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An(other) Rhetoric: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Rhetorical Tradition

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An(other) Rhetoric: Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Rhetorical Tradition

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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acknowledgement, *kairos* and sophistic rhetoric, persuasion

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DEDICATION

For John and Cora, who are always on my mind and in my heart, though you are not yet in my arms.

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ABSTRACT

Rhetoric as a discipline is still touched by the shadow of ancient Greece. Rhetoric was defined famously by Aristotle as the “available means of persuasion,” codified into five canons in classical Rome, and has since been a central part of Western education to train speakers and writers to effectively move their audiences. However, particularly beginning in the mid-20th Century, the discipline’s understanding of rhetoric as a means of persuasion (or even manipulation) passed down from our ancient roots began to shift to a sense of rhetoric as matters of ethics and a concern for the other. It begs the question: As a discipline, how did we get to a point where ethical concerns have increasingly entered the rhetorical conversation?

With a theoretical focus, this study traces and examines how rhetoric’s relation to ethics has transformed over the past 60 years from our discipline’s Aristotelian/Platonic/Socratic inheritance to the introduction of multiple new perspectives and voices. In suggesting that the goal of rhetoric is more than persuasion—a major focus of the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition dominant in the field of rhetoric and composition in the early 20th Century—this study traces a “turn” within our discipline from “confrontational” rhetoric to “invitational” rhetoric. It suggests that invitational rhetoric challenges a strict definition of rhetoric as persuasion seeks instead to understand rather than convert, support camaraderie and mutuality (if not unity) instead of reinforcing dominant power

relationships, challenge the speaker as much as the audience, and privilege listening and invitation over persuasion when appropriate. Rhetorical ethics is defined as the ethical decisions made in the everyday interactions that constantly invite us to make rhetorical choices that inevitably have consequences in the world. The study examines *kairos*/sophistic rhetoric, identification, and responsibility to establish a potential framework for rhetorical ethics, as well as listening and acknowledgement as methods for enacting this model. The ambition is a rhetoric of ethics that attends to everyday situations; accommodates different, often “silenced,” voices; and offers the possibility of an ethical encounter with others.

The study offers several possible conclusions about the nature of rhetorical ethics. Significant areas of continued study include issues of voice, agency, and marginalization—even invitational rhetoric does not guarantee that quieter or disadvantaged voices will be heard. In all, an(other) rhetoric is both a ripe topic for continued disciplinary attention, as well as a necessary component of everyday interactions with others that long to display love over hate, listening over silencing, inclusion over exclusion, and acceptance over rejection.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Rhetoric as a discipline is still touched by the shadow of ancient Greece. Rhetoric was defined famously by Aristotle as the “available means of persuasion,” codified into five canons in classical Rome, and has since been a central part of Western education to train speakers and writers to effectively move their audiences. However, particularly beginning in the mid-20th Century, the discipline’s understanding of rhetoric as a means of persuasion (or even manipulation) passed down from our ancient roots began to shift to a sense of rhetoric as matters of ethics and a concern for the other. It begs the question: As a discipline, how did we get to a point where ethical concerns have increasingly entered the rhetorical conversation? This study will trace and examine how rhetoric’s relation to ethics has transformed over the past 60 years from our discipline’s Aristotelian/Platonic/Socratic inheritance to the introduction of multiple new perspectives and voices. The ultimate ambition is to work toward a (re)definition of rhetoric in light of ethics.

Methodology

This study will have a theoretical focus, beginning with a review of Plato/Socrates and Aristotle’s conceptions of rhetoric and ethics. In suggesting that the goal of rhetoric

is more than persuasion—a major focus of the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition dominant in the field of rhetoric and composition in the early 20th Century—this study traces a “turn” within our discipline from what might be called “confrontational” rhetoric to “invitational” rhetoric. Confrontational rhetoric—more in line with rhetoric grounded in traditional Western and/or European institutions and attitudes—seeks to persuade, conquer, convert, and ultimately change others. Invitational rhetoric was originally defined by feminist scholars Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin in 1995 as “an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination” (5). For purposes of this study, I suggest that invitational rhetoric challenges a strict definition of rhetoric as persuasion and works instead toward the possibility of an ethical encounter with others. In the “ethical encounter,” invitational rhetoric seeks to understand rather than convert, support camaraderie and mutuality (if not unity) instead of reinforcing dominant power relationships, challenge the speaker as much as the audience, and privilege listening and invitation over persuasion when appropriate.

The turn from confrontational to invitational rhetoric reflects multiple shifts in traditional studies of rhetoric, including a reconsideration of what constitutes “rhetoric,” a reexamination of the role of the self in rhetorical encounters, and an increasing concern for the both the “other” and historically disadvantaged voices. Beyond the question of whether there is an ethical form of persuasion, this study is primarily concerned with ethics in terms of ethical relations with and responsibility to others. I do not suggest that agonistic rhetoric or persuasive tactics are always inappropriate to teach, nor are they always an ineffective rhetorical response. Rather, I propose that the disciplinary focus

on confrontational rhetoric to the *exclusion* of invitational techniques threatens to leave out those who do not personify the classical “great men” of Ancient Greece and does not address the wider ethical concerns inherent in rhetoric. My ambition instead is a different model of rhetoric—one of rhetorical ethics—that attends to everyday situations; accommodates disadvantaged, often “silenced,” voices; and offers the possibility of an ethical encounter with others. The discipline as a whole is enhanced by augmenting our agonistic, persuasion-focused inheritance with new, more inclusive rhetorical methods that focus on distinctly ethical concerns.

New/revived techniques of interest in contemporary scholarship include studies of identification and division (Kenneth Burke, Krista Ratcliffe [via Burke]); responsibility to others (Emmanuel Levinas, Dietrich Bonhoeffer); listening and acknowledgement (Krista Ratcliffe, Lisbeth Lipari, Michael Hyde); rhetoric as love (Jim Corder); and *kairos/sophistic* rhetoric (Susan Jarratt, Bruce McComiskey, Michael Carter, James Kinneavy, etc.). Drawing primarily from these works and focusing on the five areas of 1) *kairos/sophistic* rhetoric, 2) identification, 3) responsibility, 4) listening and acknowledgement, and 5) rhetoric as love, this study will trace the evolving relationship between rhetoric and ethics within the discipline, as well as influences from other disciplines such as philosophy, feminism, and theology. I will examine the various studies that have helped us work toward a rewriting of rhetoric’s “other,” adding to the available research by focusing specifically on the relationship between rhetoric and ethics from our discipline’s ancient influences to present day. The study will question what constitutes ethics from a rhetorical perspective. It will seek to answer how has/does the study of rhetoric inform an evolving definition of ethics from our

Aristotelian/Platonic/Socratic inheritance, particularly over the past 60 years. Likewise, as our discipline's focus has shifted more toward a concern for the other, it will question what an ethical engagement with others looks like, and how has/does rhetorical theory inform it.

Ethics and Rhetoric: First Things First

How is ethics connected to rhetoric? If rhetoric is conceived as a *technē* only—e.g., a defense against the available means of persuasion or a model for effective public speaking—then ethics might be reserved as a philosophical or theological problem. However, to define rhetoric so narrowly denies the basic nature of human interaction. Kenneth Burke famously defined human beings as symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animals. Humans are unique from other animals in our critical process—people can “interpret our interpretations” (Warnock 80). “Burke makes clear that linguistic choices are ethical decisions that are motivated by and consequential in the world. Choices, therefore, are not free; nevertheless, people must act,” explains Tilly Warnock (80). Not only must people act, but others are unavoidably affected by our actions. Ethics is tied to rhetoric because everything we do as one human reaching out to another—from what we say, to how we say it, who we listen to, who we allow to speak, and even what we choose not to say—is by its nature an ethical decision.

Rhetoric is not only an activity and area of study for the privileged and powerful hoping to gain influence over their audiences. Instead, as the writers studied here will suggest, our everyday interactions with others hold the power to display love or hate,

listening or silence, inclusion or exclusion, and acknowledgement or rejection.

Rhetorical ethics attends to these everyday situations. For teachers in any discipline, recognizing the ethical implications of everyday rhetorical decisions has significant applications in the classroom (e.g., including the silent introvert, listening to “different” perspectives and encouraging alternative viewpoints, redefining what constitutes an “argument,” embracing non-traditional modes of instruction or language, and so on). For people of any nation, profession, or walk of life, the implications for our everyday encounters are just as great.

What marks an encounter as ethical? British economist Ernst Friederich Schumacher, an early proponent of sustainable building design, put forth the motto of “Cease to do evil; try to do good,” which later become a credo of the sustainable design movement. Yes, “evil” and “good” are tricky terms in contemporary scholarship. Though our postmodern sensibilities remind us of the complexity of “good” and “evil,” as Ronald Arnett explains, “this does not reject, nor de-privilege, the importance of temporal discernment of a given ‘good.’” Within the loss of one universal “good” lives “the tapestry of multiple social ‘goods’” which we must determine for ourselves and commit to (“A Conversation” 54). The point of Schumacher’s appeal to this particular social good is: if we are to avoid environmental disaster, we must *try* to do good for the environment and cease to do those things which are known to be detrimental to the natural world and others around us. The American Institute of Architects defines sustainable design as “a collaborative process that involves thinking ecologically—studying systems, relationships, and interactions—in order to design in ways that remove rather than contribute stress from systems.” In much the same way, an ethical

encounter in the context of this study can be defined as an encounter that does not prioritize the needs or will of the self over the other, but rather involves a sense of “thinking ecologically” about our interactions with and responsibility to others. Just as the sustainable design movement has built upon a popular desire to consider the effects of our choices and resource use on the planet and on others (including future generations), ethical rhetoric also considers how our rhetorical choices are ultimately ethical decisions, always with motive, and always with consequences.

Summarizing James Kastely’s *Rethinking the Rhetorical Tradition*, Carolyn Miller writes:

The positive task of rhetoric is not to persuade others away from injustice or to promote remedies; it is to keep us constantly open to refutation, to the possibility of seeing an alternative to the inadvertent wrong we commit. The inherency of injustice is what makes rhetoric a philosophical problem, but refutation is what rhetoric can offer to philosophy. (179)

A constant stance of openness toward refutation is key not only to Kastely’s work, but also to ethical rhetoric as defined here. Perfection is not the goal; in fact, inadvertent injury “is an inescapable aspect of a being who is born into a world that is shaped by a language and by conventional practices that embody a particular set of values” (Kastely 42). Kenneth Burke reminded us all that, bound up in our terministic screens, people are a *necessarily* mistaken species. Though the perfectly ethical encounter may be impossible, I find hope in the space between the possible and the probable. I find value—even necessity—in *trying*.

CHAPTER TWO: THE RHETORICAL TRADITION

Rhetoric's Ancient Beginnings

To begin the long road toward an(other) rhetoric, I will start with a review of Plato/Socrates and Aristotle's conceptions of rhetoric and ethics to understand how these ancient thinkers have shaped our discipline and continue to influence rhetorical thought today. For the Greek philosophers, ethics and virtue were closely tied to the study of rhetoric. Raphael's fresco *The School of Athens* famously depicts Plato and Aristotle as the work's central figures. Holding the *Timaeus*, Plato points to the heavens, while his student, Aristotle, grips his *Nicomachean Ethics* and stretches his hand open-palmed down to the earth. Raphael alludes to one of the central distinctions between the two philosophers: for Plato, virtue brings us closer to the divine, while Aristotle insists that the object of ethics is "practical wisdom" with more earthly purposes (to create good living).

Socrates, as portrayed through the dialogues of his student Plato, identified knowledge with virtue. If knowledge can be learned, so can virtue. Thus, virtue can be taught, and the quest for knowledge brings us closer to the divine, which is the ultimate goal in Socratic ethical living. In the *Phaedrus*, knowledge is depicted as the "recollection of the things our soul saw" when it was travelling with the gods on winged horses, and the rhetorical art is then "a way of directing the soul by means of speech"

(249c, 261a). In the *Symposium*, Diotima tells Socrates that “what we call *studying* exists because knowledge is leaving us, because forgetting is the departure of knowledge, while studying puts back a fresh memory in place of what went away, thereby preserving a piece of knowledge” (208a). For Socrates, through philosophy, Socratic discussion, and the questioning of all things—life and death, meaning, reality, right and wrong—we reach a divine understanding of how to live our lives ethically or “for the good,” to Socrates.

Plato later suggests that philosophy is “understanding knowledge and being (reality) through the process of dialectic (one version of abstraction) and an understanding of how the soul recollects knowledge” (Welch 39). In *Republic VII*, Plato argues that education is not “putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes” (518c). Rather, education takes for granted that the “sight” or “power to learn” is already present in the soul, but education can “redirect” the soul appropriately toward the good if students can allow reason to rule over the impure attractions of the physical world (518 c-d). We are born with this “genuine knowledge” because our souls existed prior to birth in the “higher realm,” or the realm of the Forms, which contain the true nature of all things and are impossible for humans to fully grasp (Biffle 115-6). Thus, truth is not transferred to man, but man is brought to the truth that already exists in the soul through development of character and cultivation of morals.

Christopher Biffle explains that Platonic ethics “states that what we should do with our lives is reject the attractions of the physical world, let our reason rule our appetites, and pursue wisdom by purifying our souls with the study of philosophy” (116). The purpose of ethics is ultimately an inward journey to find the proper balance of the

soul's three functions—reason, appetite, and honor. Plato's concern for others is generally limited to promoting the ethical person's responsibility to protect the well-being of the community or state through living a just life and setting a good example.

Plato, most clearly in the *Gorgias*, puts rhetoric and ethics at odds with one another. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates (Plato) claims that rhetoric is a knack (like pastry baking and cosmetics) for “producing a certain gratification and pleasure,” not an art like medicine or philosophy (462c). He argues that the aim of most rhetoric is flattery and deception; it “guesses at what's pleasant with no consideration for what's best” (465a). Virtue (the soul) is not inherent in rhetoric, and therefore without philosophy, rhetoric is simply used for “instilling persuasion in the souls of an audience” and manipulating others for personal gain (453a). Philosophy, on the other hand, is an art of truth concerned with “the good,” and ethics belongs to this realm of truth. To Socrates, rhetoric instills belief, but philosophy produces knowledge (the higher purpose). He argues that rhetoric is merely the *simulation* of justice (as medicine stands to cookery), but politics is the *art* of justice. Overall, Socrates' unflattering review of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* concludes that orators are not held in any regard at all, and that they have “the least power of any in the city” (466b). Such accusations would lead to centuries of skepticism and disdain against those who would align themselves with rhetoric and praise its benefits, including the sophists.

In contrast to Plato/Socrates, Aristotle's treatment of rhetoric is more concerned with the practical uses of rhetoric in the world. In Aristotle's view, to study rhetoric is to learn how to persuade or to protect yourself against those who would use rhetoric maliciously. Rhetoric is an art that is used to deceive; rhetoric “dresses itself up in the

form of politics” (In Kennedy *On Rhetoric*, 1.2.1356a). In his central text, *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle claims that rhetoric’s function is “not to persuade but to see the available means of persuasion in each case” (1.2.1355b). Top students of rhetoric would therefore be master speakers, trained to anticipate and disarm the rhetorical tactics of their adversaries. Aristotle’s techniques have since been a central part of Western education to train speakers and writers to effectively move and prepare to refute their audiences.

Alternatively, students study ethics in order to improve their lives and pursue happiness. In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle claims that there is one goal at which all people “aim in what they choose to do and in what they avoid. Summarily stated, this is happiness and its parts” (1.5.1). Happiness to Aristotle is a combination of virtue and success with other internal and external “goods” like wealth, friendships, health, and beauty. Richard Kraut writes:

Like Plato, [Aristotle] regards the ethical virtues (justice, courage, temperance and so on) as complex rational, emotional and social skills. But he rejects Plato’s idea that a training in the sciences and metaphysics is a necessary prerequisite for a full understanding of our good. What we need, in order to live well, is a proper appreciation of the way in which such goods as friendship, pleasure, virtue, honor and wealth fit together as a whole. (“Aristotle’s Ethics”)

Students can acquire, through upbringing and education, the course of action best suited to the situation based on reason. There are no general rules for this practical wisdom. Students must acquire, through repetition, the skills to put a general understanding of well-being into practice in ways that are suitable to each occasion (Kraut, “Aristotle’s Ethics”). Though Aristotle echoes Plato’s privileging of reason and concern for ordering the soul, Aristotle would make ethics an autonomous field

independent of other branches of knowledge. In other words, the pursuit of ethics (the good) does not require expertise in mathematics, science, or even rhetoric.

Aristotle's best known work on ethics, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, set the baseline for Aristotelian ethics that would continue to influence all thinking about ethics since. Again, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle maintains that happiness (living well and doing well) is "the highest of all goods achievable by action" (1.4). Though happiness may seem like something "godlike and blessed," he insists that happiness is not god-sent (as Plato might argue) but "comes as a result of virtue and some process of learning or training" (1.9). Happiness, he says, is "an activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue" (1.13). Aristotle identifies two kinds of virtue—intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtue comes from teaching and requires experience and time, while moral virtue (*ethike*) is produced from habit (2.1). Good habits are required for good character, and conversely good character arises from the continuous practice of good habits. To Aristotle, both kinds of virtue are necessary for a human to achieve the highest good, and thus virtue requires both practical and theoretical elements.

In Book VI, Aristotle compares wisdom (*sophia*) to practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Wisdom is scientific knowledge and concerned with "higher things." Practical wisdom is neither scientific knowledge nor art, but is concerned with the individual, human things, and human action and "making." Aristotle values the contribution of practical wisdom as the "action" and moral virtue as the "guide" to happiness. "The work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means," says Aristotle (6.12). Knowledge of rhetoric and the available means of persuasion is an art

(technē) that contributes (with wisdom, practical wisdom, knowledge, and intellect) to happiness, but rhetoric is not in itself a study of ethics.

Through education and dialectic, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle sought a (singular) path to the virtuous life for their students. Yet as Victor Vitanza suggests in *Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric*, this required a particular type of student and supported a sort of academic “imperialism.” Plato’s “theory of learning as recollection” required that virtue and excellence already be “implanted into the individual speaker *in order to learn and speak well*” (Vitanza 154). Aristotle’s theory of learning based on having the right “predisposition” toward the virtuous “means (again) coming from ‘the right families,’ or the elite” (Vitanza 154). Contemporary critics of the history of rhetoric (Jarratt, Royster, Bizzell, and many others), as it has been canonized from our ancient roots, have pointed to the exclusion of women and people of non-elite classes, as well as the omission of sophistic rhetoric, as a serious ethical shortcoming of Platonic and Aristotelian rhetoric.

Likewise, rhetoric as a discipline has been shaped by our Aristotelian inheritance, from the long echoing link between rhetoric and persuasion to the “practical” instruction for public speakers found in the techniques and tricks of the rhetorical trade offered in *On Rhetoric*. George Kennedy remarks: “Most teachers of composition, communication, and speech regard [*On Rhetoric*] as a seminal work that organizes its subject into essential parts, provides insight into the nature of speech acts, creates categories and terminology for discussing discourse, and illustrates and applies its teachings so that they can be used in society” (x-xi). Aristotle’s rhetoric is thus used as a model for

teaching effective public speaking; rhetoric is conceptualized as a utilitarian, ethically neutral technē.

In the past 60 years, however, many contemporary scholars have helped to expand rhetoric from strictly the realm of political discourse, citizen making, and the art of persuasion for the world's elite and have called into question not only the nature of ethics, but also *whose* ethics we seek to teach. This shift has led to calls like Jim Corder's in "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love" to speak a more "commodious" language. A big, roomy language "full of space and time that will hold our diversities," and an abandonment of the self-endorsing "tribal talk" that shuts out others and breaks down loving communication (31). "We have *to see* each other, *to know* each other, *to be present* to each other, *to embrace* each other" (23). It has also opened the door for feminist scholars such as Foss and Griffin (and later Jennifer Emerling Bone and T. M. Linda Scholz) to appeal for a move beyond traditional conceptualizations of rhetoric as persuasion to an invitational rhetoric that offers "a means to create ethical exchanges in difficult situations" (Bone, et al. 435). Determining how we made this "turn" from persuasion to invitation requires an examination of the rhetorical traditions that shaped our discipline in the 20th Century.

The 20th Century Rhetorical Tradition

"The rhetorical tradition is always being edited," says Patricia Bizzell (109). Indeed, what counts as the "rhetorical tradition" depends largely on who you ask and when you asked them. Maurice Charland likewise argues that pinning down a rhetorical "tradition" when our history is neither coherent nor harmonious is particularly

problematic (120). In light of such arguments, I do not seek to imply that the field of rhetoric and composition has followed a linear, well defined path over the last 100 years to arrive at a point where rhetoric and composition departments universally agree on concerns for ethics and rhetoric's other. I concede that the notion of any one "20th Century Rhetorical Tradition" is a slippery one, at best. However, I do suggest that tracing some of the major movements that have influenced the study of rhetoric in the 20th Century helps us understand how disciplinary thought has progressively opened toward ethical concerns, issues of rhetorical choices and consequences, concerns for including traditionally "silenced" voices, and the relationship between rhetoric and others. It also reveals that further study of the relationship between ethics and rhetoric is a timely, appropriate pursuit for rhetoricians.

In their introduction to *Twentieth-Century Rhetorics and Rhetoricians: Critical Studies and Sources*, Michael Moran and Michelle Ballif outline the critical movements that have shaped the study (and subsequent "editing") of rhetoric in the 20th Century. While they also admit that the notion of 20th Century "rhetoric" still defies simple definition, Moran and Ballif provide an overview of the many ways that rhetoric has been conceived, theorized, and practiced over the last 100 years. As mentioned, this historical background is critical to the current study of the 20th Century rhetorical tradition and how the relationship between ethics and rhetoric relates to broader trends in disciplinary thought.

Current-traditional rhetoric. Current-traditional rhetoric dominated the teaching of rhetoric through the 1960s and was "committed to the positivism of nineteenth-century science that assumed that reality existed apart from language used to express

it” (Moran and Ballif xiii). Therefore, language was only useful to the extent that it did not distort reality. According to this tradition, good writing should function as a “windowpane” through which the reader views the truth presented by the writer (Moran and Ballif xiii). Current-traditionalists thus emphasized plain, unadorned style “that was most closely identified with early science of the British Royal Society” (Moran and Ballif xiii). Current-traditionalists assumed that writers already had ideas to communicate and emphasized various strategies for organizing these ideas into essays by means of the modes of discourse—usually some combination of description, narration, exposition, and argumentation/persuasion.

Bizzell dubs the early to mid-20th Century the “traditional tradition” era in the study of rhetoric, focused on the ancient texts written by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, and so on. Choices in the rhetorical canon “were dominated by the preferences of socially privileged men who saw Western culture as the best in the world, and that culture itself as springing primarily from Greek and Roman roots,” writes Bizzell (110). Summarizing Walter Ong, Bizzell describes education in the “traditional tradition” as introduced via agonistic competition and requiring extensive education, first in Latin and Greek (110). Later, publications such as Edward P.J. Corbett’s 1965 book, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, encouraged teachers to incorporate elements of classical pedagogy into contemporary classrooms in a manner that could not be more “traditionally traditional” (112). Bizzell claims that even into the mid-1980s, the “traditional tradition” still dominated scholarship in the history of rhetoric to a surprising degree, and the texts of the traditional tradition (such as Aristotle) still remain

staples of rhetorical study (111). Indeed, current-traditional practices have not altogether disappeared from the present-day teaching of rhetoric and composition.

Current-traditional rhetoric's textbook-based methods of composition instruction, focused on organization and final product, engendered a number of critiques about the field's limitations and ineffectiveness and triggered many subsequent counter-movements. Criticism of current-traditional rhetoric included disapproval of the tradition's privileging of science and Western culture and inherent patriarchal, aristocratic tendencies, as well as paradigmatic assumptions about the nature of language, truth, reality, the writer, the audience, the instructor-student relationship, and discourse. I argue that these counter-movements marked an evolving turn within the discipline toward a concern for both personal and ethical matters in writing and rhetoric, as well as increasing interest in the relationship between the writer/rhetor/self and "others," rather than his or her ability to make well organized, persuasive arguments.

Expressivism. The first challenge to current-traditional rhetoric came in the form of expressive rhetoric. "Expressivism rejected the scientism of current-traditionalism with its emphasis on correctness, clarity, and form and emphasized instead personal writing that reflected the autonomous writer's individual experience, reactions, and beliefs" (Moran and Ballif xiv). For expressivists, meaning results from a private search where the writer draws on both intellect and emotion to discover personally significant truth (Moran and Ballif xiv). With expressivism, emphasis is on the writing process rather than the final product, with discovery at the heart of the act of writing.

Expressivism depicts language as a tool of personal expression by stressing freedom, discovery, and a search for the writer's authentic self in the writing process.

This new focus on the personal journey, rather than style and final product, served as a first step toward considering larger ethical issues of the self's relationship to others.

Cognitive rhetoric. Prevalent in the 1970s and early 1980s, cognitive rhetoric extended the work of the expressivists by seeking to develop cognitive models of the writing process based on the workings of the human mind as understood by cognitive scientists (Moran and Ballif xvi). Although cognitive rhetoric has been criticized on a number of grounds, as Andrea Lundsford notes, cognitive science has helped build bridges “between disciplines in order to work toward a general theory of cognition and communication” (Moran and Ballif xvi). Cognitivists theorize that thought exists in the mind apart from language, and thus seek to discover how language/writing comes about through the mind's mental processes. Again stressing the self's relationship to personal expression, cognitivists focus on how the writer makes decisions mentally during the writing process.

Like expressivism, cognitive rhetoric also emphasizes process over product. Both expressivism and cognitive rhetoric directly refute the ethically neutral, five paragraph essay-focused pedagogy of current-traditional rhetoric. Yet while focusing on the generative process of rhetoric and composition, both movements fail to include any significant discussion of the self's relationship to others, the ethical dimensions of language, and the consequences of our rhetorical choices in society.

Reclamation of the classical tradition/historiographies of rhetoric. The reclamation of the classical tradition/historiographies of rhetoric emerged in the late 1930s and early 1940s with scholars like Kenneth Burke, who infused literary criticism with neo-Aristotelian principles (Moran and Ballif xviii). “The reclamation of classical

rhetoric served to join rhetoricians in English and speech communication departments, to endow compositionists with a professional legitimacy unknown in American institutions, and to attack current-traditional rhetoric's theoretical and pedagogical sterility" (Moran and Ballif xviii). This included the rediscovery and embrace of Aristotelian principles such as invention. As will be discussed in detail shortly, Burke in particular helped set the stage for transforming our Aristotelian inheritance in the study of rhetoric.

New/social-epistemic rhetoric. The term new rhetoric (or social-epistemic rhetoric) emerged in the 1980s, referring to any rhetorical practice other than current-traditional rhetoric. According to Richard Ohmann, "modern rhetoric lowers the barrier between speaker or writer and audience. It shifts emphasis toward cooperation, mutuality, social harmony" (Moran and Ballif xx). Ohmann's statement echoes the goals of invitational rhetoric, a different rhetoric aimed at fostering camaraderie and mutuality over confrontation and persuasion.

For Burke, the "key term for the 'new' rhetoric would be 'identification'" rather than persuasion, representing a significant reinterpretation of the discipline's ancient traditions (Moran and Ballif xx). Jacqueline Jones Royster contends that scholars such as Burke and Foucault "have helped us to see more clearly over the last few decades that we actually create and filter meaning from more elaborate perceptive possibilities, making sense of what we see based on ideological frameworks and social practices" (149). This "social turn" in the field of rhetoric—which emphasizes the ethical, social, cultural, political, and ideological forces that influence the self within rhetorical discourse

communities—not only expands the role of rhetoric well beyond persuasion, but also serves as a crucial step toward a “rhetoric of ethics.”

For example, James Berlin calls the new rhetoric “social-epistemic” to stress that while it does construct knowledge, it constructs *social* knowledge, which is situated materially and historically (Moran and Ballif xxi). For social constructivists, writing is a social act, emphasizing key terms such as “collaboration,” “consensus,” “community,” and “conversation” (Moran and Ballif xxi). Social-epistemic rhetoric “questions the transcendent self and views writers as subjects constructed through social processes and according to ideological motivations” (Moran and Ballif xxviii). Therefore, rhetoric by nature is both influenced by and capable of influencing the world, and consequently rhetoric cannot be ethically neutral.

Another concern that has emerged in the new rhetoric is exploring ethical ways of including the historically excluded. This attends to a rhetoric of ethics that accommodates different, often “silenced,” voices. Critics of the history of rhetoric, as it has been previously canonized, pointed to the exclusion of women and people of non-elite classes, as well as the omission of sophistic rhetoric. Royster writes that Western rhetorics and their legacy in scholarship have been “demonstrably dominated by elite male viewpoints and experiences” and that these traditions of theory and practice have “tended to function with a heavy and relentlessly constraining hand” (149). Thus, rhetoric as a discipline has been granted a distinctively Western, male, elite inheritance. Yet the “new tradition” of rhetoric, as Bizzell calls it, “has been impacted by changes in the demographics in the academy,” as well as changing cultural preferences (113). For example, she notes that the induction of women and persons of color into the ranks of

advanced rhetorical scholarship has helped shape the modern rhetorical canon.

“Scholars with some different cultural assumptions and interests than those of privileged white men had to gain access to the textual record of human civilization, looking it over for texts that could be adapted to these different scholars’ agendas,” argues Bizzell (114). In many ways, new rhetoric struggled to give those previously ignored not only a place in the Academy, but (channeling Spivak) a right to speak at all, again attending to a distinctly ethical turn in the study and teaching of rhetoric.

Poststructuralism and postmodernism. Poststructuralists and postmodernists challenge the definition of rhetoric as primarily communicative and persuasive in purpose, and even the possibility of communication. Poststructuralist and postmodern rhetorics view the writing subjects as “noncentered, as effects of language, of conflicting and libidinally motivated discourses” (Moran and Ballif xxviii). Poststructuralism (Barthes, de Man, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault) challenges the ability of language to “represent” ideas, the very stability of those ideas, and the “self-present, sovereign, knowing and speaking subject” (Moran and Ballif xxiii). Postmodernism saw a loss of faith in the grand narratives passed down from the Enlightenment (Lyotard) such as “the emancipation through total identity (of self and community) and through rational thought” (Moran and Ballif xxiv). By challenging the nature of rhetoric, poststructuralists and postmodernists “seriously problematize traditional notions of the rhetor, of the text, of the rhetorical situation” (Moran and Ballif xxiv). Thus, whereas previous movements challenged or redefined traditional notions of rhetoric, poststructuralism and postmodernism effectively disrupts them.

Arnett argues that, in asking us to stop leaning on universal assumptions, postmodernity actually opens up rhetoric and dialogue to all walks of life. He says: “Postmodern scholarship does not reject agency, but situates and embeds it in what Martin Buber called the mud of everyday life; one cannot stand above history. The ultimate element is what agency is embedded in—it is embedded in multiplicity of ground” (“A Conversation” 58). Thus, the 20th Century metaphor of “knowledge” in rhetorical ethics evolves into a contemporary metaphor of “learning,” which means that “whatever I know must engage and risk being reshaped in a given moment” (“A Conversation” 57). Postmodernism advances a rhetorical “turn” to ethics by asking the question “What guides the self, other, or moment?” “What ground is the other standing on—am I standing on?” Or as Burke might say, what “terministic screen” am I peering through to understand and communicate with others?

Can we then reconsider, “What is rhetoric?” Is the ultimate goal of rhetoric necessarily persuasion or the available means of persuasion? Do rhetorical statements rely on written and spoken words, or can arguments be made by an image, a body movement, or even by what is not said or what someone refuses to say? And in fact, what exactly is a text?

Debra Hawhee’s “Rhetorics, Bodies, and Everyday Life” offers one postmodern reexamination of what constitutes the rhetorical enterprise. She considers one formulation of rhetoric put forward by Wayne Booth, who describes rhetoric as “the entire range of resources that human beings share for producing effects on one another,” effects which can be ethical, practical, emotional, and intellectual (158). Booth’s definition opens the realm of rhetorical studies to new areas of consideration,

especially visual rhetoric and the rhetoric of new media. “The discovery, use, and effects of such ‘available means’ of rhetorical action transpires through bodies, spaces, and the visual as much as it happens through the presumed twin-media of rhetoric—the written and spoken word,” says Hawhee (163). For her, we can never escape rhetorical situations, since we are constantly surrounded by them in everyday life—in an advertisement, in an image, and even in the choice to smile or frown. Far from a tool used by masterful rhetoricians for persuading and moving their audiences, rhetoric is a part of everyone’s everyday interactions.

Importantly, as demonstrated, rhetoric’s relationship to ethics has also shifted significantly over the past 60 years. This study seeks to build on the conception of rhetoric as the ethical decisions made in the everyday interactions that constantly invite us to make rhetorical choices, continuing with an examination of *kairos*/sophistic rhetoric, identification, responsibility, listening and acknowledgement, and rhetoric as love.

CHAPTER THREE: A NEW RHETORICAL INHERITANCE

Sophistic Rhetoric and *kairos*

While some were rejected, other aspects of the ancient Greek rhetorical traditions reappeared in the discipline as rhetorical scholars increasingly shifted their focus to ethical concerns. For instance, the late 20th Century saw a “rereading” of the sophists (maligned by Plato and Aristotle) by Susan Jarratt, Bruce McComiskey, Michael Carter, James Kinneavy, and many others, as well as the reemergence of the concept of *kairos* in rhetorical thought. McComiskey defines *kairos* as “seizing the opportune moment, choosing arguments depending on the demands of the situation” (111). In contrast to Aristotle’s persuasion, the early conceptions of *kairos* take on a connotation of universal conflict resolution or diplomacy. Situating the encounter in its appropriate *kairos* and using the “opportune moment” means opening the possibility to ethical action based on shared consciousness.

In *Dissoi Logoi*, everything done at the right time is decent and everything done at the wrong time is disgraceful (II 20). “Gorgias’s epistemology is relativistic,” writes McComiskey, “and his corresponding rhetorical methodology works to seize the opportune moment (*kairos*) in which certain kinds of language can be used to unite subjective consciousness into a communal desire for action” (18). Building on the principles of sophistry, McComiskey argues that recognizing *kairos* (not only possessing

critical consciousness but understanding institutionalized strategies) gives us the “discursive knowledge we need to compose our own timely rhetorical tactics, tactics that, a little at a time, work toward challenging marginalizing strategies” (117). Thus not only the strategy but also the goal of rhetoric changes radically from persuasion to timely, communal action.

Unsurprising given its connection to socially situated *kairos*, sophistry has also piqued the interest of social constructionists. For example, Michael Carter also supports a rereading of sophistic rhetoric and ancient sophistic contributions to the discipline to build on the contemporary work of the social constructionists. Recognizing that discourse and knowledge are socially constituted, Carter examines the principles of *stasis* and *kairos* to point toward a social constructionist foundation for classical rhetoric. Although many contemporary social constructionists have looked for support for their social theories outside of the discipline, he argues that they have overlooked this important aspect of classical rhetoric coming from our own “rhetorical roots” (98).

Carter’s “Stasis and Kairos: Principles of Social Construction in Classical Rhetoric” focuses on showing that the principles of *stasis* and *kairos* offer “a rich source of understanding the social construction of discourse” (98). Stemming from the rhetoric of Hermagoras, *stasis* is the means by which the rhetor identifies the “rhetorical issue,” or the area of disagreement, through a set of questions leading the rhetor to *topoi* appropriate to that issue. Carter distinguishes five identifying features of *stasis*: 1) *stasis* grows out of the conflict of opposing forces, the initial accusation and denial; 2) this stasiastic conflict is *generative*, creating an impetus for rhetorical *action*; 3) *stasis* is a doctrine of inquiry, which involves asking questions; 4) *stasis* provides a means for

solving the conflict, a *direction* for action; and 5) *stasis* is situational, it “provides a way of defining the rhetorical situation, particularly the rhetorical conflict, so that the rhetors can respond with arguments that are appropriate to that situation” (99-100). Key to Carter’s social argument, then, is that *stasis* is not individualistic and internal, but represents a community-oriented, socially-situated rhetoric (101). Notably, Carter’s treatment of *stasis* is reminiscent of Corder’s discussion of *ethos*. His investigation reveals a number of similarities between *stasis* and *kairos* relevant to our disciplinary understanding of sophistic rhetoric: 1) both *stasis* and *kairos* feature the role of opposing forces; 2) both act as a stimulus for rhetorical action; 3) both serve as guides to resolving conflict through a judgment; 4) both offer systems of inquiry; and 5) both are concerned with the rhetorical situation. Whereas Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle emphasized “scientific” education and dialectic to lead their students to the virtuous life, through *stasis* and *kairos*, the sophists taught their students timely, socially situated rhetorical tactics to help resolve conflicts (reflecting a distinctly ethical concern).

In spite of its (mis)interpretation throughout history, *kairos* and sophistic rhetoric had markedly ethical connotations, and these concepts have found numerous advocates for their place in contemporary rhetoric/composition theory (e.g., James Kinneavy). For the Pythagoreans, *kairos* was one of the “fundamental laws” of a universe comprised of agonistic, opposing relationships. “The generative potential of these opposing forces was achieved only through their harmony. And this was the function of *kairos*,” writes Carter. Enos translated the term as “balance,” and later wrote that “meaning is found through the synthesis of contradictory beliefs” (102). Carter stresses that for Gorgias and the other sophists, the concept of *kairos* as “the opportune

moment” also takes on an ethical dimension—a generative principle founded on conflict and resolution (105). “It was not simply saying what the audience wanted to hear, as the connotations of sophistry suggest, but it was facing squarely the tragic notion that all *logos* is ‘deception’ and acting on the basis of what *at the crucial time* seemed to be the truest *logos*” (106). A rhetoric based on *kairos* is thus fundamental to the sort of “invitational” thinking required to attempt the ethical encounter.

Susan Jarratt also points to sophistic rhetoric as a long overlooked tradition in the history of rhetoric. As she “rereads” the sophists in her attempt to refigure classical rhetoric, Jarratt argues that sophistic teaching offers resources for bridging the gap between individualism and community and for accommodating difference (88).

“Rewriting/rereading texts in terms of narrative logic of difference opens avenues not only in literature but also in the history of rhetoric,” writes Jarratt. She argues that the sophists teach us to not only situate a discourse in its *kairos*, but also to understand the local *nomos*, or culturally negotiated norms that by necessity have an ethical dimension. Jarratt seeks to accommodate difference through an understanding and use of *kairos* and its associated *nomos*. As the following discussion will reveal, “accommodating difference” is a central concern of rhetorical ethics.

Identification

Kenneth Burke was, in many ways, one of the first to reconsider rhetoric’s “uses” from our ancient roots. Burke selects “rhetoric” (not philosophy, science, poetics, or any of the other fields privileged by Plato and Aristotle) as his key term because it is the “terministic screen” that most directly addresses how people understand each other and

offers the greatest opportunity to come to terms with one another rather than to war (Warnock 77). In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke characterizes what is essentially the Socratic/Platonic/Aristotelian approach to the nature of language as “scientific.” “A ‘scientific’ approach begins with questions of *naming*, or *definition*,” says Burke (44). He favors instead a “dramatistic” approach (essentially a sophistic approach) that stresses “language as an aspect of ‘action,’ that is, ‘symbolic action’” (44). “Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality,” writes Burke (45). Reality could not exist for us if it were not profoundly involved in symbol systems. For example, we may be immediately present in a room, but that room is situated in a country, situated in a nation, situated in a web of international relations, situated under cosmic relations, etc., which ultimately “dissolves into a web of ideas and images that reach through our senses only insofar as the symbol systems that report on them are heard or seen” (48). Behavior must be viewed through a kind of terministic screen; since we cannot say anything without terms, whatever terms we use must constitute a corresponding type of screen (49-50). Screens can be manipulative; screens can be persuasive. “Insofar as man is the symbol-using animal, his world is necessarily inspirited with the quality of the Symbol, the Word, the Logos, through which he conceives it” (55). Burke’s concepts of symbol systems and terministic screens are key to understanding the relationship between language and ideology. Later I will extend Burke’s analysis to show how his conception of symbol systems, the relationship between language and ideology, can be recast to foster an understanding of the relationship between self and the other.

One of Burke's major contributions to the rhetorical tradition is his revision of Aristotle's persuasion with his notion of identification. According to Warnock, identification is key to Burke because it represents the cooperation between reader and writer that is essential to persuasion. "The distance between people, between their individual bodies, motivates them to seek a 'margin of overlap' so that they can communicate" (81). Within society, through symbolic action, the individual builds "his symbolic bridges between his own unique combination [of experiences, situations, etc.] and the social pattern" (83). Inherent in Burke's goal of identification is his yearning for the ethical encounter with others. In revising Aristotle's persuasion with identification as the key term for rhetoric, Burke chiefly aims to offer humankind rhetorical ways to better communicate, build symbolic bridges with one another, and ultimately live in greater harmony.

Burke began tying rhetoric to our ethical relationship with others through the introduction of his "philosophy of rhetoric" in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, including concepts like "identification" and "consubstantiality." He writes, "In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with one another" (21). Burke is careful to note that the counterpart to identification is *division*, and even more so now that different people and cultures have access to one another more readily. "Indeed, the very 'global' conditions which call for the greater identification of all men with one another have at the same time increased the range of human conflict, the incentives to division," warns Burke (34). Faced with humankind's enormous propensity toward division, Burke sees

rhetoric as a means of tying us back together through identification to make communication possible. Rhetoric is concerned with “the state of Babel after the Fall” (23). For Burke, rhetoric dwells in the tension between identification and division.

Burke recognizes that the very act of identification carries with it division; there are always ethical consequences to our rhetorical actions. Nevertheless, Burke does ultimately support union as the fundamental goal of rhetoric. Burke writes, “Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man’s very essence” (*Rhetoric of Motives* 22). Rhetoric “leads us through the Scramble” in an attempt toward unity. Warnock asserts that the primary aim of Burke’s rhetoric is to “combat attitudes and actions that prevent people from ‘getting along’ with each other and to demonstrate how people can fight verbally rather than physically” (77). To Burke, persuasion, identification (consubstantiality), and communication are all ultimately tied together in *realistic* functions that offer tangible possibilities for cooperation. Thus, there is a way to make substantial connections with an “other” if we can speak the same language, *per se*, or at least understand *how and why* that language is used for purpose of identification (not just persuasion).

Burke also encourages humility and a sense of humor as important rhetorical techniques—the “comic corrective”—in our relations with others. Burke says it best in *Attitudes Toward History*:

The progress of humane enlightenment can go no further than in picturing people not as *vicious*, but as *mistaken*. When you add that people are *necessarily* mistaken, that *all* people are exposed to situations in which they must act as

fools, that *every* insight contains its own special kind of blindness, you complete the comic circle, returning again to the lesson of humility that underlies great tragedy. (41)

By approaching rhetoric through this comic frame, we may view our opponent's mistakenness with compassion rather than rancor. He thus suggests that the choice between opposition/confrontation and identification (cooperation, invitation) lies within our own rhetorical choices and our own willingness to relate before retaliating. "Burke, the comic optimist, puts the future of humanity in the hands of human beings themselves and shows us that we have the power to invent and to construct the future we desire," says Cynthia Miecznikowski Sheard (308). Burke desires that, by stripping ourselves of our differences and building bridges through our terministic screens, humans will have an opportunity to unite through our shared connections. An ethical question posed to our discipline through reading Burke is then: Is this an appropriate (or reasonable) goal of rhetoric?

Timothy Crusius argues that Burke sought to transform philosophy and rhetoric as we know it, not to abandon it. To him, Burke's "practical philosophy" sought self-understanding and went hand-in-hand with humanism (3). He writes:

Burke argues that we must treat one another as *persons*, as beings capable of *choice* and *action*—not because we can prove such a claim beyond reasonable doubt but because otherwise society and morality become impossible. Dramatistic human being is implicit in language *as addressed*, as rhetoric, for we do not bother to appeal to beings without the ability to *respond*, who lack response-ability. (230-31)

Burke is *realistic* in his viewpoint on human nature, but ultimately *optimistic* regarding our ability to think and act responsibly without falling into despair. Burke opens up the possibility—naively, according to Sheard—that different cultures can find means for

“identifying” with one another in a way that neither are victimized by the encounter (298). Burke’s “god-terms” serve as the grounds for identification between strangers, whether the goal is assimilation into a local or global community (though their effects can be a mixed blessing) (299). Yet, unity through assimilation has considerable shortcomings, including loss of self, loss of freedom, and even annihilation.

One noteworthy example is the experience of non-native speakers of English in writing courses or graduate students indoctrinated into a world of professional publication. In both cases the individual can only gain access to one community by loosening their ties with another (301). Sheard writes that “We live in a world in which the differences between ourselves and others threaten to keep us apart, even to destroy us. . . . Without identification, human progress is halted and human life threatened” (307). Burke’s theory of discourse as symbolic action provides a way to consider language as both the source of conflict and a way to overcome it (308).

Stephen Bygrave does not take Burke’s optimism as a sign of naiveté, as Sheard does. “I take Burke’s optimism to be Gramsci’s ‘optimism of the will,’ the counterpart of a ‘pessimism of the intellect,’ rather than a naïvely exclusive faith in daylight reason,” says Bygrave (14). Burke’s is a rhetoric always directed at the “uses” of rhetoric, which involves both context and effect together. Burke’s methodology of interpretation privileges neither the author nor the audience. Bygrave argues that Burke also “refuses, or suspends, the privilege other kinds of theoretical discourse afford themselves by assuming their own distance or immunity from the critique they furnish of their object-discourse” (15). Throughout his work, Burke interrogates the procedures through which discourse tries to legitimate or authorize itself (15). Burke’s rhetoric “offers a means of

reading history as well as of reading *into* history: a means of connecting all sorts of ‘symbolic action’ to ideology and the programme of palpable action which underlies it” (17). Bygrave would thus situate Burke’s rhetoric closer to Aristotle’s—a useful *technē* to effectively arm and prepare actors to act in the world. But such a reading does not fully reflect Burke’s ethical intentions.

I would argue that Burkean theory shares more common themes with the sophists than with Plato and Aristotle. Cynthia Miecznikowski Sheard classifies Burke as a “contemporary sophist,” although she aligns him closer to Protagoras than to Gorgias. In Burkean theory, she claims, *kairos* is the “scene” of rhetoric—*kairos* is exigence and provides a method for deciding the course of action (292). Sheard emphasizes the ethical nature of sophistic discourse practices over the more popular association with opportunism and manipulation. Both Burke and the sophists believed that rhetoric is metaphysical, rather than representational. Instead of merely reflecting reality, language helps construct reality. Burke writes that “Man, *qua* man, is a symbol user. In this respect every aspect of his ‘reality’ is likely to be seen through the fog of symbols” (*Rhetoric of Motives* 136). In this way symbolic motives are inherent to humankind. Burke reminds us that “whatever *correspondence* there is between a *word* and the *thing* it names, the word is *not* the thing,” says Warnock (80). Though we do not have direct access to the material world, we always engage it through our consciousness, shared culture, language, ideas, preconceptions, identities, ideologies, etc.

In defining Burke as a “neo-sophist,” Sheard summarizes Burke’s analysis of the motives behind language as “fundamentally kairotic and his conception of the relations

between rhetoric and reality [is] visionary—that is, directed toward future possibilities—while still grounded in traditional, human values” (294). Like the sophists, Burke’s “humanistic” philosophy is both optimistic (described by Rueckert as “a faith in the creative, cooperative, and restorative powers of the word” and “a belief that a cure for the disease of war can be found”) and realistic in his acceptance of humankind’s predispositions and shortcomings (302). To create a better future, the sophists offered resources for bridging the gap between individuals, resolving conflicts, and accommodating difference. And that is largely why the sophists have reemerged as central figures guiding our discipline’s renewed interest in rhetorical ethics.

As suggested in this analysis, an undeniable motive of Burke’s project is saving civilization as we know it from the brink of nuclear destruction. The oft cited epigraph to Burke’s 1945 *A Grammar of Motives* was, after all, *ad bellum purificandum* (toward the purification of war). It is important to note that Burke did not see the possibility of war’s elimination, but rather the “purification” of war’s potentially harmful nature by drawing it into a less destructive channel. He considered war a “disease of cooperation,” and a “perversion of communion” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 20-22). He stressed that war is not part of the essence of human relations but rather a perverted response to our disagreements. Thus, the goal of rhetorical ethics in Burkean terms is not to eliminate war or to debunk militaristic thought, but to find through identification “the moral equivalent for war” (*Attitudes Toward History* 236).

So what does Burke bring to rhetorical ethics? A popular quote is attributed to Buddha: “All beings tremble before violence. All fear death, all love life. See yourself in others. Then whom can you hurt? What harm can you do?” In many ways, to me, this

hopeful statement echoes the ultimate goal of Burke's identification. Burke wanted our discipline to recognize rhetoric, not for its ability to help us discover our godliness or make us excellent speakers, but because understanding rhetoric leads us to understand both the limitations of language and our own human limitations. In understanding our shared limitations (we all tremble before violence, we all fear death) and in identifying ourselves with others, Burke hoped we may find a means to a discourse of cooperation rather than war. Put simply, Burke hoped. And there is value in Burke's optimism that humankind can find ways—rhetorical ways—to work toward a better future. As Bonhoeffer says, though it may be wiser to be pessimistic as a means of avoiding disappointment or ridicule, “the optimism that is will for the future should never be despised,” for we all are responsible for reconstructing our present and for future generations (*Letters and Papers from Prison* 15). Burke also undeniably transformed rhetoric's Aristotelian inheritance, setting a new paradigm for rhetoric's relationship with ethics. As I hope to reveal in the following discussion, other contemporary scholars of the intersection between rhetoric and ethics have expanded Burke's theories not only to transform our discipline's Platonic/Aristotelian inheritance, but also to appropriate a new *kairos* for our Burkean inheritance.

CHAPTER FOUR: RHETORICAL ETHICS

Responsibility

Burke had a lot to say about human nature: we are rational; we are inventors of the negative (or moralized by the negative); we are separated from nature by instruments of our own making (e.g., instruments of hunting, war, artificial light, etc.); we favor order, hierarchy, status, etc.; and we are rotten with perfection (*Language as Symbolic Action* 16). Most importantly, humans are also the world's most sophisticated critics. While emphasizing humankind's unique ability to interpret signs and symbols, Burke was also careful to warn that our greater critical capacity has "not only increased the range of [our] solutions, but also the range of [our] problems" (*Permanence and Change* 6). The danger lies in humankind's propensity (even inclination) to misinterpret signs. Writing between the World Wars, Burke bitterly denounced the "stupid national or racial wars which have been fought precisely because these abstractions were mistaken for realities" (*Permanence and Change* 6). Words become more than signs when they are attached to events, objects, persons, institutions, classes—the name given to things can determine how we respond to them.

Like Burke, Emmanuel Levinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, both born in 1906, were deeply influenced by some of the most troubling events the world has witnessed during World War II. Both were essentially contemporaries to Kenneth Burke, though

Bonhoeffer's career was tragically cut short by his execution at the hands of the Nazis in 1945. Burke and Levinas passed away just two years apart from each other, in 1993 and 1995 respectively.

As mentioned, Burke's rhetoric of identification served realistic functions that worked to offer tangible possibilities for cooperation with others. Through identification, Burke largely supports unity as the fundamental goal of rhetoric. In contrast, Levinas presents ethics as his first "first philosophy"—an ethics that is tied to the self's responsibility to the other and that privileges plurality and difference over Burke's unity and Plato's ontology. "The responsibility for the other is the originary place of identification," says Levinas (*Is it Righteous to Be* 110). Responsibility, not identification, is Levinas' key term because identification can lead to "totalization," the denial of the other's difference. Such totalization is an unethical act—a violence that Levinas claims denies the autonomy/alterity of the other. In *Ethics and Infinity*, Levinas states bluntly that his "critique of totality has come in fact after a political experience that we have not yet forgotten" (78-9). Referring to the unforgettable lessons of World War II, Levinas's criticism of totality is born out of his disgust with the very real and very destructive anti-Semitism and fear of difference that led to the Holocaust.

Levinas is also skeptical of the systems of dialectic and ontology passed down from ancient Greece. To the Greek philosophers, claims Levinas, spirituality is grounded primarily in "knowledge." He argues that in Greek thought, the relationship with the other "is a matter of grasping—in both senses of the term—a being: to comprehend and to apprehend him, to unveil and to dominate him" (*Is it Righteous to Be* 116). Absolute knowledge as promised by philosophy is a "thought of the Equal,"

with an ultimate goal of “making the other become the Same” (*Ethics and Infinity* 91). Levinas opposes this tradition passed down from the ancient philosophers because of their ambition to name, and subsequently conquer/make same, the other. This “grasping” stands in opposition to Levinas’s ethical encounter with the other, where the Infinite evokes the Unequal. “In the access to the face there is certainly also an access to the idea of God,” says Levinas (*Ethics and Infinity* 92). To Levinas, this access to the idea of God, or infinity, means opening oneself to the unequal, “otherness” of the other. In the “possibility of holiness” lies the need to “recognize the priority of an irreducible alterity” in the other (*Is it Righteous to Be* 106). To Levinas, to truly love someone is to approach him as “unique to the world” (*Is it Righteous to Be* 108).

Lisbeth Lipari writes in “Rhetoric’s Other: Levinas, Listening, and the Ethical Response” that Levinas rejects the unity of being and instead stresses the infinite alterity of the other (228). Levinas’s notion of the other, as widely used in this study, refers to a person or thing that is alien, different, or not yet encountered (rather than Levinas’ alternative sense of the “Other,” which references Otherwise than Being, or God). “There is no other more authentically other than the unique,” says Levinas (*Is it Righteous to Be* 112). However, he stresses that the other is not other because he has different attributes, origin, race, etc. Instead, “the other is other because of me: unique and in some manner different than the individual belonging to a genus” says Levinas. “It is not difference which makes alterity: alterity makes difference,” where alterity refers to the ability to distinguish between the self and the other-than-self (*Is it Righteous to Be* 106). The question of the other is *anterior* to the problem of ontology. Ethics arises in the relation to the other in what cannot be knowable. To Lipari, Levinas emphasizes

questions about *relations* with others over questions about *being* (228). “Levinas’s philosophy does not ask the ontological question of whether to be or not to be but the ethical question of whether my relation to others is justified. In short, to Levinas the response to this question means ‘to fear injustice more than death, to prefer to suffer than to commit injustice’” (228). And the fundamental exigency of justice, as Levinas sees it, is “the love of the other man in his uniqueness” (*Is it Righteous to Be* 109). Unlike for Burke, for Levinas unity would be an unjust, unethical aspiration.

Levinas theorizes that the ethical relationship comes from the asymmetrical subordination of the self to the other, where the priority of the other always comes first (Lipari 229). “Ceding one’s place to the other is paradigmatic of the kind of gesture that Levinas terms *ethical*,” explains Jill Robbins in her introduction to *Is it Righteous to Be?* (1). The self’s responsibility to the other is limitless and never ceasing. “Responsibility is thus an incessant *answerability* for and response to the other,” says Robbins (3). This is the attitude and demand of holiness to Levinas. Likewise, dialogue (rhetoric) and ethics depend on one another, the two “converge in the whorl that is human being” (Lipari 229). Levinas’s rhetoric is invitational (rather than persuasive) in the constant concern for and responsibility to the other.

To Levinas, the “face” is the expression of the demand of the other, and ethics derives from the recognition of this face in all its otherness (230). In reading Levinas, I am reminded of the phrase people use to greet each other in some Zulu areas of South Africa: “Sawubona,” which means “I see you.” The response, “Ngikhona,” means “I am here.” Says one blogger: “Inherent in the Zulu greeting and in the grateful response is the sense that, until you saw me, I didn’t exist. By recognizing me, you brought me into

existence. A Zulu folk saying clarifies this, ‘Umuntu ngumuntu nagabantu,’ meaning ‘A person is a person because of other people.’” This description reflects a greater assertion of Levinas’s ethics—that the ethical response begins with an encounter with (or at least a glimpse of) the “face” of the other. The face, produced in *encounter*, is naked, mortal, destitute, and defenseless. The face orders “thou shalt not kill,” the paradigm for Levinas’s positive responsibility—the self must do everything in order that the other live (Robbins 3). “The self is called to responsibility for the other before it is free, and the face is the manifestation of the ethical exigency that is woven into the very structure of human being,” says Lipari (229). Thus, Levinas imagines the ethical response differently from both Plato/Aristotle and Burke. His ethics helped redefine our disciplinary understanding of responsibility and concern for the other, where the object is neither visions of the good (Plato/Aristotle) nor unity (Burke), but agency knit only in responsibility. His writings have ignited countless conversations about “others” since.

Speaking about Levinas, Ronald Arnett says: “His understanding of agency is derivative, not originitive. He offers a responsive ‘I’ rather than the agency of an ‘I’ that imposes willfulness upon the world. The notion of ‘call’ is fundamental to Levinas; his ethics begins with a voice other than our own” (“A Conversation” 56). In this Levinasian vein, I define an ethical encounter as an encounter that does not prioritize the needs or will of the self over the other, but rather involves a sense of “thinking ecologically” about our interactions with and responsibility to others. Like Burke, Levinas was not devoid of his visions for peace, which he calls love. To him, peace is sociality and attending to the other. “It means not to close one’s shutters, not to close one’s door, but to put a *mezuzah*, a sign of welcome, on the doorpost” (*Is it Righteous to Be* 113). To support

this goal of hospitality in a society placed “under the sign of *shalom*” means one must always cede his place to the other (*Is it Righteous to Be* 113). One must recognize that human beings are the only species in the animal kingdom willing to lay down their lives for another. But one must also never overlook the unforgettable atrocities committed by human beings for fear of difference.

Life Together

Unlike Levinas, Bonhoeffer did not survive the horrors of the Holocaust, but his writings were also deeply influenced by a desire to reach out in more ethical, responsible ways to others. There is little evidence that the rhetorical tradition—as it is widely recognized and has been discussed here—overtly shaped Bonhoeffer’s writing, and he never directly engaged the major texts belonging to the traditional rhetorical canon. He was also a Lutheran pastor, theologian, unwavering defender of the faith, and a bit of a “scandalous” thinker in Christian ethics for his time. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Bonhoeffer is not widely talked about outside of theological circles. Yet, I would suggest that much of Bonhoeffer’s work on ethics directly relates to the question of the ethical encounter with others and is an appropriate area for further exploration in rhetorical ethics.

Ned O’Gorman posits that Bonhoeffer’s work on discourse ethics, particularly on truth telling, “entails a revelation of *rhetoric*, so often and infamously considered amoral or immoral, as the ethical approach to communication” (*Telling the Truth* 225). Bonhoeffer’s rhetoric is situational, social, and context-dependent and expresses a richly ethical vision for communication with others (225). Like Aristotle, Bonhoeffer

conceived his discourse ethics as an art that can be learned through experience, practice, and principle (226). “Bonhoeffer thus presents us with an ethical vision rooted in practical knowledge,” says O’Gorman (243). However, rhetoric is not limited to a *technē*, and is far from ethically neutral. Bonhoeffer’s discourse ethics is “an articulation of a social good . . . [that] is explicitly grounded in a social ontology” (244). Out of the darkest times of the 1940s, he developed a rhetorical vision of ethical dialogue that emerged from a social ontology “that included a basic theory of self, otherness, plurality, order, and dignity, and a social crisis that threatened to crush these forms of being with others” (O’Gorman 245). Bonhoeffer echoes the Greek philosophers, but presents a new challenge to contemporary theorists, teachers, and practitioners of rhetoric who would link rhetoric to larger issues of ethics and envision rhetoric’s possibility for supporting a social good.

Bonhoeffer argues that we are all embedded agents, literally stuck in the mud (ground) of our everyday life and framework. To Bonhoeffer, “The most immoral thing to do to another is to destroy the ground of another person” (“A Conversation” 59). Ground can emerge between persons—we can stand on our own ground and attend to another. But, in Levinas’ language, we can only glimpse the face of the Other. “In the Old Testament, we never see the face of God, only a glimpse. Dialogically, we never see or grasp the face of the Other,” explains Arnett (“A Conversation” 59). In Bonhoeffer’s ethics, “a glimpse, not a grasp, guides communication ethics that protects the ground of another” (“A Conversation” 60). Bonhoeffer conceives an ethical encounter that changes but ultimately preserves the ground of both the self and the other. He does not shy away from difference; his goal is not assimilation. Like Levinas, Bonhoeffer does not

demand unity, again supporting his reputation as a somewhat scandalous thinker to many of his religious contemporaries.

Bonhoeffer is more hopeful than Levinas about the possibility of togetherness, primarily because he is writing from a spiritual framework that answers the quandary of Levinas's asymmetrical relationship to the other through spiritual communion. In Bonhoeffer's ethics, this community precedes both the self's identity and the relation with the other (Marsh 666). "Bonhoeffer offers a view of the self emerging in the originary I and extending beyond itself in social relation," says Charles Marsh. "It is not the other person that patterns this movement, but Christ . . . who extends the center of the self from subjective constitution into life together" (667). The loss of self in Bonhoeffer's encounter does not necessarily mean the destruction of self, but rather the re-centering and expanding of self. Levinas's hospitality with the other is Bonhoeffer's Christ-like table-fellowship with strangers, caring for the sick, gathering with the weak and suffering, and living out of responsibility for the neighbor. Levinas's responsibility to the other is Bonhoeffer's "being there for the other" (Marsh 668). "Communications ethics in action personifies Bonhoeffer's rhetoric of responsibility," says Arnett (Dialogic Confession 1). In terms of rhetorical ethics, Bonhoeffer envisions an encounter with others that engages with difference, maintains a stance of constant learning and teachability, greets the other in rhetoric and dialectic, and is tied to the other in Christ-like responsibility.

Though not explicitly, Bonhoeffer indirectly appeals to *kairos* in his *Ethics*. He emphasizes that the ethical as a theme is always tied to a definite time and a definite place (260). He writes: "To confine the ethical phenomenon to its proper place and time

is not to invalidate it; it is, on the contrary, to render it fully operative. Big guns are not the right weapons for shooting sparrows” (261). Explains Arnett: “Levinas points to the unity of theory and practice, and Bonhoeffer details the place of application in dialogic response to the demands of the historical moment” (Dialogic Confession 4-5).

Bonhoeffer is aware that every situation must respond to the present moment, and every response must be situated in its *kairos*.

Arnett describes the Bonhoeffer-inspired rhetoric classroom as one where neither student nor teacher seeks to “unmask” the ground of each other. “Such a move invites the danger of expecting another to engage a task with the same motives as my own. Life simply needs to be bigger than such provincial impulses of attribution” (“A Conversation” 60). He uses the example of an instructor who ridicules a conservative Christian student’s faith life as “unsophisticated ideas” that should be eliminated. In the imaginary Bonhoeffer classroom, rather than work to destroy another’s faith, the instructor may employ a more “additive framework,” where both student and instructor recognize that each are working from the bias of their own ground, and neither have all the answers. Arnett reminds us that a glimpse, not a grasp, guides Bonhoeffer’s rhetorical ethics that protects the ground of the other (“A Conversation” 60). Perhaps such a classroom holds the potential of truly bringing disparate or excluded voices into the same conversation. To that end, we now turn to an examination of how techniques such as listening and acknowledgement have emerged as methods for enacting the Levinas/Bonhoeffer model of rhetorical ethics.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODS FOR A NEW MODEL

Listening and Acknowledgement

If our ethical tie to the other is knotted up in responsibility (whether in the style of Levinas, Bonhoeffer, or another), what rhetorical responses are appropriate for the student of rhetoric? What rhetorical choices seek to accommodate rather than assimilate difference? Studying persuasion and the available means of persuasion would certainly fall short of preparing the rhetorician for such an ethical encounter. Burke's identification gave the field of rhetoric a foundation for exploring ways to build bridges with others through understanding our shared language, symbol systems, ideologies, etc. Building on Burke, Levinas, and others, new techniques have more recently emerged in rhetorical theory to help attend to the quandary of ethical relations with others.

For example, in "Rhetoric's Other: Levinas, Listening, and the Ethical Response," Lipari argues that, historically, studies of rhetoric and dialogue have tended to pass over listening in favor of speaking (and persuading), effectively banishing listening to the subservient status of rhetoric's *other*. However, to Lipari, listening actually makes the ethical response to others possible (228). She draws on the philosophy of Levinas to examine "the ethical exigency of the face and its relation to primordial discourse in order to disclose the otherwise hidden significance of listening" and "make a case for

conceptualizing listening as a form of co-constitutive communicative action that can ‘listen persons to speech’” (228). Rhetorical listening, I would argue, is a crucial breakthrough in moving from a rhetoric of confrontation to invitation.

Lipari argues that quietly embedded in Levinas’s notion of responsibility to others is the prior action of listening (229). Listening (or “listening otherwise”), essential to the ethical encounter, can give birth to speech. “Listening is the invisible and inaudible enactment of the ethical relation itself; on it, everything depends,” concludes Lipari (242). An important note, on the one hand Levinas theorizes that “to make the stranger a familiar is to do violence to the otherness of the other, to exclude some part of the stranger” (237). Yet Lipari contends that “the listening, as opposed to the heard, does not absorb the other into conformity with the self but instead creates a dwelling space to receive the alterity of the other, and let it resonate” (237). Lipari does offer hope for a non-violent encounter with others through listening that does not demand the hopes of unity central to Burke’s identification. “The (in)vocation of dialogic ethics is a giving birth to speech by listening, it is a *dwelling place* from where we offer our hospitality to the other and the world,” says Lipari, echoing Levinas (240). Listening not only makes space for others’ differences in encounter, but also invites different (perhaps even “quieter”) voices into the conversation. Lipari privileges listening and dwelling together over persuasion and confrontation.

Like Lipari, Ratcliffe calls for a revival of listening as a focus of study in rhetoric and composition. She defines rhetorical listening as a “trope for interpretive invention” or “code of cross-cultural conduct” that produces a “stance of openness” that can be assumed in cross-cultural relations (1). She argues that the concept of rhetorical

listening supplements Burke's rhetorical theory, particularly his identification theory. Focusing on identifications with gender and whiteness in *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*, Ratcliffe examines how people can employ modes of rhetorical listening to "foster *conscious* identifications . . . in ways that may, in turn, facilitate cross-cultural communication about any topic" (2). This includes *negotiating* troubled identifications. She fully recognizes the many challenges of cross-cultural communication, including the importance of recognizing privilege to combat oppression. She quotes Wildman and Davis: "Only in visualizing [privilege] and incorporating it into discourse can people of good faith combat discrimination" in ways that prevent their doing "more harm than good" (7). The journey to communicating with others starts with a long, sobering look at yourself. "We have to listen to other people, not so that they will do the work for us but, as Morrison reminds us in *Beloved*, so that *we* and *they* may lay *our* stories alongside one another's," says Ratcliffe (8). The idea is reinforced by Childers and hooks: "People really learn from the sharing of experience" (8). In all, Ratcliffe amplifies Burke's identification with her appeal to rhetorical listening.

She also notes that listening—hearing and recognizing differences—echoes Levinas's call for the self's continuous ethical engagement with others (151). Listening to each others' stories helps us engage in dialogue with our own experiences and observations. Listening should therefore be both theorized and taught in rhetoric and composition. To this end, Ratcliffe offers listening metonymically to public debates, eavesdropping in scholarly discourses, and listening pedagogically to classroom resistance as specific "tactics" of rhetorical listening.

While Lipari and Ratcliffe stress rhetorical listening, for Michael Hyde, positive acknowledgement is essential to our ethical relations with others. In *The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgement*, he writes that “the act of acknowledgement is a communicative behavior that grants attention to others and thereby makes room for them in our lives” (1). This acknowledgement requires a sustained openness to others (4).

“Acknowledgement is a conscious act of creation that marks an origin, a beginning, an opening in space-time where people can feel at home as they dwell, deliberate, and know together,” says Hyde (10). The notion of hospitality or “feeling at home” again echoes Levinas, just as his appeal to togetherness invokes Bonhoeffer. Through the act of acknowledgement, Hyde ties rhetoric and ethics to our everyday responsibilities and interactions with others. Like Lipari and Ratcliffe, Hyde does not demand the goal of unity central to Burke’s identification. Instead, he supports positive acknowledgement as a means of opening to and embracing the infinite alterity of others. Together, Lipari, Ratcliffe, and Hyde help contribute two important techniques—rhetorical listening and positive acknowledgement—that support the goals of rhetorical ethics and invitational rhetoric.

Rhetoric as Love

Jim Corder is another supporter of reviving listening and acknowledgement as appropriate rhetorical techniques. As mentioned, in “Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love,” Corder calls for us to speak a more “commodious” language with one another. Writing in the mid-1980s, Corder turns the “traditional tradition” of education in rhetoric on its head by suggesting that the goal of rhetoric is not primarily to persuade others,

but actually to prepare ourselves to deal with the “genuinely contending narratives” that ask us to reexamine our own, deeply held narratives. In this way, Corder draws ethical concerns into the realm of rhetoric.

Corder states bluntly that the “risk in argument” is greater than we have learned from our Aristotelian inheritance and from others like psychologist Carl Rogers, whose humanistic approach to communication revised the traditional Aristotelian framework for rhetoric and widely influenced college writing curriculum beginning in the early 1970s (25). While the insights of Aristotelian and Rogerian argument have been useful for teaching students to pattern arguments in ways that may in fact be persuasive, Corder emphasizes that these traditional modes of rhetoric do not prepare students to face the “flushed, feverish, quaky, shaky, angry, scared, hurt, shocked, disappointed, alarmed, outraged, even terrified condition that a person comes to when his or her narrative is opposed by a genuinely contending narrative” (21). As I would put it, they do not prepare us for the challenges of invitational rhetoric, or for an ethical encounter in a truly difficult situation.

Corder echoes Bonhoeffer’s description of the “ground” of our everyday life and framework in his repeated assertions that we are always “standing some place” in our lives, always “standing somewhere in our narratives when we speak to others or to ourselves” (16-17). He also channels Burke when he posits that humans are “always agents for what can be known” and “inventing the narratives that are our lives” (17). Truth is not only stranger than fiction; it is our fiction, created through language, history, experience, etc. Burke’s symbol systems and “god-terms” are “the ground” to

Bonhoeffer and “tribal talk” to Corder—we speak what we have lived and indentify through what we share.

Just like this study, Corder is interested in what happens during encounter—in his vocabulary, what happens when one narrative encounters another, different narrative. Specifically, he is concerned with what happens during a type of contention, which he calls “steadfast arguments,” during which both narrators (self and other) are “wholly intent upon preserving the nature and movement of his or her narrative, earnest and zealous to keep its identity” (23). Corder asks the key question of ethical relations: What happens when there really is no hope of agreement? Corder is optimistic that an ethical approach to rhetoric—where rhetoric *is* love—can encourage us to not only *speak* a commodious language, but also *hear* a commodious language in our everyday encounters (32). Corder resonates with Burke’s attempts toward unity through identification (and with the other studies of listening to and acknowledging others), although his goal is more mutual understanding and tolerance than total unification. Corder’s self does not lose its own identity, but learns to listen to and uphold others’ own narratives.

Levinas’s face-to-face encounter with the other does not contain the possibility for mutual understanding and “embrace” that Corder demands. Levinas’ relationship with the other is inherently non-symmetrical and one of subjection; our tie with the other is “knotted only as responsibility” (*Ethics and Infinity* 97). Integral to Corder’s call for rhetoric as love is emergence toward the other as an equal. He is clear in his description of the ethical encounter (or at least the encounter we should all strive for): we have to see, know, be present to, and embrace each other (23). Like Levinas, he

also advocates maintaining a sense of almost reverent responsibility to others to support mutual understanding.

Corder's rhetoric requires changing the way we talk about and conceive arguments (25). Again, Corder directly refutes traditional methods of teaching rhetorical argument as solidly laid out paths of display and presentation, proposition, evidence, and conclusion (e.g., Rogers, Young, Becker, Pike, Hairston, etc.). Instead, he calls for more "arguments full of the anecdotal, personal, and cultural reflections that will make us plain to all others, thoughtful histories and narratives that reveal us as we're reaching for the others" (31). He calls us to abandon authoritative positions and puffery in argument. Argument should not be a display or presentation, or "my poster against yours, with the prize to the slickest performance" (26). Argument is instead "emergence toward the other" (26). Rhetoric is love.

Corder does concede that "some conflicts will not be resolved in time and love," but suggests that "most failures of communication result from some willful or inadvertent but unloving violation of the space and time we and others live in" (27, 31). One could also question how the historically silenced can gain a voice if they are to give up authority in a world that will never be devoid of arrogance, opportunism, and ignorance. In other words, his argument in some ways assumes that the arguer already possesses a privileged position that he or she can agree to abandon. Nevertheless, Corder raised the interest of a discipline when he asked us to learn to love before we disagree (26). And he candidly admits that this often means that the arguer must go it alone, with no guarantee that the other or any audience will be "kindly disposed" toward him or her (28). He writes:

The arguer, alone, must see in the reverence owed to the other, discover and offer all grace that he or she can muster, and, most especially, extend every liberty possible to the other. The arguer must hold the other wholly in mind and yet cherish his or her own identity. *Then*, perhaps, the arguer and the other may be able to break into mutuality. (28)

He does not expect this to be an easy (or fast) endeavor, but holds it as a necessary goal. Corder also finds hope in the space between the possible and the probable, and his call is to continue learning and trying to incorporate ethical concerns into the study and practice of rhetoric. In seeking mutuality over persuasion or unity, we practice rhetoric as love.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

An(other) Rhetoric: Moving Forward

As I reach this conclusion, I find an irony inherent in this study of rhetorical ethics. Here I am asked to draw conclusions, to make my argument. In the minuscule slice of dialogue in the vast universe of our disciplinary discussion that this thesis represents, I must assert my own personal authority and contribute to the “ongoing debate.” I have read, studied, and changed as a result, but my personal journey falls short of disciplinary goals. I must now say others are wrong and I am right. In this I hear Lipari’s lament that that we have passed over listening in favor of speaking and persuading; we have banished listening to the subservient status of rhetoric’s other. Through the very act of writing this paper, I find something lacking in the disciplinary tradition that “others” me. To be a master of rhetoric, it seems I have lost my ability to say, “I don’t know the answer, but I am listening... infinitely listening.”

For surely the disciplinary debate regarding what represents an ethical encounter with “others” continues, and may always go on. For example, we continue to debate the ethical ways of including the historically excluded within our discipline and canon, as well as the potential for such inclusion and representation. Focusing on issues of feminism and representation, Amy Hinterberger argues that feminist researchers occupy a place of power and authority which by nature requires a commitment to

ethically represent “others.” Specifically, in her article on “Feminism and the Politics of Representation,” she addresses feminist concerns of speaking “for others” and obstacles of representing across differences of race, sexuality, gender, and culture. Feminists, she claims, “cannot transparently know who ‘oppressed people’ are and what will aid them simply because they are concerned with the politics of empowerment” (75-76). This highlights Spivak’s concern regarding how intellectuals construct the wills of “oppressed people” (76). Hinterberger also considers how hierarchies of oppression and privileged ontological positions are inconsistently represented in feminist discussions, suggesting that differences between “others” are being represented in potentially problematic ways. For instance, through references to binaries such as “liberation/oppression” or “western/non-western,” feminist theorists can end up reproducing the same polarizing categories they seek to escape (81). In spite of these challenges and additional ones, we should not abandon the task of working towards an ethical involvement with “others.”

In fact, I would “argue” that the focus on rhetorical ethics could not be timelier. This study began with the assertion that our discipline’s focus has shifted from confrontational rhetoric to invitational rhetoric (as defined by Foss, Griffin, Bone, and Scholz) over the past 60 years. It is important to note that I do not suggest that persuasion is *always* an inappropriate rhetorical tactic. Every situation must respond to the present moment; every response must be situated in its *kairos*. However, a strict definition of rhetoric as persuasion denies an important connection between ethics and rhetoric that must be explored further, just as a sole disciplinary focus on persuasion is problematic because of those it threatens to exclude. I have suggested that one

possible definition of the ethical encounter is an encounter that does not prioritize the needs or will of the self over the other, but rather involves a sense of “thinking ecologically” about our interactions with others—recognizing that our rhetorical choices are ultimately ethical decisions, always with motive, and always with consequences in the world.

I believe the preceding study of the 20th Century rhetorical tradition and specific analysis of identification, responsibility, listening and acknowledgement, rhetoric as love, and *kairos* supports such a reading of ethical encounters and leads us to several possible conclusions about the nature of rhetorical ethics. The ethical engagement with others as shaped by the rhetorical theories discussed involves, among many things:

- Understanding the role of language and symbol systems in human interaction.
- Embracing humility and a sense of humor in rhetorical situations.
- Seeking a “face-to-face” encounter with others.
- Creating a “dwelling space” for difference in ethical encounters.
- Protecting the “ground” of both the self and the other when we communicate.
- Listening, acknowledging, and offering time for reflection to encourage the most ethical response possible.
- Abandoning authoritative positions and puffery, and instead envisioning rhetoric as love.
- Considering that every self/other, and thus every encounter, is different. In the end, we need *kairos*.

Such goals support a more invitational rhetoric that attends to ethical concerns by seeking to understand rather than convert, support camaraderie and mutuality (if not

unity) instead of reinforcing dominant power relationships, challenge the speaker as much as the audience, and privilege listening and invitation over persuasion when appropriate.

Arnett speaks about the notion of *satyagraha*, the dialogic nonviolent change supported by Mahatma Gandhi, versus *duragraha*, or stubborn persistence (“A Conversation” 53). I would argue that both are *effective* strategies. Persuasion, violence, and “bully tactics” used to have one’s way without concern for the other (which can be literally for the other’s life, but also for the other’s difference) have and continue to be effective rhetorical strategies. Likewise, in situations of extreme violation of basic human rights, such as genocide, action based on *satyagraha* may be inappropriate. As Martin Buber retorted to Gandhi, nonviolence against the Nazis would have been impossible. Again, *kairos* is key. But effectiveness is not the only factor in the choice of rhetorical strategy. Instead, rhetoric is the practice of everyday existence; its concern is how we dwell with others in the world. We therefore cannot ignore the wider ethical concerns of rhetoric.

Though their theoretical frameworks vary, Burke, Levinas, Bonhoeffer, and the others studied here all envision a paradigm where ethical concerns *do* guide our rhetorical choices with others. Significant areas of continued study regarding rhetorical ethics include issues of voice, agency, and marginalization. Invitational rhetoric cannot guarantee that quieter or disadvantaged voices will be heard unless all participants embrace the invitation. In all, an(other) rhetoric is both a ripe topic for continued disciplinary attention, as well as a necessary component of everyday interactions with

others that long to display love over hate, listening over silencing, inclusion over exclusion, and acceptance over rejection.

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One of Kathleen's most fulfilling responsibilities is serving on the board of directors for a nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian assistance to the village of Montrouis, Haiti. Along with her frequent visits to Haiti, Kathleen and her husband, Craig, are avid travelers.