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To: **Reviewing Professor**

From: **Marketing Department**

Subject: **Review Package for *Great Speeches for Criticism and Analysis—fourth edition by Lloyd Rohler and Roger Cook***

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Critical Perspectives: A Brief Introduction by Lloyd Rohler



If human nature is any guide, the criticism of public speaking began in the long forgotten past when the first man gave the first speech to an audience of our primitive ancestors. The first speech may have been greeted with grunts of approval or possibly a shower of sticks and stones to express the antagonism of the audience to the speaker's plans. It seems natural that man as the only animal endowed with conscientiousness should sort out and evaluate the possibilities available to him. Since speech is the primary means of communicating ideas, the criticism of public speaking has an important role in the proper functioning of society that goes beyond the mere granting of approval or disapproval. Criticism of the public dialogue in a democratic society is vital to improving the understanding of the many complex issues on which the public must pass judgment. This book is designed to contribute to that process by providing a brief survey of the major critical methods, texts of important contemporary speeches for reading and analysis and several critical essays to serve as guides in helping the reader to develop a critical perspective. The Great Speeches series of videotapes that accompany this book are an important part of the critical process that technology has made available to the student.

Public speaking is an art form based on natural ability, study of the basic principles of rhetoric, and extensive practice. By definition, an art is the systematic application of knowledge by a creative individual to produce a certain result or effect. The public speaker uses his skill and inspiration to affect the audience in some way. In common with such other arts as painting or composing, speechmaking does not have a mechanical process that guarantees to produce a successful work. A knowledgeable and experienced speaker with a pleasing voice and an imposing presence may still fail to inspire an audience. Certainly part of the fascination surrounding a major political speech derives from the possibility that even the most carefully crafted effort by an important public figure will fail.

Understanding the reasons for the success of some speeches and the failure of others is essential to improving the theory, the teaching, and the practice of public speaking. Rhetoricians have been concerned with this problem since the study of speech began in Ancient Greece in the Fifth Century B.C. Plato and Aristotle established the basis for a systematic inquiry by identifying the elements in the speech situation and by providing a critical analysis of the techniques taught by the Sophists, the travelling teachers who originated the teaching of public speaking.

The Classical Critical System

Classical rhetoricians identified four elements in the speech situation that interact: the speaker, the speech, the audience, and the occasion. Each element contributes to the overall effectiveness of the speech in its own right, but the interaction of the elements can be crucial to the success or failure of the speech.

The personal characteristics of the speaker as projected through his delivery and self-presentation to the audience are vital to the success or failure of the speech. Great speakers are able to convey to the audience a sense of the person behind the message—a meaning that resides not in the mere text but in the life of the speaker himself.

The audience brings to the speech situation its own expectations, experiences, and values. Often the audience's emotions have been aroused before the speaker begins. Sometimes the audience has had the experience of listening to the speaker before. The audience is aware of certain stylistic preferences or idiosyncratic behaviors and anticipates them. When achieved, the symbolic union of the speaker and the audience at a moment in time is the unique characteristic of public speech.

The speaker has a text (message) to deliver. In some cases the speaker actually wrote the speech. More commonly, the basic text was written by others and the speaker edited it to conform to his personal style. Whether he wrote the entire text or merely parts of it, the speech text is the speaker's responsibility. He will have to answer for the accuracy of its details, the truth of its charges, and the meaning of its message. What the speaker says is important. The reasons he gives to justify policies or actions will be scrutinized by others. Often a speech that is delivered to a favorable audience will be read much more critically by another. Confronted by multiple audiences and critical interpretations by the news media, a contemporary speaker must weigh the relative importance of each to his goal as a speaker and address each, according to his priorities, in the text of his address.

Lastly, the occasion will influence the speaker's reception, the text of the speech, and the audience's expectations. A ceremonial occasion such as Inauguration Day with its high drama of state and its rich tradition of solemn ceremony will heighten the patriotic feelings of the audience and make it more receptive to the speech of the newly elected President. Similarly, the solemnity of the occasion will influence the text of the speech and the demeanor of the speaker.

Although as critics we often focus attention on one or more of these elements in the speech situation to explain the success or failure of a speech, we must not forget that the speech situation is dynamic. All of these elements interact and contribute something to the total success or failure of the speech.

For convenience in teaching rhetoric to their pupils, classical rhetoricians divided the subject into five parts: invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory. Each division is an important component in the process of composing and presenting a speech. In the discussion that follows, references are made to speeches collected in this text, which are available for viewing on the Great Speeches videotapes.

Invention refers to the speaker's use of the resources at his disposal. These involve the three forms of proof: *ethos*, the speaker's reputation or personal credibility; *logos*, the rational arguments and evidence that the speaker gives to support his claims; and *pathos*, the psychological or emotional appeals that the speaker makes to the audience. Speakers rarely use one of these forms of proof to the exclusion of the others. The forms of proof are usually combined for total effect. For example, when Martin Luther King claimed that black Americans felt like exiles in their own land, he used his own credibility as a black American who grew up under a segregated school system, combined with specific examples or evidence of segregation in public accommodations and emotional appeals such as patriotic and religious symbols to reinforce his conclusion that segregation was "a shameful condition."

When, as critics, we examine a speaker's invention, we are concerned with his analysis of the situation and his use of the entire range of available proofs to create a speech to influence an audience. Each speaker chooses those proofs that he feels will most effectively accomplish his objectives. This reveals to the critic the speaker's view of himself and his evaluation of the critical abilities of the audience. For example, emotional appeals without any rational proof may produce a dramatic audience response but have a relatively short-lived impact. Critics quickly note a speaker's overreliance on such appeals and question his objectives and sincerity. Similarly, a critic recognizing MacArthur's exclusive reliance on his *ethos* as a means of proof in his "Farewell Address" might question the wisdom of this choice and consider what alternatives were available to him. To a great extent a speaker's use of invention is a key indication of his character, his objectives, and his attitude toward his audience.

Arrangement refers to the order of the ideas in the speech. Critics generally divide arrangement into two categories: the general strategy that the speaker uses in adapting his ideas to the audience and the more specific organizational pattern. Effective speeches have a psychologically compelling order that effectively moves the audience from acceptance of one idea to another. Often great emphasis is placed on the introduction to secure goodwill and to conciliate any negative feelings that the audience might have toward the speaker's position. A good example of this strategy is Senator Edward Kennedy's speech to a convocation at Liberty Baptist College in which his introduction compliments the Reverend Jerry Falwell for his generous introduction, uses humor to lessen tension and to secure goodwill, and calls for a fair hearing of divergent views such as his own. Once audience goodwill has been secured, Kennedy then advances from general principles to specific applications to move the audience toward his position.

Often ceremonial speeches follow the sequence of past, present, and future; recalling glorious actions in the past, singling out important aspects of the present, and predicting great accomplishments in the future. This is the pattern of Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" Speech (videotape Volume I). He locates the promise of freedom in the sacred writing of the Founding Fathers and the Emancipation Proclamation, notes the failure of the present to make real those promises, and dreams of the glorious day in the future when the promises will come true. Franklin Roosevelt, in his Declaration of War Address, follows a similar sequence when he recounts the terrible events of "Yesterday, December 7, 1941," describes the difficulties immediately confronting the American people, and predicts the great victory that lies ahead for the United States and its allies.

The specific organization pattern used by the speaker contributes clarity to the speech. It aids the audience in following the arguments and it indicates the relationship among ideas. Through subordination, it reveals the ideas the speaker considers most important. Organization patterns may vary widely from speech to speech depending on purpose and length. All speeches have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. Many include a section anticipating counter attacks and answering them. Ceremonial speeches usually follow the past, present, and future sequence.

A speaker's style is his signature. In combination with delivery, it reveals his sense of who he is and what he is about. The speaker's choice of words involves matters of taste and reveals a sensitivity to what is appropriate to the situation, and to the audience. It is also an index to his knowledge of his culture as it has been transmitted through the language and the literature. A speaker's style is not uniform, but must be adapted to the situation and to the needs of the audience. The classical rhetoricians recognized three levels of style—plain, middle, and grand—which correspond to the three purposes of the speaker—to instruct, to delight, and to move or persuade. The plain or natural style is conversational and appropriate to conveying information. The middle style is more metaphorical or philosophical and corresponds to pleasing or delighting an audience. The grand style is vigorous, abundant, or profuse, and is used to persuade. The three levels of style may be used in one speech or a single style may be relied upon exclusively. When a professor speaks to a civic club about a recent trip he and his class made to England, he may use both the plain and middle styles. If the same speaker gives a commencement address, he might rely on the grand style. John Kennedy's Inaugural Address is in the grand style. The word choice, the sentence structure, and the abounding use of metaphors aim for an overwhelming effect on the audience. In contrast, General MacArthur's speech is predominately in the plain style as he informs his audience of the situation in the Pacific.

Delivery may be divided into two parts, physical action and voice, although obviously both combine to make a strong impression on the audience. The use of physical action to convey meaning is the most difficult skill for beginning speakers to develop, and has posed problems for teachers of public speaking as well. There are two approaches to the teaching of gestures; natural and artificial. The natural approach relies on the emotional involvement of the speaker in the speech situation to motivate physical activity. If a speaker feels strongly about his message, he will be carried along by his emotions and physically display his concern. The artificial school believes that this may occur for experienced speakers, but beginning speakers will need rehearsal and conscious effort. The speakers on the accompanying tapes predominantly follow the advice of the natural school with only Hitler subscribing to the artificial school and consciously rehearsing his gestures.

Before the development of newsreels, motion pictures, and television, a speaker needed broad gestures to project vitality and convey emphasis and meaning to large crowds that could only view the speaker from a distance. With television close-up pictures, a mass audience of millions of individuals can easily see facial expressions involving small movements of the eyes. As a consequence broad sweeping movements of the arms are not only unnecessary but appear exaggerated. Obviously a speaker's style is greatly influenced by the media of the era. Adolf Hitler was most effective when he appeared in person before mass rallies. Franklin Roosevelt brought his

intimate “Fireside Chats” into living rooms throughout the country on radio. John Kennedy effectively utilized the visual dimension of television to project the image of a vigorous young leader with his boyish grin, confident gaze, and quick wit.

Memory is the last division of classical rhetoric and the most neglected today. In an age of Teleprompters, speakers need not take the time to memorize their speeches. Elaborate systems of mnemonic devices such as the Ancients used are passé. But memory meant more to the Ancients than the ability to recite a text. It included familiarity with the commonplace—those lines from poetry, sacred hymns, popular songs, nonsense rhymes, and fables that encompassed the collective wisdom and experience of the culture. In ancient Greece and Rome, books were expensive and rare. The education of the young included memorization of long passages of epic poetry, stories of the gods, and exploits of the heroic warriors and leaders of the past. Today’s educational system rarely asks the student to memorize even a line from the great literature of our past. What we have lost is well illustrated on the videotape of Martin Luther King’s speech. The entire “I have a dream” sequence was not a part of King’s written text. He completely extemporized the lines—finding them in his memory. He took lines from previous speeches, verses from the Bible, stanzas from patriotic songs and Negro spirituals to make a moving and memorable conclusion. In doing so, he illustrated for the contemporary student the value of memory, i.e., having a storehouse of the commonplace that can be called upon when necessary.

The Greek and Roman rhetoricians noticed that rhetorical forms used by speakers in recurring situations shared certain characteristics. Legal speeches addressed the issues of justice or injustice and primarily used the tactics of accusation and defense. Epideictic or ceremonial speeches focused on honor and dishonor and utilized praise or blame. Political or deliberative speeches primarily addressed the advantages or disadvantages of policy choices and used encouragement or warnings to move the audience. These genres or types represent only a speech’s general tendency; rarely will a speech be a pure example of one type. Identifying the genre of a speech will help to clarify the speaker’s duties and aid in evaluating how well he utilized the persuasiveness of form to satisfy audience expectations.

Neo-Aristotelian Critical System

Aristotle considered rhetoric, the art of persuasion, distinct and poetic, which is the realm of imaginative literature. Following Aristotle’s lead, Herbert Wichelns wrote an influential essay in 1925, “Literary Criticism of Oratory,” which initiated a critical movement that profoundly influenced the scholarly criticism of public speeches in America. Wichelns distinguished a public speech and its criticism from a literary work and its criticism by the differing purposes of the two discourses. A literary work such as a poem is an autonomous work that is complete in and of itself. In contrast, a speech always addresses an audience and is designed to achieve some specific purpose. The very term “public address” which is used as a synonym for a speech implies an audience which is “addressed” or spoken to by an individual. Frequently in contemporary literature, the sense that the work has any relationship to an audience or to the real world is completely lacking. Many literary works are entirely self-referential. The “world” of the poem or novel or play is self-contained as it unravels or turns back upon itself. The complexity of the language and the opaqueness of the work to an uninitiated reader unfamiliar with the latest critical exegesis serve as a barrier to understanding. In contrast, a speech must be accessible to its audience and the speaker desires to achieve certain effects with his presentation. The speech is not a literary artifact to be admired for its beauty and technique nor mined for meaning at leisure but a vital attempt to influence the audience to accept the speaker’s view.

The emphasis upon the effect of the speech means that neo-Aristotelian criticism of speeches has been inescapably influenced by the temporal nature of public speaking. There is no escaping the truism that a public speech is a product of the time, and that nothing is so old as yesterday’s news. Speeches that once stimulated the imagination of an audience, that moved the conscience, that touched the very soul of every person present, when read today may bring boredom and a stifled yawn. To compensate for this difficulty, many critics focus on factors external to the speech itself in an attempt to situate the speech in its time and place. To do so requires adopting the methods of the historian to recreate the events that influenced the composition and delivery of the speech. The critic often uses biography to understand the role that the speaker plays in the historical drama and to understand the speaker’s personal contribution to the speech situation. At times the critic uses the methods of the sociologist to understand the forces that move an issue to the forefront of the society or to study the speech as one event and the speaker as one actor in a complex social movement for change. In adopting these methods, the critic imaginatively recreates the situation that inspired the speech to gain a greater understanding of the constraints that the speaker faced and the strategy that the speaker used to overcome them. Such a recreation requires both a description of the actual events and an interpretation of them. The critic must know what happened but mere description is not enough. The critic must confront the more important and more difficult question of “Why did it happen?” To successfully answer this requires interpretation of the facts. It requires an imaginative act in which the critic weighs the relative importance of the factors involved, identifies the constraints operating on the speaker, and provides an explanation that satisfactorily deals with the known facts.

The classical system outlined above focused on the construction of a persuasive message for a particular audience. It assumed that certain recurring rhetorical forms succeed because they correspond to the way individual members of the audience decide upon the “Truth.” The selection of proofs, and their arrangement in a certain format compels the audience to accept the claims of the speaker because the total effect of the message is satisfying. Given the assumptions of the system, audience response became the major criterion for evaluating the success or failure of a speech. A successful speech satisfies the requirements of the situation and gains audience approval. The system did not limit the critic’s role to measuring the amount of applause or gauging the public mood. The critic evaluated the speech against an ideal standard. Did the speaker utilize all the available proofs to achieve the maximum impact on the audience? The speech may have gained the approval of some members of the audience but not others. The critic might decide that a different strategy would have made the speech far more successful.

The development of the mass media and the multiplication of audiences has modified this criterion for the contemporary critic. Often speeches are staged before a friendly audience but really designed to influence those listening or viewing the speech far removed from the speaker in space and time. Given this situation, the critic must clearly specify the nature of the speaker’s “true” audience and the

speaker's effectiveness with that audience. Is the speech to be judged by the reactions of the immediate audience or the delayed effect it has on the opinion leaders of the society? Is the critic concerned with the long-term effect of the speech on public opinion as reflected in actual public policy choice?

Some of these effects are easier to determine than others. We can count the number of times the immediate audience interrupted the speech with applause and we can see visible reactions of agreement or disagreement on films made of the event. The delayed reaction of public opinion leaders can be followed in the editorial columns of the newspapers and journals of opinion in the days following the speech. Sometimes public opinion polls are available to document swings in the public mood following a major speech by a leading political figure. Over an extended period of time, the critic may find recurring references in interviews, speeches, public documents, autobiographical accounts, and scholarly studies to a major speech as the catalyst of change. Even then the critic must be aware of the many factors that influence public opinion and the many pressures that shape policy making and not overestimate the influence of a single speech.

Another way to assess the effectiveness of a speech is to focus on the effect it had on the speaker's overall objectives. The critic can try to understand the speaker's motivation for giving the speech and assess how completely it achieved his purpose. If the speaker gave the speech to gain the nomination for a political office, did the speech help or hinder in the effort? The critic must realize that a speaker may have several goals in mind for a speech and that failure to achieve the primary goal may not make the speech a total failure. A well received speech in a losing cause may be counted a partial success if it brings recognition and marks the speaker as a rising star. John Kennedy's nominating speech for Adlai Stevenson in the 1956 Democratic Convention did not gain him the vice presidential nomination that he sought, but it immensely increased his credibility as a candidate when he began his quest for the 1960 presidential nomination. How the speech influenced the speaker's reputation may be assessed by examining political commentary and public opinion polls.

If the critic is examining delayed effects he may note whether the speech affected the ability of the speaker to act in ways that hindered his career. Sometimes speakers become the victim of their own words. Richard Nixon found that speeches on the growing political scandal in his administration not only failed to gain him public support but limited his freedom of action. Sometimes speakers make predictions or issue warnings that later events prove false. The series of speeches that Charles Lindbergh made against American intervention in Europe prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor greatly diminished his heroic status.

Several examples of this form of classical criticism appear in this text. One excellent example is Nicholas Cripe's evaluation of John Kennedy's Inaugural Address showing how the blend of the speaker, the occasion and the speech combine to create a memorable moment in American history.

Symbolic Interaction Or Dramatism As A Critical System

The revived Aristotelian system reigned supreme in academic speech circles and dominated criticism for almost thirty years. In the 1960's dissatisfaction with the dominant methodology began to surface and criticism began to resemble the pluralistic society of which it was a part. Many new approaches competed for the allegiance of the practicing critic. Perhaps no other approach won as many adherents or seemed as influential as the symbolic interactionist or dramatistic method based on the writings and practice of Kenneth Burke.

Dramatistic criticism begins with the premise that man is the symbol creating and using animal. Communication creates a symbolic world through the ability of human beings to make and use symbols. The human condition is an alienated existence in which each person finds himself alone in the world. Man has the ability to transcend this condition through symbolic identification with others. The function of rhetoric is to produce union by inducing cooperation through symbols. It does so through the process of consubstantiality: the sharing of substance symbolically which overcomes the division at the base of the human condition.

Symbols are not limited to messages or even words. Anything can take on symbolic import if it is capable of producing identification. For example, objects such as possessions that identify a person as a member of a group or class or with a particular life style has symbolic meaning, as do hairstyles, clothes, and pets. Membership in various groups, organizations, or institutions such as colleges and universities creates identification with others. Participation in certain communal activities such as watching the Super Bowl or the World Series or attending a rock concert or peace demonstration also functions symbolically to bring people together and to overcome division. The rhetorical critic using this method must be sensitive to the entire range of symbolic meanings in a rhetorical situation.

In addition to identification and consubstantiality, other key terms in this critical method include hierarchy, guilt, purification, and redemption. Hierarchy refers to the structure of the social order. Our technological society is structured along the lines of a pyramid with many people at the base and relatively few people at the top. The further up the pyramid an individual climbs, the more privileges he enjoys. At the same time, a belief system based on the democratic values of equality makes him feel guilty about all those who are left behind. Exercising privilege or status creates a tension in the mind between man's ability to conceptualize a perfect society in which all men would share in the good life and the nagging realization that the world is imperfect and filled with suffering. In an attempt to rid himself of guilt, man undergoes purification rituals that often involve finding scapegoats that can be blamed for the imperfect world and, thus, relieve man of his burden. Frequently, the scapegoat is an outsider of a different religion or race or nationality whose very difference makes the transference of guilt easier. Once the rite of purification has been performed the individual feels redeemed or made acceptable again and able to function in the hierarchy until the burden of guilt becomes again overbearing and the process repeats itself.

The best illustration of this process is Burke's own analysis of Nazi rhetoric that inflamed Germany in the 1930's. Following the defeat in World War I, Germany paid a heavy price in the loss of the traditional government headed by the Kaiser, the seizure of territories by the allies and the imposition of huge reparations or payments for the destruction caused by the war. Following a brief postwar posterity, Germany suffered a ruinous inflation and then the devastation created by the worldwide depression of the 1930's. Many Germans facing starvation and suffering during these grim years, felt guilt for the suffering of their families and friends, and sought a means of salvation. Adolf Hitler and his party provided the means of purification and redemption through scapegoating the Jews. By joining the Nazi party or voting for Hitler, the desperate German people achieved unity with a vision of the greatness of the past and a dream of

better days ahead. Their guilt for the postwar failures, could be transferred to the Jews and, redeemed at last, they would seek salvation through Hitler and his leadership.

The strength of this analysis is the focus on unconscious processes that are released through the manipulation of symbolic means. Rather than focus on an individual speech, Burke does not ignore Hitler's messages. In fact, his discussion of the Nazis focuses on Hitler's writings, especially *Mine Kampf*. However, the message is examined not for the kinds of proofs that it contains or the content *per se*, but as a means of transmitting a symbolic inducement to cooperate with others in advancing the Nazi cause.

Burke's system is usually referred to as dramatic criticism because he borrowed the vocabulary of the theatre to identify the various perspectives that the critic could take in analyzing a rhetorical situation. The five elements of the pentad are: agent, act, agency, scene, and purpose. These terms correspond to the traditional questions of the journalist: who (the agent) did what (the act), how (the agency), where (the scene) and why (the purpose)? The pentad is useful in reminding the rhetorical critic that a rhetorical situation is not a unitary action but a blend of many elements. In using the pentad, the critic may focus on one or many perspectives or try to establish the relative weight of one term to another. For example, in some situations the scene may exert more influence than the agent as when a priest delivers a homily in a magnificent cathedral. In other situations, the agent may be more significant than the purpose as when a glamorous celebrity such as Robert Redford makes a personal appearance at a shopping center. By focusing on the dominant term in the pentad, the critic can gain a clearer understanding of the symbolic transaction and by exploring the relationship of the dominant term to the others, the critic can discover the multiple meanings of the event.

As an example of symbolic interaction, this author's essay evaluating John Kennedy's address to the Houston Ministerial Association provides an example of how Kennedy's speech symbolically called for the "American Dream" to achieve, his persuasive goals. By accepting Kennedy's arguments the audience can validate the American values of toleration and fair play.

Stylistic Or Linguistic Criticism

Aristotle separated rhetoric from poetic, investigated each subject and wrote seminal work in each field. Even in Aristotle's time, the distinction between rhetoric and poetic began to break down under the influence of Socrates who wrote essays in the form of speeches that were never intended to be delivered in the conventional sense. The convergence of rhetoric and poetic in our time has been fostered by advances in the fields of semantics and linguistics which focus on the word as a symbol of meaning. Obviously both rhetoric and poetic depend on words to convey meaning. Methods for analyzing the meaning of metaphors or images in a poem should also be effective in discovering the meaning of metaphors in a public speech.

Both I.A. Richards and Richard Weaver have demonstrated the value of close analysis of language and style in criticizing speeches. Unlike their predecessors in the Renaissance who saw language as ornamentation and delighted in classifying every possible scheme and trope, Richards and Weaver view language choice as central to meaning and not a mere decoration to give variety to discourse. Key concepts in this approach include the qualities of language such as abstraction and ambiguity, the choices implied by grammatical structure and the characteristic use of figures of speech, especially metaphor. Although this approach is primarily intrinsic or internal criticism, in skillful hands it can reveal much about the speaker and the times. For example, a study of the characteristic metaphors employed by a speaker may reveal a mechanistic view of the universe or a mercantile bent. Weaver has even suggested that the characteristic form of argument can reveal basic philosophical differences in the worldview of a conservative and a liberal. David Henry's critical essay on Mario Cuomo's keynote address (contained on the CD-ROM accompanying this book) is an excellent example of the strength of this critical analysis. Henry identifies "family" as the key metaphorical term in Cuomo's speech and demonstrates how effectively he used this metaphor to frame his argument that the Democrats not the Republicans can best advance the family ideals that are the basis of the middle class.

Genre Criticism

Both stylistic criticism and genre criticism share a concern for underlying forms, and a tendency to examine a speech from a formalistic perspective that emphasizes basic principles and patterns of discourse. Genre comes from the French word meaning form or pattern and genre critics are interested in analyzing groups of speeches or closely related units of discourse to discover common characteristics of style, structure or situational response. For example, by examining several eulogies from diverse time periods such as Ancient Greece and Rome, Medieval Europe, Victorian England, and the contemporary United States, the critic may uncover recurring patterns of organization, of forms, of proof or variations on a common metaphor. If eulogies from such diverse societies and time periods share a common form, then the critic has discovered something that is permanent and enduring over time. This may lead to stronger and more powerful theories about human communication, and it is certainly helpful in teaching students to write speeches by identifying effective formats.

Roger Cook in his essay on Robert Kennedy's eulogy of Martin Luther King, Jr., illustrates the value of genre analysis by showing that Kennedy's extemporaneous speech gained its power not only from the overwhelming emotion experienced by both the speaker and audience but also from the psychological satisfaction provided by the underlying structure of the speech. Similarly, Richard Katula's analysis of Nixon's resignation draws upon the work of two contemporary critics of the genre of apology to explain that speech's failure as a result of Nixon's unwillingness to meet the demands of the form and own up to his personal responsibility for the collapse of his administration.

Fantasy Theme Analysis

This critical method shares the constructivist perspective that social reality is mutually constructed through communication, and derives from an insight of small group research. Frequently small groups will cooperate to develop a group fantasy—a shared understanding or

explanation of some difficulty that the group is experiencing or some dream that they have of the future. For example, a group of high school students who form a band may interrupt a practice session to fantasize that some day the band will be discovered and they will make hit record after hit record. Obviously, this fantasy will probably be limited to the band and a small group of friends. Other fantasies may chain out from the original small groups and come to dominate the consciousness of larger and larger social groups. Perhaps this was the very process by which small groups of black Americans began to dream of ending segregation and attaining equality. As the fantasy chained out into larger and larger groups through such mechanisms as the black church and black social groups, white Americans began to share the fantasy. As it was transmitted to larger and larger audiences through communication contexts such as public speeches, demonstrations, and marches, it became a rhetorical vision and found its most profound expression in Martin Luther King's March on Washington Speech. When the fantasy moves from small groups to a larger audience through rhetorical transactions, it is gradually molded and shaped into a full scale rhetorical vision. The rhetorical critic may focus on the individual rhetorical vision or adopt the method of the genre critic and investigate recurring scenarios in an effort to understand the process of constructing heroes and villains. This method focuses attention on interaction between the audience and the message. Critics may be more concerned with the motivation of the audience and how the audience uses the information provided by the speaker. Although most of the criticism that uses this method attempts to identify fantasy themes that worked, it is possible to use the insights from this analysis and identify speeches that failed to develop a fantasy theme that could move the audience to concerted action. Robert Denton uses a variation on this method suggested by Rod Hart to analyze the values underlying President Carter's Energy Address (also contained on the CD-ROM.) Denton's analysis suggests that one reason for the failure of the speech is that it did not promote the chaining necessary for group fantasies and thus was not able to sustain a rhetorical vision necessary for effective political action.

Becoming An Effective Critic

It is impossible in this short space to discuss the various critical systems or methodologies in great detail. This essay is designed to be suggestive: to stimulate your interest in criticism and to get you started thinking about the various ways to evaluate a speech. Some interesting approaches are not formulized as critical schools but combine insights into the way technology has influenced the nature of the speaker-audience relationship with rhetorical analysis of the speech itself. The essay by Solomon and Stewart on Jesse Jackson is illustrative of this type of analysis. Since the videotapes contain speeches dating back to Roosevelt's First Inaugural given in 1933, through Nixon's "Checkers" speech in 1952, and George Bush's speeches on the Gulf War, the instructor may wish to devote class time to a discussion of the way that television has effected public speaking. Students may want to elect this topic for a written assignment.

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Closing Address To The Nazi Party Congress Adolf Hitler

Nuremberg, Germany, September 14, 1934 (Transcribed from the video, GREAT SPEECHES, VOLUME I)

The Sixth Party Rally is coming to an end. What millions of Germans outside our ranks may simply have rated as an imposing display of political power was infinitely more for hundreds of thousands of fighters; the great personal, political and spiritual meeting of the old fighters and battle comrades. And perhaps, in spite of the spectacular forcefulness of this imposing review of the armies of the Party, many among them were wistfully thinking back to the days when it was difficult to be a National Socialist. For when our Party comprised just seven people, it already formulated two principles: it wanted to be a truly ideological party; it wanted, uncompromisingly, sole and absolute power in Germany.

We, as a party, had to remain a minority, because we mobilized the most valuable elements of fight and sacrifice in the nation, and they are never a majority but always a minority. And since the best racial component of the German nation, proudly self-assured, courageously, and daringly, demanded leadership of the Reich and the people, the people followed its leadership in ever greater numbers and subordinated themselves to it.

The German people are happily aware that the eternal flight of appearances has now been replaced by one stable pole, which sensing and knowing that it represented the very best German blood, rose to the leadership of the nation and is determined to keep this leadership, and exercise it, and never give it up again. There will always be only one segment of a people who will be really active fighters, and more is demanded of them than of the millions of other people. For them it is not enough to simply say, "I believe;" they take an oath, "I shall fight."

The party will for all times be the leadership reservoir of the German people, unchangeable in its teachings, hard as steel in its organization, pliable and adaptable in its tactics, and in its total appearance the manifestation of the spirit of the nation. Again it must be that all decent Germans become National Socialists. Only the best National Socialists become party members.

Formerly, our opponents saw to it that through prohibition and persecution our movement was periodically purged of the light chaff that began to settle in it. Now we must practice selectiveness ourselves and expel what has proved to be rotten and therefore not of our kind. It is our wish and intent that this state and this Reich shall endure through the millennia ahead. We can rejoice in the knowledge that the future belongs totally to us.

Where the older generations might still waver, the youth is sworn to us and given to us, body and soul. Only if we realize in the Party the ultimate essence and idea of National Socialism, through the joint effort of all of us, will it forever and indestructibly be a possession of the German people and the German nation. Then the splendid and glorious army of the old and proud armed services of our nation will be joined by the no less tradition-bound leadership of the Party and together these two establishments will form and firm the German people and carry on their shoulders the German state and German Reich.

At this hour, tens of thousands of party comrades are beginning to leave town. While some are still reminiscing, others are getting ready for the next roll call, and always people will come and go, and always they will be gripped anew, gladdened, and inspired, for the idea and the Movement are expressions of the life of our people and therefore, symbols of eternity.

Long live the National Socialist Movement. Long live Germany!

RUDOLF HESS:

The party is Hitler! Hitler is Germany as Germany is Hitler!

THE PARTY IS HITLER

Expel what has proved to be rotten and therefore not of our kind.

CRITICS: Lloyd E. Rohler and J. Justin Gustainis

Sixty years after his death, Adolf Hitler continues to exert a perverse fascination for our culture as the evil figure of the Twentieth Century. The daring of his ambition and the monstrosity of his imagination created untold human suffering and profoundly changed the political map of Europe and ultimately the world. Though far removed from Quintilian's ideal of the orator as the good man speaking well, Hitler's forceful delivery of emotional speeches to audiences conditioned by spectacular displays of military and patriotic symbols played a major role in his rise to power.

This essay examines Hitler's speech on the closing night of the Sixth Party Congress at Nuremberg on September 14, 1934. The purpose of the essay is to demonstrate the usefulness of the classical system in evaluating the speech of a man who rejected the concept of rational argument that is the very basis of classical rhetoric. This essay will demonstrate that the application of the classical categories can reveal the reasons for the overwhelming emotional response by the audiences as well as the ultimate weakness in Hitler's method of persuasion.

The Speaker

Adolf Hitler was born in the Austrian town of Braunau on April 20, 1889, the son of a customs officer of the Austro-Hungarian Empire who would prove to be a domineering father. A mediocre student, young Hitler left high school at the age of sixteen without a diploma. Inclined to become an artist, Hitler spent his late adolescence in dreamy idleness. Refused admission to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna at the age of 18, disappointed and alienated, Hitler drifted and absorbed the ideas that would dominate his life: anti-Semitism, nationalism, celebration of the will, and the cult of violence. When Germany went to war in 1914, Hitler in a burst of patriotism enlisted in the German army. Serving in the front lines during the next few years, he was twice wounded and five times decorated for bravery. Temporarily blinded by a mustard gas attack in October of 1918, Hitler recuperated in the hospital when the armistice was declared. He remained in the army for several years after the war serving as a political instructor. As part of his duties, he monitored political organizations. While attending a meeting of the German Workers Party, he spoke so forcefully that he was invited to join. His talents were recognized and he soon took charge of recruiting new members. Thanks to his organizational skills and his inspired oratory, party membership grew rapidly and so did Hitler's influence. Within a year, he became the party leader.

By 1923, some 50,000 dues paying members of the party made Hitler a force in German politics. Impressed by Mussolini's successful "March on Rome," Hitler attempted to take advantage of unsettled conditions in Bavaria to lead a "March on Berlin." The "Beer Hall Putsch," as the activities of November 8 and 9, 1923, are called, resulted in the death of several party members and in Hitler and his deputies being arrested and tried for treason.

Hitler used his oratorical skills to turn the trial into a propaganda forum for the party and win the minimum sentence possible for himself. While in prison, he wrote the first volume of *Mein Kampf*, his autobiography. Released after serving only nine months of a five year term, Hitler returned to Munich to rebuild the party. The next years were not very successful, as the post-war prosperity robbed the party of much of its appeal, but the good times were soon to end. The worldwide effects of the Great Depression improved Nazi prospects. Between 1928 and 1930, the party gained enough votes to go from 12 seats in the Reichstag to 107 and become the second largest political party in Germany. This increased political power led to increased respectability and financial support. In Germany, in 1930, no party had a parliamentary majority, and attempts to form one floundered on political polarization between the left and the right. In the absence of a parliamentary majority, the Weimar Constitution empowered the President to use emergency powers to appoint a Chancellor who could rule by decree. President von Hindenburg used this expedient to form a centrist government, but agitation by the Nazi Party led to the calling of new elections in 1932 to remedy the situation. The new elections resulted in a stunning victory for Hitler and the Nazi Party as their representation in the Reichstag grew to 230 seats making them the largest party in parliament. Although still lacking a majority of the votes, a new government would have to include them, and Hitler refused to join any government that did not give him the post of Chancellor. He calculated (correctly) that as Chancellor he would have the opportunity to manipulate the President, Field Marshal von Hindenburg, into issuing a decree giving him emergency powers. Aided by conservative nationalist politicians who thought that they could manipulate him, Hitler assumed office on January 30, 1933, and immediately set to work to subvert the legal institutions of Germany and to gather all power into his hands. In the wake of the mysterious burning of the Reichstag Building on the night of February 27, 1933, which the Nazi propagandists blamed on the communists, Hitler persuaded von Hindenburg to sign an emergency decree suspending indefinitely all the basic rights guaranteed in the constitution. A month later Hitler forced through the Reichstag an "Enabling Act" which gave him the power to enact legislation without parliamentary approval and to deviate from the constitution whenever he deemed it necessary. These two actions ended constitutional government in Germany and formed the basis for Hitler's dictatorship. Hitler moved quickly to use the emergency powers to destroy any independent power base that might challenge him and to bring all institutions in German society under the control of the Nazi Party. In the summer of 1934, in a bid to gain support of the Army, Hitler brought the paramilitary units of the Party, the Storm Troopers of the SA, under tighter control in a bloody purge. The death of von Hindenburg in August, 1934, allowed Hitler, a foreign born, poorly educated, ex-corporal, to assume the title of Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Germany. This is the man who addressed the Party faithful at Nuremberg on September 14, 1934, and received their adulation as "Führer."¹

Occasion

The use of spectacle to arouse the emotions of the audience was not unknown in Ancient Greece or Rome. When Pericles gave the funeral oration for Greek soldiers killed in battle, he stood on the sacred ground surrounded by trophies of war and armed soldiers. Mark Antony's funeral oration for Julius Caesar depended for effect on the bloody evidence of the Assassination. However, no ancient rhetorical theorist could imagine the spectacle that an industrialized country in the Twentieth Century would be able to arrange. Classical theorists placed great emphasis upon the speech as an instrument of persuasion; Hitler demonstrated the importance of staging and spectacle to arouse the emotions of the audience and to heighten the effect of the speech.

The party rallies held in Nuremberg in September of each year were a good example of the use of spectacle by the Nazis and of the careful attention to detail that went into their production. The purpose of the rallies was to demonstrate to both Germany and the World the power and unity of the new German Reich. Party organizations and sections such as Hitler Youth, the SA, the SS, and party cadres from local bosses to regional directors, all got an opportunity to meet together, hear party directives, and parade before Hitler. Almost 500,000 persons from all over Germany would be brought to Nuremberg during the eight days in September to be indoctrinated in the new policies of the party and then sent back to their communities to spread the new line to others.²

Nuremberg, an ancient medieval town with Gothic cathedrals and gable roofed old houses, served as the setting for these rallies and symbolically united the old Germany with the new. Hitler always stayed at the Deutscher Hof where he frequently appeared on the balcony overlooking the moat in front of the hotel to receive the adulation of the crowd. His every appearance was carefully orchestrated for full dramatic effect. When he appeared at the opening meeting of the Party Congress at Luitpold Hall on the outskirts of the city, the vast auditorium was a sea of Nazi banners. A band that had been playing marching songs suddenly stopped. The crowd quieted, the band struck up the Bandenweiler March, and Hitler, Goring, Goebbels, Hess, and Himmler strode down the center aisle while 30,000 people stood at attention hands raised in the Nazi salute. Hitler mounted the floodlit stage and took his place surrounded by hundreds of party officials. Draped on the wall behind him was the sacred standard carried in the streets of Munich during the attempted "putsch." It was stained with the blood of martyrs, and before Hitler spoke, Hess read the name of each martyr. Members of the audience wept.³

Nuremberg provided an ideal setting for the vast open air pageants staged at night and so beloved by Hitler. One evening over 200,000 party faithful crowded into the open air stadium. Over 20,000 flags unfurled to the night breeze and were illuminated by long search lights that stabbed the night. After the chanting, singing, and playing of patriotic music, Hitler entered the stadium to a deafening roar. Standing in the back of the car, he acknowledged the salutes of the crowd. The pageantry of the occasion swept the crowd into an emotional crescendo that reached hysteria when Hitler began to speak. Later over 15,000 party faithful marched in a torchlight parade through the streets of Nuremberg while Hitler reviewed them.⁴

The theme of the 1934 Party Congress, "The Party Day of Unity," assumed great importance for both leadership and rank and file members of the Nazi party that year. Three months earlier, in June, Hitler ordered a bloody purge of the party in which thousands were arrested and shot without trial including many long time associates from the early days in Munich. Hitler worried that the brown-shirted Storm Troopers or SA led by Ernst Roehm posed a threat to his leadership. The SA leadership recalled the days when the Party was the National Socialist Party and resented Hitler's growing alliance with German industrialists. Hitler in turn realized that the boozing, brawling SA, whose members were mostly drawn from the lower classes, threatened the vital support of the Army whose leadership reflected the conservative values of the upper class. As Hamilton Burden wrote in his study of the Nuremberg rallies, "The leaders of the army... regarded the SA as an association of hoodlums and street brawlers. Although Hitler felt indebted to the SA for having stood by him in the years of crisis, he was dependent on the Army to keep him in power."⁵

Thus, toward the end of June, Hitler acted. At his order, Roehm and the rest of the SA leadership were arrested by the SS (the "elite guard" units, which comprised the military arm of the party) and executed without trial. A figurehead, Viktor Lutze, was installed in Roehm's place and instructed to keep the SA in line. The 1934 party rally was to be the first real test of how well he had succeeded.

The Speech

The classical rhetorical system reflects a rational worldview. The members of the audience are rational persons capable of making decisions among competing policies, ideas, or claims, through an analysis of the proofs or evidence offered. Although Classical theory recognizes that emotion and personal influence often play a role in the decision making process, it emphasizes that the speaker must provide rational arguments to satisfy the critical mind of the listener. The classical system strives for a balanced effect—an effective speech should satisfy the demand of the audience for good reasons that are emotionally compelling and given by a believable speaker. Using this system to evaluate Hitler's speech, we can identify his major strategy. Hitler relied on emotional proof and personal force to the total exclusion of rational argument. He theorized that the masses possessed essentially "feminine" characteristics and had an "emotional longing" for domination by a "ruthless and fanatical" speaker.⁶ Acting on this assumption, his speeches were not designed to persuade by rational argument but to move audiences by "divining the hidden passions, resentments, and longings in their minds."⁷ A speech by Hitler conveyed "an extraordinary impression of force, the immediacy of passion, the intensity of hatred, fury and menace."⁸ Often working himself into a rage, he "appeared to lose all control of himself...screamed at the top of his voice, spitting out a stream of abuse, (and) waving his arms wildly."⁹ He told the audience what it wanted to hear: "the great universal obvious hopes: that Germany should once again become what it had been, that the economy should function, that the farmer...the townsman, the worker, the employer...should forget their differences and become one in...the love for Germany."¹⁰ His speeches became melodramas of the fight between good and evil moving from the perilous state of the present to a glorious triumph over Germany's enemies. And always, He—Adolf Hitler—Der Führer, was the embodiment of the will of the people, the representative of the State, and the sole defender of the nation. The speech on the videotape, *Great Speeches, Volume I*, given to the closing session of the Party Congress at Nuremberg, September 14, 1934, is a

good example of this technique. Evil is represented by the past—the old generation that grew up with the poisonous party politics of the corrupt parliamentary system. Unfortunately, some of those doubters found their way into the Party where their prejudices undermined its unity. Their “alien spirit” confused the “brain and heart” of the German people. Through vigilant actions of the party, those people have been weeded out of its ranks. This is the basic script of a melodrama—evil appeared, but good struggled with it and triumphed thanks to the leadership of Adolf Hitler. This is all nonsense, of course. It is Hitler’s justification for ordering a bloody purge that left many of his old comrades dead—men who had been with him from the beginning in Munich and who now seemed a threat to his new respectability as Chancellor, and an irritant to his smooth dealings with the real source of power, the German Army. The purpose of the speech is to demonstrate to the German people and to the world that the Nazi Party is united behind Hitler’s leadership. The speech will also provide an indirect justification for the recent purge that will suffice for loyal party members. Hitler does this in a very traditional way. He secures the good will of the audience by complimenting them as the elite of the German nation. He refers to them as “the best racial component of the nation,” and later he says that “only the best National Socialists become party members.” What does it mean to be part of the elite? For Hitler, it means three things: to be strong, to be pure, and to be young. Hitler’s notion of strength is made clear when he refers to “the spectacular forcefulness of this imposing review of the armies of the party” and later when he says that the party members “will form and firm the German people and carry on their shoulders the German state and the German Reich.” Purity means that the party members hold to their right ideas, “truly ideological,” and possess “the very best German blood” in contrast to the Jews whose “unclean blood” polluted Germany. Hitler explicitly says that the party is aimed at the young, “Where the older generation might still waver, the youth is sworn to us and given to us, body and soul.”

According to Hitler’s address, this elitism of the party is achieved in two ways: by a selective recruitment and by weeding out undesirable elements. Hitler brings up the selectivity issue in several parts of the speech. Early in the speech, he reminds them of the legendary “days when it was difficult to be a National Socialist...when our party comprised just seven people.” Shortly thereafter, he claims “we mobilize the most valuable elements of fight and sacrifice in the nation, and they are never a majority but always a minority.” And, still later, he proclaims that “...only the best National Socialists become party members.”

The issue of purging certain deviant elements from the party is mentioned only once, but it is a clear reference to the housecleaning by bullets which the SA underwent a few months earlier. Hitler points out that, in the early days, the party was spared this task as political oppression eliminated weaker elements from the party; but “Now we must practice selectiveness ourselves and expel what has proved to be rotten and therefore not of our kind.”

Thus, Hitler’s message is essentially one of congratulation. The party members are congratulated for being part of a strong, young, and pure elite, which owes its status to the fact that it is a minority that is periodically purged of undesirables.

The delivery of the first part of the speech is restrained, almost matter-of-fact. In his speeches Hitler liked to build slowly toward a crescendo of passion whipping himself and his audience into hysteria. His voice was harsh and conveyed an extraordinary impression of force. The sound of the voice alone communicated an intensity of hatred, fury, and menace regardless of what he said. Hitler had an extraordinary talent for self-dramatization and for role playing. He could easily switch from one mood to another and be absolutely convincing. His gestures reflected his changing mood. At the beginning of the speech they are restrained. When he builds to an important point, they become vigorous and even threatening. He slashes the air with his hand or pounds the podium with his fist.

Whenever Hitler refers to “us” (meaning the Party), he touches himself or hits himself on the chest. This occurs every time he used words like “we” or “us.” Also, when he uses the word “leadership” he again touches himself. The message is clear. Hitler is the party; Hitler is the leader. The party has no leadership, no existence without him. The assembled party members have no existence without him.

Evaluation

As the videotape clearly indicates, this speech was a rousing success with the immediate audience. Afterward, when Hitler’s sycophant, Rudolf Hess, shouted out the phrases, “Hitler is the Party! The Party is Hitler!” and “Hitler is Germany! Germany is Hitler!” the crowd roared its approval. Hitler achieved his goals: he got the adulation of the crowd and he got the demonstration of Party unity.

The Nazi leaders were greatly impressed with their ability to organize party rallies that produced mass hysteria. So impressed were they that Hitler personally chose Leni Riefenstahl to produce a feature length film of the Sixth Party Congress for use in propaganda efforts abroad. Hitler assumed that other audiences particularly those outside of Germany would be equally enthusiastic about the Nazi message. In this he was wrong. The audiences were impressed by the spectacle but shocked at the scenes of otherwise sensible people losing themselves in an emotional frenzy of adulation for a despotic dictator. In this case a message effective for a friendly audience was evaluated differently by an audience that retained its rational faculties. The film had a boomerang effect. It helped to solidify opposition to Hitler and his methods in the democratic states of Europe and in the United States. When people saw the irrational forces unleashed by the maniacal figure of Hitler, it made them understand the threat the Nazis posed to the values of Western Civilization. As the classical system postulates, man is a reasoning being. In the short run, his emotions may make him act foolishly; but to be effective over time, a persuasive message must include good reasons that can be critically evaluated by the audience. Hitler gambled that the irrational fears and hatreds of the audience magnified by spectacular displays of powerful symbols would be sufficient to overcome the rationality of the human mind. He and his audience paid a terrible price for that gamble when Allied troops marched into Berlin in April, 1945.

NOTES

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3. William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent 1934-1941* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1941), pp. 16-21, 23.
4. *Ibid.*
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6. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943), pp. 337-338.
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