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BETWEEN WRITER AND READER; THE RELATIONSHIP
OF THE CONCEPT OF AUDIENCE TO THE TEACHING OF
COMPOSITION.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT
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BETWEEN WRITER AND READER:
THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CONCEPT OF AUDIENCE TO
THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

by

Janet Fyne Cochran

A Dissertation Submitted to
the School of Education at
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Approved by



Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

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COCHRAN, JANET FYNE. *Between Writer and Reader: The Relationship of the Concept of Audience to the Teaching of Composition.* (1979) Directed by: Dr. Dale L. Brubaker, Pp. 169.

Traditionally the term rhetoric has been applied to the education of speakers on public occasions. Modern rhetoric has been characterized by a shift from spoken to written discourse and another shift from emphasis on the rhetor to emphasis on the audience.

The purpose of this study is two-fold: to synthesize the major contributions to the study of audience, assessing their usefulness in the teaching of composition, and to analyze rhetorical action by presenting a model which will illuminate the relationship between writer and reader.

The heritage of the rhetorical concept of audience can be traced back to the Rhetoric of Aristotle. The analysis of audience found in the Rhetoric can be of great value to students and teachers of written discourse. Aristotle treats rhetoric as an art which can be systematized, and is therefore teachable. Although Aristotelian rhetoric can be useful, it also has limitations for twentieth-century studies.

The three elements of discourse with which Aristotle deals -- rhetor, audience, and discourse -- constitute a curricular cornerstone for the teaching of composition. The attempt to integrate modern rhetoric with contemporary

curriculum theory leads to a discovery of many principles which can be mutually beneficial. They reveal ways in which the concept of audience functions in the context of the composition classroom.

The teaching of English has long been dominated by a content-centered approach. James Moffett proposes instead a "student-centered" approach, which views the dimension of growth from the self to the world. L. S. Vygotsky suggests that the development of written speech is rather from the social to the self, which seems more closely related to the developmental lag of many students of writing.

Different kinds of rhetorical action have certain things in common; therefore it is possible to construct a model which will reveal the component parts and their relationship to each other. The model has its origin in a situational context. Writer and reader fictionalize each other according to inferences each has made. They make choices based on common materials or characteristics: Culture, Education/Information, Syntactic Repertoire, Power, and Values. The materials are the basis of covenants formed between writer and reader. Encompassing all of these factors is the writer's purpose which is ultimately determined by the intended audience. Certain qualities of discourse emerge which are discussed as Selection, Symbol

System, and Structure.

The rhetorical action of classroom discourse presents its own audience categories. They can be classified according to three kinds of writing which may be said to belong to the Thematic Domain, the Interpretive Domain, or the Affective Domain, in order of their relationship to the development of written speech. As decisions are made about the audience category, the writer experiences new insights and thus undergoes change as a result of his own rhetorical action.

The model can be said to generate its own heuristic procedure, and can be used in specific ways in the composition classroom. Knowledge of the dynamics of the model can enable the writer to understand more fully the process of producing meaningful discourse directed at a particular audience.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The traditional meaning of the term rhetoric has been associated with the education of speakers in the most effective modes of public communication. A great deal of attention was given to rhetorical training in the classical period of ancient Greece in the fifth century B. C., especially by Aristotle whose Rhetoric has been one of the most influential instructional works of all times. Definitions of rhetoric have fluctuated wildly since Aristotle's time. The term on the one hand has sometimes been stripped of substance and used as an epithet describing empty bombast, as in the phrase, "nothing but rhetoric." At the other extreme it has been freighted with philosophical meaning that has tied it irretrievably to formal logic and argumentation. At times the fundamental notion of rhetoric as a communicative act between speaker or writer and audience has been seemingly obscured.

The latter half of the twentieth century has witnessed a remarkable resurgence of interest in rhetoric as a process of communication, and a vast expansion of

of knowledge of related fields. While historically emphasis has been on the rhetor (speaker or writer), preparing him for effective citizenship, modern rhetoric has been characterized by two significant changes. The first, a result of the spread of literacy, is a change of emphasis from spoken to written discourse. The second is a shift from focusing on the rhetor, or creator of discourse, to the audience, or receiver of discourse. Profoundly affecting both of these changes has been the severing of rhetor and audience, which has brought about the necessity for new perspectives on their relationship.

The purpose of the present study is two-fold. First, it will attempt to synthesize the major contributions to the study of audience in the rhetorical situation, beginning with that of Aristotelian rhetoric. Concurrently, it will assess the significance of those contributions to the present-day teaching of written composition, a field which is bound to classical rhetoric by its heritage. This aspect of the study will provide a broad view of the literature with regard not only to Aristotelian concepts of audience, but contemporary ones as well.

The second purpose of the study is analytical in nature. A part of the analysis will consist in applying some principles of rhetorical thought and also contemporary curriculum theory to the study of audience awareness

in the classroom, in order to determine the relationship of the concept of audience to the rhetorical situation as a whole. The major part of the analysis is effected through the development of a model representing the setting of a rhetorical action. The purpose of the model is to make it possible to display and discuss the component parts of the relationship between writer and reader in a way that will be illuminating for both teachers and students of composition.

The so-called literacy crisis in our time has brought to light the difficulty that many students are having with writing skills. Standardized writing test scores throughout the nation have shown a significant decline over the last fifteen to twenty years. The original impetus for the choice of subject of this dissertation was born of a growing conviction based on teaching experience in a variety of situations. That conviction is that one of the chief reasons for the inability of students to produce meaningful discourse is a lack of a sense of audience. It must follow, then, that they do not understand sufficiently well what factors and what choices are involved in a rhetorical action. It is my hope for the study that it will contribute to increased attention being paid to the role of audience in communication. James Britton has provided a superb rationale for study

in this area:

. . . A highly developed sense of audience must be one of the marks of the competent mature writer, for it is concerned with nothing less than the implementation of his concern to maintain or establish an appropriate relationship with his reader in order to achieve his full intent.¹

Traditionally, the study of composition has focused on the quality of the finished discourse. It is the intention of this dissertation to bring attention to bear on what actually happens between writer and reader in the process of rhetorical action.

¹The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18).
(London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1975), p. 58.

CHAPTER II

THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE

Any thorough examination of the ancestry of the contemporary composition teacher leads eventually back to the ancient Greeks. For the rhetorical treatises that emerged from the classical Greek civilization were the earliest attempts at rhetoric or a systematized investigation and reconciliation of the elements of discourse. To be sure, other civilizations had produced substantial oral traditions and literature, but the Greeks claim the distinction of having made the first formal inquiry into the nature and form of human communication.

The most common form of human communication in the classical period was oral discourse rather than written for obvious reasons: written communication was a slow, laborious, manual process; its inutility for the conducting of private or public affairs consigned it largely to the realm of poetic. The Athenian communicative situation is aptly described by E. M. Cope:

In a state where public speaking was an indispensable accomplishment for a statesman or politician; and at Athens to be a politician was the rule rather than the exception; and in an unusually litigious society where every citizen was obliged to plead his own cause in the law court, the value of such a powerful instrument of self defence and

aggrandisement was of course recognized . . . and supplied an education to the young men who were preparing for public life.¹

Although oral discourse remained the major form of communication until well after the invention of the printing press, it is safe to say that modern courses in composition have their origins in the rhetorics, or oratorical training systems for public life among the early Greeks; they seem to have made the sole attempt in their time to analyze the fundamental bases for the exchanging of messages between human beings.

What was undoubtedly the earliest written rhetoric or formal guide for would-be public speakers appears to have been composed about the year 465 B.C. by one Corax, a resident of the Greek colony of Syracuse in Sicily. Corax was said to have devised a set of rules that would lead to the settling of lawsuits over conflicting claims to property. Corax's system was cleverly constructed upon his belief that if a claimant could establish a case that was more believable than that of his adversary, the claimant could then gain access to the land he desired. This belief provides very early evidence of the

¹An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric with Analysis, Notes, and Appendices (London: Macmillan & Co., 1867), p. 1-2.

inclusion of the notion of probability in rhetoric.²

Although Corax is given credit for being the author of the earliest written rhetoric, it would not be an overstatement to declare that all discussions of classical rhetoric lead inevitably to Aristotle. Such a claim is attested to by many authorities, among them Lane Cooper, author of the most readable translation of Aristotle's remarkable Rhetoric:

The Rhetoric not only of Cicero and Quintilian but of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and of modern times is, in its best elements, essentially Aristotelian. There is no book on the subject since Aristotle's that is not at least indirectly indebted to his.³

It has also been said of the Rhetoric that

So comprehensive and fundamental were Aristotle's views on rhetoric that it is no exaggeration to say that his treatise on the subject is the most important single work on persuasion ever written.⁴

Therefore, notwithstanding the Phaedrus, Plato's dialogical allegory of the "true rhetoric" with its soaring moral

²See James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, and William E. Coleman, The Rhetoric of Western Thought (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1976). For a fuller discussion of the Corax tradition, see D. A. G. Hinks, "Tisias and Corax and the Invention of Rhetoric," Classical Quarterly, 34 (1940), 59-69.

³Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1932, Intro. p. xvii.

⁴Golden, p. 28.

tone, and the influential rhetorics of Cicero and Quintilian containing their emphasis on practical application, it seems thoroughly justifiable to single out the Rhetoric of Aristotle as the starting point of the study of one of the elements of the art of discourse.

What is of particular interest here concerning the Rhetoric is the special character of its approach to its subject: The chief value of the Rhetoric of Aristotle lies in its provocative and penetrating study of the concept of audience. This chapter will (1) seek to demonstrate what close attention to Aristotle's concepts can offer to students and teachers of written discourse, and (2) explore the limitations of the Aristotelian system.

Not only does the Rhetoric continue to stand as a classic of its genre, but there is little question that the kinds of needs it addressed have altered remarkably little. Donald Lemen Clark reminds twentieth-century men that:

In twenty-four centuries, institutions, laws, means of communication have changed greatly, but the speaker or writer today has as in the past one objective -- to make his sense of the truth prevail in the minds and hearts of his audience, by means of words, composed for this purpose, in speech or in writing.⁵

⁵Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 49.

Clark's writer, then, may be as much the college freshman struggling to complete his first theme assignment as the young Athenian, well-educated and ambitious, eager to win his first case in court. The difference is that the student, unlike the Athenian with his pressing rhetorical situation, is occupied with finding an appropriate subject and trying to tailor it to a particular "mode" of expression. In short, he has not, and is too often not required to develop, a sense of audience, a belief that he is writing "to someone" rather than simply "about something." It is little wonder that students, thus taught, see little relationship between what happens in composition class and their daily life experience.

The Rhetoric, on the other hand, offers an approach to discourse which can go far toward narrowing this gap. It is essentially a holistic approach in two important ways. First, it is clear that Aristotle views discourse as an evolved form of inherent unity, rather than as a collection of parts which, when assembled properly, would yield the desired construction. Other rhetoricians had stressed the "building blocks" approach as an appropriate pedagogical tool; Isocrates, for example,

emphasized the proem, narration, proofs, and epilogue with the use of practice speeches illustrating mastery of each part. Aristotle's approach suggests repeatedly that there is a kind of synergistic process in operation -- that is, the whole of the discourse transcends the sum of the parts. Furthermore, the approach of the Rhetoric is holistic in a second sense. That is, it acknowledges the presence of the total human personality in the communication process. It recognizes not only a rational, intellectual being, but an emotional one as well. It is truly unique in its divination of the non-rational aspects of participants in the rhetorical process.

Far too often in modern pedagogy the idea of holism is obscured. With the plethora of approaches to the study of shorter units of discourse (such as the paragraph), there is an ensuing sense that they are ends in themselves, rather than elements of the whole discourse, which are, in turn, products of whole persons. The Rhetoric can aid in a revival of a consideration of the total rhetorical situation, while ever-emphasizing the important place occupied by the audience of the discourse.

CONCEPTS IN THE RHETORIC WITH SPECIAL IMPORTANCE
FOR THE STUDY OF AUDIENCE

Aristotle begins Book I with a kind of legitimation of rhetoric as a discipline by declaring that "Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic"(p. 1).⁶ Aristotle thereby seeks to secure a philosophical basis for rhetoric and establish its place (outlined in the Rhetoric) alongside his Topica as a coordinate treatment of dialectic, or logical argumentation. Clearly, as he will go on to explain, Aristotle, unlike Plato, considered rhetoric not as a method of rational analysis which would lead to certainty, but as belonging to the realm of probability or opinion in the same way as did dialectic, which he understood as the "art of logical discussion"(p. 1). He justifies his assertion on the basis that both rhetoric and dialectic deal with matters that, rather than belonging to any one area of science, fall within the common knowledge and the everyday experience of most persons.⁷ Here Aristotle prefigures the

⁶This and all subsequent references to the text are taken from the following edition: Aristotle, Rhetoric, ed. Lane Cooper (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1932).

⁷For a useful discussion of the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic, see Historical Studies of Rhetoric and Rhetoricians, ed. Raymond F. Howes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 64-67. Also cf. Richard M. Weaver's interesting distinction in Language is Sermonic (Baton Rouge, La.: L.S.U. Press, 1970) especially the chapter "The Cultural Role of Rhetoric."

significance he attaches to the hearers or audience, for he is establishing as the criteria for the matters of argumentation the understandings of those who are the receivers of the discourse.

A second way in which Aristotle moves to legitimize rhetoric, and one of even greater interest to modern practitioners and teachers, is his rationale for considering rhetoric as an art. He declares of the universal use of rhetoric that

" . . . the random impulse and the acquired facility alike evince the feasibility of reducing the processes to a method; for when the practiced and spontaneous speakers gain their end, it is possible to investigate the cause of their success; and such an inquiry . . . performs the function of an art" (p. 1) emphasis mine .

Here Aristotle strongly suggests two coterminous possibilities which are at the heart of the Rhetoric. The first is that a process which can be reduced to a method can be systematized and reproduced; that is, it is generative and can therefore be applied fruitfully to other situations. And second, if this is true, the method (hence the art) is then teachable; if the "cause of success" (or measure of effectiveness) can be determined, then it can be transmitted to other human beings. Surely this should offer encouragement to teachers of writing in their search for a

validation of their discipline.

One of the most familiar quotations from the Rhetoric is Aristotle's definition which appears in Chapter II of Book I: "So let Rhetoric be defined as the faculty [power] of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion" (p. 7). Although the definition has been much discussed, there remain some comments to be made which will serve the present purposes. To begin with, Aristotle has already established his position that rhetoric must assume a morally neutral role when he declares that a successful rhetor⁸ "should be able to argue on either side of a question" (p. 6) and that Rhetoric "may indifferently prove opposite statements" (p. 6). What is more, Rhetoric may be considered a "faculty" (or power) rather than the discovery itself because it is a means of pointing the way, not of indicating a "single and definite class of subjects" (p. 6). Therefore, the burden rests upon the rhetor's special and unique ability to discover the means of persuasion accessible to him⁹ on any subject.

⁸Aristotle's term rhetor will be used to refer to either speaker or speaker/writer. Unless specific reference is made to the writer, it may be assumed that the term can be applied to both speaker and writer.

⁹The masculine pronouns will be used without apology throughout this paper, based on the fact that the rhetor of Aristotle's time was invariably masculine, and consistency in usage is desirable.

It is scarcely necessary to state that according to the definition, the end of Rhetoric is clearly persuasion. And the effectiveness of persuasion depends upon the rhetor's ability to present some object or idea as what Theresa Crem (quoting St. Thomas) calls an operable good (That is, the rhetor in classical Greece was construed as a man striving toward good citizenship, addressing an audience who in turn desired certain things, presumably for the betterment of the state). Furthermore, Crem affirms,

. . . it is of capital importance that the rhetorician should consider the dispositions of his audience; for according as men are differently disposed, so will different things seem good to them.¹⁰

Crem's statement clearly indicates that in the definition, Aristotle foreshadows the whole of Books I and II of the Rhetoric.

A final comment should be made with regard to the definition. Aristotle obviously sees Rhetoric as a method that is characterized by intuition (albeit governed by rationality) and choice. He is careful to note that "the art has no special application to any distinct class of subjects" (p. 8) (that is, it is up to the rhetor to intuit the appropriate circumstances for its application),

¹⁰"The Definition of Rhetoric According to Aristotle," in Aristotle: The Classical Heritage of Rhetoric, ed. Keith V. Erickson (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1974), p. 63.

and indicates that the rhetor's function is to examine and evaluate whatever means of persuasion are available, "the genuine means and also the spurious means" (p. 7), and to make choices among them.

Thus the definition furnishes a rich source of philosophical speculation for those who are involved in exploring better ways of teaching composition, and of understanding more fully the place of rhetoric in the classroom. The definition bespeaks the necessity for flexibility in the art of rhetoric, the universality of its applicability, and most or all of its generative power to shape language which will move an audience to react in the desired way.

Aristotle regarded earlier rhetorics as employing somewhat spurious means of persuasion themselves, erring chiefly, in his opinion, in an over-reliance upon emotional appeal to the neglect of the rational. He attempts to correct such deficiencies by setting up two means of persuasion (or proof). The ones of interest here are those that Aristotle designated as "artistic proofs," or those "that may be furnished by the method of Rhetoric through our own efforts," (p. 8), (as opposed to "inartistic proofs," which may be described as pre-existent, such as witnesses, admissions under torture, etc.). Of the former, those created by the rhetor himself, Aristotle

notes three kinds:

The first kind reside in the character [ethos] of the speaker; the second consist in producing a certain [the right] attitude in the hearer; the third appertain to the argument proper. . . . (p. 8).

Students of discourse may note an inconsistency of apparent contradiction here; while Aristotle appears to stress the alliance of rhetoric with dialectic, resulting in his claiming a preference for the logos, or proofs pertaining to the argument proper (perhaps, again, by way of reprimanding earlier rhetoricians for their neglect of rational argument), he subsequently devotes well over half of Book II to a painstaking analysis for bringing the audience into the proper state of feeling.¹¹

Further evidence of the importance that Aristotle attaches to the audience factor in the rhetorical situation is demonstrated when he classifies kinds of speeches. He announces at the opening of the discussion that the kinds of Rhetoric correspond to "the three kinds of hearers to which speeches are addressed" (p. 16). Aristotle's division is worthy of quoting here:

¹¹Further evidence of the contradiction can be seen in Aristotle's discussion of arrangement at the conclusion of Book III: The arousing or allaying of emotions, treated in such depth in Book II, is mentioned only as one of the functions of the Epilogue of the speech, rather than being treated in the earlier parts, when such a consideration could interfere with rational judgment.

. . . There must be three kinds of speeches in Rhetoric, (1) deliberative, (2) forensic, and (3) epideictic. [That is, there are (1) speeches of counsel or advice (deliberation) -- as political speeches addressed to an assembly or to the public on questions of State, but also, for example, a speech addressed to an individual (a ruler, or, indeed, any person who is to be advised); (2) judicial speeches (used in prosecution and defence); and (3) panegyric or declamatory speeches, in the nature of an exhibition or display, eulogies -- in general, speeches of praise (or blame).] (p. 17).

The "kinds of hearers" to which Aristotle refers include the decision-maker or judge (as in the case of forensic or deliberative discourse) or spectator or critic (as in epideictic).

Aristotle's intention in making this distinctly limited classification of kinds of discourse and audience functions is not clear. What does emerge is a strengthening of the pervasive notion in the Rhetoric that it is the role played by the audience that determines the nature of the discourse. It is a role that needs to be re-introduced as a guiding principle in the making of writing assignments. Insofar as the principle applies to the teacher of composition who all too often is the sole audience for student writing, he or she might profit by self-examination in terms of Aristotle's classification of kinds of audience. It would be safe to say that frequently they unwittingly manipulate the nature of student writing by confusing the judicial function of an audience with the critical

function. That is to say, they assume the role of judge, one who determines rightness and wrongness, and neglect the role of critic, one who as a spectator is concerned with value and quality of the discourse. Aristotle stops short of saying that the latter function is one which involves the audience in active participation in the rhetorical act.

None of this is by way of saying that Aristotle diminishes the role of the rhetor. Early in Book I he makes it clear that he places great importance upon the character of the speaker:

The character [ethos] of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief. . . . This trust, however, should be created by the speech itself, and not left to depend upon an antecedent impression that the speaker is this or that kind of man (p. 8-9).

And again, in a significant prefatory statement to Book II, he says:

The speaker must not merely see to it that his speech [as an argument] shall be convincing and persuasive, but he must [in and by the speech] give the right impression of himself, and get his judge [audience] into the right state of mind (p. 91).

There is a compelling hidden assumption here which is central to Aristotle's theory of rhetoric. That is, the rhetor is presumed to be a person of high principle, one who is intent upon preventing "the triumph of fraud and injustice" (one of the uses of Rhetoric enumerated

in Book I). Nevertheless, there is a distinct unstated suggestion, one which is of great interest to all modern-day students of communication, that what Aristotle has in fact perceived is a psychological notion that is remarkably insightful for his time -- that which has come to be called the image (or "voice" or "persona") of the speaker or writer. Congruent with the notion of choice (of means of persuasion) discussed in connection with the definition of Rhetoric is the implication that the rhetor seems to be invited to use all efficacious means of divining the nature of his audience, and to assume the particular ethos which is most likely to "make him worthy of belief" and "give the right impression of himself." What is essential is that "the judges [audience] should conceive him to be disposed towards them in a certain way" [emphasis] mine (p. 91).

This implied distinction between the rhetor and his image brings to mind yet another issue which surfaces fleetingly from time to time in the Rhetoric. This is the ethical question of justifying expediency as a rhetorical strategy. In other words, just how reliable and trustworthy is a rhetor who deliberately shapes and orders his discourse according to the particular impression he wants to create upon a particular audience? Does this perhaps mean that at bottom he is a crowd-pleasing

sycophant? The only rebuttal, in Aristotelian theory, must lie within the character of the rhetor himself. If he is truly "a good man skilled in speaking" as Quintilian was to describe the ideal classical orator, then his ethos (whether consciously adopted or not) will naturally be in the best interest of the audience as well as himself. In this regard he is careful to note that "If it is urged that abuse of the rhetorical faculty can work great mischief, the same charge can be brought against all good things" (p. 6). Clark affirms that "Aristotle is not urging a hypocritical assumption of goodness by an evil man," and goes on to explain that,

The good speaker must not hide his light under a bushel. If he is a good speaker as well as a good man, then he should exhibit his good sense, good morals, and good will to his audience. The art of rhetoric should teach him how.¹²

Thus the ethical dimension of the character of the rhetoric, at least in Aristotelian terms, is inescapable.

It is possible to carry the question of conscious assumption of ethos one step further -- a step which should be noted with interest by all students and teachers of discourse. That is to say, ethical questions aside,

¹²Clark, p. 45-46.

it is sometimes profitable for a single rhetor to assume a variety of stances. In other words, his ethos can be more than an immediate, temporal response to a rhetorical exigency; it might be, for example, a reconstruction of the way one once responded to a particular exigency, or a conjecture of how one might respond in a future situational context. It can transcend the structures of the speaker or writer's "real" world of the moment; its only limit is his imagination, or, if Aristotle is to be believed, the boundaries of his ethical universe.¹³

More specifically, the qualities of ethos, or state of feeling, are those of intelligence, character, and good will. He who possesses these qualities is best able to induce in the audience the proper balance of pain and pleasure which will elicit certain states of feeling. Thus, as James J. Murphy points out, pain and pleasure are in Aristotelian terms not themselves emotions, but rather those feelings which bring about a certain emotional response.¹⁴ Aristotle gives an account of

¹³See Jim W. Corder, "Varieties of Ethical Argument with Some Account of the Significance of Ethos in the Teaching of Composition," Freshman English News 6 (Winter, 1978), 1-23, for a very helpful discussion of ethos.

¹⁴James J. Murphy, A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric (New York: Random House, Inc., 1972) p. 46.

a number of common emotions and their opposites (as anger and mildness or placability) with respect to the following points: (1) a definition or what the mental state of the person in that state of feeling is, (2) toward whom he is most likely to feel that emotion, and (3) what things are most likely to put him into the particular state of feeling. What necessitates a reiteration of the above is that these points demonstrate that they call for a rhetor to make certain complex rational decisions in order to assure that the audience will react in a particular way. Perhaps Aristotle's analysis of emotions represents one way of defending himself against the charge he levels at earlier rhetoricians -- that they contrive to elicit audience response based upon irresponsible and impulsive reaction.

Aristotle's view of premises for psychological proof (persuasion) is unremittingly objectified, dealing only with the external manifestations of states of feeling. For example, fear is defined as "a pain or disturbance arising from a mental image of impending evil of a destructive sort"; the exclusion of such introspective fears as that of developing undesirable traits is carefully avoided. While such an analysis of emotions may seem primitive and quaint in the light of

Freudian psychology,¹⁵ what is unique in Aristotle's treatment is the recognition of the powerful role played by the emotions in the personal response of the audience, a consideration easily neglected as speaker or writer and hearer or reader have become separated by distance or time. Aristotle's plea to those who would absorb the principles inhering in the Rhetoric is for a responsible appeal to an audience, an appeal emerging from loftiest elements in the character of the rhetor.

Aristotle's detailed analysis of the types of human beings that make up the audience is another feature of the Rhetoric which sets it apart from similar works which preceded and followed it.¹⁶ It seems to suggest that while Rhetoric is theoretically universal in its application -- that is, it may treat of any subject matter -- it is limited in a practical sense to human

¹⁵In his paper "Aristotle's Rhetoric on Emotions" in Erickson, p. 205-234, William J. Fortenbaugh defends Aristotle's account because it admits the vital role of cognition in emotion, and therefore helps to develop an "adequate moral psychology."

¹⁶Cope notes that "The adoption of this novel method of treating the subject was in all probability due to the suggestion of Plato in the Phaedrus 271 C - 273 D-E, where it pointed out that as there is a great variety of 'souls' i.e. minds and characters or dispositions, and a like variety of speeches, the latter, in order to produce the intended effect of 'persuasion,' must be duly adapted to the corresponding varieties of the former . . ." (p. 6-7).

characteristics which are inevitably contingent and unpredictable, and must therefore be studied and whenever possible comprehended in all their infinite complexity. In short, the informing assumption of the Rhetoric is that consummation of rhetorical action is dependent upon, perhaps more than any other factor, the proper recognition and assessment of the audience.

Aristotle proceeds to classify the audience according to "the several periods of life and the varieties of fortune" (p. 132). He divides men into the young, the elderly, and men in their prime. Under gifts of fortune, he discusses the well-born, the wealthy, the powerful, and those with general good fortune such as domestic happiness. It can with some justification be argued that Aristotle might have used some other less traditional divisions, and that his categories embody the more predictable traits. What is most singular about Aristotle, however, and what is most instructive for students of classical rhetoric is the remarkable complexity of his psychological view: nowhere does he more clearly affirm his holistic view of the human being's involvement in the rhetorical process. He understood, for example, that strong physical drives (such as a high degree of sexual desire in the young) and the absence of physical drives (resulting in a love of gain replacing passion in the

elderly) strongly affect the human being's response to a rhetorical situation, and appeals to young or elderly audiences should be chosen accordingly. John Mackin aptly summarizes the point:

Thus the nature of our biological being and the place we have reached in our lives toward its conclusion will determine the vehemence of our idealism and our materialism and the ability we have to temper both so both may be satisfied to some extent.¹⁷

No one else antedating twentieth-century psychology comprehended as clearly what it means to say that, in Weaver's phrase, man is "born into history" and brings the cumulative effect of his personal circumstances to each rhetorical situation.

Much has been said to this point concerning the premises which help to establish the ethos of the speaker in the opinion of the audience and those which bring the audience to speak briefly of the logos -- the message itself -- namely, Aristotle's concept of topoi, insofar as it relates to the concerns of audience.

The term topoi is generally translated as meaning "lines of argument" or "place where (an argument can be found)." Friedrich Solmsen notes that:

¹⁷Classical Rhetoric for Modern Discourse (New York: The Free Press, 1969), pp. 162-163.

Topoi had been before Aristotle ready-made arguments, referring to particular subjects in the sense that orators had ready-made commonplaces for either enhancing or minimizing trustworthiness of witnesses, etc.¹⁸

Aristotle, however, views topoi in a somewhat different light.¹⁹ He evinces an approach to the topoi which focuses on making choices from the available means of persuasion based on those special lines of argument that would (according to the rhetor's assessment of his audience) assure the desired effect. In other words, Aristotle's conception of the topoi, while nominally a system to aid the rhetor, is ultimately audience-centered.

As to the source of the topoi, it is important to understand something of Aristotle's notion of invention -- the discovery of ideas for discourse -- which permeates the Rhetoric. Invention, of course, is a process of the mind of the speaker or writer, and an effective speaker or writer, in Aristotle's estimation, is a well-educated, informed person with a certain orderliness of mind. Thus, he has available to him at all times an

¹⁸"The Aristotelian Tradition in Ancient Rhetoric," American Journal of Philology, 43 (January, April, 1941), p. 40.

¹⁹Examples of Aristotelian topoi are argument from opposition, a fortiori argument (argument from degrees of more or less), and argument from consequences.

inventory of places to look for arguments in a very literal sense:

In these special regions the orator hunts for arguments as a hunter pursues game. Knowing where a particular kind of game (or argument) is to be found, he will hunt for it there, and not in some other place or places" (p. 155).

Murphy identifies a significant point with regard to Aristotle's view:

Throughout the Rhetoric, Aristotle conceives of invention as a conscious choice from a fixed stock of alternatives. He does not recognize creative imagination, or insight issuing from the unconscious in a dream, or inspiration from above. His word for invention -- heuresis -- puts the emphasis on finding rather than creating.²⁰

Murphy's point is well taken if viewed in the light of twentieth-century interest in and emphasis on creativity, but the student of discourse need be reminded that Aristotle is really interested only in the formal structure of the argument, and that this structure is useful for analyzing content but is not tied to content; infinite choices can be made within the structure based on the rhetor's judgment as to the best suasive possibilities.

Aristotle's topoi are generally considered to be the first rhetorical heuristic -- or system for finding and getting at the subject matter of discourse. As the

²⁰Murphy, p. 57.

stage in the composing process which has come to be known as invention (or sometimes pre-writing) has attracted much interest among modern rhetoricians, it is not surprising that a certain excitement has been generated with the development of modern heuristic procedures. But the emphasis among most modern investigators of the composing process has been on the subject heuristic -- helping the student to search out different things that can be said about it.²¹ Although there are sound reasons for this shift in emphasis (reasons which have to do with the contemporary speaker or writer frequently addressing an unknown audience), an important area for inquiry is a means of acquainting modern students with a variety of audiences and a systematic procedure enabling them to probe the expectations and desires of different kinds of audiences.

Books I and II of the Rhetoric which have occupied the discussion thus far are of considerably more interest to students and teachers of writing than is Book III which treats matters of style and delivery. Aristotle himself seems to find it necessary to justify and almost apologize

²¹The tagmemic discovery approach of Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike described in their book Rhetoric: Discovery and Change (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1970), is such a method.

for the treatment of style and delivery in this somewhat lengthy statement at the beginning of Book III:

. . . The whole affair of Rhetoric is the impression [to be made upon an audience]: and hence delivery must be cared for, not on grounds of justice, but as something we are bound to do. Strict justice, of course, would lead us, in speaking, to seek no more [of an emotional effect] than that we should avoid paining the hearer without alluring him; the case should, in justice, be fought on the strength of the facts alone, so that all else besides demonstration of facts is superfluous. Nevertheless, as we have said, external matters do count for much, because of the sorry nature of an audience. Meanwhile attention to style necessarily has some real, if minor, importance in every kind of exposition; it does make a difference in the clearness of an exposition whether you put a thing in this way or that -- and yet not so much difference as people think, since all these devices of style and the like are of the imagination, and meant for the ear. No one uses them in teaching mathematics! (p. 183-184).

After having relegated style to the status of a necessary ornamental evil, and indicating that most of the important treatment of the matter has been dealt with where it belongs, in the Poetics, Aristotle does go so far as to say that the essential attributes of style are clarity and appropriateness. Both qualities are weighed according to their value in relation to the audience: if language is not clear, then it cannot perform its communicative function; if it is not appropriate to the hearers, then it cannot be expected to persuade. It is important to note that those who have participated in the twentieth-century "revival of rhetoric" have disagreed

with Aristotle in his estimation of style and have looked upon it as a major suatory device, one which is not "external" but is rather an integral element of discourse.

More useful to modern-day teachers and students of writing is Aristotle's view of giving "the ordinary idiom an air of remoteness" (p. 185), or, as he explains it, using the language of everyday life but combining words in unusual or unlikely ways. He says:

Thus we see the necessity of disguising the means we employ, so that we may seem to be speaking, not with artifice, but naturally. Naturalness is persuasive, artifice just the reverse. People grow suspicious of an artificial speaker and think he has designs upon them . . ." (p. 186).

If Aristotle is to be believed, what he designates as the quality of "remoteness" indicates a fundamental difference in the structure of discourse (oral or written) from that of ordinary conversation. In short, persons do not write (or speak) as they talk. The effective writer or speaker can convey the impression of, say, street language (thus establishing common bonds with his audience), without actually employing it. "In style," Aristotle explains, "the illusion is successful if we take our individual words from the current stock [contemporary slang?] and put them together [with skill]" (p. 186). Aristotle's idea of "remoteness" has a pedagogical usefulness in helping to make clear to students

the distinction between written discourse and transcribed conversation.

The remainder of Aristotle's treatment of style deals with the literary concerns of speech-making and is largely an amplification of his admonitions on clarity and appropriateness. The ultimate purpose is always, he reminds readers periodically, to make choices suitable for the hearers or readers the rhetor has in mind to persuade.

LIMITATIONS OF ARISTOTELIAN RHETORIC

It is evident that the classical tradition of rhetoric as exemplified by Aristotle's treatise has much to offer present-day teachers and students of written discourse. Although many definitions of rhetoric have been proposed between the time of Aristotle and the time of, say, Edward P. J. Corbett, one of the modern rhetoricians who extols the continuing value of classical rhetoric in the teaching of composition, there has been remarkably little variation from a view of rhetoric as "an art governing the choice of strategies that a speaker or writer must make in order to communicate most effectively with an audience."²² The preceding section has

²²Edward P. J. Corbett, "What is Being Revived?" College Composition and Communication, 23 (October, 1967), 166.

pointed out that indeed Aristotle's Rhetoric is well worth close study by modern practitioners in the light of the audience in the rhetorical situation, and the general neglect of the concept in the teaching of writing today. In spite of its relevance, however, the Rhetoric has certain limitations. These may be instructive to examine if one has an interest in ascertaining the value of the Aristotle tradition in the modern study of discourse.

First of all, Aristotle's Rhetoric as a systematized approach to the art of persuasion contains implicit assumptions about its own audience which are simply not viable today. Aristotle was addressing a body of young male citizens who were, as has been pointed out, strongly motivated by the desire to be able to defend themselves ably in litigation. The orator, moreover, traditionally embodied the Greek ideal of aretē which was characterized by Aristotle (perhaps inadequately) as intelligence, character, and good will. He who was addressing an audience ideally represented a kind of cultural ideal of the good citizen.²³ Thus the prospective and potential students of the Rhetoric had, to a large degree, a common

²³See S. M. Halloran, "On the End of Rhetoric," College English, 36 (February, 1975), 621-631.

educational background, rich in the disciplines of logic and dialectic. Athenian orators and audiences alike could rely on certain significant commonalities of training and experience. Aristotle, then, did not have to reckon with the highly divergent student population which fills twentieth-century classrooms. These latter-day students, in addition, lack the powerful pragmatic motive that impelled the young Athenian to master the art of rhetoric, which was, after all, an art of the practical which often resulted in material gain. Furthermore, the same students lack a concept of aretē for they cannot claim a common cultural heritage. They are instead drawn from widely disparate social, ethnic, and economic origins, and as a consequence vary equally in educational background. All these factors account for what may readily be perceived as a general lack of urgency in the business of learning to communicate with an unseen audience, or, as Lloyd Bitzer has expressed it, a lack of exigency in the rhetorical situation.²⁴

Furthermore, Aristotle's doctrine of the tria genera causarum, or classification of speeches into the deliberative, forensic, and epideictic, had its own usefulness

²⁴"The Rhetorical Situation," in Contemporary Rhetoric: A Reader's Casebook, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1972), pp. 39-48.

for Aristotle's own time, as Kennedy points out; but it tends to impart to the rhetorical tradition an emphasis on polemical discourse which appears to diminish its usefulness to modern teachers of writing. That is, the extensive analysis of deliberative and forensic oratory and the rather short shrift allotted to epideictic eloquently betrays Aristotle's bias toward argumentation. There is a logical explanation for his emphasis, of course; the important rhetorical occasions at Athens were of a deliberative or forensic nature, with epideictic becoming a sort of catchall category, holding a lesser position as it was the only type of speaking that might be engaged in by non-citizens. The dominance of argumentation in rhetoric persisted virtually unquestioned until the latter part of the eighteenth century (although Cicero had suggested an extension of its domain by his interpretation of the multiform purpose of rhetoric: to teach, to please, and to incite). Nevertheless, the result was a long neglect of other purposes of discourse, especially that which might be classified as expository communication, which plays a major role in contemporary composition courses. The expository function is crucial because it makes very specific demands on the speaker or writer's ethos -- that is, it calls to account the unique quality of his experience and requires an

interpretation of that experience. The expository also embraces the self-expressive function of discourse, which may lead to a disregard for the audience, but on the other hand can provide the audience with valuable insights into the ethos of the speaker or writer. While Richard Hughes²⁵ takes a different position, asserting that narration, description, and exposition (three of what have come to be known as the "four modes of discourse") are subsumed by Aristotle's doctrine of argument, it would seem that a distinction should be made between argument and persuasion. One could profitably contend that "exposition might be accomplished by persuasion" -- that is, by the winning over or of inducing of the audience to accept a certain explanation (through the accurate assessment of the emotional state of the audience, perhaps, and the successful arousing or allaying of the appropriate emotions). On the other hand, to submit that the same might be said of argument in the Aristotelian sense would seem to suggest misleadingly that the validity in expository treatment might be established by the determining of the degree of truth or falsehood

²⁵"The Contemporaneity of Classical Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, 16 (October, 1965), 157-159.

in the treatment, at least that is the construct that Aristotle appears to intend for the term.

Aristotle's concept of topoi has been attacked and defended with equal vigor in regard to its usefulness in modern approaches to invention, and this is more a problematic issue concerning the rhetor rather than the audience, but a few words do need to be said here concerning the topoi. While they do represent the most flexible and comprehensive approach to invention in classical rhetoric and served perhaps in the Athenian context to forge common bonds between speaker and hearer, the modern producer of discourse cannot rely on the intellectual order of Aristotle's "place" or "region" where arguments may be found; nor can he count on a corresponding "place" or "region" in the mind of his audience. This reflexive reliance is requisite to the effectiveness of the topoi. Although it seems clear that Aristotle did not intend the topoi to account for individual rhetorical instances or situations (for he notes early on that Rhetoric does not have regard to the individual but rather to the class), this seems but further proof that the Rhetoric is grounded in assumptions about the audience that limit its value given most twentieth-century rhetorical situations.

A further distinction which may be made between the Rhetoric's fourth-century B.C. applicability and its modern-day efficacy in heightening an awareness of audience in the teaching of writing has to do with the potentiality of response in the mind of the reader. Aristotle, the supreme rationalist, placed his faith in the logos, the "argument proper." It may be recalled that he chastised the writers of earlier rhetorics for their shortcomings in this regard -- for their pre-occupation with "matters external to the direct issue," meaning the calculated winning over of audiences by deliberate manipulation of their emotions. Aristotle goes on to declare that ". . . trust . . . should be created by the speech itself, and not left to depend upon an antecedent impression that the speaker is this or that kind of man" [emphasis mine] (p. 8-9). Wayne Brockriede effectively emphasizes the point and suggests a distinct limitation of the Rhetoric:

. . . Greek culture focused considerable attention on the discourse itself. The audience responded aesthetically to the techniques embedded in the discourse as well as suavisly to the decision called for by the orator. In such a climate Aristotle is perhaps justified in restricting the study of ethos to what the speaker does in the speech itself to recommend his credibility. Such a restriction is misleading today since audiences appear very much affected by the image of authoritativeness and reliability which speakers have developed prior to any given

discourse.²⁶

This certainly appears to be a treasury of understatement when one considers the image of the rhetor in current contexts. In terms of public figures the effect is most noticeable. Few can doubt, for example, the rhetorical effectiveness of John F. Kennedy's inaugural address. Its widespread use in "rhetorics" offering models of rhetorical excellence is sufficient evidence. It requires a cynical mind, indeed, to be immune to its ringing phrases. Examples here would only add to countless repetition and are not required. But a second consideration arises. Thanks to extensive television coverage of Kennedy since he first announced his decision to run for the presidency, his face and form were familiar to virtually every American household. How many indeed of those watching in person or on television that January day could fail to be moved by the vision of the handsome young president whom they had followed through a hard-driving campaign during which he had thoroughly bested his opponent in forensic oratory? As he stood before the American people in full solemnity of the inaugural occasion,

²⁶"Toward a Contemporary Aristotelian Theory of Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech 52 (February, 1966), 36.

exuding vigor and confidence, it would be difficult indeed to believe that what Aristotle calls "an antecedent impression" was not a significant factor in the reception of the inaugural address, even its continuing reception long afterward.

To take another rhetorical context which is more relevant to pedagogical concerns, an example familiar to many teachers is the somewhat indifferent student of irregular attendance in the composition class who suddenly turns in a beautifully-written essay. Ideally, perhaps, the composition teacher would evaluate the essay solely on its own merits, but in fact the "antecedent impression" intervenes, making fair and dispassionate assessment difficult if not impossible.

The point of both examples is that aspiring to a discourse-centered approach such as Aristotle recommends is unrealistic when applied to present-day rhetorical situations. What usually happens in these instances is a kind of "self-fulfilling prophecy" effect -- that is, the audience's expectations (whether they be television viewers or teachers of composition) tend to be borne out, based on what Brockriede described as "the image of authoritativeness and reliability which speakers [or writers] have developed prior to any

given discourse."²⁷ Certainly, the rhetor's establishment (within the context of the message) of his qualifying ethos as Aristotle described it is important in verifying the credence of the discourse, but there is simply no realistic way of viewing the rhetorical act without taking into account the audience's pre-existing impression of the rhetor.

Another aspect of the same problem with regard to the study of ethos is that the rhetor (more dramatically in the case of the public figure, but equally in the case of the student of composition) is himself aware to some extent of the "antecedent impression" in the mind of the audience, and so (perhaps unwittingly) contributes to the "self-fulfilling prophecy." This enhancement of the audience's image is, needless to say, governed by the ethical considerations of the rhetor. In other words, he may for rhetorical effect consciously vary his language -- his "voice" -- but he is on his honor not to use his ethos and his ability to manipulate it to advance unethical ends. It may be said, then, that Aristotle's conception of a discourse-centered rhetoric which rested primarily on rational

²⁷Ibid.

considerations was perhaps idealistic for his own time and is most assuredly inadequate to deal with the rhetorical situations as they exist in the twentieth century.

Perhaps one of the most significant limitations of Aristotelian rhetoric in the light of current needs can be found in the contrast of physical relationships between rhetor and audience in the ancient world and those of today. The rhetoric of the Athenian forum, as has been discussed, occurred between a rhetor and, in most instances, his peers. The practical situation consisted of a man confronting his audience at a specified time and in a specified place. The success or failure of the means of persuasion he chose were immediately apparent; if he perceived that the choices he had made were somehow faulty or gone awry, he was at liberty to alter them in mid-sentence, if necessary. For example, Aristotle states that the speaker must start from "the [actual] opinions of the judges [audience], or else the opinions of persons whose authority they accept" (p. 156). If he perceives that he has somehow chosen a questionable authority (judging by the audience's reaction), he can then cautiously move to another opinion, one more in line with that which the response of the audience would indicate.

The rhetoric of recent times, however, takes place largely under vastly different circumstances. With the primacy of the written medium has come the separation of writer and reader, not only in space, but also in time. The rhetor can no longer make well-founded judgments about an audience to the immediate impact of the discourse (as Aristotle was wont to do, in contrast with Plato who was concerned also with the long-range effects of the discourse upon ideals and goals). He is -- he must be -- concerned with what Mackin describes as "a reasoned decision that might occur at some time after the reader had disengaged from the text or the speech."²⁸ Modern psychologists would insist, and rightly so, that the decision is influenced not only by the text but also by all of the conscious and unconscious factors (unknown to the writer, of course) that are affecting the audience during and after the process of disengagement. Therefore, Aristotle's concern with the immediacy of emotional response²⁹

²⁸Classical Rhetoric for Modern Discourse (New York: The Free Press, Inc., 1969), p. 146.

²⁹He says, for example, "Accordingly, the speaker will be more successful in arousing pity if he heightens the effect of his description with fitting attitudes, tones, and dress -- in a word, with dramatic action; for he makes the evil seem close at hand -- puts it before our eyes as a thing that is on the point of occurring or has just occurred (p. 122).

is appropriate only to a situation in which the audience is a living presence.

Finally, the most significant limitation of the Rhetoric in its relationship to the teaching of composition, and one which subsumes much of what has been said earlier, is that the Rhetoric is keyed to speakers rather than writers. Even though much of what Aristotle says has great relevance for teachers and students of writing, there are certain characteristics which do not apply to written discourse, and vice versa. It may then be useful to point out some of the distinctive features of each and to note their effect on the communicative process.

Much of what follows has to do with the contrast in the rhetorical setting or oral and written discourse. As E. D. Hirsch, Jr., notes in The Philosophy of Composition:

The chief problem of written speech as a mode of communication is that a sufficient context for interpretation must be supplied in the absence of the many types of contextual clues found in ordinary speech.³⁰

The implications for Hirsch's "context for interpretation" are rich and manifold. At the most obvious level,

³⁰Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, p. 22.

oral discourse supplies for the audience a wealth of clues encompassed by delivery, such as gesture, phrasing, and facial expression. Moreover, the speaker is aided by the clues from the audience -- the presence or absence of applause, movement or sounds signifying restlessness, etc. In short, orality provides physical evidence of the degree of adherence of minds³¹ between speaker and audience, while the writer and reader are denied such evidence. Similarly, although the full utilization of such did not materialize until long after Aristotle's time (except in poetic -- specifically, Greek drama), the speaker has at his disposal the possibility of "conditioning agents" (again, Perelman's term) such as lighting, costuming, music, and sometimes the choice of the locale itself. The writer has no comparable control over the conditions which may prevail at the time his discourse is read. These factors contribute substantially to the reasons that student writers frequently exhibit a lack of a sense of audience.

³¹A useful term employed by Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca in The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

All this is by way of saying that one of the significant differences between the two kinds of discourse is in the degree of time lapse. Aristotle's Rhetoric dealt with the dramatic immediacy of the law court and the ceremonial occasion; the writer, particularly the student writer, has no way of knowing when and under what circumstances his message will be received. Walter J. Ong expresses the imbalance clearly:

. . . the spoken word is part of present actuality and has its meaning established by the total situation in which it comes into being. Context for the spoken word is simply present, centered in the person speaking and the one or ones to whom he addresses himself and to whom he is related existentially in terms of the circumnabulent actuality. But the meaning caught in writing comes provided with no such circumnabulent actuality.³²

Aristotle adduced that "we might almost affirm that the speaker's character [ethos] is the most potent of all the means to persuasion" (p. 9). This may be overstating the case, but it is assuredly safe to say that the speaker reveals more of his ethos for good or ill than does the writer. The very physical presence of the speaker is itself, as Carroll C. Arnold points out in his essay "Oral Rhetoric, Rhetoric, and Literature," a kind of symbolic rhetorical action which

³²"The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," PMLA, 90 (December, 1975), 10.

demands a commitment, whether positive or negative.³³

The legendary Kennedy-Nixon debates are eloquent testimony to the power of ethos as it is perceived by an audience, even though the two men were facing an audience which was not "live."

What is the impact of these distinctions upon the writer's, and especially the student writer's, relationship to his audience?

Most of all, it means that, lacking the concrete information and the degree of control which the speaker has at his fingertips, the writer must create his own audience.³⁴ This is a crucial concept for the student writer who often feels the lack of an authentic audience. He very possibly feels that he is merely trying to please a remote teacher who will evaluate his efforts using criteria that are even more remote. The professional writer, however, lacking a visible audience, perhaps unconsciously creates a kind of second self as a critic; it is this critic-self who determines the shape and substance of the audience. The conception

³³"Oral Rhetoric, Rhetoric, and Literature," in Enhinger, p. 65.

³⁴See Ong, and also Perelman, especially pp. 19-23.

of the audience may be based on many things, all of them a composite of what the writer's previous notions of the role of the audience for a particular kind of discourse may be. The construct is at once highly individualized and at the same time broadly generalized, for there is a certain set of conventions of the audience for written discourse which are more or less common to all writers.³⁵ This means that the writer generally makes certain adaptations of which he may or may not be aware.

There is, for example, a tendency for the writer to standardize his language; even though he may speak a dialect or rely orally on the jargon of a particular trade, his writing is generally regarded as being more fixed and permanent than speech; therefore, the writer, confident that he possesses the tools of revision, comes across as somehow more intellectualized, perhaps more inhibited, than the speaker. And finally, for much the same reason, the writer must take pains to be more explicit, for he should be aware that he cannot rely upon all the contextual factors (discussed earlier) to fill

³⁵Perelman's term for this set of conventions is the "universal audience," by which he means "the whole of mankind or at least all normal, adult persons" (p. 30).

in the gaps in his meaning. These characteristics might well serve as a kind of rationale for the teaching of composition, and perhaps suggest some of the reasons students have such great difficulty in learning to write well.

To sum up what has been said in this chapter, there has to be a systematic attempt first of all to determine what the treatment of the concept of audience in Aristotle's Rhetoric has to offer the students and teachers of what has come to be known as the "new rhetoric." The approach was to examine various statements in the Rhetoric and to discuss them in terms of their relevance to pedagogical concerns. The latter part of the chapter then turned to a discussion of the limitations of the value of the Rhetoric as it addresses present-day attention to the concept of audience, with much importance given to the distinctive features of written as opposed to oral discourse, and the contrast in the two kinds of rhetorical situations.

Having examined the classical heritage of the concept of audience in Chapter I, Chapter II will view the importance of the concept from the standpoint of modern elements in the Aristotelian model, the speaker [ethos], the message [logos], and the audience [pathos]. It will

demonstrate in this context how an increased comprehension and awareness of audience in the rhetorical situation can enhance the effectiveness of the teaching of composition.

CHAPTER III
THE CURRICULAR CORNERSTONE

The influence of Aristotelian rhetoric has survived, in one form or another, for almost 2,500 years. As Richard E. Hughes points out,

The Aristotelian rhetoric has passed so thoroughly into most western rhetorics that it is nearly impossible to untangle the distinctively Aristotelian from the Aristotelianesque.¹

One of the most "distinctively Aristotelian" aspects of the Rhetoric is its tripartite concern with ethos, pathos, and logos, or the three elements of discourse, the speaker/writer, the audience, and the discourse itself. If rhetoric is, as Aristotle suggests, a communicative method, a system that can be taught, then the three elements may be said to form the curricular cornerstone of the art.

This cornerstone rests upon Aristotle's notion of the nature of rhetoric: that (1) rhetoric is fundamentally an art of persuasion, and (2) persuasion is

¹"The Contemporaneity of Classical Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, 16 (October, 1965), 157.

appropriate only in the areas of probability, as audiences need not be convinced of that which is verifiable. Clearly, the rhetor's skill existed in proportion to his knowledge of his audience and his ability to persuade that audience. In short, this view of Aristotelian rhetoric forms a rationale for what Edward P. J. Corbett acknowledges as a "stress upon audience as the chief informing principle in persuasive discourse."²

Three profoundly significant changes, however, had a reductive effect upon the relationship of audience to the speaker/writer, hearer/reader, message equation.³ First the fifteenth-century invention of the printing press and the resulting growth of literacy led to the disjunction of the elements in the rhetorical situation through the separation of rhetor and reader. Students of rhetoric could no longer be advised that choices of the "available means of persuasion" be made according to the immediate audience, for the audience was no longer visible and knowable.

²Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 599.

³The following account of events in the history of rhetoric is indebted to Corbett, pp. 594-630.

A further consequence of literacy brought about a second change. The estrangement of the audience led to an increased preoccupation with the discourse or text itself, a view of rhetoric as a productive art, a means of classifying kinds of literary creations and arranging their parts or offices.⁴ Matters of style, especially figures of speech and means of delivery, were the chief concerns of rhetorical study under the leadership of Petrus Ramus, a sixteenth-century French philosopher, and his followers. This concentration on the author's personal style culminated in the eighteenth-century elocutionary movement, which strove to restore pronunciation, or oral delivery, to its place of prominence in the curriculum.

A third change of approach to rhetoric served to de-emphasize the role of audience. Whereas the Ramists and the elocutionists had fostered the division between reason and imagination, and had pointed to the latter as the rightful province of rhetoric (consigning

⁴The five offices of rhetoric are intention, discovering the speech topic and gathering information about it; disposition, arrangement of information; elocution, finding the appropriate style; pronunciation, delivery (in the case of oral discourse); and memory, which later disappeared as a separate function.

matters of reason, such as grammar, to logic), Richard Whately in his Elements of Rhetoric (1828) supported the place of reason or logic as a proper part of rhetoric, and one necessary to rhetoric as "argumentative composition." Most significant for present purposes was the growing emphasis in the nineteenth century upon rules and correctness of usage which sharply delimited the participation of the reader as well as his importance. Rhetoric textbooks posited prescriptive and often dogmatic precepts for discourse. Alexander Bain and Adams Sherman Hill were among those at the forefront of this movement,⁵ and it was during the time that Hill held the prestigious and influential Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric at Harvard University that the teaching of speaking and the teaching of writing were irrevocably split, and the term rhetoric was largely replaced by the term composition, while emphasis shifted from oratory to an exclusive concern with written discourse.

It was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that there was a revival of interest in classical

⁵Both Bain and Hill have been credited with the origination of what has come to be known as the "four forms of discourse." Variations of this classification survive in a great many twentieth-century textbooks.

rhetoric and the term became once again more than a vague word in the title of many composition texts or a pejorative description of flowery or misleading discourse. Stimulated by the development of communication theory and other allied disciplines, interest in Aristotle's three elements of the rhetorical situation once again became the subject of study.⁶ A reawakening to the importance of the receiver of the discourse began to assert itself. Corbett writes in 1963:

Above all other considerations -- such as the subject and the occasion -- the audience was the consideration which gave "form" to the discourse, which dictated the means that the speaker would employ to effect this end. It is this awareness of an audience that we must bring back to the composing process, and ancient rhetoric has much to offer us on this score.⁷

The revival of interest in rhetoric as a communicative art, or as it has been called by various interpreters, the "new rhetoric," has been characterized perhaps most of all by the return to speculation about the role of audience, speculation that has been

⁶ See, for example, Corbett, Hughes, and Wayne E. Brockriede, "Toward a Contemporary Aristotelian Theory of Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 52 (February, 1966), 33-40.

⁷ "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, 14 (October, 1963), 162.

enhanced by knowledge from fields such as linguistics, semantics, psychology, and anthropology. Conjointly, an increasing number of educational institutions are offering courses and even degrees in rhetoric and/or the teaching of writing. Questions are being raised such as: What are the obligations of the writer? Of the reader? In what ways do each affect the nature of the discourse and each other? How may the principles of rhetoric be taught most effectively? Students of rhetoric, be they beginning teachers or tenured rhetoricians, have come face-to-face with the need to investigate the place of rhetoric in curriculum. Unfortunately, the term curriculum has been beset by as many variations of interpretations as the term rhetoric.

Rhetoric and Curriculum

On the one hand, rhetoricians, whose orientation is primarily theoretical and philosophical, are likely to participate in a general misconception based on an outdated interpretation of what many contemporary curriculum specialists mean to convey with the term curriculum. Curriculum is a term whose usage in English is fairly recent, dating back only as far as the nineteenth century.⁸

⁸Lawrence A. Cremin, "Curriculum Making in the United States," in William Pinar, Curriculum Theorizing (New York: McCutchan, 1975), p. 19.

It was first used to designate particular courses of study (such as the law curriculum, for example) and the specific subjects which made up these courses of study. Indeed, today there is a substantial and well-respected body of traditional curriculum specialists whose approach is geared to the concrete, the pragmatic, the eminently "useful" in discussing educational matters. This body aims at one audience -- those who are or wish to be actively engaged in the educational process and seek specific aid and assistance in meeting their day-to-day problems. The belief that this interpretation wholly represents the contemporary meaning of curriculum is entirely too limited but understandable; it has been estimated that sixty to eighty per cent of those teaching courses in "curriculum" fall into this category.⁸ It is small wonder that those whose discipline is firmly grounded in theoretical thinking would reject a utilitarian approach to the field.

On the other hand, beginning teachers in English who feel reasonably competent to teach the sonnet form or analyze a short story after having had a full complement of courses in literature, frequently quail at the thought of teaching composition. Too often their

⁸Pinar, Preface, p.. xii.

preparation for the teaching of writing has been one or possibly two courses; consequently, they have no idea what is meant by a "rhetorical approach" to teaching writing. They turn hopefully to a course or workshop in "curriculum planning" in the hope that it will afford them some content-centered kind of counsel in structuring courses. They soon reject an approach that they view as "impractical" or "all theoretical," that does, in fact, in the hands of its more liberal practitioners, seek to explore and understand the nature of the total educational experience.

Both theorists and practitioners would perhaps be willing to agree that curriculum planning is a study of intentionality, the intended outcomes of certain learning experiences. Similarly, intention or purpose is a significant part of the rhetorical act, perhaps more important than has yet been acknowledged. This would suggest, then, that there are fruitful ways of talking about curricular and rhetorical considerations, with special attention to the role of audience, that will prove helpful to both theorists and practitioners. Answers may be found by examining from different perspectives the elements of the rhetorical situation, arranged in the form of a triangle.

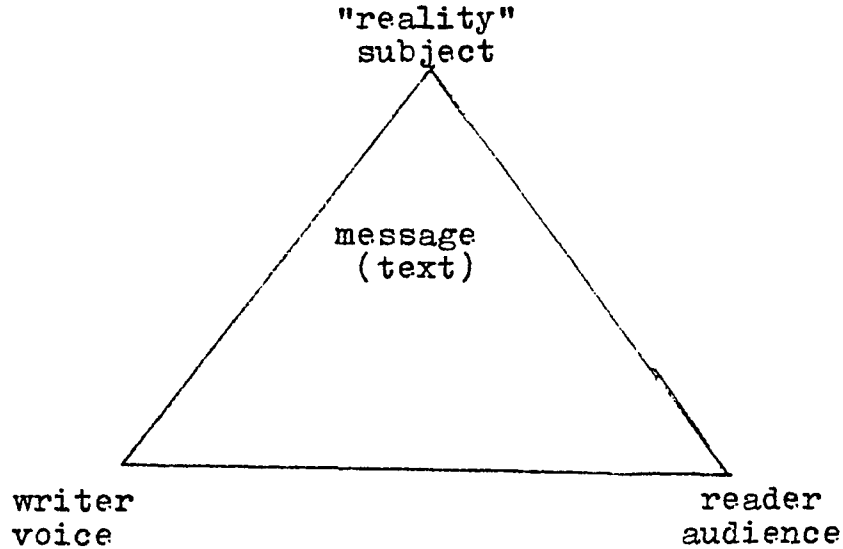


Figure 1.

Elements of the Rhetorical Situation

Another way of stating the same relationships is in terms of what Wayne Booth has described as the "rhetorical stance," or a proper balance between the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort; "the available arguments about the subject [discourse] itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker [or writer]."⁹ Booth designates his concept as the main goal of teachers of rhetoric, and by extension, composition.

⁹Wayne Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," in Douglas Ehninger, Contemporary Rhetoric (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1972), p. 220.

In a larger sense, the composition class itself is a "communicative effort" or rhetorical situation, a kind of macrocosmic analogue to Booth's "rhetorical stance." That is, the elements of the classroom (in lieu of the writer, the arguments about the subject, and the audience) may be depicted as the teacher, the classroom activity, or means by which learning takes place, and the student, all of which are related in some way to the texts of the class.

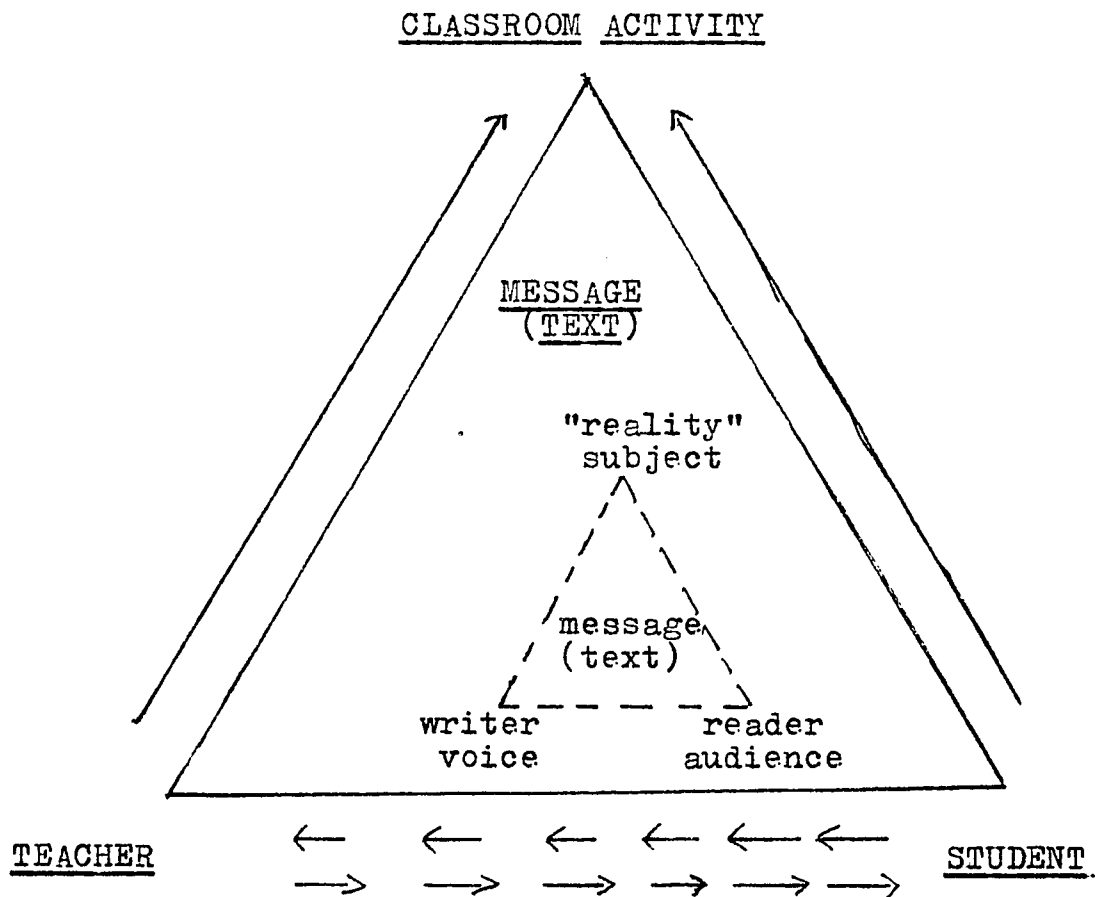


Figure 2.

The Classroom Situation and
The Rhetorical Situation

The schematic representation as shown is unavoidably linear and static. The communicative act in either situation is, of course, recursive and dynamic. For example, the teacher and student exchange "voice" and "audience" roles in many classroom situations. Similarly, the teacher's and student's perceptions of the same "reality" reflect their different orientations. Keeping Figure 2 in mind, this chapter will suggest four ways of thinking about curriculum as it pertains to the teaching of writing, and as it consequently affects audience considerations.

THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM AS SETTING

First of all, the composition classroom viewed as situational context represents a unique kind of pedagogical setting. Seymour Sarason defines the creation of settings as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals."¹⁰ It might be argued with some justification that the establishment of any class might then be considered the creation of a setting, but this paper will take the position that the nature of the setting

¹⁰Seymour B. Sarason, The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972), p. 1.

of the composition classroom, especially with regard to the "new relationships" that are formed, is, as has been stated, unique. This uniqueness is not a function of size; the setting has as little in common with the seven- or eight-student seminar that consists mainly of the reading of student efforts as scholarly writing as it has with the three-hundred-student lecture hall. Nor is it necessarily a function of the teaching experience; some of the most lively and stimulating settings are created by earnest teaching assistants and parttime instructors (those who too often comprise the ranks of teachers of writing) rather than those who have been teaching for many years.

Sarason uses the preparation of a dramatic production for the commercial theater to illustrate important aspects of the creation of a setting. The analogy is especially applicable to the creation of the composition class setting. Sarason states:

". . . There must not be conveyed . . . any distinction between the actor as a person and the actor in his particular role; he must not remain himself, but he must change himself so that he is the role."¹¹

In the classroom situation, the "actor" may be interpreted as either the teacher or the student. If the

¹¹Sarason, p. 143.

teacher is viewed as actor, then his role may be read pedagogical stance -- the relationship he bears to the student and to the classroom activity. The writing teacher must be careful not to profess one audience role and practice another; for example, he may not pretend to exalt "free" writing, then penalize students severely for lack of editing skills or the use of non-standard forms. This would not be unlike an actor stepping out of character to correct another player's reading of the lines. If, on the other hand, the student is perceived as the actor, he will assume what appears to be an appropriate role in the class as a passive and compliant automaton who receives instructions for the classroom activity and then struggles valiantly to fulfill the teacher's (or audience's) expectations. The student may, on the other hand, perhaps because of experience gained in earlier settings of which he was a part, become an active agent of change who is instrumental in actuating "new relationships" in the classroom setting.

Interestingly, in the light of the parallel to the rhetorical act, and especially to Aristotle's definition of rhetoric, Sarason quotes Laurence Olivier as saying that ". . . acting is the art of persuasion. The Actor persuades himself first, and through himself,

the audience."¹² Sarason is suggesting that the individuals involved in the creation of a setting need to look into themselves in order to discover the conditions and possibilities for change. It must be noted that change may not always seem desirable to either teacher or student for reasons that will become apparent in the next section, and the resistance to or the welcoming of change will be reflected in the nature of the third element of the classroom activity.

Finally, Sarason's extension of the analogy of the preparation of a drama to the creation of works of art in general offers some remarkably pertinent insights into the dynamics of the composition class:

Like a work of art the creation of a setting requires of a group that it formulate and confront the task of how to deal with and change reality in ways that foster a shared sense of knowing and changing and allows it to regard its development as a necessary antecedent to and concomitant of its efforts to serve and please others. Like the artist, its problems are never solved once and for all, they are ever present and varyingly recalcitrant, they discourage and distract, but it knows that this is the way it is and has to be and there is no good alternative to trying and learning. It treasures feeling and reverses reflection and calculation; it knows that there is always a tension between the two from which something may emerge.¹³

¹²Ibid.

¹³Sarason, p. 283.

The teacher of writing and the student are similar to the artist in that each, in terms of Sarason's figure, are in turn both actor (creator) and audience. It is more than anything else the "shared sense of knowing and changing" that permits exchange of roles and accounts for the special quality of the setting.

TYPES OF CLASSROOMS

A second way of examining the relationships of the composition class to the curriculum as a whole is to focus on each element of the triangle and regard each as representative of a type of classroom with its own audience function.

(1) Probably the most common type of classroom is the teacher-focused. The teacher in this case employs what Dale L. Brubaker calls ". . . the bureaucratic decision-making process . . . with commands given downward and

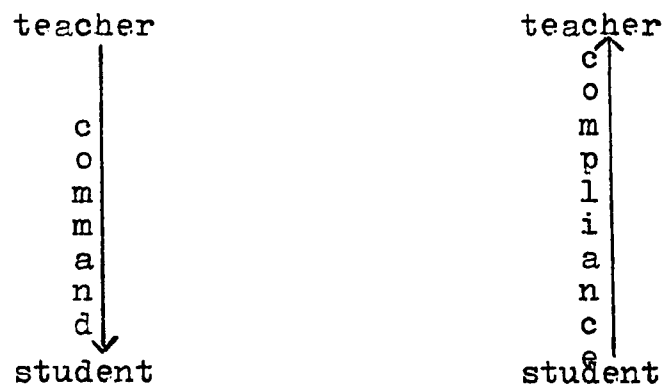


Figure 3.

The Bureaucratic Decision-Making Process

compliance expected upward."¹⁴

This teaching mode is easily identifiable and often understandable in the light of the teacher's own educational experience. In the case of inexperienced or insecure teachers, the command-compliance system offers a means of warding off the perils of ambiguity and the threat of chaos. Characteristically, rules and policies of the class are set solely by the teacher. Most of these classes are textbook-centered and lecture-dominated.

The teacher's sources of power are by virtue of positional authority and when necessary personal charisma (Brubaker's terms). That is, the spirit of the class is deeply imbued with the personality and philosophy of the teacher who may be a self-styled entertainer who is convinced that one can best attract and hold student's attention with anecdote and innuendo, or a dedicated scholar determined at all costs to cover the material assigned for the day. This type of ". . . hypothetical specialist," states John Warnock, "acknowledges that his purpose is to teach, but he is likely to characterize the act as 'presenting the subject,' not 'teaching the students'. . ."¹⁵

¹⁴Dale L. Brubaker, Creative Leadership in Elementary Schools (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1976), pp. 38-39.

¹⁵"New Rhetoric and the Grammar of Pedagogy," Freshman English News, 5 (Fall, 1976), 2.

What effect does the teacher-focused classroom have on the conception of audience by student writers? The student cannot but recognize the bureaucratic structure of the classroom; it is likely to be a replica of classroom settings he has known earlier in the educational experience. The student's response to the situation is fairly predictable. Almost unconsciously, in response to the command-compliance system, he begins early to collect observations and inferences about the teacher. No habit of dress or speech or manner is overlooked; no verbal or written comment escapes notice. Still often unaware of what is happening, the student takes these fragments of personhood and compiles them with the diligence of a police artist. The result is a composite of the student's image of the teacher, a construct that serves as a model for the student's audience in writing. The tacit premise operating here is a misunderstanding of what Young, Becker, and Pike refer to as "shared bridges:"

. . . There can be no interaction between writer and reader, and no changes in their thinking, unless they hold certain things in common, such as shared experiences, shared knowledge, shared beliefs, values, and attitudes, shared language.¹⁶

¹⁶Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike, Rhetoric: Discovery and Change (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970), p. 172.

The bridge in this case is real enough, but it may be travelled in only one direction. The misunderstanding is potentially lethal to student writing, for it badly skews the student's concept of audience. To return for a moment to the notion of student writer as actor, the student is attempting to persuade himself that what is happening is that by assessing the teacher-as-audience accurately, the teacher can then be flattered and manipulated into honoring the student's work, i.e., rewarding the student in the currency of the system, good grades. What is actually happening is that the teacher, like some older, more experienced actor is "upstaging" the amateur (student), transferring him into an unwitting pawn who is actually pleased with the results. The teacher-focused composition classroom, then, takes the responsibility for decision-making and change off the student by permitting the teacher to assume all responsibility in true bureaucratic fashion, and implicitly indoctrinates students in the belief that the teacher is the sole audience for student writing.

(2) The activity-focused composition classroom is in some ways closely related to the teacher-focused classroom. Although the term activity can refer to any kind of classroom interaction, much of the interaction involves textbooks. The normal complement of textbooks

for the composition class is as follows: a reader containing short pieces of professional writing intended to serve as models for student writing and organized according to some variation of the "four forms of discourse;" a "rhetoric" (comprising a storehouse of principles of good writing, which may be rhetorical in name only); and a handbook of usage, the framework of which is usually traditional grammar. Remedial or "developmental" or "basic writing" courses rely also on workbooks, exercises, drills, self-programmed instruction, and sometimes computer-assisted instruction. In addition, heavy emphasis is placed on testing and final examinations in which memorization and timed writing play a major part.

The theoretical basis of this type of classroom rests on certain assumptions:

1. The study of the writing process is a teachable body of subject matter (accessible through the use of the right teaching materials) which all students must master in composition class.
2. The writing act itself can be viewed and taught as a series of graduated rhetorical units (the sentence, the paragraph, the theme), each of which must be mastered in turn and exhibits an internal structure resembling

the larger.

3. When students can assemble and organize these units, they will then be able to write well and will want to write.
4. The concept of audience is not a significant consideration, as the chief end the discourse is being shaped to is that of correctness of form.

The student is, one may say, at the mercy of the materials. There is little room for personal growth or change, but since the underlying implication is that all students learn more or less at the same rate, and through the same methods, individuation to any degree becomes a hindrance to the progress of the class. The purpose of writing is lost along with the intended audience, for these are aspects of writing which extend beyond the text itself.

(3) The last classroom type to be discussed, the student-focused, is inevitably a product of educational trends and styles, or misconceptions of these trends and styles resulting from rebellion against what is considered an excessive degree of formalism in education. Its educational roots go back to the "child-centered" philosophy of what came to be known as Progressive Education, and later perversions of this

philosophy which were practiced in the 1930's and early 1940's. Its halcyon days in the composition classroom, however, occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's as a kind of accompaniment to student demands for greater academic freedom. Textbooks (if used at all) featured titles in the vernacular of the day; inside many were a dazzling array of type faces and psychedelic colors. Contents of readers were usually arranged thematically around such topics as war, race relations, the environment, the youth revolution.

The teaching style concomitant to the student-focused composition class was characterized by informality and frequently a quasi-peer relationship with the student. High-priority goals of student writing were held to be freedom of expression and, in Abraham Maslow's phrase, "self-actualization." This brought about a liberalizing of what was considered appropriate taste in language or acceptable form in writing. Encounter-group-type exercises which were designed to reduce the element of threat¹⁷ and "put students in touch with their feelings" enjoyed a flurry of popularity.

¹⁷Rogers' concept of the reduction of threat which he refers to in several of his works including the excellent essay "Communication: Its Blocking and Its Facilitation" (Reprinted in Young, Becker and Pike), has been used fruitfully by a number of writers on writing.

In this type of classroom structure, testing and final examinations are minimal; in many cases policies and even grades are decided by the students. The goal of the student-focused classroom is admirable in conception; to offer what Carl Rogers calls freedom from "institutional press," or the expectations of the educational institution, parents, and the larger society.¹⁸ Unfortunately, it is a style which lends itself readily to exaggeration and distortion.

How does the student-focused classroom affect the concept of audience in student writing? The figure of the teacher no longer looms large as the receiver and judge of the message, for he has rejected positional authority to become one of the peer group. Nor has correctness of form much to do with the discourse and its aim, for what is transmitted to the student reads, "Don't worry about editing skills -- the important thing is to express your true feelings!" The outcome is curiously solipsistic. The interlocution by default turns inward to discover the response to the message;

¹⁸Carl R. Rogers, Freedom to Learn (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969), p. 40.

the audience, in other words, is the self. There is no need to identify "shared bridges," or to nurture, in Kenneth Burke's term, "consubstantiality" between writer and reader. Nor is there reason to interpret private symbols or explore connotative values for the self-as-audience is but one step removed from what L. S. Vygotsky describes in his provocative work Thought and Language as abbreviated "inner speech."¹⁹ The writer may proclaim in concert with Humpty Dumpty in Wonderland, "A word means just what I want it to mean -- Nothing more, nothing less."

The three types are of necessity presented here as starkly as possible in order to delineate characteristics and contrasts clearly. It should be understood that each one may exist in an infinite number of degrees and permutations.

COVENANTS AND THE COMPOSITION CLASS

A third way of thinking about curriculum in the composition classroom setting is by examining the formation of covenants.²⁰ The word covenant is usually

¹⁹(Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1962).

²⁰The covenant formation concept is discussed in Brubaker, Creative Leadership, and in his "Social Studies and the Human Covenant," Social Education, 40 (May, 1976), 305-306.

described as something like "an agreement between two or more people," but the concept is more complex than such a definition would indicate. The words contract or compact are sometimes offered as synonyms, but they have a more legalistic connotation with a suggestion of being enforceable by some authority. Covenants, as the term is used here, are entered into voluntarily, and have certain special characteristics:

(1) Those engaging in covenantal relationships may form tacit or expressed agreements. Clearly, tacit agreements are most vulnerable to ambiguity and misunderstanding, yet paradoxically they are often the most binding type of agreement.

(2) Each party who agrees to enter a covenant believes that he or she will somehow be enriched by conscious commitment to the relationship. Once again, entry is purely voluntary, but that is not to say arbitrary; therefore, there must be motive which is usually the envisaging of gain of some kind.

(3) The gain may be that the other party(ies) to the covenant will behave in a more predictable manner. In other words, each party hopes to bring about some significant change in the other that will assure that the covenant will be enacted according to the "rules of the game."

(4) The change that is desired and that may be brought about is that moral or ethical order is introduced into the relationship. The implication is that a person who enters into a covenantal relationship does so partly because of some felt disorder or disharmony.

(5) In a successful covenant, the parties will experience a certain amount of empathy for each other. The possibility for empathy must, of course, be recognizable in advance and thereby serve as an impetus to forming the covenant, but even more important is the potential for an increasing degree of empathy with the continuation of the covenant.²¹

At this point, any effective teacher or anyone who has experienced successful teaching will recognize covenant formation as that which ideally happens between student and teacher in any educational setting. But it is my contention that covenant formation need not necessarily occur in the classroom in order for learning to take place. Learning, is, after all, by definition "the acquiring of knowledge,"

²¹This description of covenant characteristics is adapted from Brubaker, "Social Studies," p. 305.

which says nothing about the role of the transmitter of knowledge. It is perfectly possible in a course, say, in advanced accounting or metaphysical poetry for the student to come away from the course with very positive feelings without a covenant having been formed between that student and the teacher, or the student and any other student in the class. The expertise of the teacher coupled with the enthusiasm of the student for the subject (or for the potential rewards to be gained as a result of acquisition of the subject matter) may make for a highly successful education experience. Such is seldom if ever the case in the writing class, except perhaps in the case of the gifted student. For the large majority of composition students, covenant formation plays a highly significant role in learning to write.

Brubaker identifies four kinds of covenants which vary in two important qualities -- intensity and duration: (1) Covenants of little intensity and brief duration, (2) Covenants of high intensity and brief duration, (3) Covenants of little intensity and long duration, and (4) Covenants of high intensity and long duration. Most of the covenants which have been previously formed by the student and the teacher have in all probability been of the first three types, a function of the ephemeral nature of most human

relationships in contemporary society. For this reason, some readjustment of thinking is required in order to enter the fourth type of covenant. "Although this is the rarest type of personal covenant," says Brubaker, "for it involves considerable openness and risk-taking, it can be the most rewarding."²²

The possibilities for this type of covenant formation are determined by the degree of openness and the kind of thinking activity engaged in by both teacher and student. The thinking activity can, for purposes of demonstration, be divided into two types.

Sometimes called:	Vertical R(eality)-Type Left Hemispheric	Lateral A(utistic)-Type Right Hemispheric
Characteristics:	sequential selective algorithmic analytical task-oriented reality-adjusted	generative inclusive aleatory synthetic playful fantasy-dominated

Figure 4.
Types of Thinking

It is only in the presence of the second type of thinking that covenant formation of the fourth kind can

²²Dale L. Brubaker, "Social Studies and the Creation of Settings," Publication #7 of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Humanistic Education Project, 1976, p. 4.

take place. The mind of student or teacher who benefits most from the experience must free itself to take leave of fixity, finiteness, the passion for "the correctness of form." It must embrace fancy, ambiguity, the least likely possibility. It requires more of a risk than many persons are willing to take.

In addition, something else is requisite in the before-the-beginning stage of covenant formation, and it is this factor that ultimately determines the audience considerations, whether they involve the student-as-audience or the teacher-as-audience. It has been called by many names: Dissonance, Disequilibrium, Conflict, Anxiety, Craving for Understanding, Sense of Problem. Perhaps the most useful designation is Lloyd Bitzer's term exigency, one which unlike the rest, seems to enfold both the positive and the negative connotations that are essential to the concept. An exigence is defined as "an imperfection marked by urgency."²³ There must be, as a necessary condition for the formation of the covenant between teacher and student (or student and student), as between writer and reader in the rhetorical situation, the exigence of

²³Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," in Ehninger, p. 43.

a felt need.

It is within this exigency -- shaped according to its very nature -- that the determiners of audience appear, for once the need is acknowledged, many questions arise: Felt need to do what? To whom? For what purpose? Therefore, it is vitally important for both teacher and student to examine and assess the possibilities for covenant-making, and the nature of the covenant once it is made, in order to determine whether or not the above questions can be answered, and whether the answers are or are not appropriate to the rhetorical situation. These determiners will reveal the kind of setting that exists in the composition class, as well as the kind of audience awareness that students experience in their written discourse.

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVENESS

The final perspective will attempt to identify some criteria by which the learning situation may be judged. Just what is it that must happen in order for students to have an optimal opportunity to make use of their communicative abilities? It has been made clear that the creation of fruitful classroom settings, as with the creation of a meaningful piece of discourse,

is really a matter, in its simplest terms, of effecting a well-balanced rhetorical stance. Students and teachers share the responsibility, for as A. M. Tibbetts notes,

Managing rhetorical stance is more than just the student's responsibility. As teachers, we are at times also responsible for creating real-world situations to which the students may respond and in which they can create useful stances.²⁴

Teachers do not teach in a vacuum; students do not write in a vacuum. Both are involved in a complex network of relationships with their own self-image, with each other, and with whatever activity is taking place in the classroom whether it be verbal or non-verbal. In many pedagogical situations, the involvement is with insights that inhere within a given field of study, such as, say marine biology. Learnings relate to data occurring within a temporary framework (temporary because new knowledge is always replacing the old) or pertaining to actions that are connected to phenomena of a given sort.

Rhetoric, however, does not fit into the same framework. It is a method rather than a subject, and as such, may be used to explore any area of knowledge.

²⁴"Rhetorical Stance Revisited," College Composition and Communication, 26 (October 1975), 250.

It has its own epistemology, makes its own ground rules. What is more, it is important to be reminded frequently of the province of rhetoric. Donald Bryant states:

. . . Rhetoric is concerned, said Aristotle, only with those questions about which men dispute, that is, with the contingent -- that which is dependent in part upon factors which cannot be known for certain, that which can be otherwise [*Italics mine*].²⁵

This means, for one thing, that the writer makes choices among the available means of persuasion based upon the degree of probability of each choice; and the degree of probability, of course, is determined by the effect a chosen argument is likely to have upon a given audience.

In order for students to feel free to make these kinds of choices, the setting must be characterized by flexibility, tolerance, a respect for that "which cannot be known for certain, that which can be otherwise." Teachers of writing, says Janice Lauer, "find [themselves] in the uneasy role of the Delphic Oracle who does not give answers but riddles."²⁶ They must recognize that often they are acting as audience for

²⁵ "Rhetoric: Its Function and Its Scope," in Ehninger, p. 20.

²⁶ "The Teacher of Writing," College Composition and Communication, 27 (December, 1976), 342.

students whose culture has vastly different notions of appropriateness and acceptable usage from their own. In the same way, teachers need to be cautious about projecting their own doctrines of appropriateness and usage while conveying the implicit message that these are the only acceptable forms. This kind of insistence upon static notions of rightness and wrongness denies the essential qualities of rhetor which are expressed succinctly by Bryant:

Rhetoric is primarily concerned with the relations of ideas to the thoughts, feelings, motives, and behavior of men. Rhetoric, as distinct from the learnings which it uses, is dynamic; it is concerned with movement. It does rather than is . . . It is chiefly involved with bringing about a condition, rather than discovering or testing a condition.²⁷

For those who participate in the creation of settings for the teaching of composition (and this includes both teachers and students) Bryant's statement seems to warn against the excessively teacher-dominated style of pedagogy and implies that teachers should aspire to being open-ended, courageous, and relativistic. The second hazard, over-emphasis upon classroom activity (which again includes such intangible factors as the mode used for conducting class, as well as the more

²⁷Bryant, p. 25.

tangible teaching materials), is avoidable by paying close attention to Bryant's audience-oriented definition of the rhetorical function, "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas." Following this injunction requires an admission that no single activity or topic, for example, will be right for every student or will be successful in the hands of every teacher, or even with every class taught by the same teacher. The method of rhetoric itself must be constantly re-appraised and readjusted to meet audience requirements of different rhetorical situations. As for the potential problems inherent in student domination, they are less threatening than many teachers unsure of their role would imagine; teachers should feel comfortable enough so that they are able to voluntarily relinquish the authoritarian role at times. The chief danger in undue student focus is that students are denied the rigor and discipline of "adjusting ideas to people," that is, they may be tempted to forget that the main business of writing is communication rather than self-expression. If audience sensitivity is to be strengthened, the classroom interrelationships and activities must extend far beyond the self-enveloped world that may exist. It is evident, then, that while some elements can perhaps profitably be garnered for each type of

classroom, the most effective teaching and learning take place within a balance of three styles, the proportions of which are determined by the specific nature of the individual classroom.

With respect to the concept of covenant formation, it is but a convenient label for the harmonious relationship that may exist between elements of the rhetorical stance. This element of conciliation has been pondered by others. Young, Becker, and Pike's concept of "shared bridges" speaks to the same concern. At another point they state,

Whatever other purpose rhetoric may serve, it is fundamentally a means of achieving social cooperation. The writer's goal is to engage in some sort of cooperative action with the reader.²⁸

Kenneth Burke also speaks of "bridging devices," and makes a significant point about the distinction between classical rhetoric and the "new rhetoric:"

If I had to sum up in one word the difference between the "old" rhetoric and a "new" (a rhetoric reinvigorated by fresh insights which the "new sciences" contributed to the subject), I would reduce it to this: the key term for the old rhetoric was "persuasion" and its stress was upon deliberate design. The key term for the "new" rhetoric would be "identification" which can

²⁸Young, Becker, and Pike, p. 171.

include a partially "unconscious factor in appeal."²⁹

Burke goes on to define "identification" as a person's material and mental ways of placing oneself as a human being in groups and movements.³⁰ Such is the nature of successful covenants formed between student and teacher, or student and student, to the same extent as those formed between writer and reader.

Medical practitioners have in their lexicon a very useful concept which has great relevance here. The concept is synergism (from the Greek synergis, working together). Synergism may be defined as the simultaneous or joint action of separate agencies or substances which together have a greater total effect than the sum of their effects acting separately. Physicians must be keenly aware of the potential power in synergistic action that may result from the combination of two or more drugs or from the combination of a certain drug with certain foods. In the same way, the learning experience in the composition classroom must have a kind of synergistic effect upon students.

²⁹Kenneth Burke, "Rhetoric -- Old and New," The Journal of General Education, 5 (April, 1951, 203).

³⁰Ibid.

Students must be able to comprehend the various agencies of their learning -- the relationship with the teacher and with other students, rhetorical principles and the classroom activities that explore them, the mixture of cultural values which they and others bring to the classroom -- and transcend them if they are to go on to other unknown audiences who will make new and different demands upon their communicative skills. In other words, the validity of the composition class, when viewing it in relation to the entire curriculum, can only be measured in the degree to which its effect is generative, to which it can create an "alchemic opportunity" (again, Burke's term) for students to reach beyond human divisiveness through the most effective use of language.

SUMMARY

Aristotelian rhetoric has remained a powerful influence since the fifth century B.C., and even today has much to contribute to the teaching of composition. Although the rubrics of rhetoric have undergone semantic and philosophical changes, the term rhetoric has maintained the Aristotelian interpretation of communication, that is, the interaction taking place among

the speaker/writer, the audience, and the discourse. These three elements may be said to comprise a curricular cornerstone when rhetoric is viewed in the light of its pedagogical implications. Because rhetoric does involve the making of choices among available arguments rather than seeking proof from demonstrable scientific fact, the speaker or writer devises his or her own "case" depending upon selecting the arguments which will have the greatest suasive effect. And because the suasive effect is determined by the nature of the hearers or readers, the element of audience is the force which more than any other animates the rhetorical occurrence.

Certain facts in the history of rhetoric have at times seemed to diminish the significance of the audience. For example, the invention of the printing press and the spread of literacy severed the face-to-face relationship of speaker/writer and audience, putting distance and usually time between them. Another significant shift of emphasis occurred as a result of Petrus Ramus, a sixteenth-century French scholar who took the five offices of rhetoric and divided them between logic and rhetoric -- assigning style and delivery to rhetoric, thereby emphasizing the imaginative faculties of the author, with scant attention given to the receiver of the discourse. The Ramists

helped to prepare the way for the elocutionists who stressed oral delivery, again emphasizing the creator of the discourse rather than the intended audience. The nineteenth-century history of rhetoric witnessed various prescriptions for correctness of form including such formulaic doctrines as classification according to the four forms of discourse. It was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that a revival of interest in classical rhetoric, especially Aristotelian rhetoric, once again focused attention on the interrelationship of the speaker/writer, audience, and discourse.

The older rhetoric had been characterized by close attention to the creation of the text, and the form and style of the ultimate product resulting from the creative process. The new rhetoric, armed with knowledge from such areas as psychology and linguistics, examines the complex interaction between writer and reader, with as much attention to factors affecting the interpretation of the text as to those affecting its creation. This change of emphasis has brought about the development of new perspectives on the rhetorical action³¹ as the application of rhetorical

³¹There is, for example, a fascinating investigation in progress of the reader-oriented approach to literature and the interaction between text and reader.

principles to the teaching of composition has proved to be of great interest to those with pedagogical concerns. This interest is being reflected in the increasing number of courses and degrees in rhetoric now being offered by educational institutions, as well as an abundance of textbooks and journal articles being published.

Many persons concerned with the teaching of composition have struggled to integrate the new rhetoric and contemporary theories of curriculum. Often they are hampered by erroneous conceptions of curriculum. These misconceptions perhaps indicate growing need for increased cooperation between schools of education and teachers of composition.

The three elements of a rhetorical situation first pointed out by Aristotle have once again begun receiving attention. Wayne Booth has called for a state of balance between them which he refers to as the "rhetorical stance." Similarly, the composition class itself may be represented as a rhetorical situation composed of teacher, student, and classroom activity, or learning process. Using this parallel representation, the remainder of the chapter is devoted to exploring four ways of analyzing the teaching of writing as rhetorical situation -- and more expressly, the role of audience --

as a facet of curriculum.

(1) The composition class may be viewed as a unique kind of setting. It has a certain uniqueness because of the extraordinary complexity of the inter-relationships among the three elements. Seymour Sarason's use of the preparation of a dramatic production as setting serves as a convenient analogue. The teacher and student play shifting roles (of creator and audience) which makes possible many creative opportunities of "knowing and changing" within the classroom setting.

(2) The three elements may be used as instruments to describe three types of classrooms, each with its own audience function. The first type is the teacher-focused which may be designated as the "command-down-compliance-up" mode. The student's goal is to say and write whatever will please the teacher. Responsibility for decision-making is taken off the student, and the teacher assumes the role of the sole audience.

A second type is the classroom activity-focused which is closely related to the teacher-focused in its bureaucratic temper, but relies even more heavily on teaching materials and testing. This type of classroom views the teaching of writing as a linear process which must be mastered by the student in increments

of increasing length and complexity. There is little or no attention given to the shaping of discourse to a given audience, for the chief criterion here is highly-structured organization and with it correctness of form.

The last type is the student-focused classroom, which tends to be affected by social trends and reached its height during the late 1960's. Teaching materials, course content, and teaching styles reflected an effort to be "relevant" and to enable the student to "express his true feelings." In this type of pedagogical climate, affective expression assumed the highest priority. As a result, the audience by default becomes the self, and only the self. Communication takes a back seat to self-expression.

(3) The composition class operates by way of covenants. The covenant-formation process and the nature of covenants are of special character and are essential, given the particular nature of the composition class. Of the several types of covenants, students and teachers of writing need to form covenants of high intensity (or commitment) and long duration. A certain type of thinking is required for this type of covenant formation. It may be distinguished by a freedom of thought which permits and even invites the ambiguous and unpredictable. In addition, there must

be an exigence, or felt need, that sparks the rhetorical occurrence.

(4) There are identifiable criteria for effectiveness in the teaching of writing. One is the measure of success in both students' and teachers' ability to develop and function in a well-balanced "rhetorical stance." This necessitates, among other things, the courage on the part of the teacher to relinquish at times the traditional authoritarian role in order to function more effectively as audience. Another is the degree of acceptance of the notion of probability as opposed to certainty. This acceptance also requires a certain amount of risk. A third criterion is the ability of the participants to understand and accept the culture or variety of cultures of a particular audience, for the cultural mix is a significant audience consideration. All of these criteria reflect the importance of an effective combination of the three pedagogical styles if audience sensitivity is to be enhanced and learning is to take place. Much of this is by way of saying that the teacher-student relationship, as well as the writer-reader relationship, must be one of "cooperative action" and collegiality.

The concept of synergism is a useful one in illuminating the possibilities of what may happen as a

result of the interaction of the composition class. If the goals of students and teachers are to be actuated, a kind of "alchemic opportunity" must transpire. This will enable students to employ the communication skill they have acquired in dealing with rhetorical situations with yet unknown audiences long after they have left the classroom.

Richard Larson writes,

A student of rhetoric examines the features of language that help establish the identity of the writer, or speaker, in the hope of learning to control both the image of himself that emerges from his writing and the impression he gives of his attitude toward subject and listener.³²

Establishing the identity of the student becomes the mission of the curriculum in which he participates; exploring the image of himself and the impression he gives to his audience will be discussed in the next chapter.

³²Richard L. Larson, "The 'New Rhetoric' in the Training of Teachers of Composition," in Oscar M. Haugh, ed., Teaching the Teacher of English (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968), p. 38.

CHAPTER IV
THE MODERN LEGACY

The revival of interest in rhetoric in recent years has in a sense compounded the problems of teachers of English. It has muddied the waters of the traditional discipline of English, a discipline whose outer limits were already unclear. English teachers had already wearied of defending themselves against assumptions by those in other subject areas that English is primarily a "service" discipline -- that is, English is included in the curriculum, according to this view, mainly to enable students to deal adequately with the language of other fields of knowledge. To be told that rhetoric is, in the classical sense, method rather than subject only seemed to reinforce the opposition. In addition, the incursion of knowledge from the various fields of study newly attendant upon rhetoric (such as psychology, linguistics, and philosophy) seemed a violation of the traditional sacerdotal view -- that English teachers are reverent "keepers of the flame" of both pure, unchanging language and of the sacred texts of literature. In short, the upstart rhetoric seemed to some a threat to a branch of knowledge which had struggled valiantly

for academic respectability and validity as a formal educational discipline in its relatively short hundred-year lifespan.

Once literacy became widespread, some of the impetus of the "service" function of English was spent. Thus the content-revering model prevailed in the first half of this century. The conflict between the content approach and the rhetorical approach is that the former almost totally ignores one of the elements of discourse -- the reader or audience. The paradigm is one of the student of English as receiver rather than sender of messages, serving as a receptacle for the subject matter and/or precepts of literature, traditional grammar, and composition (which was still redolent of nineteenth century formalism). The student should not be a "bench-bound listener," says Jerome Bruner, but should be "taking part in the formulation and at times may play the principle role in it."¹ Otherwise he is no more than a passive entity, evaluated according to his ability to ingest a certain body of material, say, the nature of literary "form." But, argues James Moffett,

Learning "form" this way is really learning content, and the result is quite different

¹"The Act of Discovery," On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 83.

than if the student practices form or feels it invisibly magnetize the whole curriculum. Learning and learning how to result in very different kinds of knowledge.²

To elaborate on Moffett's distinction, learning how to, as opposed to learning, strongly implies that (1) the learner is actively engaged in the process, and (2) the learning is taking place for some purpose. One does not learn how to play a trumpet or write a sentence impersonally or purposelessly. If learning how to is thus linked to commitment and purposiveness, then it seems reasonable to suggest that with regard to the teaching of English, and more specifically the teaching of writing, the end of the process must inevitably involve the transmitting of a message to an audience. David K. Berlo even goes so far as to declare that purpose and audience are indivisible, and that "All communicative behavior has as its purpose the eliciting of a specific response from a specific person (or group of persons)."³ In all suasy discourse and much that is not overtly suasy the desirable response from the audience is change, even if the hoped-for change is

²Teaching the Universe of Discourse (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), p. 3.

³The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960), p. 16.

empathetic rather than ideological in nature. But knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of empathy, even though that knowledge may not always be consciously acquired. For, as James Britton declares:

. . . Adjustment to the audience is inherent in the social contract of all language use. Thus we do not learn our mother tongue and then follow this basic training with a course on audience rhetoric: the two run concurrently and are central to socialization in general.⁴

How then, does the writer go about adjusting to an audience in an electronic age which, for the most part, has separated writers and "live" audiences, putting between them great gulfs of space and often time as well? Of course, in the classroom, most writing is nominally directed at the teacher, but in fact, unless the classroom is altogether teacher-focused (in the sense that the term has been used earlier), the efforts of students are all too often directed at no one at all.

Rhetorical theorists as well as teachers of composition have long wrestled with the problem. Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca suggest that the collective addressee of argumentation consists of a

⁴The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18)
(London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1975), p. 60.

"universal audience" which in turn "consists of the whole of mankind, or at least, of all normal, adult persons."⁵ Perelman, however, makes some assumptions that leave the "universal audience" in a problematic position at best. Perelman equates reason (that of readers) with understanding (of the discourse), and subsequently understanding with acceptance (of the message). John W. Ray suggests that Perelman's doctrine encounters other obstacles:

Since it is the orator who creates a personal concept of the universal audience, Perelman's rhetor is faced with [a problem]: the rhetor has no way of knowing if that personal concept of the universal audience is correct. . . . Are we to have as many universal audiences as we have speakers? Were this the case, we would face the anarchic situation of each individual's universal audience being as good as anyone else's universal audience, since no a priori standard is given which would enable us to choose between them.⁶

Indeed, how many writers deliberately envision a collective audience of strangers? As was stated in Chapter I, herein lies one of the significant distinctions between speaking and writing. The orator's visible audience may, as Aristotle suggested, have at least one characteristic

⁵The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 30.

⁶"Perelman's Universal Audience," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64 (December, 1978), 370-371.

in common (such as age or degree of wealth), but the writer in most instances is addressing a distant, unknown audience, each member of which will probably be reading in different situational contexts. Walter Ong has provided a seminal notion in his excellent essay entitled "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction."⁷ Although Ong is speaking primarily of fiction, what he proposes is applicable to virtually all types of written discourse. The writer, says Ong, "must construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role. . . ." Writers, in other words, "fictionalize" their audience, originally according to how earlier writers in their experience have done this, but eventually making their own modifications. The writer casts the reader in a particular role, and the audience in turn fictionalizes itself, making adaptations according to the role in which it has been cast. To carry Ong's proposition a step farther, it is tempting to speculate that the audience fictionalizes not only itself but the writer as well; the writer, then, is also conforming to a set of expectations. This is assuredly true of composition class writers. This point of reciprocity will be touched on again later.

⁷PMLA, 90 (December, 1975), 9-21.

Thus, the awareness of the complex interrelationship of writer and audience illustrates the severe limitations of the content model of English education. Some attempts have been made toward the structuring of a model which would suggest something of the dynamic nature of the rhetorical action. James Moffett has developed a complete curriculum which seeks to project the student "in all possible relations that might obtain between him and an audience and a subject."⁸ Moffett posits that, in accord with the classical tradition, English has no content; it is rather a system of symbols which one must master -- that is, be able to think, talk, read, and write in -- in order to be able to use language to participate in discourse about other subject matter. The learning process, as Moffett relates it in his Teaching the Universe of Discourse⁹ is "student-centered" as the student is viewed as the initiator rather than merely the recipient of rhetorical action. Moffett advocates a greater reciprocity among the three elements of discourse which will (as pointed out in Chapter II, and illustrated in Figure 2)

⁸"I, You, and It," College Composition and Communication, 16 (December, 1965), 247.

⁹(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

result in a more egalitarian and humane classroom. The primary dimension of growth in Moffett's scheme is a movement from the center of the self outward. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that the self gradually enlarges as the mind develops, "assimilating" the world to itself and "accommodating" itself to the world, as Moffett describes the process in Piagetian terms.¹⁰ Drawing on theories from such fields as linguistics, psycholinguistics, and psychology (and such minds as Bernstein, Piaget, and Bruner), Moffett has designed a curriculum organizing discourse into a hierarchical spectrum and based on the assumption that a child's verbal and cognitive growth progresses from initial "inner" speech to ultimate social speech. This successive "decentering" moves from a sole audience of self to a "distant, unknown, and different" audience in sequenced stages, or to put it another way, the developmental path of discourse is through levels of increasing abstraction. Meanwhile, the student, who is actively engaged in learning about language with other students

¹⁰For example, Moffett believes that the theory of decentering, essentially Piaget's, is paralleled by Basil Bernstein's theory of "restricted" and "elaborated" codes, although the latter actually describes social class differences.

as well as the teacher, takes part in what Moffett calls the "naturalistic" method of pedagogy. His praxis is fully elaborated in his companion volume, A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers.¹¹

Discourse is perceived as a continuum divided into four levels, characterized by progressive "decentering" -- that is, each level moves the audience farther away from the speaker, not only in space, but also in time (See Figure 5). Moffett further clarifies the schematic representation of the Spectrum of Discourse saying:

The essential purpose of such a curriculum would be to have the student abstract at all ranges of the symbolic spectrum and progressively to integrate his abstractions into thought structures that assimilate both autistic and public modes of cognition. The hypothesis is that speaking, writing, and reading in forms of discourse that are successively more abstract makes it what is entailed at each stage of the hierarchy, to relate one stage to another, and thus to become aware of how he and others create information and ideas.¹²

Moffett admits that his model "falsifies a lot" through its seeming linearity. "For example," he says, "it tends

¹¹(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

¹²Teaching the Universe, p. 25.

Interior Dialogue (egocentric speech)			P
Vocal Dialogue (socialized speech)	<u>Recording, the drama of what is happening.</u>	PLAYS	O
Correspondence			
Personal Journal			E
Autobiography			
Memoir	<u>Reporting, the narrative of what happened.</u>	FICTION	T
Biography			
Chronicle			
History	<u>Generalizing, the exposition of what happens.</u>	ESSAY	R
Science			
Metaphysics	<u>Theorizing, the argumentation of what will, may happen.</u>		Y

Figure 5.

Moffett's Spectrum of Discourse¹³

to take the speaker-listener relation first, then the speaker-subject relation. Only a model of one or two dimensions more could justly represent the simultaneous play of both relations."¹⁴

¹³Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 47-48.

Moffett is careful to note that teachers must see to it that students do not "get stuck" on any one level of the continuum, with one and only one kind of audience, especially the teacher as audience. In the chapter "Learning to Write by Writing" he recommends various ways of providing "feedback and response" by having the class function as audience. "Classmates are a natural audience," says Moffett. "Young people are most interested in writing for their peers. . . students write much better when they write for each other."¹⁵

The curriculum can be planned in a series of units which reflect the changing relationship between speaker and discourse; the curriculum thus recapitulates the mental growth of the student. He would be asked to produce everything from "all kinds of real and invented interior monologues and dramatic monologues" to "essays of generalization and essays of logical argumentation"¹⁶ consonant with the continuum from inner speech to high-level inference.

Although Moffett's curriculum is admirable in its ambition to enable the student "to play freely the whole symbolic scale" of language, and is certainly

¹⁵Ibid.; p. 193.

¹⁶Moffett, "I, You, and It," p. 247.

convincing in its argument that a more "naturalistic" classroom methodology can indeed enhance the learning process, there are some important points that remain unclear. Perhaps the major one concerns the order of the development of language skills on what he understands to be the fundamental assumptions of certain psychologists, mainly Piaget and Vygotsky:

According to Piaget, and Vygotsky agrees with him, the early egocentric speech of children becomes gradually "socialized" and adapts itself to other people. . . .The movement is from self to world, from a point to an area, from a private world of egocentric chatter to a public universe of discourse" [Emphasis mine].¹⁷

Moffett plots the progression of his curriculum according to the following schema which illustrates his conception of increasing distance between speaker and audience:

Reflection -- Intrapersonal communication between two parts of one nervous system.

Conversation -- Interpersonal communication between two people in vocal range.

Correspondence -- Interpersonal communication between remote individuals or small groups with some personal knowledge of each other..

Publication -- Impersonal communication to a large anonymous group extended over space and/or time.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., p. 246.

¹⁸Teaching the Universe, p. 33.

VYGOTSKY AND WRITING

Vygotsky's theory of intellectual development as outlined in his valuable study Thought and Language clearly reveals that the author patently disagrees with Piaget on several major points.¹⁹ Piaget, says Vygotsky, hypothesizes that

The development of thought is based on the premise taken from psychoanalysis that child thought is originally and naturally autistic [subconscious, individualistic] and changes to realistic thought [conscious, directed] only under long and sustained social pressure.²⁰

In the center, according to Piaget, stands egocentric speech which may be compared to a monologue in a play, or simply thinking aloud, unaware of and unconcerned with an interlocutor. Gradually, at or near the beginning of school age, social desires and needs make themselves felt, and egocentric speech diminishes and atrophies. Piaget's theory of the development of thought as described here does indeed stand behind

¹⁹(Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1962). The editors of Thought and Language are careful to note that Vygotsky's criticism is based on Piaget's two books, Le langage et la pensée chez l'enfant (Neuchâtel-Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1923) and Le jugement et le raisonnement chez l'enfant (Neuchâtel-Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1924), and is not fully applicable to his later findings.

²⁰Ibid., p. 13.

Moffett's belief in the direction of mental development from self to world.

Vygotsky, however, disagrees strongly with Piaget on the development and function of egocentric speech. He argues that egocentric speech evolves from the earliest speech which is essentially social, and at a certain point is bifurcated and becomes either egocentric of communicative. The egocentric speech begins to become more and more telegraphic as the child learns to master inner speech -- the ability to "think words." Thus, in Vygotsky's view, the development of speech is not from the self to the world, but rather from the social to the self. This view, rather than supporting Moffett's, is in contradiction to it.

Vygotsky's investigation of the relationship between instruction and development in the area of written speech²¹ also seems to be in conflict with Moffett's explanation of the development of writing skills as they relate to his Spectrum of Discourse. Whereas Moffett indicates that "writing is learned in the same basic way other activities are learned,"²² and the key factor

²¹Ibid., p. 98-100.

²²Teaching the Universe of Discourse, p. 193.

in an individual's success is the quality of human feedback or audience response, Vygotsky states:

Our investigation has shown that the development of writing does not repeat the developmental history of speaking. Written speech is a separate linguistic function differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning.²³

The development of written speech, says Vygotsky, is a function of the child's ability to manage the high degree of abstraction and the deliberate, analytical action required.²⁴ Rather than occurring developmentally at the end of Moffett's sequence of verbal discourse when the child has learned to handle the notion of probability of experience involved in the ability to theorize, Vygotsky concludes that "the psychological functions on which written speech is based have not even begun to develop"²⁵ when instruction begins, and this accounts for there being a gap of as much as six to eight years between a child's "linguistic age" in speaking and in writing.²⁶

²³Vygotsky, p. 100.

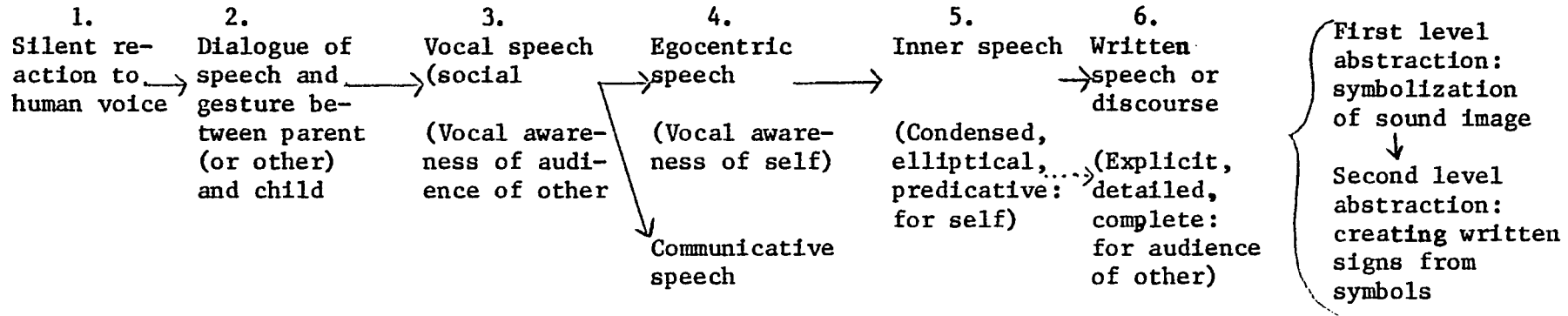
²⁴Vygotsky explains this by stating: "Speech that is merely imagined and that requires symbolization of the sound image in written signs (i.e., a second degree of symbolization) naturally must be much harder than oral speech for the child. . ." (p. 98-99).

²⁵Vygotsky, p. 100.

²⁶Ibid., p. 98.

Although both Moffett and Vygotsky are speaking of the developmental stages of language learning in the early years, often teachers of composition at the secondary and college levels are puzzled and dismayed to discover that many of their students display only a very primitive and immature ability to create meaningful written discourse. Although the student may possess sufficient vocabulary and knowledge of syntactic structures to serve his needs in oral speech, the "psychological functions" necessary for the production of written discourse are simply not developed. A schematized view of the development of writing abilities implied by Vygotsky is helpful in suggesting some factors in student writing ability or disability (See Figure 6).

The child's earliest contact with communication is his wordless response to the human voice. (Crying and babbling are largely an emotional form of behavior not closely related to thought). Soon, as the child becomes more responsive, there is dialogue of speech and gesture between parent (or other) and child. As the child learns to speak more words, he becomes more aware of the social function and consequences of language, i.e., that language can be used in affecting an audience. Gradually, this vocal speech divides into (1) egocentric speech, which is not unlike soliloquy or



Schema of Vygotsky's Implied Development of Writing Skills

Figure 6.

dramatic monologue and marks the child's vocalized awareness of self, and (2) communicative speech which grows increasingly fluent without formal instruction as the child interacts more and more with his environment. It is the egocentric speech which leads ultimately to writing, according to Vygotsky. It becomes progressively more condensed, elliptical, and predicative (since its subject is known to the child), and virtually disappears as the child learns to "think for himself." It is approximately at this point in development that formal instruction in writing begins, and with it, the onset of difficulty. The transition from inner speech to written speech or discourse requires a drastic shift from the extremely abbreviated inner speech (for an audience of the self) to an explicit, detailed, written speech that (1) takes place in a new communicative situation (e.g. speech with an absent interlocutor who must be "fictionalized," a highly abstract process), and (2) requires a second degree of abstraction in its execution -- first, a symbolization of sound images and second, the creation of written signs from those symbols.

I will make no attempt to analyze the facilitating or inhibiting of thought processes affecting this pattern of development, but will rather consider what happens between writer and reader during the

rhetorical action, and some ways of enabling students to understand that interaction more fully and effectively in the classroom.

THE RHETORICAL ACTION

When viewing the schema derived from Vygotsky's remarks concerning the development of written speech, one is struck by two conclusions: (1) Writing is the ultimate phase of a centripetal movement beginning with a communicative effort that is primarily social in nature and progressing to expression that is the result of having successfully internalized thought; and (2) as writing marks the emergence of explicit and complete communication for an audience of other, it of necessity implies the formulation of an image of self (as distinct from one's audience). This formulation of self enables a kind of internalized conversation which makes possible the adaptation to an audience in a particular setting or context. If it is possible thus to generalize about the development of the writing process and its purpose, then it is evident that there must be many shared features among types of rhetorical actions whether they transpire in the political arena, over the breakfast table, or in the classroom.

As Aristotle suggests in his rationale for considering rhetoric as an art (see pp. 5-6, Chapter I), rhetorical action (of any kind) is a process which can be reduced to a method. Therefore, it can be systematized and can be viewed as generative, meaning that it can be applied fruitfully to different situations, or considered teachable. It should then be possible to construct a serviceable model of rhetorical action.

There are, as has been mentioned before, inherent problems in depicting a process in the form of a model. The very medium of print reflects a static, two-dimensional state, which, as Moffett says, "falsifies a lot." While it describes a dynamic, ongoing process, the meta-language that is required for a model of rhetorical action is, in reality, frozen by the very act of languaging itself, with the shifting relationships among the elements unseen. This tends to defeat the major purpose of the model which is to portray and explain the event in question. It might be well to define the term model as it is used here, and state the purpose for which it is to be used. A model, for present purposes, is "in essence, an analogy, a replication of relationships that supposedly determine the nature of a given event," and that is capable of reducing a complex event

to a more manageable, abstract, and symbolic form."²⁷ A truly fruitful model should possess "implications rich enough to suggest novel hypotheses and speculations in the primary field of investigation"²⁸ and consequently be able to generate a heuristic by presenting elements in changing relationships that will be useful to those seeking understanding in that field. The risk of fallacious inferences from innocent distortions can be controlled, says Max Black, through the use of "rules for translating the terminology applied to the model in such a way as to conserve truth value."²⁹ These rules must insure consistency of terminology through consensus of meaning.

Such significant truth values can be brought into focus through the use of a model of the rhetorical action. However, one further point must be brought out before introducing the model. The process, in all its complexity, is fundamentally an outgrowth of the three elements

²⁷Kenneth K. Sereno and C. David Mortensen, Foundations of Communication Theory (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 56.

²⁸Max Black, Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 233.

²⁹Ibid., p. 222.

of discourse dealt with by Aristotle -- the rhetor, the audience, and the discourse itself. And, as with Vygotsky's theory of the development of written discourse from which the model springs, the regulating principle is ultimately the reader or audience. For, as Karl Wallace says:

Any . . . difference between rhetor and audience . . . calls for adaptive behavior from the speaker. . . . Adaptation is reflected in the image that controls and dominates a rhetorical action, it is reflected even more clearly in the choices exercised by the speaker . . .³⁰

Everything that is within the context situation of any rhetorical action constitutes a special kind of setting in the Sarasonian sense of "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals."³¹ The rhetorical action is not a product of spontaneous generation; it rather "confronts a preexisting complicated structure of relationships, parts of which work against and parts work for the creation of the new setting,"³² according to Sarason's description

³⁰Understanding Discourse: The Speech Act and Rhetorical Action (Baton Rouge, La.: L.S.U. Press, 1970), p. 81.

³¹Seymour B. Sarason, The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976), p. 1.

³²Ibid., p. 42.

of the "before the beginning" stage of settings creation. Both rhetor and all potential members of the audience bring to the action a history of relationships with other rhetorical actions or settings. Sarason provides a springboard for discussion of the rhetorical action when he states:

. . .The prehistory of a new setting almost always contains conflict and controversy about how problems are being handled, and the creation of the new setting is implicit recognition of some kind of failure or inadequacy [or exigency?] on the part of the existing organization of settings, hence the importance of confronting history.³³

The personal experience of every individual involved in the rhetorical action play a part, although more often than not, the histories of each are, for reasons that have been discussed, unknown or only superficially known to the other.

Figure 7 presents a representation of the setting of a rhetorical action. The following account will clarify the meaning of the representation, beginning with the contextual situation.

Wallace defines a rhetorical action as "the kind of response that a speaker, a rhetor, makes to a particular

³³Ibid., p. 64.

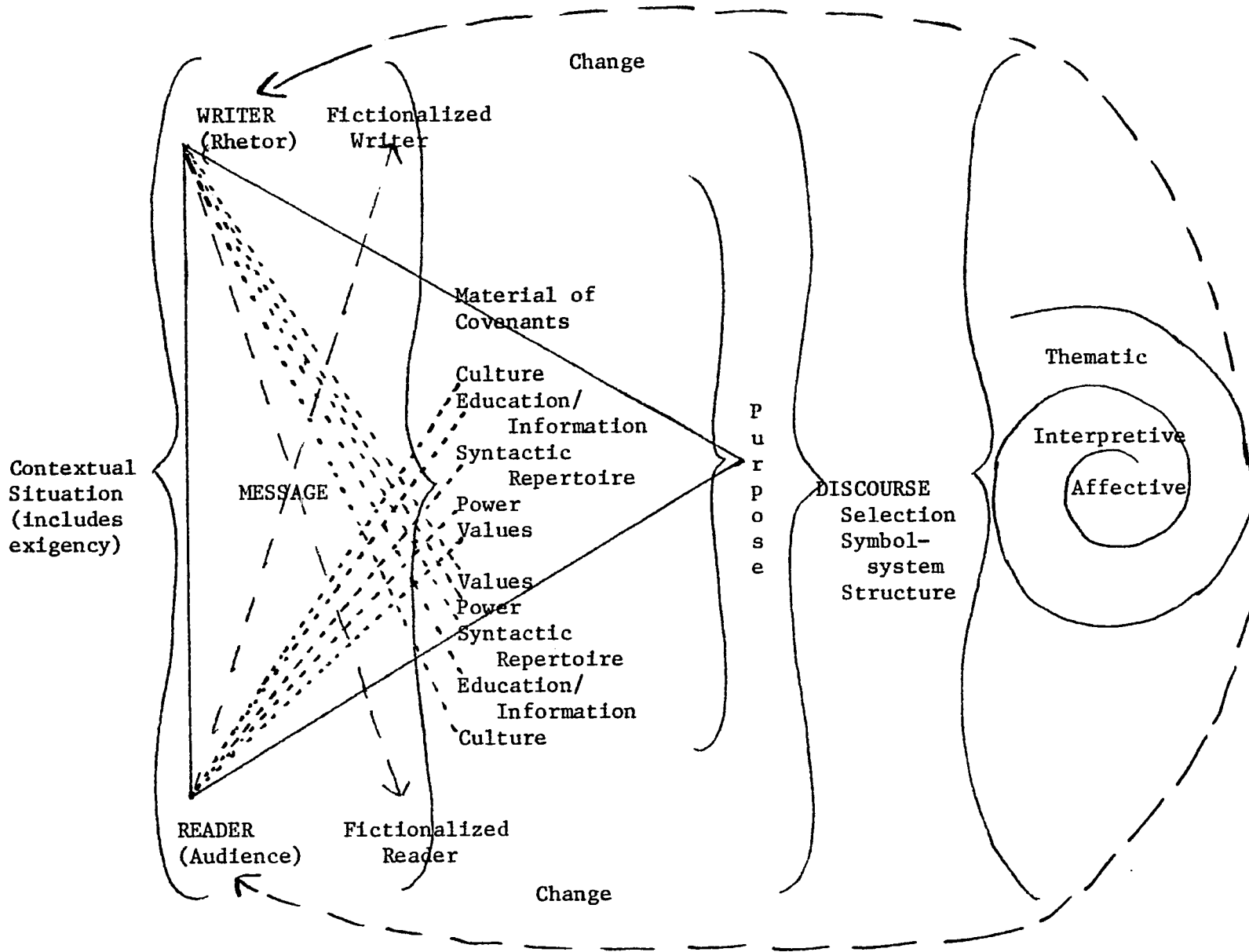


Figure 7.

Setting of a Rhetorical Action

context." He continues:

. . .A person who responds rhetorically has an end or purpose in view, and this dominates his choice of materials and his forming of them. And all of these features of his act -- purpose, materials, and form -- are functions of the rhetorical context.³⁴

The situational context includes all the factors or circumstances -- both societal and personal -- that exist at the rhetorical moment. As has been suggested, among them somewhere is the exigency or felt need which prompts the action. There may be and probably are numerous irrelevant stimuli or lesser exigencies acting on the rhetor simultaneously, but for reasons perhaps known to the rhetor alone, the special exigency demanding a particular kind of rhetorical action is the most pressing for the moment.

The rhetor, having his message in mind, albeit in an inchoate and amorphous state, begins to scan his alternatives and make choices based on what he conceives to be (or what he fictionalizes as) his intended audience. (The basis for these choices and subsequently those of his audience will be discussed shortly.) The reader or audience recognized to some degree (even young

³⁴Wallace, p. 21.

children are conscious of this recognition) that he has been fictionalized or cast in a specific role by the writer and may attempt to respond according to the perception of that role, believing that he is doing so, but in actuality the response is made from the point of view of the "real" reader. The reader, decoding the nature of the message, will make certain choices which result in turn in responding to a fictionalized writer, a composite of inferences that the reader will have drawn from the message. If the reader is fortunate enough to receive some feedback (and this is one of the points Moffett stresses) or can reach for some reliable experience from former comparable rhetorical actions, he will recognize the role into which he has been cast by the reader. He will in this case be able to predict with some degree of accuracy the impact of the discourse that is to be produced.

What, then, is the basis for the choices made by the writer and subsequently by the reader? The materials of writer and reader comprise the matrix of choices that will be made. As the model indicates, there are certain characteristics or factors common to writer and reader, and the point of intersection (signifying the degree and nature of interaction) between the characteristic as possessed or manifested by the writer and then by

the reader, is a basis for choice. For example, both sender and receiver of discourse "confront history" and participate in the rhetorical situation based on the forms of expression deemed acceptable in the culture of each. (See model.) Similarly, the degree of education or pertinent information possessed by each is a vital component in shaping the discourse, specifically in the acknowledgment that the writer makes of any discrepancy between his education/information and that of the reader. Closely related is the matter of the individual's syntactic repertoire. This may not in all cases be a function of age, culture, or education; it may even extend beyond Bernstein's "restricted" and "elaborated" codes. In some instances, writer and reader may be extremely well-known to one another or may participate in some of the same sub-groups. In this case, a high degree of abbreviation or else a reliance on a particular jargon or "in-language" may prevail. There may be employed, in the case of sophisticated writers and readers, a deliberate kind of double entendre, designed as a private joke on the "hidden" audience, perhaps a teacher or the general public (for example, a student might employ terminology with sexual or drug-related connotations which are familiar only to his particular sub-group).

An important and often neglected consideration is the relative power of writer and reader. "Power," state Brubaker and Roland H. Nelson, Jr., "may simply be defined as control over others. It reflects the degree to which an individual or group affects the actions of others." They identify two kinds of power, authority and influence:

Authority is the legitimate right as determined by the formal organization to control the actions of others whereas influence is of a less legal or formal nature. Influence is also less overt and depends instead on the persuasive abilities of an individual or group.³⁵

The adroit writer will (1) make every effort to appear to be using influence rather than authority, and (2) attempt to present an appearance of equalizing the degree of power between himself and his audience (This can produce a highly complex power play in the classroom, in which the teacher holds the authority, and the student through his written discourse is subtly attempting to influence the teacher).

Finally, the values of each are of great importance in shaping the discourse. They may, in fact, play a part in all other factors. Wallace declares:

³⁵Dale L. Brubaker and Roland H. Nelson, Jr., Introduction to Educational Decision-Making (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1972), p. 21-22.

. . . A rhetor considers two focal points of the occasion. He asks first, what does my audience consider important about the subject at this time and place? He inquires second, what values account for its interest and concern?³⁶

If the writer could be certain of the answers to these questions, he would have no reservations about his choices, and no doubts about the effectiveness of his discourse.

Thus, all of these characteristics -- culture, education/information, syntactic repertoire, power, and values -- are the raw material for the covenants formed between writer and reader. In fact, the exact nature of the covenants is revealed by the point of intersection of a specific characteristic held by writer and reader. To cite a specific example, if a student is addressing other students attempting to stir them to action and enlist their aid in gaining a more liberal visitation policy in college dormitories -- a value that he holds strongly at a particular time -- the arguments and the diction would be quite different than if the intended reader or audience is the adult authority figure of the academic institution. Of course, there is an element of risk present here: if the writer

³⁶Wallace, p. 79.

seriously misjudges his intended audience, with regard to, say, its adherence of minds, the covenant not only will not be honored but may actually be destructive to the writer. Many theorists have noted that in oral discourse the rhetor can make immediate readjustments at the first sign of an error in judgment, but in written discourse, he must make choices and be willing to abide by them. What is being said here is summed up succinctly by David K. Berlo using the terminology of communication theory: "Many of the key determinants of communication involve the relationships between source and receiver characteristics."³⁷

Encompassing all that has been described as occurring within the situational context of the rhetorical action to this point is the rhetor's purpose or intention -- the ultimate motive for his action. The purpose, one might say, is the exigence transformed and refined. The exigence is an often vague if powerful awareness of dissonance, anxiety, or conflict. The purpose reveals the ethos of the writer as well as "the rhetor's understanding of his audience, his subject, and all aspects of the rhetorical occasion and context . . ."³⁸

³⁷Berlo, p. 57.

³⁸Wallace, p. 83.

Finally, it is the purpose, then, that determines the form of the discourse. And the major force in that determination is the writer's assessment of his audience. If the audience is imagined, it is fictionalized according to whatever knowledge the writer has based on earlier audiences; if, however, the audience is known, the form of the discourse is a reflection of existing empathetic feelings and mutually-accepted conventions between writer and reader. However, cautions James Britton,

Writers will differ greatly in the extent to which they are justified in making tacit assumptions and in their capacity to write in a way that accommodates these assumptions.³⁹

Britton, it is worthwhile to note, bears out my contention that, in accordance with the implications of Vygotsky's theory of the development of written speech, "a writer's capacity to adjust to his audience is dependent upon the degree to which he can internalize that audience."⁴⁰

If the writer can indeed successfully internalize his intended audience, which is to say that the covenants he has made with his audience are valid, then the result is meaningful discourse. Meaningful discourse can be defined in this setting as a response to a communicative

³⁹Britton, p. 61.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 62.

experience within a given situation which is based on certain choices made by the rhetor and the audience acting interdependently.

In discussing the continuity of the communication process, Dean C. Barnlund employs a striking figure that seems admirably suited to describe the dynamics of the rhetorical action. The image is that of "the dynamic equilibrium of a mobile by Alexander Calder in which the movement of each pendant upsets the balance among all others until a new equilibrium is achieved. . ."⁴⁰

If one can visualize the elements of the model in this kind of spatial relationship, it is reasonable to suggest that when any "new equilibrium" is attained which produces a unique piece of discourse, certain qualities will be in evidence. These qualities are the direct result of the choices mentioned earlier which have been made by writer and reader. They will be discussed as (1) Selection, (2) Symbol System, and (3) Structure.

In creating the discourse, the writer is confronted with the challenge of presenting the raw message in a comprehensible and effective manner to the reader. The message in this form has a kind of massive quality and does not differentiate between relevant and irrelevant

⁴⁰"A Transactional Model of Communication" in Sereno and Mortensen, p. 89.

data. Young children frequently have considerable difficulty in determining what is relevant and what is not, as word meaning "denotes nothing more to the child than a vague syncretic conglomeration of individual objects;"⁴¹ his concept formation abilities are still very immature. By the onset of puberty, however, the writer should have acquired the skill which would permit him to render a message manageable and to decide what aspects of it are appropriate to a given occasion. This is made possible through a process of selection of what the writer deems preferential information, chosen on the basis of its potential for accomplishing the writer's purpose.

Having made a controlling decision about what is to be included, the writer must almost simultaneously (and often unconsciously in younger writers) make decisions about the symbol system most suitable to the discourse. Depending upon his degree of communicative competence, the writer has available a spectrum of symbol systems or "codes," as Bernstein calls them. These have been mentioned earlier; they range from "restricted codes" which are used to communicate within

⁴¹Vygotsky, p. 59-60. See the entirety of Chapter 5, "An Experimental Study of Concept Formation."

the individual's sub-group(s), such as the terminology of a particular sport or the slang of a particular neighborhood, to "elaborated codes" which should enable the writer to range freely among audiences of the general public, or to respond appropriately to the "generalized other" which George Mead in Mind, Self, and Society defines as "the organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self."⁴² For the most part, students of writing need practice in matching symbol system to audience, exclusive of the teacher as audience. The "generalized other" can be more than adequately represented by the classroom audience of peers.

Finally, the writer is obliged to make decisions about the structure of the message. Structure is undoubtedly the least individuated and most intellectual process in the shaping of the discourse. In structuring, the writer generally conforms (to the best of his knowledge and ability) to the conventions and constraints approved by his society, and/or inferences he makes about his audience based on prior experience. An

⁴²George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 154.

example from literature vividly illustrates the point. Mark Twain announces at the beginning of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:

NOTICE

Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

BY ORDER OF THE AUTHOR

Twain is humorously disclaiming any attempt on his part to project a conscious intention or form in writing the novel. And yet the novel abounds in rich complexities of symbolism, moral judgments, and traditional literary materials. Twain implies (incorrectly, as time has proved) that his audience will not consist of "literary" persons, and therefore he proffers a persona of a simple, unself-conscious teller of an interesting tale. He is in fact drawing on traditional sources and conforming to a rather sophisticated set of literary conventions. In the same way, students all too often adopt a pseudo-persona which is aimed at some fictitious audience made part of a writing assignment, when in reality they are striving to fathom and conform to the kinds of structural conventions valued by the teacher. Sometimes, for instance, students may be asked to address a specific imaginary audience, and in response they assume what they

think the teacher would consider a proper "typical" student response for their particular age group.

The classification of the qualities of discourse as Selection, Symbol System, and Structure is somewhat simplistic and perhaps even arbitrary; it may be recast in many variations. The given divisions, however, are satisfactory for present purposes if one final aspect of classification is clearly understood. The elusive quality of style has been under scrutiny by rhetoricians since Aristotle declared in the Rhetoric that the greatest virtue of style is appropriateness. That is indeed a challenging concept. Style may here be defined as a choice among alternative expressions based on the needs of certain occasions and certain audiences. The study of style is one of the most vigorous and fast-growing areas of the revived field of rhetoric, and with good reason and relevance here. Style clearly subsumes the other qualities of discourse as classified here, and therefore attests once again to the suffusing influence of the audience acting as a synthesizing principle of discourse.

APPLICABILITY TO THE CLASSROOM

Classroom discourse has its own inherent constraints and idiosyncrasies. Chief among them is the tacit and continuing power play between teacher and students. The result at one extreme may be writing strictly to please the teacher, and at the other, a kind of rhetorical free-for-all labelled "self-expression." Most writing experiences in the classroom fall somewhere between the two extremes. The point at which they fall is determined by the kind of writer-audience relationship in a particular piece of discourse.

Few direct attempts at classifying classroom writing had been made until the appearance of James Britton's fascinating study The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18).⁴³ In chapter 4 Britton has fashioned a "category system" of accounting for the possible writer-audience relationships that may exist in the classroom. Britton's system may be displayed schematically as follows:

⁴³(London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1975).

- 1 Self
Child (or adolescent) to self
- 2 Teacher
 - 2.1 Child (or adolescent) to trusted adult
 - 2.2 Pupil to teacher, general (teacher-learner dialogue)
 - 2.3 Pupil to teacher, particular relationship
 - 2.4 Pupil to examiner
- 3 Wider audience (known)
 - 3.1 Expert to known laymen
 - 3.2 Child (or adolescent) to peer group
 - 3.3 Group member to working group (known audience which may include teacher)
- 4 Unknown audience
Writer to his readers (or his public)
- 5 Additional categories
 - 5.1 Virtual named audience
 - 5.2 No discernible audience

Figure 8.

Audience Categories in School Writing⁴⁴

Britton's classification has exciting implications for teachers of composition, who have long been in need of research into the classroom writer-reader relationship.

I wish to suggest that under each of Britton's audience categories 2, 3, and 4, there are three types of audience relationships in classroom writing.⁴⁵ The

⁴⁴Britton, p. 66.

⁴⁵Categories 1 and 5 are excluded based on the belief that except in the case of student journals and diaries never seen by the teacher, these are not in any sense functional classroom audience categories.

three kinds of writing are depicted in the spiral form portion of the model and are a function of (1) the audience category, either elected or imposed, and (2) the purpose or intention of the writer. Each rhetorical action is the result of a "new equilibrium" of the model. Each is likewise adaptable to the two kinds of composition that comprise virtually all classroom writing, response-to-personal-knowledge writing and critical writing.

The outer mode is the Thematic domain, one which is the earliest chosen by student writers because it is the simplest and most natural for them to use at an early age; therefore, it occurs most frequently in student writing. The frequency of its use is commensurate with a number of other things besides age; among them is the writer's knowledge of his audience. The less familiarity with the audience (or in some cases the less at ease with an audience) the more frequent the use of the thematic function. This is because the thematic deals with external events and what is most important about them. Student writers are more comfortable dealing with external realities when the audience is relatively unfamiliar. Use of the thematic domain, for example, may vary from the elementary school age child's account of a trip to the zoo (Britton's category 2.1, child or adolescent to trusted adult) to the step-

by-step explanation of the firing of the internal combustion engine (Category 3.1, Expert to known laymen). These are only two of the possible implementations of the thematic domain in the response-to-personal-knowledge type of writing. It may be said to answer the generalized question, "What is it, 'out there'?" as it views an event. The thematic domain would be suitable for literary criticism only in the broadest sense, as when discussing issues brought out by the study of a work of literature, for it is descriptive rather than analytical.

The second is the Interpretive domain. It is useful in responding to assignments in the form of questions concerning the nature of an experience or a literary work, for it deals with intrinsic events and ideas. It may, in fact, be said to answer the question, "What is it about?" in exploring the ramifications of a social issue ("What would the legalization of marijuana really mean?") or a literary character's experience ("What does the character learn about good and evil in the story?"). Obviously, the reader (audience) will gain some insight into the writer, for a certain amount of subjectivism is inevitable. If the reader examines carefully all he knows of what has gone before in the rhetorical action, especially the covenants

formed by the writer and himself, and in addition evaluates his prior experience as reader, he may in the interpretive domain learn more about the writer than the writer had intended to reveal. There is sufficient distance between writer and reader for the writer to assume a mask or persona, but the very assumption of the persona may itself be revealing. Of course, there is the danger that the reader, if he is unduly concerned with ethos, may read into the discourse things that are not there. For example, the reader may conclude from the writer's familiarity with shoplifting that he is writing from personal experience, when the conclusion is altogether unwarranted. The desirable equilibrium here is a blending of objectivity and subjectivity in the discourse. The difficulty is that the point of balance may not be perceived alike by writer and reader.

The final domain, the Affective, is in many ways the richest and most complex of all. It may be stated in interrogative form as "What is it to me?" The writer must have reached a certain level of maturity -- must, in Vygotsky's terms, have effected the transition in the development of written speech from the social function (represented in writing by the thematic domain) to the successful explication of inner speech for an audience (somewhere among Britton's categories 2 and 3) and

represent it to himself by fictionalizing it. If he is successful, he experiences what has been called by some an epiphany and by Jerome Bruner effective surprise, "the unexpected that strikes one with wonder or astonishment."⁴⁶ The discovery is the writer's ability to experience (as if by another) his own personal responses, and at the same time to intuit the responses of his audience. He can then direct his discourse at any audience category, and can even make subtle shifts when required, as from 2.3 (Pupil to teacher, particular relationship) when writing in a response-to-personal-knowledge vein, to 2.4 (Pupil to examiner) when writing a formal examination. Thus, the direction of maturity and sophistication in writing ability is a progressive journey into the self until one discovers not only one's own written "voice" but is able to construe the voice of the intended audience as well.

A specific application of the model appears in the Appendix. The spiral figure (which was originally conceived as concentric circles) was chosen to suggest the continuity and non-time-bound nature of the process. One domain blends imperceptibly into the next as further development of the writing abilities occur, or even sometimes within the same rhetorical action the writer with audience

⁴⁶"The Conditions of Creativity," On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 18.

in mind searches for a fitting approach to the subject in what has come to be known as the "pre-writing" stage.

The spiral figure is also meant to suggest the recursive nature of the rhetorical action. As the discourse is shaped and reshaped by the decisions about the audience category and the resulting domain of the subject, it produces new insights for the writer as well as the reader, for one suspects that Corbett's admission is far from uncommon when he states ". . .I often do not know what I want to say until I have said it."⁴⁷ The writer, Corbett seems to be suggesting, experiences new insights as a result of his own rhetorical action, and consequently changes his way of thinking about his subject, his intended audience, and himself. The very act of formulation, of objectifying his ideas -- his "inner speech" -- by writing, provides him with a view that he had not had before. At this point, his epiphany enables him in one sense to become his own audience. Some process of detachment has taken place so that if the writer lays aside the work and then returns to it, a kind of "critic self" takes over, appraises it, not only seeing flaws or

⁴⁷"A New Look at Old Rhetoric," in Rhetoric: Theories for Application, Robert M. Gorrell, ed., (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1967), p. 18.

virtues that were not previously apparent, but seeing them with a startling degree of objectivity. Thus the writer is affected by his own discourse, and is imperceptibly changed when he becomes engaged in the next rhetorical action.

And so in a way the writer is propelled toward the discovery of the nature of his intended audience essentially by what Rollo May calls "the creating of one's self." May goes on to explain:

Human freedom involves our capacity to pause between stimulus [exigence] and response [discourse, possibly] and in that pause, to choose the one response toward which we wish to throw our weight. The capacity to create ourselves, based upon this freedom, is inseparable from consciousness or self-awareness.⁴⁸

Having gained self-awareness in this way, and having it confirmed by the "generalized other" of his rhetorical experience, the writer develops and delineates his ability to fictionalize his audience in a more perceptive manner for his next rhetorical action. The problem with student writers is quite frequently that a lack of rhetorical experience, either oral or written, has made for a self-awareness that is vestigial at best.

⁴⁸The Courage to Create (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), p. 117.

One stipulation must be made clear, however. The ability to create one's self repeatedly in rhetorical action demands the condition of encounter. "Escapist creativity," May points out, "is that which lacks encounter."⁴⁹ Here "escapist creativity" is seemingly a fitting term for what has been labelled "student-focused" writing, that which finds its sole end in self-expression. If the writer does indeed experience change as a result of one and in preparation for another rhetorical action, then the participation in encounter(s) will have been fruitful; the writer has learned something, not only about subject, but about audience-awareness as well. The excavation of the self, in other words, can in no wise substitute for the writer's honest engagement with the world.

SUMMARIZING THE MODEL

A rhetorical model is in many ways a contradiction in terms. While rhetorical action is by its very nature ongoing, dynamic, and recursive, any schematic representation of it is unavoidably two-dimensional, its interrelationships suspended and static. The rationale for employing a model is to illuminate a combinatorial power

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 40.

that causes the elements of the model to interact, shifting into ever-new relationships to each other, and thereby producing "novel hypotheses and speculations" for anyone seeking greater knowledge of the field. The mind must free itself, then, to imagine the model both flexible enough to depict an analogical presentation of virtually any kind of rhetorical event, and yet stable enough to demonstrate that there are features common to all rhetorical events.

The rhetorical action comprises a certain kind of setting which is characterized by the coming together of a speaker, a subject, and an audience -- the three elements of discourse explored by Aristotle and deemed by Lloyd Bitzer a "rhetorical situation." The ultimate motive for the speaker or writer's action is contained in his purpose, and the major determinant for his purpose is his assessment of his audience.

In reviewing the model, it might prove a useful methodology to allow it to generate its own heuristic by designating its features through a series of questions intended to analyze closely the writer's relationship to his audience:

What makes it important for me to communicate a message?

Who is my intended audience?

How can I best describe him, or how do I imagine him?

Say that my image of him is a "fiction;" what are the areas of uncertainty?

How is he likely to fictionalize me, based on what he knows of me and his former experience with writers?

How is his fictionalized image of me likely to differ from the "real me," and how is my knowledge of that difference likely to affect the discourse?

Taking into consideration the answers to the previous questions and also the message that I want to communicate, what is the relationship between my reader and me with regard to the following?

Culture?

Education and Information?

Syntactic repertoire?

Power?

Values?

On the basis of what I now know about my relationship to my reader, how can I best state my purpose or intention?

By what plan can I achieve my purpose?

Which facts or ideas is it most important to include in my discourse?

Which symbol system will come closest to placing my reader and me at the same lexical level?

What is the most appropriate structure for my discourse?

If this is classroom discourse, which of the "audience categories" does my conception of my audience fit?

Given my message and my audience category, which of the domains -- Thematic, Interpretive, or Affective -- is most appropriate?

What insights about my audience and myself have I gained from exploring the setting of the rhetorical action that have altered my perceptions and that will affect future rhetorical actions?

The series of questions used as a probe or heuristic procedure works in two ways. First, they are liberating, in that they (at least in intent) enable the writer to envisage qualities and aspects of the writer-subject-audience relation of which he had been previously unaware. Second, they are limiting in the sense that May uses the term when he says, "Conflict presupposes limits, and the struggle with limits is actually the source of creative productions."⁵⁰ The condition of being human itself presupposes certain limits (such as physical or

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 137.

mental endurance, lifespan, etc.) and it is the confronting of conflict within these limitations that gives birth to creativity.

The writer, especially the inexperienced student writer, may be brought to an awakened consciousness of the situational character of rhetorical action, and all that that notion implies. If the model has value, it will enable him to take up the raw material of his existence and transform it into meaningful discourse directed at a particular audience.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY, AND CONCLUSION

Traditionally the term rhetoric has been applied to the education of speakers on public occasions. The twentieth century has witnessed a revival of interest in classical rhetoric and also an expansion of knowledge of related fields. Modern rhetoric has been characterized by a shift from spoken to written discourse and another shift from emphasis on the rhetor to emphasis on the audience.

The purpose of this study is two-fold: to synthesize the major contributions to the study of audience, assessing their usefulness in the present-day teaching of composition, and to analyze the rhetorical action by presenting a model which will illuminate the relationship between writer and reader.

The heritage of the rhetorical concept of audience -- and of the art of rhetoric itself -- can be traced back to ancient Greece, and more specifically to the Rhetoric of Aristotle. The chief value of the Rhetoric is its analysis of audience, an analysis which can be of great value to students and teachers of written discourse.

The approach to discourse is holistic in that Aristotle views it as an inherently unified form rather than a collection of parts, and he acknowledges the involvement of the whole personality, including the emotions.

Aristotle offers a legitimization of rhetoric viewing it as the counterpart of dialectic as both deal with the realm of probability; in addition he treats rhetoric as an art which can be systematized, and is therefore teachable. It is a method of "discovering. . . the available means of persuasion" and assumes a morally neutral role.

Of Aristotle's means of persuasion or proof, the ones of interest in the study of audience are the "artistic proofs," of which there are three kinds: those residing in the character of the speaker (ethos), those producing a certain attitude in the hearer (pathos), and those concerned with the argument proper (logos). Aristotle classifies kinds of speeches as deliberative, forensic, and epideictic, according to the different kinds of hearers, which indicates the importance he places upon the role of the audience. In discussing the role of the rhetor in Book II, he stresses the significance of the way in which an audience conceives the rhetor. The qualities which are most likely to bring the audience into a certain pathe are those of intelligence, character, and good will. The

proper balance of these will elicit certain emotions from the audience. Aristotle's analysis of the emotions is remarkable for its recognition of their importance in audience response.

Audiences are classified according to "the several periods of life and the varieties of fortune." Nowhere does Aristotle more clearly affirm his holistic view and reveal his degree of psychological insight. Aristotle's concept of topoi is audience-centered and is considered to represent the first rhetorical heuristic procedure.

Book III of the Rhetoric treats of style and delivery and is of less interest to students and teachers of composition than Books I and II. "External matters do count for much," says Aristotle, "because of the sorry nature of an audience." He deems clarity and appropriateness the essential attributes of style, both measured in terms of effect on the audience. In addition, he makes a distinction between spoken and written discourse which has implications for the modern study of discourse.

Although Aristotelian rhetoric has much to offer students and teachers of composition, it nevertheless has some limitations. First, it makes assumptions about its fifth-century B.C. audience which are not suitable today. Present-day audiences are much more diverse. Second, Aristotle's treatment of the doctrine of the

tria genera causarum betrays his bias toward argumentation which was valid for his time but imposes a restriction on the modern day study of audience. Furthermore, the concept of topoi conceives rhetor and audience in ways that are no longer adequate.

Aristotle places much faith in the logos and minimizes the antecedent impression of the rhetor. Today's audiences are very much affected by the "image" of the rhetor. The rhetor himself is aware of the impact of the antecedent impression and may deliberately or unwittingly enhance his own image.

Perhaps the most significant limitation is the contrast of physical relationships between rhetor and audience in the ancient world and today. Aristotle's concern with the immediacy of emotional response is appropriate only to a situation in which the audience is a living presence. The most basic difficulty in the application of the Rhetoric to modern day studies is that it is keyed to speakers rather than to writers. The written mode has no "context for interpretation" as does the oral mode. This may help to explain why student writers frequently lack a sense of audience. The writer is forced to create his own audience. This causes him to tend to standardize his language, to appear more intellectualized than the speaker, and to be more explicit.

These are the major limitations of Aristotelian rhetoric as applied to the present day teaching of composition.

Aristotelian rhetoric is still a powerful influence in the twentieth century. The three elements of discourse with which Aristotle dealt -- rhetor, audience, and discourse -- constitute a curricular cornerstone for the teaching of composition. Writers choose their arguments according to which will have the greatest suasive effect, and since the suasive effect depends upon the hearers or readers, the element of discourse which more than any other animates the rhetorical occurrence is that of audience.

Certain historical events have seemed to diminish the significance of audience. An example is the printing press which separated writer and reader. The Ramists in the sixteenth century and the elocutionists in the eighteenth both stressed the creator rather than the audience of discourse. The nineteenth century was characterized by a passion for correctness of form which emphasized the discourse rather than the audience. In the twentieth century, a revival of interest in rhetoric has restored the interrelationship of writer, audience, and discourse.

The new rhetoric draws from many fields in its examination of the interaction between writer and reader. Interest in the interpretation of the message has brought about the development of new perspectives on the rhetorical action, with special interest to those with pedagogical concerns. Many of these persons have struggled to integrate the new rhetoric with contemporary curriculum theory, and have been hampered by misconceptions of both. Each has many principles which can be useful to the other.

Wayne Booth has called for a balance between the three elements of discourse which he refers to as a proper "rhetorical stance." The composition class itself may be conceived as having comparable elements in teacher, student, and classroom activity. The remainder of the chapter explores four ways of viewing the teaching of writing as rhetorical situation with special emphasis on the element of audience.

(1) The composition class may be viewed as a unique kind of setting. Seymour Sarason's use of the preparation of a dramatic production is a convenient analog. Teacher and student play shifting roles as actor and audience.

(2) The three elements may also be used to describe three types of classrooms each with its own audience

function. The first is the teacher-focused in which students struggle to please the teacher who becomes the sole audience. The second is the classroom-activity-focused which is also bureaucratic and emphasizes teaching materials and testing; consequently, it gives little attention to addressing an audience. The last type is the student-focused. It places a high priority on "self-expression" with the result that the self becomes the audience by default.

(3) The composition class operates by a series of covenants. Students and teachers of writing need to form covenants of high intensity (or commitment) and long duration. This requires encouraging freedom of thought on both sides.

(4) There are identifiable criteria for effectiveness in the teaching of writing. One is the development of a proper equivalent of the rhetorical stance in the classroom which necessitates that the teacher relinquish some of the traditional authority in order to become more effective audience or to provide a variety of audiences. The teacher-student relation must like the writer-reader relation be one of "cooperative action."

The concept of synergism is a useful one in illuminating the possibilities of effectiveness. If the goals of students and teachers are to be reached, a kind of

"alchemic opportunity" must transpire. Students will then be able to use their acquired communication skills in rhetorical situations with yet unknown audiences at some future time. Examining the features of language which establish one's identity should be an important part of the mission of rhetoric in the curriculum.

The revival of rhetoric has compounded the problem of English teachers in that the function of English becomes allied with method rather than subject. In addition, knowledge from other fields related to rhetoric seems to violate the traditional values in the teaching of English -- those of preserving "pure" language and teaching literature.

For a long time the teaching of English has been dominated by a content-centered model, which ignores the place of audience by making the student's role passive and compliant. If, however, learning is made purposive, the teaching of English, and more specifically the teaching of composition, must involve consideration of an audience, for purpose and audience are indivisible. How can student writers learn about adjusting discourse to an audience when in real-life situations the audience is often far removed?

One answer has been offered by Chaim Perelman who suggests that the collective addressee is a "universal audience," but it would be impossible to gain consensus. Walter Ong proposes that the writer "fictionalize" his audience and the audience in turn fictionalize itself.

James Moffett has outlined a complete "student-centered" curriculum which would result in a more egalitarian classroom. The primary dimension of growth in Moffett's scheme is from the self outward. His curriculum is based on a hierarchical "Spectrum of Discourse" which is characterized by progressive decentering (as described by Piaget), or levels of increasing abstraction. The audience is moved farther and farther away from the speaker. The curriculum thus recapitulates what Moffett conceives to be the mental growth of the child.

A contrary view of mental growth -- specifically that of the development of "written speech" -- is expressed by L. S. Vygotsky. In Vygotsky's view, the development is rather from the social (speech between parent and child) to the self (egocentric speech internalized for an audience). Written speech is a function of the child's ability to handle a high degree of abstraction, the psychological functions of which have not yet begun to develop when instruction begins. This accounts in part for the common inability of students to produce meaningful

written discourse.

It is evident that all kinds of rhetorical action have certain things in common; therefore, rhetorical action can be systemized. It should then be possible to construct a useful model. Although models tend to be misleading in that their dynamics must be arrested for presentation, they have value in clarifying relationships in a given event.

The setting of a rhetorical action (as represented by the model) originates in a situational context. The writer and reader fictionalize each other according to inferences they have made based on prior rhetorical experience. They next make choices based on common materials or characteristics possessed by each: Culture, Education/Information, Syntactic Repertoire, Power, and Values. The materials are the basis of covenants formed between writer and reader. Encompassing all of these is the writer's purpose. The purpose reveals the ethos of the writer as well as his interpretation of his involvement in the rhetorical action. Purpose determines the form of the discourse, and the major force in that determination is assessment of audience.

The dynamics of rhetorical action may be likened to the equilibrium of a Calder mobile with pendants constantly shifting until a new equilibrium (or a unique

piece of discourse) is achieved. Certain qualities will surface that are the result of earlier choices; these are discussed as (1) Selection of preferential information, (2) Symbol System or appropriate code, and (3) Structure or degree of conformity to existing conventions. The element of style (which is fashioned according to the nature of the intended audience) subsumes the other qualities of discourse.

Classroom discourse has its own constraints and idiosyncrasies. James Britton has fashioned a "category system" for classifying writer-audience relationships in the classroom. Britton's audience categories can be subclassified according to three kinds of writing which may be said to belong to (1) the Thematic domain ("What is it, 'out there'?"), (2) the Interpretive domain ("What is it about?"), and (3) the Affective domain ("What is it to me?"). They are discussed in order of the development of written speech. Thus the maturation in writing ability is a journey into the self making possible the discovery of one's own written "voice" and the voice of the appropriate audience as well. The writer actually experiences new insights as the result of his own rhetorical action. He undergoes a process of detachment so that a "critic self" emerges and evaluates the discourse. Thus the writer is imperceptibly changed by each rhetorical action.

These changes (with his increased self-knowledge) enable the writer to fictionalize his audience more perceptively.

The model can be said to generate its own heuristic by designating its features through a series of questions intended to analyze closely the nature of the writer's relationship to his audience. The questions used as heuristic procedure work in two ways. First, they are liberating in that they free the writer to envisage new aspects of the relationship; second, they are limiting in Rollo May's sense of the tension resulting from human limitations stimulating creativity. If the model has value, it will enable the writer to understand more fully the process of producing meaningful discourse directed at a particular audience.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Research into audience theory and means of development of audience awareness in the classroom have only recently begun to come into their rightful share of attention. There is still much investigation to be done in both areas. The following represent only a few of the possible topics for further study.

(1) There is much to be learned about the effects of the shift from orality to literacy in students. Home and neighborhood communication for the child is almost entirely oral with specific, known audiences. Even much

of school experience is oral (teacher-focused) or else passive (paradoxically fostered by the use of "enriching" media materials such as films, tapes, and television).

(2) A great need exists for the effective means of training of English teachers in rhetoric (and related fields) as well as literature, so that the composition will not simply be regarded as a linear operation to be mastered in increments, but instead one that involves creation of a setting which includes writer, discourse, and audience.

(3) An equal need exists for finding non-threatening ways of retraining teachers who have traditionally patterned their teaching on the content-centered, command-compliance model. For example, they would benefit from instruction in the psychology and implementation of the use of alternative classroom techniques such as small groups and one-on-one peer pairs so that their students might be given authentic ways of varying the audience for their writing.

(4) A promising field which has been too long neglected is a sociology of teaching (and here specifically of teaching composition). Teachers so trained would come to understand more fully what has been discussed as the materials of covenants, and thus the difficulties students have in formulating their own image as a writer

and in subsequently fictionalizing their audience.

(5) There is a dearth of textbooks for the teaching of composition which include an adequate treatment of audience considerations. Teachers need to develop their own heuristic procedures for stimulating audience awareness, while encouraging book publishers to give more attention to this important area.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the history of the concept of audience has been from the time of Aristotle a long search for ways to promote mutual understanding between persons. It is tempting to say that understanding is merely an elaboration of the adjustment of discourse to an audience; but that is not unlike the temptation to say that the meaning of life is merely an elaboration of the notion that death begins at the moment of birth. It is the fine comprehension (which can never be complete) of the nature of the alternatives and ultimate choices, and the awareness of the risks of misapprehension, that are ever challenging and intriguing in the attempt at written communication between one person and another.

Education involves the rhetorical situation in a very fundamental way, for both have a common goal -- that of seeking ways to lessen misunderstanding and thus combat the existential isolation which all human beings share.

"The relation in education," declares Martin Buber in Between Man and Man, "is pure dialogue," and warns that "An education based only on the training of the instinct of origination would prepare a new solitariness which would be the most painful of all."¹

The rhetorical action in written speech does have an origin -- in the consciousness of the writer. But the writer does not exist in isolation; the action takes place within a situational context which includes a reader, even though he may be unseen. If the "instinct of origination" is not conjoined with an instinct of communion between writer and reader then the rhetorical action is rendered futile and meaningless. It is the moment of mutual recognition in which the discourse is received and valued which justifies and makes intelligible the complex rhetorical action.

¹Trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 87.

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APPENDIX

The spiral portion of the figure can function as a conceptual framework for recognizing the desired writer-reader relationship (appropriate to the degree of maturity of writing skills) and choosing subject matter accordingly. The framework reflects two convictions: (1) The development of written speech (as discussed in Chapter III) derives from the gradual internalizing of inner speech which means that student writers are able to deal with external concerns earlier and more easily than they are with internal feelings, and (2) Assignments need not be trivial or artificial and as a result directed at no particular audience, but can instead speak meaningfully to genuine concerns of young people.

With regard to the first, the theoretical basis for the conviction was treated fully in the paper as related to the development of written speech in general. For evidence that the path of development is a progression toward explicating inner speech for an audience, it is useful to turn to Janet Emig's valuable study, The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders.¹ Emig uses the terms

¹NCTE Research Report No. 13. (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1971).

"extensive" (a basically active role) and "reflexive" (a basically contemplative role) to signify the range of modes of student writing.² Her modes would appear to correspond fairly closely to the "thematic" and "affective" domains (with "interpretive" falling somewhere in between) designated here. The student ideally would move through a composition curriculum beginning with "thematic" writing until he had eventually come to feel at ease with "affective" writing, after which he could shift confidently in any direction.

Emig's Chapter 4 is devoted to "Lynn: Profile of a Twelfth-Grade Writer." Each subject is asked to compose aloud with the investigator present. Emig notes:

The interesting question here is to define what for Lynn is an "easy" subject and what is a "hard" one. Clearly an "easy" one is a non-personal subject, one that does not demand interacting with her feelings, one that is not reflexive.^{2a}

Excerpts from one of Lynn's sessions help to illuminate Emig's point:

I found that if I could write about a specific incident and use, specific facts, I was doing a lot better than if I just had to write about like my

²Emig, p. 37.

^{2a}Emig, p. 49.

ambitions. . . .I'm sure we had to do a composition on that theme, ah . . .it was very hard, it still is very hard for me to write about abstract things like feelings about something. I do a lot better when I have facts. . . ."3

Emig does not say so, but one might be tempted to wonder if the presence of the interviewer could be an inhibiting factor. Lynn was asked if she wrote about her feelings when an audience is not involved. She admitted having done so on two occasions because "there was nobody I could talk to."⁴ Emig hypothesizes that when a student's time for writing is curtailed (as by an assignment),

. . . he usually does not elect to work on a topic or problem he regards as cognitively or psychically complex. Rather, he chooses one . . . that corresponds with some kind of schema he has already learned or even been taught, and one he has internalized. For Lynn, as for most older secondary students in American schools, this schema is for some kind of extensive expository writing that does not require the deep personal engagement of the writer.⁵

Concerning the second point which deals with ways of getting at writing assignments that have real meaning for students, taking into account their level of development, a strong case can be made for an approach through

³Emig, p. 49.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid, p. 50.

familiar traditional materials -- in short, through well-known fairy tales.

Fairy tales have numerous advantages as teaching matter. First of all, they are universally known, and hold generally pleasant connotations of childhood. Furthermore, they are cross- and multi-cultural as most are products of many versions from many lands. Then, too, says Bruno Bettelheim,

Through the centuries . . . they came to convey at the same time overt and covert meanings -- came to speak simultaneously to all levels of the human personality, communicating in a manner which reaches the uneducated mind of the child as well as that of the sophisticated adult.⁶

Fairy tales deal with the most fundamental of what Bettelheim calls the "existential anxieties" -- the fear of being lost or abandoned or thought worthless, the desire to be loved, the threat of evil overcoming good. They speak to the most commonly-held feelings that human beings can know, and yet, paradoxically, their multi-level significance will be unique to each person (based on the Materials of Covenants factors), and meaning will vary (as Aristotle adduced) depending upon the time of a person's life. The reader or hearer imposes the "puzzle form" of his present experience and draws out the meaning

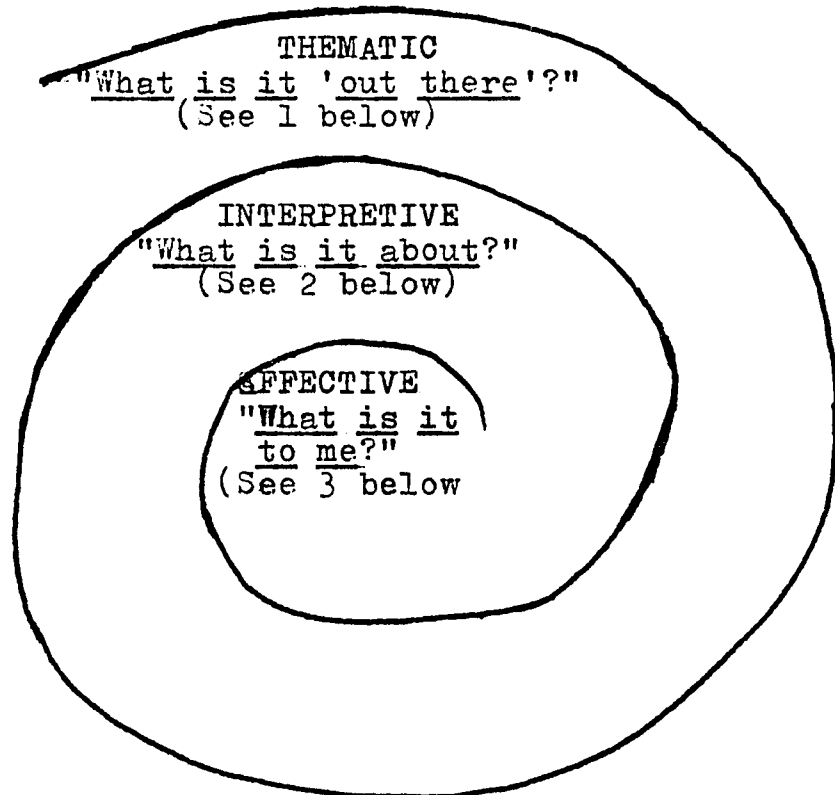
⁶The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), p. 6-7.

which meets his communicative needs for that moment.

It is upon this assumption that the use of a fairy tale -- of a particular fairy tale -- is offered as a means of finding expression for a particular category of writer-reader relationship. The fairy tale "Cinderella" has been chosen, in part because Bettelheim offers evidence that it is the best-known and best-liked of all fairy tales; in addition, it is among the oldest, having been first written down in China in the ninth century.⁷

For use in the classroom, the teacher should begin by reading or telling the tale in the Perrault version, which is the most familiar form. (Interested students at a more advanced level might wish to compare the Perrault version with that of the Brothers Grimm; there are some fascinating dissimilarities which result in different audience reactions). The teacher would determine either to compose his own questions or to guide the students in composing questions, depending upon the maturity and ability level of the class. The sample questions that are presented here are directed at more mature students, but they could be simplified and rephrased to meet the needs of younger writers.

⁷Bettelheim, p. 236.



1. THEMATIC domain - "What is it 'out there'?"
 - a. Does it necessarily follow that if you are good, then you will become rich, happy, and loved? Explain.
 - b. What if any evidence do you see of sex-role stereotyping that is reflected in the modern world?
 - c. Is the kind of rejection suffered by Cinderella a problem in the world today? Give examples.
 - d. Is true merit or value always recognized?
 - e. Is suffering and deprivation necessary for self-fulfillment? Explain.

2. INTERPRETIVE - "What is it about?"
 - a. What kind of social world do the characters live in?
 - b. What is the nature of "good" and/or "evil" in the tale?
 - c. Can you support the thesis that Cinderella is secretly manipulative and smug because she is convinced that she is more beautiful than her stepsisters?

3. AFFECTIVE - "What does it mean to me?"
- a. Have you ever been intensely jealous (as were the stepsisters) of a brother or sister (or if an only child, of another person)? If so, what were the results and how did they affect you?
 - b. Can you describe an experience of a supernatural agent (such as a fairy godmother) seeming to intervene in your life?
 - c. Do you think that the story suggests that the stepsisters who remain tied to the parent and the parent's values never fully develop as human beings? Discuss.
 - d. Must every parent go through a stage when the "good" (real) parent seems to have turned into the "bad" (step) parent? Why or why not?⁸

Again, as the spiral form indicated, a writer can become engaged at any point and can, if desired, combine questions at more than one level. The "audience category" may be designated (as specifically peer-response, perhaps, in some assignments) or may be unconsciously chosen by the writer in determining his approach (making the choice of which question or questions to answer.

Finally, the use of the fairy tale in this way demonstrates a process of apperception - that is, the student writer is able to assimilate and interpret new ideas and impressions with the aid and support of familiar experience and materials from the past. The use of the spiral as a conceptual framework provides a wide flexibility for matching approaches to appropriate writer-audience relationships.

⁸Bettelheim's discussion of "Cinderella" was helpful in formulating the questions.