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Epistemic rhetoric: Its history and influences

R. Bradley McClanahan

EPISTEMIC RHETORIC:

ITS HISTORY AND INFLUENCES

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

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In Partial Fulfillment

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in

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by

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ABSTRACT

This master's thesis defines the legacy of epistemic rhetoric from Greek to contemporary times. Epistemic rhetoric is defined as a knowledge-discovering rhetoric in Classical times, and a knowledge-creating rhetoric in contemporary times. Socially-constructed discourse communities are the contemporary epistemological base though which epistemic rhetoric is understood and expressed. These discourse communities express themselves in both inclusionary and exclusionary language, which has important implications in the teaching of contemporary composition. The conclusion of this thesis is that the foundational and exclusionary tension in discourse communities limits composition studies, as well as knowledge creation in general. The anti-foundational and inclusionary tension, on the other hand, enables composition studies as well as the creation of knowledge.

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I would like to thank my wife Mary McClanahan-Calvert for her boundless love and support. Without her love, all the knowledge represented in this thesis would have no value.

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INTRODUCTION

Does rhetoric create or discover knowledge? Composition studies has inherited this dialectic in the form or epistemic rhetoric, a rhetoric whose tradition and dialectic begin with Plato and the Sophists. In Classical times Plato articulated his foundational belief that rhetoric aided in the discovery of pre-existing archetypal truths. The dominant contemporary position, however, has been articulated by various anti-foundationalists who believe that truth is socially constructed by discourse communities. Both points of view are embedded in epistemic rhetoric, a rhetoric that is concerned with the relationship between language and knowledge, yet how could these positions differ so radically? In my thesis I will explore this dialectic as a way to understand what epistemic rhetoric is, what epistemic rhetoric has been, and how epistemic rhetoric affects contemporary composition studies today.

Chapter one will explore the three dominant contemporary definitions of epistemic rhetoric that map out its territory in composition studies. At one end is the anti-foundationalist James Berlin who defines epistemic rhetoric ideologically (Rhetoric and Reality 165-179). At the other extreme is Richard Fulkerson who allows for both foundational and anti-foundational definitions of epistemic rhetoric (409-411). Covering the middle ground is Kenneth Bruffee, along with other anti-foundational social constructionists, who calls for exploratory interdisciplinary searches

for definitions in fields that are affected by social constructionism in an effort to create a bibliographic base that would allow composition studies to come to consensus on a definition of epistemic rhetoric (Social Construction 773). Clarifying and analyzing the definitions sought by Berlin, Fulkerson, and Bruffee will display the dialectic in current thinking that is inherent in any examination of epistemic rhetoric.

Chapter two will examine the historical roots of this dialectic within epistemic rhetoric. Beginning with Plato's ideal of epistemic rhetoric (Bizzell, Herzberg 55-143), I will demonstrate that Plato's argument for a foundational epistemic rhetoric was not completely countered until the 19th century when Nietzsche wrote that rhetoric is dissimulation (Miller 316-319 and Bizzell 885-896). With Plato on the side of "truth," and Nietzsche on the side of "lies," the parameters of the the epistemic dialectic were finally defined. I will then show that the modern response has been more towards Nietzsche's than Plato's, since anti-foundational, socially-constructed thought, that believes that knowledge can never transcend language, has evolved as the dominant epistemic rhetoric (Berlin 183-184).

In the third and last chapter, I will explore how epistemic rhetoric has influenced contemporary composition studies by examining how epistemic rhetoric enables and how it limits composition studies philosophically and pedagogically. In particular, I will explore how epistemic rhetoric's idea of discourse communities, which is fraught with an inclusionary/exclusionary dialectic (Russell

53-56), has allowed composition studies to expand beyond the traditional hegemony of the formalist or current traditional rhetoric of the academic discourse community, and consequently has changed not only the ways composition studies approaches writing, but the ways in which composition studies thinks about knowledge and its relationship to writing. The thesis that I will arrive at in chapter three is that the foundational and exclusionary tensions limit composition studies pedagogically and epistemologically, whereas the anti-foundational and inclusionary tensions enable composition studies to more effectively teach writing and thought.

Throughout these three chapters I will expose how the rhetorical dialectic or debate has changed. The Classical dialectic revolved around the ethical and unethical uses of language, whereas the modern dialectic has revolved around the foundational and anti-foundational epistemological nature of language. This changed dialectic from ethics to epistemology represents the change that epistemic rhetoric has experienced within its legacy, a legacy in which discourse changed from being the dressing of thought to the substance of thought itself.

I think that it is important to understand that epistemic rhetoric is not a commonly referred to term in composition studies. The realm in which it can be defined is not commonly understood; its history is complex and extensive, the research is at times incomprehensibly jargon filled, its pedagogical and philosophical applications can be confusing, and so consequently epistemic rhetoric

has lived in the shadow of social constuctionism, the dominant

contemporary expression of epistemic rhetoric, but not the epistemic

rhetoric that has been known and used throughout the rhetorical

tradition. It would take more than a thesis, or even a large book, to

deal effectively with all the problems that affect an understanding of

epistemic rhetoric. Despite that, I feel that a thesis like this is

needed, particularly in the wake of James Berlin's death, since he has

championed the epistemological and ideological influences of

epistemic rhetoric in composition studies more than any

contemporary scholar. I'm certainly not in a position to fill the void

that may occur because of the lack of James Berlin's scholarship, but

I hope that I will contribute to a growing understanding of epistemic

rhetoric, determining some of its history, and showing how it both

enables and limits composition studies.

Lastly, let me apologize to the reader in advance for a difficulty

he or she may have in entering in to the discourse of epistemic

rhetoric as presented in this thesis. In researching and writing this

thesis I have had to synthesize a complex, ever-evolving, jargon-

filled, and oftentimes contradictory discourse that, despite its call to

be inclusionary and reader friendly, for the most part remains

reader hostile and exclusionary. If the reader finds himself or

herself feeling lost or confused with the relatively inclusionary style

that I am trying to use in thesis, I would ask the reader to spend a

few minutes reading Foucault, Nietztche, Plato, or any of the other

source material in order to appreciate the difficulty I have had in

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attempting to present this often-times exclusionary research in both

an accurate and reader friendly manner.

Brad McClanahan

June 1996

CHAPTER ONE
WHAT IS EPISTEMIC RHETORIC?

The belief that rhetoric either *discovers* or *creates* knowledge has been part of the rhetorical tradition since the Sophists and Plato. Contemporary epistemic rhetoric is the modern vehicle for that rhetorical tradition, but the dominant epistemological conclusions today are contrary to the dominant epistemological conclusions in Classical times. From Classical times, the legacy of Platonic thought has dominated over Sophistic thought, and consequently rhetoric was seen as an epistemic vehicle though dialectic to a transcendent absolutist truth, also referred to as foundational, logocentric, or universal truth. In contemporary times however, the thought of socially constructed discourse communities has dominated over the absolutist thought, and consequently rhetoric is seen as an epistemic vehicle through dialectic to relative socially constructed truths, also referred to as anti-foundational, post-positivist, or relative truth. Simplistically put, Classical epistemic rhetoric has represented foundational thought, *discovered* knowledge, whereas contemporary epistemic rhetoric has represented anti-foundational thought, *created* knowledge.

The terminology that surrounds composition studies has flourished in the last thirty years, and the appearance of epistemic rhetoric, both as a term and as a way of knowing, writing, and teaching, is not an exception. Some would say this explosion of terminology is a sign that composition studies is experiencing a

Kuhnian crisis and the new terminology reflects a paradigm shift in the making. Others would say that the new terminology is due to the creation and expansion of new and divergent discourse communities that have expanded awareness beyond the legacy of traditional scholarship. And still others would put it in the realm of political dialectic. I believe that all these positions are valid since composition studies, seen from a meta-historical perspective, is a young field in the process of defining itself to others and to itself. In such a young field many new terms do not survive for more than one published article. Epistemic rhetoric is not one of those terms. Epistemic rhetoric has a legacy behind it. Even so, in a field of expanding terminology, it is hard to define epistemic rhetoric, particularly because of the frequently impenetrable quality of the research and writing. Consequently there are many logistical and philosophical problems in defining the theories and practices of composition studies, including the defining of epistemic rhetoric, but three problems in particular stick out for me.

Problems in Defining

First of all, there's the problem of whether composition studies is an independent field or not. Being an independent field that can claim the legacy of rhetoric and stand firmly within the English studies tripod of linguistics, literature, and composition makes a huge difference in the process of self-definition. Stephen North, in his book *The Making of Knowledge: Portrait of an Emerging Field*, makes

an excellent argument for composition studies being a field, but he, like Edward J. Corbett, concedes that composition studies is a young field. Both North and Corbett place its beginning in 1963 at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Corbett chooses 1963 because of the common use of the word rhetoric that began during that CCCC conference (Corbett 445). North chooses 1963 because of the Braddock Study, which essentially claimed that we knew nothing about to research and teach composition effectively, and also because composition was made a third leg in the academic reform movement with literature and linguistics (North 15). The paradigm had shifted pedagogically and rhetorically, and composition became "Composition Studies" (North 12-17). Without entering into further details of this debate, which still continues, my position for this thesis is that composition studies is an independent field and in defining epistemic rhetoric I will claim the legacy of rhetoric.

Secondly, we have the problem that each definition represents a paradigm, and the paradigm must be agreed upon before an understanding can take place of that definition within that paradigm. According to Thomas Kuhn, changes occur in science, nature, and in other academic and political fields when a paradigm no longer answers research questions adequately (Kuhn 109). As North, Corbett, and others have written, this shift began for composition studies in 1963 with such university crises as open enrollment and a general questioning of academic authority. And as Maxine Hairston

writes, who traces this period of social upheaval that has parallelled the pedagogical and philosophical growth of composition studies, Kuhn's book was also published in 1963 (Hairston 76). Although some will argue about what stage in the shift composition studies is in, I simply want to point out that my argument for an epistemic rhetoric presupposes the nature of paradigm shifts in all fields of study. Given the existence of paradigm shifts, defining epistemic rhetoric in a time of change is an unwieldly, yet necessary, task. Composition studies is a young field, definitions are still very slippery, particularly as seen from an anti-foundational point of view, and the term epistemic rhetoric is not a commonly used term in the field.

Thirdly, and related to the problem of changing paradigms, is Foucault's concept of an *episteme*, the epistemological field. Just as understanding Kuhn's now widely accepted theory of paradigm shifts is important in trying to understand the nature of definitions in a young, independent, and changing field, it is also important in understanding the epistemological shift from foundational to anti-foundational thought that has occurred in the Western tradition and consequently in epistemic rhetoric. I will discuss the epistemological shift in more detail in chapters two and three, but underlying the process of defining epistemic rhetoric is Foucault's idea of the *episteme* , the ever shifting epistemological field, the fabric of thought and reality itself. Foucault feels that the Western *episteme* began to change in the 19th century, Nietzsche's century (The Order

of Things 304-305). Many others, such as Knoblauch and Brannon, feel that the shift in the Western *episteme* began during the 17th century and the Scientific Revolution (4). I will argue with Foucault that the paradigm shift occurred in the *episteme* most definitively in the 19th century. In the 19th century, Classical thought no longer represented our emerging modern and post-modern thought, or in other words a Kuhnian paradigm shift was occurring. The rhetorical debate in this *episteme* , and the consequent paradigm shift, turned from the ethical and unethical uses of language to foundational and anti-foundational views on language and reality. Composition studies and current epistemic rhetoric have grown up during, and out of, this anti-foundational shift in the *episteme* and so it will inherently affect epistemic rhetoric's definition. These issues of definition will become clearer towards the end of the chapter.

A Definition of Epistemic Rhetoric

Before I give the definition of epistemic rhetoric that I will be using in this thesis, allow me to say that understanding how I came up with the definition is almost as important as the definition itself. There are so many paradigms in the act of defining, and so many rubrics used within those paradigms, and these paradigms and rubrics reveal how composition studies defines itself as a whole. In other words, I will give my definition of epistemic rhetoric, but then I will take the rest of chapter one to demonstrate how I had to come up with that definition and why that process of defining is inherent

to an understanding of epistemic rhetoric. In short, epistemic rhetoric embodies the dialectical nature of the continual human search for truth and knowledge which includes the search for definitions.

> I define epistemic rhetoric as follows:
> Epistemic rhetoric is a rhetoric that assumes and teaches that language is the basis for all human understanding of knowledge, whether foundational or anti-foundational, and that effective use and understanding of language leads to the creation or discovery of knowledge, either from or for the self, or from or for the society. Effective use and understanding of epistemic rhetoric would emphasize the dialectical, as well as the formalistic, nature of language and knowledge in relation to the self, society, and what is perceived to be reality.

I don't believe that my definition of epistemic rhetoric is definitive, but I hope that it will be comprehensive, as we will see when we analyze it at the end of this chapter. As is evident, this definition reflects the epistemic legacy of both foundational and anti-foundational beliefs. A foundational definition of epistemic rhetoric may have been dominant in Classical times, but in contemporary times the dominant usage of epistemic rhetoric reflects an anti-foundational epistemology, which, as Joseph Petraglia asserts, is completely construed with social constructionism.

Petraglia writes, "a social constructionist argues that knowledge is created, maintained, and altered though an individual's interaction with and within his or her 'discourse community'" (Petraglia 38). Simply by understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, immediately there are problems in definitively defining epistemic rhetoric. Since the definition is based on the ongoing dialectic within

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a diverse and everchanging discourse community of compositionists who align themselves with epistemic rhetoric, the definition will continue to change over time. According to Schiappa, "rhetoric's epistemic status, and the emerging controversy concerning the utility of social constructionism..." are two of the hottest topics in composition studies today (Schiappa 401). And so, in a sense, this thesis is marking my entrance into the epistemic discourse community. This means that in defining epistemic rhetoric, I will have to define what the current community understands it to be, and in the course of the thesis, I will also define what it means to me as a member of that community.

Definition Paradigms

Having given the above definition of epistemic rhetoric, I would now like to explore why definitions, terminologies, and taxonomies in composition studies are hard to determine.

In searching through the literature on what I took to be epistemic rhetoric, and the taxonomizing of composition studies as a whole, I have come up with six different paradigms that are used to define composition studies, three of which produce clarity at the meta-level, and three which produce confusion because they neglect the meta-level. The three paradigms that neglect the meta-level are: (1) Pedagogical definitions, (2) Procedural definitions, and (3) Epistemological definitions. The three at the meta-level are: (1) Theory-based definitions, (2) Ideologically-based definitions, and (3)

Exploratory definitions. These last three try to integrate other fields of study into composition studies so that enough information can exist for an eventual consensus to take place on what is epistemic rhetoric. Of these six paradigms, the theory based definition, championed by Fulkerson, and ideological based definitions, championed by Berlin are the most powerful, as we will see later in this chapter. The exploratory definitions championed by the interdisciplinary bibliographic work of Kenneth A. Bruffee and many others, are also helpful in understanding epistemic rhetoric at a meta-level, but they result in an incompleteness. Although I have most heavily relied on Fulkerson and Berlin for my definition of epistemic, each of the these definition paradigms will have to be explored to understand the dilemma in defining epistemic rhetoric.

Before exploring the three meta-level paradigms, I must critique the shortcomings of the three paradigms for definitions that neglect the meta-level. The three paradigms of pedagogy, procedure, and epistemology can not do justice to a definition of epistemic rhetoric because they are only looking at a piece of the whole. The pedagogical definition only looks at how an epistemic rhetoric might be taught. A precedural definition of epistemic rhetoric only looks at how composition texts are created and whether we stress the process or the product more in the procedure. The epistemological definition only looks at what counts as knowledge or how knowledge is made.

Although these three paradigms are important in understanding epistemic rhetoric, and I will refer to them both in

this chapter and in chapter three, they do not provide a clear and complete definition of epistemic rhetoric. I believe that epistemic rhetoricians would agree that epistemic rhetoric is minimally a philosophy, meaning a search for truth and knowledge through language, and at best a theory, meaning a set of principles about truth and its relation to language and the best methods to implement these principles. If either the philosophical or theoretical views are true, then simple pedagogical, procedural, or epistemological definitions of epistemic rhetoric can not give us a complete definition.

I'll now expand on this assertion by examining the three meta-level definition paradigms: Bruffee's exploratory approach, Berlin's ideological approach, and Fulkerson's theoretical approach.

Meta-Level Definitions

After many years of confusion about how an epistemic rhetoric should be defined and understood, Kenneth Bruffee wrote in 1986 that the solution can come through the interdisciplinary exploration of bibliographic definitions (Social Construction 773). In 1988 James Berlin posits that ideological definitions are the most accurate and helpful in understanding the rise of an epistemic rhetoric (Rhetoric and Ideology 477). Richard Fulkerson, writing in 1990, argues that a theory based definition that separates the ends and the means is the most helpful (Fulkerson 409). In order to understand epistemic rhetoric, we must first understand how Bruffee, Berlin, and

Fulkerson would go about defining epistemic rhetoric. From the disparities and similarities in their perspectives, an understanding of epistemic rhetoric will emerge. I'll start with the state of definitions that Bruffee and others inherited when he called for his exploratory approach, and then we can move chronologically to Berlin and finally to Fulkerson.

Bruffee's Exploratory Approach

As composition studies moves away from the formalistic writing classroom, many compositionists search for pedagogy, procedures, and epistemology that respond progressively to the changes in the university writing classroom. Many scholars like Kenneth Bruffee have found themselves to be part of a growing group of "social constructionists," a group that advocates pedagogy that includes collaborative learning, procedures that stress process over product, and an epistemology based on the concept of discourse communities that sees the writing process as knowledge creating instead knowledge discovering. Most importantly, Bruffee sees this emerging rhetoric as a socially-constructed, knowledge-creating rhetoric, an epistemic rhetoric on the anti-foundational side of theepistemological dialectic. As an emerging discourse community within the shifting paradigm of composition studies, self-definition for this group becomes difficult. Bruffee attempts to offer a solution to the problem of definitions by exploring the existing interdisciplinary bibliographic sources that bring light about

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epistemic rhetoric to the young field of composition studies.

Essentially Bruffee, as one of the most prominent compositionists in

this diverse group of explorers, is trying to take definitions from the

disciplines of philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, politics, the

sciences and use that research to bring composition studies to

consensus on the definition and role of a social constructionist

epistemic rhetoric. Although this exploratory approach is helpful, it

also problematizes the concept of epistemic rhetoric. Bruffee states

the problem like this:

> During the past 75 years the benefits of the debate in
> cognitive terms about education - with its ethnocentric
> emphasis on universals and absolutes, its endless circularity
> oscillating between the 'subjective' and the 'objective,' its
> alienating emphasis on individuality, and its need to
> continually ignore, suppress, or side step the unbridgeable
> abyss inherent in our cognitive vocabulary between learner
> and what is learned - has become increasingly dubious. (Social
> Construction 778-779)

In other words, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to

deal with the paradigm shift from foundational to anti-foundational

thought, from the universal to the social constructionist thought. So

who does Bruffee look to in order to bring clarity to this emerging

group of social constructionists? Bruffee explores the scholarhship of

Foucault in history and philosophy, Geertz from anthropology, Kuhn

from the theory of science, Burke from rhetoric, and the philosophers

Rorty, Dewey, Heidegger, and Wiggenstein (773-779). Jim Corder,

who explores many of the same sources, would add other social

constructionist scholars such as Kinneavy, Kitzhaber, Ong, and

Perelman. Corder writes, "We have not yet seriously begun to

explore rhetoric as a portal to other fields. Rhetoric may not be able
to do for other fields what their own methodologies have not done,
but rhetoric can help us see things in other fields in new ways, and
when we can see in new ways, we may think new thoughts" (167).

Starting in the mid-seventies, influenced primarily by social
constructionist thought from other fields of study like politics and
linguistics, many composition practioners besides Bruffee and Corder
began to explore "rhetoric as a portal" because they saw that their
thinking about language's relation to knowledge, as seen in the
writing process, had changed from their classical and/or formalist
training. Epistemic rhetoric in these situations was described in
pedagogical, procedural, and epistemological methodologies that tried
to get at the core of this emerging composition philosophy, a
philosophy emerging from exploring interdisciplinary research. The
definitions at first were confused, but eventually, they began to take
shape under the social constructionist epistemology. Yet underlying
all these definitions was the paradigm shift, an acknowledgement
that all the old words no longer described the new ideas. The
definitions were representative of the crisis in composition studies as
a whole, the old no longer answered the new, the traditional fell
short of the contemporary. Socially constructed thought and the
need for dialectic in the new discourse communities, academic and
otherwise, could not be recognized in the existing language.
Epistemic rhetoric, as a defined territory, was a thought in the
process of creation, just as the language around it was in the process

of creation or at least of redefinition. As the thinking has become clearer, so has the language and vice versa, and so within the process of social construction many traditional definitions were tried and discarded because the chronological baggage on these words proved no longer effective to express contemporary thought. For example, discourse no longer meant the clothing of thought, but thought itself.

Before Bruffee's attempts to bring clarity to composition in an emerging interdisciplinary understanding of social constructionism, there were many other epistemic pioneers in composition studies. I'd like to look at five compositionists that were involved in this exploratory process.

In 1978 Richard E. Young writes in *Research on Composing* in a chapter entitled "Paradigms and Problems: Needed Research in Rhetorical Invention," that composition's current-traditonal paradigm is in crisis (29-31). Using the terminology and the point of view of Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Young argues that the current traditional composition paradigm can not answer the questions that have been posed by such changes in academia and society such as the open university, feminist thought, and multi-culturalism. A crisis like this must change the paradigm away from formalism to a new rhetoric. At the time of writing, Young does not use the term epistemic rhetoric, but he does outline a possible action plan. In order to respond to a crisis in the paradigm, Young argues that we must look both back toward the rhetorical tradition and forward to a new rhetoric. The thread of the rhetorical tradition, an

epistemic rhetoric, has been lost to him as a student of literature, but Young knows that through research this rich legacy will provide the epistemological framework for a new rhetoric.

In 1980 Kenneth Dowst wrote a chapter entitled, "The Epistemic Approach: Writing, Knowing, and Learning," in the book *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition*. Dowst uses the communications triangle to define epistemic rhetoric, arguing that epistemic rhetoric favors the writer over language, and reality. Defined in that hierarchial order of writer, language, and reality, composition is then seen as a way of making knowledge through writing because the writer's language is reflecting the socially constructed nature of truth. Dowst goes on to show that the epistemic approach, a knowledge creating approach, is an improvement over "formalist," "referential," or "expressive" approaches to composition (66-68). Typical of early definitions, this is more a pedagogical definition than a meta-level definition as Berlin and Fulkerson will later offer. But as Bruffee writes, "Terminology proliferates" in a paradigm shift, particularly when exploring for interdisciplinary pillars (Social Construction 773). Exploring the usefulness of that terminology has been one of the most important roles of this exploratory group of composition scholars, and Dowst's language includes the first use of the term epistemic rhetoric. Epistemic rhetoric for Dowst suggests a knowledge making, not knowledge discovering, rhetoric. Epistemic rhetoric consequently expresses the contemporary bias for an anti-

foundational rhetoric based on socially-constructed knowledge creation.

According to Ann Berthoff in *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers*, composition practitioners must search to integrate theory and practice. In other words, they must create a "praxis" that "can develop an authentic pedagogy of knowing" (19). Berthoff consequently is within this exploratory group that is trying to move beyond the procedural, pedagogical, and epistemological paradigms to an inclusive epistemic theory. In her opinion, "the best way to keep theory lively and practice responsive is to have in mind models and metaphors to remind teachers and their students of what is involved in learning and teaching the composing process" (5). Berthoff goes on to demonstrate how metaphorical thinking makes an understanding of models and maxims from which to teach, thus enhancing the metaphorical position of language that is used by many epistemic rhetoricians. Coming out of one of the first philosophical, yet procedural, statements created in composition studies, namely "process over product," Berthoff, as a social constructionist, would not side with the world view that truth pre-exists language. Berthoff claims that her roots are in I.A. Richards and "his convention that the classroom is the philosophical laboratory" (18), as well as the linguistic, rhetorical, and philosophical views of Burke, Vygotsky, Cassirer, Friere, Langer, Sapir, Whitehead, and Tolstoy. Written in the years preceeding and including 1981, Berthoff's book is more of a

call for an epistemic rhetoric that a definition of it (107). This is typical of compositionists writing in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Janet Emig is also in this early group. Like many compositionists, Emig turns to Vygotsky for answers to language's relationship to thought, and hence the title of her 1983 book, *The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning, and Thinking*. As literary students have been influenced by psychology, so have composition studies, particularly in search for anti-foundational epistemologies that could reflect the reality of the contemporary writing class. The paradigm has been shifting, and many composition teachers have become open to new theories to explain contemporary problems. For instance, Edward M. White writes in "Post-Structural Literary Criticism and the Response to 'Student Writing," "Although teachers are a rather conservative lot, they seem to have responded to post-structural theory with a surprising calm, even general acceptance..." (White 186). The anti-foundational epistemology in post-structuralism has come to the forefront of composition just as social constructionist rhetoric has. Just as Classical logocentric rhetoric or the formalism of Aristotle is *not* acceptable in a writing classroom, so isn't the current-traditional pedagogy. As we will see in chapters two and three, compositionists have had to be open to new ways of thinking and teaching.

Finally, Joseph Petraglia's exploratory work on the nature of "rhetoric as epistemic," suggests that there are four processes that provide the basis of social construction in composition (39). They are

"Real entities ('reality') include knowledge, beliefs, truths, and selves... All reality is arrived at by consensus... Consensus, and thus knowledge is 'discovered' solely through public discourse (rhetoric)... Reality changes as consensus changes." This anti-foundational epistemic rhetoric is typical of the dialectic against the legacy of Classical foundational rhetoric as well as the social norms that it contained including patriarchy and Euro-centrism. Composition studies has grown up with the feminist and civil rights movements and so Petraglia's inclusionary epistemic rhetoric, within this new tradition, is responding to the exclusionary hegemony of traditional absolutist rhetoric and the typical white male ideas that it reified.

In these five exploratory attempts to define both epistemic rhetoric and its contemporary vehicle of social constructionism, a trend appears, as Jim W. Corder suggests, to talk about "a new" rhetoric or "the new" rhetoric (162-163). I agree that this trend exists, but I don't see epistemic rhetoric as "the new" rhetoric because epistemic rhetoric has a legacy that goes back to the dialectical opposition of Plato and the Sophists. Although the dialectical assumptions have changed from a foundational to an anti-foundational epistemological base, this rhetoric remains epistemic and consequently is not new. The epistemological conclusions may be new, but the idea of a knowledge creating and/or discovering rhetoric is not. The explorations of Bruffee and other interdisciplinary social constructionists may make epistemic rhetoric seem like it is new, but as Robin Varnum points out, this sort of

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"new" talk robs us of our generations, our rhetorical legacy (39-40).

As I will show in chapters two and three, this explorartory group has

still not come to terms with the historical dialectic of epistemic

rhetoric, and therefore using social constructionism as the definition

for Bruffee's idea of an epistemic rhetoric does not respond to the

meta-level definitional needs as effectively as the work of Berlin or

Fulkerson.

James Berlin's Ideological Approach

James Berlin's work on rhetoric has brought epistemic rhetoric

to the forefront of composition studies more than any other single

contemporary scholar, and his work on composition theories in 1982,

1987, and 1988 has not overlooked the rhetorical legacy. His

taxonomies have focused on the ideological and epistemological

characteristics of rhetoric, and since he himself was an anti-

foundational Marxist, his works have interpreted epistemic rhetoric

from a the social constructionist Marxist view.

Inherent in James Berlin's understanding and descriptions of

rhetorical theories is Kuhn's idea of paradigm shifts as well as

Foucault's idea of the *episteme*. Berlin writes in his history of

writing instruction in the twentieth century entitled *Rhetoric and

Reality*, "While one particular rhetorical theory may predominate at

any historical moment, none remains dominant over time... the

difference has to do with epistemology" (3). Berlin documents how

epistemological assumptions and the *episteme* have changed in

composition studies throughout the century, but most importantly since the 1960s. Berlin writes in 1987 that, "In considering the rhetorical theories of the period I have chosen epistemology rather than ideology as the basis of my taxonomy" (6). But one year later, in his landmark article "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class," Berlin choses to taxonomize ideologically. Let's first look at the epistemological taxonomy.

Berlin divides the rhetorical history of writing instruction in *Rhetoric and Reality* into three epistemological areas: objective, subjective, and transactional. The objective rhetorical theory is a positivistic rhetoric that in a contemporary light is seen as current-traditional, formalist, or cognitive psychological. The subjective rhetorical theory, because it sees knowledge coming from the individual, is essentially expressivistic. Transactional rhetorical theory, because it sees knowledge coming from "an interaction of the subject and object or of the subject and audience or even of all the elements - subject, object, audience, and language - operating simultaneously," (15) is essentially epistemic rhetoric.

Within the transactional or epistemic category, "Rhetoric exists not merely so that truth can be communicated: rhetoric exists so that truth many be discovered . . . and constructed" (165). In other words, Berlin recognizes that epistemic rhetoric enacts the foundational/anti-foundational epistemological dialectic, the Platonic/Nietzschean dialectic, that we will discuss in detail in chapter two. Berlin asserts, "Epistemic rhetoric holds that language is

the key to understanding the dialectical process involved in the rhetorical act. Knowledge does not exist apart from language" (166). Epistemic rhetoric consists of both Plato's dialectical discovery of foundational definitions as well as discourse communities' construction of anti-foundational definitions. In "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Classroom," Berlin describes this dialectical division within epistemic rhetoric as "psychological epistemic" on the Platonic side, and "social epistemic" on the social constructionist or discourse community side (489).

Berlin traces the roots of social-epistemic rhetoric, within the the transactional epistemology, in the 1950s and 1960s to Harold Martins, Richard Ohmann, Kenneth Burke, and others, and then in the 1970s and 1980s to Kenneth Pike, Alton Becker, Richard Young, Kenneth Bruffee, Ann Berthoff, Paulo Friere, Hans Guth, Fredric Jameson, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, David Bartholomae, Patricia Bizzell, C.H. Knoblauch, Lil Brannon, and Maxine Hairston (Rhetoric and Reality 165-189). What holds all these scholars, the emerging epistemic rhetoric discourse community, together? According to Berlin, what unifies them is a belief that:

> Meaning emerges not from objective, disinterested, empirical investigation, but from individuals engaging in rhetorical discourse in discourse communities - groups organized around the discussion of particular matters in particular ways. Knowledge, then, is a matter of mutual agreement appearing as a product of rhetorical activity, the discussion, of a given discourse community. (166-167)

As noted earlier, many of these epistemic rhetoricians just listed, and who follow this social constructionist pattern of self-

definition, are the same scholars that were part of what I termed the exploratory group. The beauty of Berlin's analysis of epistemic rhetoric over the exploratory group's analysis, is that he sees it as part of a rhetorical legacy as well as a rhetoric that can be defined and understood through the meta-level of ideology. Ideology, like theory or philsophy, acheives the desired meta-level, a meta-level in this thesis meaning a composition approach that minimally takes in to account pedagogy, epistemology, and procedure. Berlin also understands, unlike the exploratory group who unite predominantly around the social constructionist epistemology, that transactional rhetoric, or epistemic rhetoric, can be seen from both foundational and anti-foundational points of view, just as I have defined it. Berlin of course is in the anti-foundational camp.

In the 1988 article, "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class," Berlin does not abandon epistemological taxonomies altogether, but he decides that ideology clarifies the taxonomy claiming that, "rhetoric is regarded as always already ideological" (477). And as we will see when we analyze Fulkerson, Berlin, like Fulkerson, saw that in taxonmizing composition studies a meta-level would have to be sought. Fulkerson chooses theory over philosophy, whereas Berlin chooses ideology over epistemology. Berlin explains this evolution in his thinking by writing that ideology "addresses three questions: What exists? What is good? What is possible?" (479). Within this framework, ideology includes and supercedes epistemology because "What exists" takes on the question of what

counts as knowledge. In addition, (and this is where the meta-level clarity comes in) ideology encompasses both "What is good," which addresses the ethical and aesthetic issues, and "What is possible," which addresses issues of expectation and power. In this article, Berlin uses the same three categories, objective, subjective, and transactional, but because he focuses more on the contemporary pedagogical and procedural practices of these ideologies than on their epistemological aspects, he calls objective rhetoric "cognitive rhetoric," subjective rhetoric "expressionistic rhetoric," and transactional rhetoric "social epistemic." Social epistemic, as we saw with Bruffee and the exploratory group, is the dominant contemporary expression of epistemic rhetoric.

According to Berlin, social-epistemic rhetoric is "grounded in language" and "is located in the relationship that involves dialectical interaction of the observer, the discourse community (social group) in which the observer is functioning, and the material conditions of existence" (488). Knowledge consequently is "an historically bound social fabrication rather than an eternal and invariable phenomenon" (489). Social-epistemic rhetoric consequently sees knowledge as created, not discovered, but it is created within the same tradition as the neo-Platonic epistemic rhetoric where knowledge is seen as discovering an external and eternal truth. (Berlin calls this psychological epistemic). Berlin adds that, "in studying rhetoric--the ways discourse is generated--we are studying the ways in which

knowledge comes into existence," (489) hence the continual dialectical nature of epistemic rhetoric.

Berlin may recognize the existence of a foundational epistemic rhetoric, but he sees it as almost obsolete in light of the current historical dialectic and the current anti-foundational paradigm of composition studies. Marginalizing foundational epistemic rhetoricians divides the composition practitioners into those who align themselves with Berlin's ideological and social constructionist theory, and those who are not part of this discourse community. Consequently he contributes, with his ideological definitions, to the inclusionary/exclusionary tensions that I will discuss in chapter three. Although I personally like Berlin's point of view on epistemic rhetoric, he can be very alienating to people who don't see rhetoric and rhetorical taxonomies as inherently political. But if language has always expressed power, whether Plato's or Berlin's, the ideological nature of rhetoric's use can never be escaped. Berlin not only understands the hegemonic aspects of language, but he is able to analyze and articulate linguistic hegemony. For compositionists who would rather not have their hidden pedagogical, procedural, or epistemological agendas analyzed, Berlin can be a threat. But as stated earlier, to understand Berlin we must appreciate that paradigms shift, and the *episteme* changes. Change can be a threat to some compositionists, but most realize that change is one of the only constants in the field.

If Berlin may be accused of being too exclusive, Richard Fulkerson may be accused of being too inclusive, and too much inclusivity may fail to provide definitions as well as mask the conflictive nature in any discourse community. Yet despite that, I think that Richard Fulkerson has created the most complete and inclusive paradigm for understanding the current paradigms in composition studies.

Richard Fulkerson's Theory Approach

Bringing more clarity to the taxonomizing of composition studies than anyone before him, Richard Fulkerson proposes, "as a disciplinary paradigm that a 'theory' of composition would include four components, of which what I once called a 'philosophy' is only the first component' (410). Although there is a breadth to the exploratory social constructionist definitions from scholars like Bruffee, and there is an attractive power to the ideological definitions of Berlin, I think Fulkerson's theory paradigm provides a schema that can fully taxonomize any composition practice, not just epistemic rhetoric.

The first and the most definitive of the four components in Fulkerson's theory based definition is "axiology," a value theory for what constitutes good writing. The axiology is concerned with the ends, whereas the next three components of Fulkerson's paradigm are the means to achieving these ends. The means are procedural, pedagogical, and epistemological. As was discussed earlier, the

procedural component concerns how writers create texts or how they should create texts. The pedagogical component concerns how a teacher should design curriculum and what modes of instruction would be the best. The epistemological component concerns what counts as knowledge or how knowledge is made. Fulkerson "maintain(s) that these four elements are both necessary and sufficient for a theory of composition" (411).

In differentiating the ends of any composition theory from the means to achieve those ends, Fulkerson's logic clarifies the muddled approaches that were seen in both the exploratory and ideological approaches, as well as the earliest approaches that used only one of the components of epistemology, procedure, or pedagogy, to define a composition theory. Fulkerson, with his ends and means approach, tries to prove that, "Composition studies has moved toward a homogeneity of purpose within diversity of method" (411). In other words, composition practioners have reached a consensus on the ends, but not the means to achieve those ends. Fulkerson asserts, because of a predominance of social constructionists, that compositionists have chosen the rhetorical axiology, the axiology that privileges the reader. He asserts that composition has moved away from the formalist axiology that privileges text, the mimetic axiology that privileges reality, and the expressivistic axiology that privileges the writer. In other words, the significant disparities that continue to exist concern process, pedagogy, and epistemology, and not

axiology since the consensus in the 1980s and 1990s is for a rhetorical, or externally based, axiology.

Fulkerson emerges with his ends and means theory after a mountain of research by scholars like Berlin, Bruffee, and others in the exploratory group. Initially the procedural, pedagogical, and epistemological pieces of the puzzle were studied and understood. From these means, the ends could be examined. Fulkerson's 1990 assertion of a commonly practiced and understood end, a rhetorical axiology, took twenty seven years from the Braddock report's announcement in 1963 that we knew nothing about how to teach and research writing.

Intellectually Fulkerson's end and means theory can be quite satisfying since composition practioners can use Fulkerson's four components to analyze and implement the axiological, procedural, pedagogical, and epistemological practices needed to teach a theoretically consistent and meta-cognitive writing class. Yet in practical and emotional terms there is a awkward cumbersomeness in being so precise. Ideological terms, like the ones Berlin uses, seem to fulfill a more basic need of description. There's something unsatisfying in a Fulkerson-like answer to the question of, "What's your composition theory?" A contemporary epistemic rhetorician would answer something like this: "Well, I'm axiologically rhetorical, that is I privelege the reader over the writer, text, or reality. I'm pedagogically environmental, that is to use Hillox's definition that is essentially based on the structured workshop type of writing class

(Hillox 20). I'm procedurally process oriented following the cognitive psychology of Linda Flower (Rhetoric and Ideology 481), and I'm epistemologically a social constructionist." This many be an accurate answer, but it just doesn't have the power of, "I'm an epistemic rhetorician." That's concise, and somehow pleasing, even though its incompleteness has led to many of the current misunderstandings in composition theory and practice. Certainly Berlin's ideological terminology has had that brevity.

Although Fulkerson's theory-based paradigm has not offered brevity, it does allow for the inevitable and probable paradigm shifts that will occur as composition studies grows as a field. Compositionists will be able to define themselves within their means and ends as those means changes to achieve that end, or vice versa. Epistemic rhetoric, as a term, remains more stable than many terms in literature and composition. Take for example the literary theories of "structuralism" or "reader response"' These literary terms, one older and one newer, represent paradigms of criticism that have evolved or will evolve out of existence. Is that all epistemic rhetoric will become? If firmly established as a composition theory, ideology, or philosophy, will epistemic rhetoric only represent a compositionist's stance from the 1970s to the 1990s? Maybe so, but I hope not. I'm not arguing that all theories are historically situated and consequently do not have the ability to evolve, but theories that do not respond to a historical legacy, like the dialectic inherent in epistemic rhetoric, tend to stagnate and disappear as the paradigms

shift. Yet if epistemic rhetoric is seen as an integral part of the rhetorical legacy, as well as a rhetoric that can change with the times, then it will survive as an inclusive and timeless term. If it remains a term simply for social constructionist epistemology and pedagogy, then it will fade away an an exclusive and historically stagnant term. Judging from the historical dialectic that we will examine in chapter two, epistemic rhetoric is a language centered rhetoric whose epistemology should be able to change with the times.

So now that we've examined the exploratory group, Berlin's ideological approach, and Fulkerson's theoretical approach, it's time to understand if the definition that I earlier offered of epistemic rhetoric qualifies as both a complete composition theory and as a rhetoric that responds to its historical legacy.

Analysis Of My Definition of Epistemic Rhetoric

My definition, once again, reads as follows:
Epistemic rhetoric - Epistemic rhetoric is a rhetoric that assumes and teaches that language is the basis for all human understanding of knowledge, whether foundational or anti-foundational, and that effective use and understanding of language leads to the creation or discovery of knowledge, either from or for the self, or from or for the society. Effective use and understanding of epistemic rhetoric would emphasize the dialectical, as well as the formalistic, nature of language and knowledge in relation to the self, society, and what is perceived to be reality.

Does this definition include the axiological end and the procedural, pedagogical, and epistemological means that are

necessary to be a complete theory within Fulkerson's paradigm? In an inclusive manner of thinking, I think it does.

Although epistemology is at the forefront of this definition instead of axiology, as Fulkerson would have it, the definition nevertheless fits within the axiological definitions that would make it a theory. In post-modern times the perspective on epistemic rhetoric has axiologically priveleged the audience, reader, or society, yet my definition also allows for axiologies that could privelege the three other axiological components, the text, reality, or the writer. An epistemic rhetorician's axiology would depend on his or her epistemology, because within epistemic rhetoric there is an inseparable dialectic between language and knowledge that would affect an epistemic rhetorician's value theory of what constitutes good writing or speaking. My definition has allowed for the breadth of that axiological and epistemological legacy, whether it be a Classical reality based axiology with a foundational and logocentric epistemology, or a post-modern reader-based axiology with a anti-foundational and socially constructed epistemology.

So, this definition includes Fulkerson's axiological and epistemological components, but does it also include the procedural and pedagogical components? In the most inclusive manner of thinking, again, I believe it does.

Fulkerson's procedural component is the means by which writers, or speakers in Classical times, go about creating texts. In Classical times the procedure for creating texts was codified in

Cicero's *De Inventione* ; his five canons of rhetorical composing being invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery (Bizzell, Herzberg 195). Before Cicero, epistemic rhetoric also interpreted procedure as the Socratic method, the search for definitions, examining the formalistic nature of speech, and argumentation. In post-modern times epistemic rhetoric has interpreted procedure through various pre-writing procedures, which would include analysis of audience and discourse communities, various draft creation procedures, which emphasize the process over the product, and various revision and editing procedures, which would include peer editing and writers' workshops. Inherent in epistemic rhetoric's procedure, whether Classical or post-modern, is the dialectical nature of text creation and my definition allows for this procedural component.

As for the pedagogical component, post-modern epistemic rhetoric has interpreted this through such teaching methodologies as cooperative learning and non-hierarchical group discussion. In Classical times, according to H.I. Marrou, pedagogy would include the use of both philosophical and rhetorical debate and dialectic (Marrou 194-205). Again, my definition of epistemic rhetoric allows for these pedagogical components.

And so now, in the most inclusive terms, we have defined epistemic rhetoric, as not simply a philosophy, a search for truth and knowledge through language, but as a theory, a set of principles about truth and its relation to language and the best methods to

implement these principles. As a theory, epistemic rhetoric's nature is completely bound up in the endless dialectical pursuit for knowledge and wisdom through language, whether Classical or post-modern.

The definition I have written for epistemic rhetoric defies the ideological boundaries of taxonomy that Berlin would want, and it really gives no bibliographic context that Bruffee and the other exploratory rhetoricians may desire, but I think that it expresses an inclusiveness that neither Berlin, Bruffee, or Fulkerson would fault given the rhetorical legacy that it is trying to encompass. As we will see in much more detail in chapters two and three, this definition represents the dialectical nature of epistemic rhetoric's history, a history that must be appreciated properly to know and use epistemic rhetoric as a timeless term.

C.H. Knoblauch, whose work pioneered the epistemological shift that has been occuring in composition studies, states very clearly, "A knowledge of rhetoric can offer those who work in the theory and teaching of writing two perspectives on their work that they currently lack, the first philosophical, and the second historical" (27). Now that we've looked at how epistemic rhetoric has affected composition studies philosophically through the pursuit for a defintion, we'll next look at some of the history that creates epistemic rhetoric's current dialectic. Understanding the definition of epistemic rhetoric entails understanding its history, the purpose of chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL DIALECTIC OF EPISTEMIC
RHETORIC AS CREATED BY PLATO AND NIETZSCHE

Having defined epistemic rhetoric as it relates to contemporary

composition studies, the question now arises of how composition

studies has gotten to the point where social constructionism is seen

as the dominant epistemic rhetoric theory. The contentiousness in

the contemporary definition, as seen in chapter one is representative

of the historical dialectic that has formed our understanding of

epistemic rhetoric. In this chapter I will argue that the parameters

of this dialectic are defined by Plato in Classical times and Nietzsche

in the nineteenth century. Plato represents the definitive

foundational view on language and Nietzsche represents the

definitive anti-foundational view out of which grew the post-modern

bias for social constructionism. Plato and Nietzsche saw rhetoric in

epistemic terms as a vehicle for knowledge, but their assumptions on

whether knowledge is discovered or created and to what truth it

related are entirely different. Plato claims that knowledge is

discovered and relates to an absolute truth. Nietzsche claims that

knowledge is created and relates only to our own dissimulation or

amoral untruth. With Plato on the side of "truth" and Nietzsche on

the side of "lies," their differences epitomize and define the continual

dialectic between truth and language inherent in epistemic rhetoric.

Underlying this argument that epistemic rhetoric has changed

from a foundational to an anti-foundational stance is Foucault's

concept of the *episteme*. Before discussing Plato, Nietzsche, and the historical dialectic that took place in epistemic rhetoric between the time periods of these two pivotal thinkers, let's revisit Foucault's thought on how this epistemological legacy has changed.

Foucault's Episteme

In *The Order of Things* , Michel Foucault ponders the epistemological dialectic in Western culture. Foucault uses the Classical word *episteme* to describe the "epistemological field" of Western Culture (xxii). Foucault's concept of the *episteme* is a post-modernist view of knowledge that does not "describe the progress of knowledge towards an objectivity" (xxii), but which displays the basis of a socially constructed field of knowledge from which Western culture emerged. Foucault continues:

> Now, this archaeological inquiry has revealed two great discontinuities in the *episteme* of Western culture: the first inaugurates the Classical age (roughly half way through the seventeenth century) and the second, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, marks the beginning of the modern age. (xxii)

In other words, Plato's Classical *episteme* was different than Nietzsche's modern *episteme*. Yet the *episteme*, according to Foucault, that finally and irreversibly changed in Nietzsche's century, the nineteenth, has its roots in Classical times. Plato and Socrates assert that the *episteme* represents true, or absolute, knowledge--a knowledge based on archetypes that could only be known by transcending human existence. *Episteme* in the Classical sense is

contrasted to *doxa* , which to Socrates and Plato meant mere opinion. The distinction between *episteme* and *doxa* has blurred in the post-modern *episteme* , as socially-constructed anti-foundational thought has emerged as the dominant *episteme.*, an *episteme* that has no absolutes and believes that none have ever existed. The transition between these *episteme* took time. My contention is that the difference in this new emerging *episteme* was not understood by philosophers and rhetoricians until Nietzsche, and then by modernist and post-modernist work, alluded to in chapter one, that followed Nietzsche. Epistemic rhetoric, as a part of this rhetorical tradition, has changed as the Classical *episteme* changed to the post-modern *episteme*.

Another aspect of Foucault's work that will become clearer as we explore the historical dialectic in this chapter is the concept of hegemony. The epistemological dialectic has always been contentious. In Classical times Plato's views won out over the Sophists. Plato's views were hegemonic, and in their hegemony were a threat as witnessed by the death of Socrates. Similiarly, in post-modern times, social constructionist thought seems to be hegemonic within rhetoric. I mention this now so that we can keep in mind that dominance of one thought over another does not mean that the less dominant thought does not exist. Nietzsche felt the hegemony of foundational thought when he tried to expand the rhetorical debate beyond the Platonic and Aristotilian debate about the ethical and unethical uses of language to the the Platonic and Sophistic debate

about the epistemological basis of rhetoric. Foucault also feels the hegemonic presence in his archaeological histories in that he often studies more of what is not mentioned than what is mentioned.

I am not going to take on the comprehensive archaeological history in this thesis that Foucault made his life's work, but now that we have revisited Foucault's thought we can continue forward in examining the historical dialectic of epistemic rhetoric. I will begin my examining Plato's foundational thought. I then will examine the anti-foundational thought of Nietzsche. I will conclude with a short discussion of the rhetorical legacy that composition studies is dependent on and how that legacy influences us today.

Plato's Foundational Thought

Plato defines truth and its relationship to language through Socrates' voice in Plato's dialogues, most notably in the *Phaedrus* , and the "Allegory of the Cave," as an unvarying absolute. Archetypes of this absolute truth, or forms, are hidden, at least metaphorically, in a cave, a cave whose existence we know of before birth and which we now must remember in order to transcend back to that heavenly sanctuary of truth's archetypes. Beauty, particularly in rhetoric, reminds us of this truth and so beauty must be sought after in order to receive this truth. The transcendent truth exists and is accessible to humans. The role of the philosopher, or the "lover of wisdom" as well as beauty (Bizzell 142), is to bring humans to that secret and

hidden knowledge. Rhetoric and language, therefore, discover pre-existing knowledge.

Rhetoric consequently is a virtuous pursuit. As Karen Burke Le Fevre writes in "A Platonic View of Rhetorical Invention," "Plato maintains that virtues (truth, justice, love) do not exist in the material world, but only in the mind and in the shape of ideal forms: perfect prototypes of the natural world, forming an ideal pattern-world of a true, transcendent reality" (1). Of course this sets up a didactic binary of good and virtuous rhetoric against bad and virtueless rhetoric, a binary whose relativity was hotly debated until Nietzsche's definitive response.

This foundational definition of archetypes began the Classical *episteme*, a legacy in which truth is accessed through language, but is beyond language. Therefore rhetoric's place is to bring the speaker, through language and dialectic, to the point where he or she can transcend the limitations of language and receive the truth through a mystical experience. Often called logocentric thought, Platonic rhetoric has influenced our ideas of language straight through to the Scientific Revolution and even beyond to the present day. For instance, in composition is not the Expressivist idea that a writer must discover his or her "voice" a transcendent view of truth?

Otis M. Walter, a modern Platonic scholar, condenses Plato's influence on the rhetoric in four ways:

> (1) Ideas are the origins of our values, (2) Most of the manifestations of our values are imperfect imitations of the archetypal ideas, (3) Knowledge of the ideas can transform

individuals and entire nations, and (4) Good communication must be based on a transforming definition following the principles already set out. (20-23)

From this point of view, it is clear why Plato did not like the poets and the Sophists, the anti-foundationalists of Plato's time. Their beliefs, or *doxa* , manipulated Plato's truth, a truth of archetypes, a truth that Plato felt the Sophists and the poets had no conception of, and therefore had no right to speak and write about. Plato's hegemonic belief is that philosophy should rule over rhetoric and not rhetoric over philosophy, as the Sophists and the poets would have it (Briggs 92). Plato is particularly concerned with the "transforming" value of knowledge which leads to a Classical dialectic between the ethical and unethical uses of language.

Plato's dialogues try to create a touchstone of moral absolutism against the moral relativism that he perceived in the Sophists of his time. To quote from Bizzell and Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition*, "Plato views the Sophists as moral relativists who therefore have no reason not to be manipulative, deceitful, or downright corrupting in their use of discourse. But Plato sees himself as didactic, not manipulative, using discourse to shape his audience for its own good" (56). Plato believes that the rhetoricians must know the truth to be able to use the truth in a rhetorical situation. Rhetoric's ability to persuade must be used to convince people of the Truth, not of a relative truth, which Plato believed the Sophists practiced. Persuasion to truth is good rhetoric, Platonic rhetoric, whereas persuasion to *doxa* is bad rhetoric, or Sophistic rhetoric.

Thus Plato defines the long Classical and contemporary debate about the ethical and unethical uses of language. Many philosophers and rhetoricians between the time of Plato and Nietzsche debated Plato's idea of the transforming nature of ethical rhetoric, as well as the foundational premises of absolute truth, but they always need relative arguments. Underlying this debate is not only Nietzsche's idea of dissimulation, (that is, that language is a "lie," no truth can exist in language, language can never be escaped, and therefore there is no truth), but also the will to power and the will to truth, all of which we will discuss later. (Briefly explained, will to power is the basic human drive by which individuals try to subjugate others in order to prove that their beliefs or accomplishments are the most worthy. Will to truth is "the desire to locate truth in something other than discourse" (Bizzell, Herzberg 1126).) Plato's dialectic with the Sophists was not completely understood until Nietzsche responded to the unstated and underlying assumptions behind Platonic foundational belief: If rhetoric can deceive for "good" and for "bad," then rhetorical language must in itself be deceptive. In other words, how do we know the truth when we can use language not only to deceive others for their own good, but also to deceive ourselves? Platonic epistemic rhetoric chose to overlook this issue, and chose instead to debate the ethical and unethical uses of language. Nietzsche saw the idea of deception behind this ethical and unethical debate and this pushed him to declare his anti-foundational beliefs in response to Plato's foundational claims. As Foucault wrote, the

episteme, not just the *doxa* , has changed. We can believe ourselves out of being deceived, but we can't think our way out of being deceived.

Take, for example, the discussion on love in Plato's *Phaedrus*. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates defines good rhetoric as what Nietzsche would call dissimulation. Plato shows Socrates defining love with his student Phaedrus from three rhetorical points of view: from the Sophist Lysias'; from a Sophist-type monologue by Socrates, and finally, by an exemplary dialectic that purportedly lifts Phaedrus up to Socrates' level of understanding. Each of these rhetorical discussions are based, as in Plato's *Gorgias* , on the binary of *doxa* and *episteme* ; but only in the third dialectic does Socrates express that his persuasion is for a truthful good. Persuasion to truth, or *episteme* , according to Socrates, is the only ethical or good rhetoric, a rhetoric that must influence the soul to transcendent truths, like the transcendent non-sexual love of which he tries to tell Phaedrus. But for Nietzsche, none of this talk can be true because language, as we will discuss later, is only metaphorical and can never be escaped or transcended. There may be a truth to transcend to, but unlike Socrates, Nietzsche does not think that language is a way to arrive there.

In *Gorgias* , Plato has Socrates debating several Sophists in an attempt to illustrate what rhetoric should not be. I believe the most important issue discussed in this dialogue, in relation to truth and dissimulation as well as foundational and anti-foundational truth, is

when Socrates tells Gorgias that a distinction must be drawn between "knowledge and belief" or "the true and the probable." (Bizzell, Herzberg 66) Persuasive rhetoric, according to Gorgias, really only deals with belief or the probable; but, for Socrates rhetoric and dialectic must deal with knowledge and certainty. Socrates acknowledges "conventional truth" and "natural truth" in the affairs of men such as Gorgias, but he belittles this "popular clap trap" in favor of transcendent truth (Bizzell, Herzberg 84). Socrates' ultimate example of how this truth will be played out in our lives for the few remaining doubters at the end of the diaologue is the truth found in judgement after death.

But how can any human know this transcendent truth? The attempts at an answer have varied throughout the rhetorical tradition, starting with Plato's attempts in the *Phaedrus* ; but none has brought rhetoricians and philosophers closer to any tangible understandings, and that is where Nietzsche steps in. Dialectic and rhetoric can never bring us closer to truth because we can not escape our own rhetoricity. Consequently issues of ethical and unethical uses of rhetoric continue to be conventional even if we choose to call these conventions universals. Socrates in *Gorgias* tries to demonstrate that conventional and/or natural truths are not universal or transcendent truths, but even he can not definitively illustrate and define how rhetoric can do this. We, as humans, can not escape convention and nature, even if there is a judgement waiting for us at death, as Socrates points out to Gorgias. Yet

Nietzsche as well as many modern epistemic rhetoricians feel that we can become aware of these conventions that are influencing us. And so now, I'll turn to Nietzsche's idea of truth and how that affects the ideas of a knowledge creating rhetoric, an epistemic rhetoric.

Nietzsche's Anti-Foundational Thought

The transcendental and absolutist truth that Plato purports was finally, after more than two thousand years, correctly countered by Frederich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's 1873 essay "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" confronts the initial Platonic issues and tensions of rhetoric: truth/non-truth, language/reality, tropes/is-ness, self/others, humaness/animalness, intuition/logic, power/knowledge, subjectivity/objectivity, and of course foundational truth versus anti-foundational truth, hence epistemic rhetoric. Nietzsche responds to the Platonic legacy in diametrical opposition, flatly stating that there is no truth to transcend to through rhetoric. Nietzsche asserts that all language is metaphorical and consequently is a lie because language only represents and does not contain the thing of which it is speaking. Language can not be a medium for truth because language in its metaphoricalness expresses nothing true or real; language only represents the signs and symbols that we deceive ourselves with as human beings. Therefore, language, as a human creation, can never be transcended. It is a product of our humanness, and we are a product of it.

As Bizzell and Herzberg write in their introduction to Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense:"

> Language, Nietzsche continues, conveys no sensations but ' copies of sensations,' not things but images of our perception of things. Words are signs of our impulses and do no represent 'a many sided, respectable knowledge of things.' In short, emphasizes Nietzsche, *language is rhetoric*, because it desires to convey only a *doxa*, not an *episteme*. (886)

This assertion finally responds to the dialectic started in the *Phaedrus*, the dialectic on what Nietzsche and later Foucault call the will to truth. Nietzsche thinks that our search for truth is a way that we as humans, both individually and societally, separate ourselves fron the is-ness of nature. Nietzsche asserts that this is a stance of dissimulation, a stance of lies about what constitutes our reality. Classical rhetoricians thought of language as anthropomorphic, and consequently language is humankind's greatest societal construct. Nietzsche concedes the same point, but his conclusion is different. The difference between the Classic rhetoricians and Nietzsche is that Nietzsche argues that we only flatter our human egos when we think this anthropomorphic language construct could lead to truth (On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense 892). Language is figuration, and consequently, "there is no unrhetorical 'naturalness' of language to which one could appeal" (885). "The tropes are not just occasionally added to words but constitute their most proper nature" (886).

Nietzsche writes, "The drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive" (894). This statement makes it

clear why humans since pre-Classic times have always enjoyed

mythology, storytelling, the reading of fiction and poetry, as well as

lingusitics and semiotics. According to Nietzsche, metaphorical

language engages our very humaness, yet on a level that seems

pleasantly intuitive instead of disturbingly logical. Unlike the logical

positivists that preceeded Nietzsche, and who wanted to scientifically

control language in order to bring language to truthfulness, Nietzsche

rejoices in the metaphoricalness of language and his writing style is

highly figurative and aphoristic. Having resigned himself to the

dissimulative trap that his language theory leaves humanity in, he

plays directly with that dissimulation.

According to Nietzsche, humans have an invincible inclination

to be deceived. Accordingly, even Plato deceives himself and others

into believing that there must be an absolutist transcendent truth.

Humans beings, from the Classical period to the present, define lies

as the conscious making of a false or misleading statement. But the

lie that underlies this understanding of lies is that we choose to

believe that language has the capacity to communicate honesty,

knowledge or truth. According to Nietzsche, language never

communicates universals, language only communicates social

conventions; and therefore all language and signs are dissimulation.

The master deception is the intellect, because the intellect can

deceive us into believing anything, such as a quest for truth, a

dramatic play, or that culturally-bound knowledge is universally

true, a trap in hindsight that is true of the Platonic dialogues and

their relative truth to Greek society. For instance, "Democracy" was qualified for only non-slave men, a "Truth" we would think of as preposterous today.

Dissimulation from Nietzsche's point of view is not seen in the Classical light of ethical and unethical manipulation of the language, as in the Platonic/Sophistic debate. Dissimulation to Nietzsche is non-moral, or pre-moral, since dissimulation is the basis for everything that allows humans to think of themselves as different from nature. Human language is an anthropomorphic creation; and so Nietzsche asserts that to think of language and rhetoric as a vehicle to truth, a human truth, is a lie before nature (889). Consequently, Nietzsche concludes that all language is metaphor and metaphors lie. Non-moral lies are the human condition.

It is important to note that the title of Nietzsche's essay is "Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense." The "Nonmoral Sense" is the distinction that was not made in discussing truth throughout the rhetorical tradition, including the Platonic/Sophistic debate from what I have read. The rhetorical tradition has always looked at the ethical and unethical uses of language, as we will see later in the chapter, but Nietzsche has redirected us back to the basic debate that Socrates started on whether truth exists or not. Plato and Socrates, transcending the issue of the ethical use of language, say yes, truth exists. Nietzsche, transcending the issue of the ethical use of language , says no, truth can not exist. Both Plato and Socrates knew that asking whether truth exists or not is not an ethical question, and

so it is Plato and Nietzsche, both drawing different conclusions, that define the parameters, the dialectic, of the rhetorical tradition, and consequently of epistemic rhetoric.

And so, if all language is figurative dissimulation, then what is truth for Nietzsche? Completely in opposition to Plato's ideal of an absolutist truth, Nietzsche's "truth" is a "rhetorical construction arising from the creative use of language for the purpose of making an effective social arrangement" (886). To quote Nietzsche:

> "What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins" (891)

Before we explore Nietzsche's ideas of truth any further though, it must be made clear that Nietzsche did not come to the social constructionist epistemology that is dominant in post-modern thought. Nietzsche's radical opposition to Plato simply contrasts Plato's absolute truth with Nietzsche's absolute untruth. In other words, Nietzsche clarified the epistemic parameters with Plato's absolute truth on one side and his absolute non-truth on the other. As a non-absolutist truth, socially constructed truth compromised Nietzsche's epistemology. Only later would Foucault clarify Nietzsche in light of the post-modernist epistemology. Thus Nietzsche understood a social constructionist epistemology. Despite seeing it as

an inter-subjective truth for different discourse communities, Nietzsche saw social constructionism as an acknowledgment of the inherent dissimulation in language yet a continuance in the search for truth just the same, (hence the will to truth and the will to power enacted by different groups). Nietzsche's rhetorical ideas lead to the post-modern construct of discourse communities, in which meaning depends on language, language depends on culture, and knowledge is socially constructed within interpretive communities. "The "will to truth" and "will to power", as both Nietzsche and Foucault call it, and which I will further explore in chapter three, can only occur when we forget that we are products of language. That is to say, the will to truth is self-flattery and self-deception. Truth consequently can only be a "movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms" (891). We think we attain epistemic power by naming something, but in doing so we only reinforce our dissimulative views of language and the world. Socrates and Plato, according to my interpretation of Nietzsche, lead us on a false rhetorical search. Even if there is a truth to transcend to, as Socrates proposes in the *Phaedrus* , it could never be arrived at through any construct of language such as rhetoric, dialectic, or the search for definitions. Our only reality, our only truth, is our own metaphoricalness.

In other words, the continual debate from the Classical period to the present has misinterpreted Plato's basic premise about truth's relationship to language. It was only Nietzsche who saw through this

confusion to the basic issue that Socrates and Plato, as deceivers to

good, must have known, but kept a secret because it had no didactic

purpose. As I. F. Stone asserts, Socrates believed that truth

transcends language, and he spent his whole life trying to define

truth without success (93). Why could Socrates never define truth?

Nietzsche's answer would be that no one, not even Socrates, could

transcend language. This distinction is one that presupposes any

dialectic on the ethical and unethical uses of rhetoric, and

consequently it clears the philosophical playing field so that modern

and post-modern philosophers and rhetoricians can see the

boundaries beyond the limits of didactic debate.

Nietzsche's Thought as a Social Construction

J. Hillis Miller analyzes how Nietzsche came to his

epistemological conclusions and how Nietzsche's assertions relate to

contemporary ideas of social constructionism. Miller reads

Nietzsche's idea of truth and its relationship to language like this:

> "No proper language exists. The 'proper' is already 'improper.'
> Truth is therefore grounded in access through the senses to the
> essence of the thing. Truth is rather a conventionally agreed
> upon set of lies. Truth is lie not in the sense that it can be
> measured as false against some attainable correct naming.
> Truth is lie in the sense that it claims a false grounding in
> things as they are, where in fact it's constitutive, not
> constative" (318).

In his article entitled "Nietzsche in Basel: Writing and Reading,"

Miller points out that, although Nietzsche was not lead to social

constructionism as a way to look at truth, he did come to his ideas

about the lie of truth in a most social constructionist fashion. In studying Nietzsche's notes from this time period, Miller points out that Nietzsche was reading and teaching the Classics in Basel when the interaction of his own reading and writings, Classical readings and modern writings, along with his interaction with the students, led him to his theory of dissimulation. Nietzsche's theory, that Miller condenses above, came, in hindsight, as an act of social construction. Nietzsche found his anti-foundational views within the dialectic in trying to teach the foundational views of Plato to his students in Basel. In other words, the interpretive community, made up of his class in Basel, allowed Nietzsche to see that foundational Classical rhetoric lacked a countering dialectic; Nietzsche thus constructed his dissumulative anti-foundational theory. (One wonders what Socrates would have thought if Nietzsche had been his student and not Phaedrus.)

Miller demonstrates that Nietzsche, at the writing of "Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," saw that there was no truth, or even literal language, to transcend to. "Rhetoric as persuasion and rhetoric as tropes are the same, since all language is tropological and the tropes persuade. All language is persuasive rather than truth telling. All language is primordially rhetorical" (MIller 321). This leads to the inclusionary/exclusionary problems within epistemic rhetoric that I will explore in chapter three. If all language is rhetorical, or naturally persuasive, then positions must be sought and taught in an anti-foundational rhetoric. This has given rise to discourse

communities as a way to understand the necessarily relative or inter-subjective truth.

Post-Nietzschean Epistemic Rhetoric

So where does epistemic rhetoric now stand? According to Nietzsche, language is rhetoric because it conveys only *doxa* , not *episteme*. This *doxa* or opinion, which in our blindness stand for truth, is created not discovered, and then is only relative to each "herd" (889). (Nietzsche uses "herd" to describe pejoratively what we think of today as discourse communities). Words are signs and these signs do not, and can not, represent, "a many sided and respectable knowledge of things," (886) because language or rhetoric conveys only opinion and not knowledge. Epistemic rhetoric, from this extreme Nietzschean view, is figuration that only creates opinion, not knowledge. Consequently the idea of socially constructed knowledge, the dominant epistemic rhetoric today, would be part of the middle ground between Nietzsche's created "lies" and Plato's discovered "truths."

This will to truth within the legacy of epistemic rhetoric also creates will to power, as evidenced in Berlin's ideological definitions of epistemic rhetoric. Personal and social power are expressed in all levels of language. Language is persuasive and rhetoric expresses the will to power. Socrates and Plato express their will to power by trying to elevate the student through the transforming power of dialectic and the search for definitions. The will to power is being

expressed here in the didactic Platonic belief that rhetoric should be used to persuade for the good. But if rhetoric can be used to persuade for the good, so too can it be used to persuade for the bad. This is why will to power is usually thought of as the unethical and dissimulative part of rhetoric, but for Nietzsche will to power is beyond good and evil (Kaufman 179). It is beyond good and evil because rhetoric can never escape its own rhetoricalness, its own dissimulation. As the Nietzschean scholar Howard Kaufman asserts, the will to power is part of every language act whether the speaker believes that his or her language is being used ethically or unethically (II-12). This will to power, emphasized in the work of Foucault, who follows in Nietzsche's footsteps, underlies the inclusionary/exclusionary tension in discourse communities that epistemic rhetoric sees the world through. We will discuss this further in the third and last chapter.

The Legacy of Epistemic Thought from Plato to Nietzsche

Besides Foucault, many philosophers and rhetoricians have looked at the epistemological change that has occurred in Western thought since Classical times. Berlin writes, "Rhetoric is epistemic because knowledge itself is a rhetorical construct. Having historical precedents in Vico, Marx, and a brilliant modern articulation in Kenneth Burke, this stance argues that epistemology is rhetorical, is itself a social and historical construct" (Rhetoric and Reality 165). Knoblauch and Brannon point to the Scientific Revolution as the

beginning point for the change in the *episteme* (4-5). Numerous

books have been written about the epistemological influences that

have created our modern ideas of epistemic rhetoric. How and why

did this *episteme* change? From my point of view, the changes in

epistemic rhetoric have come about as a result of historical social

change, of epistemic change. Nietzsche's idea of dissimulation

brought social change and, according to Miller, was an act of social

construction.

If Nietzsche's thought was both an act of social construction, as

Miller claims, as well as dependent on the legacy of rhetorical

thought that preceeded him, who were some of the great thinkers

within that rhetorical legacy that led to the eventual paradigm shift

in the *episteme* ?

Grateful to Bizzell and Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition.*, I

have surveyed this legacy, and although I don't think it would be

productive to detail each of these rhetorical scholar's influence, I

would like to answer the above question with some of the names

that make up this legacy and whose influence we are a product of.

In Classical times the dialectic was widened beyond Platonic

thought by the Sophists, Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.

Augustine saw the end of this age by arguing for truth over

eloquence, but then Europe found itself in an anti-rhetorical period,

the Dark Ages or the age of faith.

During the Renaissance, reason, free will, the imagination, and

language as a sign and symbol system became part of rhetorical

discourse once more through Erasmus and Bacon. This was followed
by many great thinkers in the Scientific Revolution and the
Englightenment including Locke and Vico. And the discourse from
the Renaissance to the Enlightenment was not only confined to the
work of male scholars, since earlier feminist rhetoricians like De
Pisan, Cereta, Fell, and Grimke also add to the widening rhetorical
discourse.

Bender and Wellbery, in their book *The Ends of Rhetoric*, write
that, "To understand the significance of rhetoric today is to
understand why and in what ways it is discontinuous with its past"
(4). Now that we have familiarized ourselves with both the
discontinuity and the parameters of epistemic rhetoric created by
Plato and Nietzsche, as well as scanning the legacy that came
between them, we can move to chapter three where we will examine
the influence of epistemic rhetoric on contemporary composition
studies and in particular the inclusionary/exclusionary tension that it
has inherited.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INFLUENCE OF EPISTEMIC RHETORIC
ON CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITION STUDIES

As I demonstrated in the last chapter, Nietzsche, as Foucault
and others recognize, is the dividing line in rhetorical thought. "The
episteme has changed" (The Order of Things xxii). For over two
thousand years rhetoricians reacted to the Platonic idea of
transcendent absolutist truth. The shift away from the Platonic
legacy began in the seventeenth century with the Scientific
Revolution (Knoblauch, Brannon 51). Yet it was not until Nietzsche,
in the nineteenth century, that a definitive counterpoint argument
was offered to define the dialectical borders of rhetoric, Platonic
absolutist truth on the foundational or logocentric side, and
Nietzschean dissimulation on the anti-foundational side.
Consequently, in the last one hundred years, the rhetorical debate on
what constitutes truth has been wide open as the parameters of
foundational and anti-foundational thought have come to be
understood. Coming out of that ongoing debate, socially constructed
discourse communities have arisen as the dominant vehicle through
which contemporary epistemic rhetoric is understood. In this
chapter I will discuss, expanding from the definitions offered in
chapter one, the influences of socially-constructed discourse
communities on epistemic rhetoric and how their
inclusionary/exclusionary dialectic reflects the contemporary
dialectic in the foundational/anti-foundational *episteme*. The thesis

that I will arrive at in this chapter is that the foundational and exclusionary tensions limit composition studies pedagogically and epistemologically, whereas the anti-foundational and inclusionary tensions enable composition studies to more effectively teach writing and thought.

Before I discuss what a discourse community is exactly, and how recognition of discourse communities has opened up the far-reaching issue of inclusion and exclusion in language, and in particular composition studies, I need to return to Foucault. In the last chapter I discussed Foucault's archaeological recognition of the changing *episteme* in Western culture. I also touched on how Foucault has expanded on Nietzsche's concepts of will to power and will to truth. Before I can discuss the dialectical tensions in contemporary discourse community theory, I need to further clarify the *episteme* as a reflection of discourse. Discourse then can be understood in its relationship to the will to power and will to truth, two concepts that underlie the discussion in the rest of this chapter on the influences of epistemic rhetoric in contemporary composition studies.

Foucault

In *The Order of Things* , Foucault writes that he has concerned himself "with a history of resemblance: on what conditions was Classical thought able to reflect relations of similarity or equivalence with things" (30). Discourse in Classical times was not a "thing,"

because discourse was decoration to express pre-existing thought; but Foucault's work tries to show that discourse is the most important "thing" because in this thing of language, or discourse, is displayed both will to power and will to truth. Discourse is not dressing up of ideas, and rhetoric is not simply about ethical and unethical eloquence, as in Platonic thought. Discourse is thought. Thought is a thing. And this thing displays who we are and aren't, both individually and societally.

Seeing discourse as a real entity, as thought itself, has changed modern epistemology. Foucault looks at this changing epistemology from many sides, and sees that the foundational underpinnings of Classical thought could no longer answer the questions in a changing Western culture. "Sixteenth-century knowledge condemned itself to never knowing anything but the same thing, and moreover to know that thing only at the unattainable end of an endless journey" (30). Foucault further characterizes the Classical legacy that dominated up until the seventeenth century, by exposing "first and foremost, the plethoric yet absolutely poverty stricken character of this knowledge" (30). Foundationalism had led the Classical *episteme* into a syllogistic circle of non-generativity.

During the Scientific Revolution, language as a sign system came into being, and consequently began to recapture its generative nature as discourse. Discourse, Foucault asserts, became a real thing. "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the peculiar existence and ancient solidity of language as a thing inscribed in the fabric of

the world were dissolved in the functioning of representation; all language had value only as discourse" (43). Foucault calls this gradual awakening from the Classical legacy, "the anthropological sleep" (340-341). Kuhn would describe it a paradigm shift. The anthropological sleep was not understood as being over until Nietzsche connected, in his various works, "the philosophical task with a radical reflection on language" (305). Exposing this anthropological sleep gave rise to an understanding about will to power and will to truth that is ever present in discourse.

Bizzell and Herzberg write that, "*In The Order of Things* Foucault remarks that the tendency of Western Philosophy, since the demise of the Sophists, has been to deny discourse its own reality and to think of discourse as the dress of thought or the conveyor of pre-existing meaning. Foucault calls this tendency the 'will to truth'" (1126). The "will to power" goes hand in hand with the will to truth. The will to power, according to Nietzsche, is a basic human drive that comes out in gross displays of power, subjugations of individuals and groups, as well as in subtler circumstances like the artists trying to give order to an otherwise chaotic scene. Language is the dominant medium for the will to power and the will to truth (886-887).

As I demonstrated in chapter two, we saw that Nietzsche deconstructed Plato's truth as both the will to truth and the will to power. Plato's idea of rhetoric, that of didactic persuasion for the good of the listener, is the will to power and truth exercised and exhibited. Since Nietzsche's insight, will to truth and will to power

can be seen as existing in discourse, because discourse is a real thing that never escapes the basic human drives to display both a will to truth and a will to power. Found universally in language, these two forces underpin the inclusionary/exclusionary dialectic that I will be exploring in contemporary uses and understandings of discourse communities in composition studies. Understanding the will to truth means asking, who's truth and for what end? Understanding the will to power means asking, who's power and for what end?

Foucault asserts that looking at language, discourse, and discourse communities will answer those two questions about truth and power. Richard Rorty, in examining the epistemological change that Foucault has brought about, writes that Foucault "insists that he wants to question our will to truth, to restore to discourse its character as an event, and to abolish the sovereignty of the signifier" (43). An awareness of discourse communities in composition studies is continuing Foucault's agenda in that discourse can now be analyzed as the vehicle of knowledge. Examining the various discourse communities (the signifiers and their sovereignty) is examining their truth and power claims.

Of course underlying these issues of power, truth, and discourse is the concept of hegemony, supremacy exercised and exhibited. Barry Smart in "The Politics of Truth and the Problem of Hegemony" reads Foucault's work on these themes of will to power and will to truth as the basis for understanding hegemony, a continually contentious issue that underlies discourse communities.

Smart asserts that political analysis can be strengthened by using the concepts of will to truth and will to power in conjunction with linguistic discourse-analysis as a way to deepen our understanding of the hegemony that is exercised in the language of any discourse community. 1

As I demonstrated in chapter two, the ethical/unethical debate that pervaded Classical rhetoric has now been replaced by the foundational/anti-foundational debate. This contemporary debate reflects the study and understanding, through discourse, of who has power, who claims truth, and how people use their language to keep or share that power and truth. Knowing that truth claims, power claims, and discourse as the source of these claims, underlie any understanding of discourse communities and socially constructed thought, I now can discuss contemporary understandings of ties in composition studies on a less lofty level. I can analyze how discourse

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1 These words *hegemony, power, truth,* and *discourse* can all be seen negatively within their binary nature. I don't want to succumb to the negative interpretation in this chapter. I want to recognize it, but I want liberate it and focus more on the productive and progressive side, as Smart and others do in their work. Humans may be stuck in language, but knowing that humankind is stuck in language allows humans a sense of empowerment. Certainly most of the work in feminist criticism would assert that. And from both "What is an Author" and *The History of Sexuality: The Will To Know*, Foucault makes clear that discourse itself is a signifier' discourse is productive and inclusionary, and not just exclusionary. I think it's easy to become disenchanted with a post-modernist interpretation of Foucault. Richard Rorty writes, Foucault's Nietzschean attititude towards the idea of epistemology is that these is nothing optimistic to say" (46). This may be true for some, but I'd rather not deal with that darker, and possibly even nihilistic, side of discourse communities as they relate to composition studies. I see understanding discourse communities, and language as a signifier as Foucault would say, as part of the knowledge making and liberating influence in the modern interpretation of epistemic rhetoric.

communities both <u>limit</u> and <u>enable</u> epistemic rhetoric.

"Discourse" and Discourse Communities

The epistemological basis of understanding in contemporary epistemic rhetoric is the discourse community. Each of these words, discourse and community, have different connations by themselves. By first examining the understanding of discourse, and then examing the understanding of community, we can understand how epistemic rhetoric uses them together.

In defining discourse communities Frank J. Angelo points out that the word discourse, as it's used in composition studies to denote the aims, modes, and forms of written and spoken language, should be separated from the discourse of discourse communities (131). Discourse, by itself, carries a meaning in the Classical tradition as the clothing of thought instead of thought itself. I use discourse in the post-modern sense in which language and thought are inseparable.

Teaching post-modern discourse in the contemporary epistemic rhetoric classroom is more than teaching awareness of simple textual features of a particular writing genre, i.e. the clothing of thought. Teaching post-modern discourse is demonstrating a way of thinking and knowing as seen from a particular point of view, i.e. situated thought. A classicist, say in the footsteps of Aristotle or Cicero, would be interested in codifying and taxonomizing a particular genre or discourse. A contemporary epistemic rhetorician's interest would go beyond that to seeing discourse as a

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way of knowing. Knoblauch and Brannon, in comparing Classical and contemporary notions of discourse, make the distinction that contemporary ideas of discourse hold that knowledge is not static (87). Discourse should be seen as an active knowledge maker or discoverer, depending on one's epistemological stance. Discourse represents more than conventions; it represents epistemology, an epistemology that reflects the knowledge of a particular community.

If, as Knoblauch and Brannon write, "Modern rhetorical theory, beginning as early as the seventeenth century, finds a closer connection between language and thought, discourse and knowledge, than ancient speculation supposed"(4), then in teaching we are using an awareness of discourse communities to teach thinking as a process through the medium of language. "Discourse, then, far from having the restrictive presentational function that the ancient rhetoricians supposed, actually has a central and generative role in the pursuit of knowledge" (53). Exploring, sharing, and expanding language, that is discourse, creates knowledge, and knowledge becomes the basis for a community of understanding.

"Community" and Discourse Communities

Having clarified the nature of contemporary discourse, let's now examine how the word discourse relates to the word community.

The word community in discourse community is widely used. As Joseph Harris writes, the word community "seems never to be

used unfavorably" (12). Marilyn Cooper, who has used feminist criticism to look at both the enabling and limiting aspects of discourse communities, defines discourse community as follows:

> A discourse community is characterzized by certain underlying assumptions, knowledge, values, and interests its members hold in common and by the use of certain language conventions - - types of argument, genres, and vocabulary. Academic disciplines seems to be the prototypical discourse communities, but professions, corporations, and hobby groups also seem to qualify. (204)

For instance, the composition studies' discourse community broadly integrates literature, linguistics, and rhetoric; and within these disciplines the practitioners have been labeled within the various communities of expressionism, cognitive psychology, social constructionism or social epistemic rhetoric. In other words, defining the boundaries of any discourse community is a continually evolving process, particularly because the language that creates knowledge in each discourse community never remains entirely static. And so discourse, in relation to discourse community, can be defined as representing the socially constructed epistemological base of any group of language users.

Thomas Kent, a sceptic over the wide acceptance of discourse communites as a way to understand contemporary academic studies, describes our current understanding of discourse communities as either thick or thin.

> The thick formulation understands a community to be a system of social conventions that may be isolated and codified. The thin formulation understands community to be a chorus of polyphonous voices. We understand a spectrum of different uses of the term community; on one end of the spectrum are

thick formulations that depict a community as a determinate and codifiable entity, and on the other end are thin formulations that depict a community as relatively indeterminate and uncodifiable sedimentation of desires and beliefs. (425)

Besides codification, identification by the self and others can be another important way to understand the parameters of any given discourse community. Erika Lindeman has drawn in this important concept of identification by examining Kenneth Burke's work on symbols. Lindemann writes that, according to Burke, human beings are "linguistic animals, using and misusing symbols. Rhetoric is a function of language which enables human beings to overcome the divisions separating them" (49). Lindemann defines the difference between the "old" rhetoric, or Classical rhetoric, and the "new" rhetoric as a difference between persuasion and identification, persuasion within the Classical ethical/unethical debate and identification within the foundational/anti-foundational discourse community debate. "Identification is a key concept in Burke's theory of rhetoric; it explains why human beings act rhetorically on one another - to promote social cohesion" (49). Discourse communities are consequently ways of relating to others, ways of identification. The language used in a discourse community provides the cohesive force that provides an identity for its members.

But identification, codification, and persuasion, within discourse communities, as Kent, Lindeman, and Burke point out, relies most importantly on each discourse community's epistemological role. Identification and persuasion have to do with how community

members invest in the group's epistemology. Identification works like persuasion in including or excluding would be members. Codification has to do with how much power the members have to influence the group's epistemology. If a group can epistemologically persuade new members to join within the self-identified and codified epistemological parameters, then that discourse community is a "thick" and vibrant discourse community.

Discourse communities as seen from a contemporary perspective, as Lindman's and Kent's scholarship show, are part of "a long-time intellectual development, no passing fad of the twentieth century, but a serious reorganization of discourse theory that has permanently altered the way contemporary rhetoricians view composition" (Knoblauch, Brannon 57).

According to Foucault, discourse communities are simply a way to understand a group's regulated ways of speaking, and this is an important diagnostic tool in analyzing the rhetoric of the various discourse communities. Foucault also asserts that the birth of foundationalism occured when regulated ways of speech were no longer thought of as social fabrications, but as the reality of any particular group or society. Foundationalism began, according to Foucault, in the fifth century B.C. of Classical Greece as a fallacy within the will to truth (Cooper 206). Socrates, as a person who intimately knew that language could persuade for both the good and bad, could well have been aware of this fallacy when he was defied in his search for archetypal or foundational definitions. As we saw in

chapter two, seeing through this fallacy and recognizing anti-foundational thought is the way that Nietzsche responded to teaching Socratic thought.

Marilyn Cooper asserts that discourse at its root is anti-foundational because of its specificity to each time, place, and community. "The reality of discourse is characterized by its discontinuity, which is to say that it is not grounded in any 'original,' 'true' language" or discourse (207). Discourse is neither external nor internal, objective nor subjective. It's intersubjective, or as I quoted Berlin in chapter one of this thesis, discourse is transactional.

I can go no further in discussing discourse communities as the dominant vehicle for contemporary epistemic rhetoric without briefly introducing the influence of Stanley Fish, since, as Gary Olson in the *Journal of Advanced Composition* claims, Stanley Fish has been one "of the principal intellectual sources of social constructionism" (Olson 253). Stanley Fish has been called "The Contemporary Sophist" because "he sees an affinity between Sophism and the anti-foundational project he has so long championed" (253). Fish is aware of, and a part of, the rhetorical legacy and dialectic. He "has always insisted that rhetoric is central, that it's the 'necesssary center,' that substantial realities are products of rhetorical, persuasive, political efforts" (253).

Although Fish has not been busy building theoretical paradigms like Berlin or Fulkerson, he has contributed greatly to the theory building in contemporary composition studies. Fish argues

that interpreting discourse communties in composition studies, just like interpreting fiction in literary studies, is becoming a necessary skill, but that the history and influence of discourse analysis and/or rhetorical analysis has up until now been only minimal. In Fish's book *Doing What Comes Naturally*, Fish addresses some of these issues, and theory makers influenced by his work contend that composition studies has a long way to go. Part of the problem in discourse analysis as well as for epistemic rhetoric, is that, as Jim W. Corder asserts in *College English*, there are innumerable numbers of discourse communities which are in constant flux (168). Rhetoric, whether old or new, has not yet developed the tools to deal with all these fluctuations, and so the work of Fish in deepening our understanding of anti-foundational thought as well as rhetorical analysis is invaluable to epistemic rhetoric.

Discourse Communities and Epistemic Rhetoric in the Classroom

So, if discourse communities are knowledge creating communities, then how do they limit and enable epistemic rhetoric, and composition studies, both pedgagogically and epistemologically?

The epistemological awareness and analysis of discourse communities has caused composition studies to radically change its pedagogy. As I began to show in chapter one, epistemic rhetoric, as a composition theory, has responded to these changes. Realizing that academic discourse communities exist, progressive teachers have researched and reflected on the ways they could make students both

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aware of the existence of discourse communities and knowledgeable enough to make a successful entry into these, primarily academic, discourse communities.

Discourse community analysis in writing classes has become a very important tool of empowerment for university classrooms. For most students, particularly with an epistemic rhetorician for an instructor, freshman English has become an initiation into the surface levels of the academic discourse community. Patricia Bizzell writes, "Writing teachers, then, have seen the lack of shared discourse as a problem and have to remedy the problem by studying ways to initiate all students into academic discourse" (Beyond Anti-Foundationalism 661). Teaching students, who come from various discourse communities, that the university represents a singular academic discourse community is a starting place. It also can be naive, since "academic discourse is more unstable that this - more fraught with contradiction, more polyvocal -- and this instability is a sign of health, its ability to adapt to changing historical conditions" (663). In other words, within the larger discourse of the university, there are many different academic discourse communities, each with its own level of diversity and vibrancy. But without daunting students, thinking of university as the academic discourse community has been an empowering starting point for epistemic teachers. An entry point has to found somewhere. The issues of polyvocality and exclusion will become evident and can be dealt with after the students have been included into at least the first layer of

university discourse. Epistemic teachers need to dialogue with students so that their students can find an entry point. The hegemonic will to power and will to truth in the university is quite intimidating to the average freshman, but if epistemic rhetoric is a knowledge discovering or creating rhetoric, then the epistemic classroom will provide the heuristics and critical language base for entry into the discourse communities of choice.

Pedagogical changes that address discourse communities have included basic writing programs to facilitate entry into the academic discourse community, the use of peer tutoring and writing centers to continue to deepen that entry, and writing across the curriculum programs in order to give the writing student some specialized knowledge in his or her chosen academic discourse community. Before we look at these structural changes in writing programs that have come about out of an awareness of discourse communities, we need to look at the role that collaborative learning has had on epistemic rhetoric.

Collaborative learning, also sometimes know as cooperative learning, has been one of the main pedagogies to both deal with the problem of entrance into the academic discourse community and to deepen an understanding of that discourse once entry has been attained. Kenneth Bruffee, along with others in the exploratory group that we looked at in chapter one, has championed collaborative learning in several articles. These articles align themselves with his research on social constructionism and consequently on how

collaborative learning has become an important pedagogical tool of epistemic rhetoric. Starting with the supposition that "We can think because we can talk, and we think in ways we have learned to talk" (Conversation 641), Bruffee takes Stanley Fish's idea of interpretive, or discourse, communities and integrates them with Richard Rorty's concept of normal and abnormal discourse. Normal discourse "applies to conversation within a community of knowledgeable peers," (642) and "mastery of a knowledge community's normal discourse is the basic qualification for acceptance into that community" (643). Consequently, Bruffee feels that the educational implications for a social constructionist rhetoric, or an epistemic rhetoric, are, "Conversation, Collaborative Learning, and 'Normal Discourse'" (641). Once these are mastered, then students can be aware of and take in, "Knowledge generating discourse," or abnormal discourse (647).

Rorty's normal discourse is that which is conducted within an agreed-upon set of conventions about what counts as a relevant contribution, what counts as answering a question, what counts as having a good argument or a good criticism of it. Abnormal discourse, on the other hand, is what happens when someone joins in the discourse who is ignorant of these conventions or who sets them aside. Abnormal discourse can produce both nonsense and intellectual revolution. Bruffee, in his article with the revealing title, "Writing and Reading as Collaborative Social Acts," sees abnormal discourse in well-facilitated collaborative learning as both a way to

find entrance into a discourse community and as a way to create knowledge within that discourse community. In addition, Stanley Fish contends that an epistemic pedagogy would include collaborative work in situatedness, code switching, and using different language registers (Olson 259). Fish, like Bruffee, also appreciates that "abnormal discourse can be a catalyst of change," an important pedagogical tool (260). Collaborative learning provides the pedagogical environment for students to access this transforming knowledge.

Writing across the curriculum is also an important pedagogy that deals with discourse communities. David R. Russell, who has researched the history and legacy of writing across the curriculum programs in composition studies, writes "Ideally cross-curricular writing instruction would initiate students into the discourse of a professional community and give them extensive experience in negotiating the discourse of other communities, other disciplines" (Russell 69). He also asserts that writing across the curriculum programs confront the epistemological issue of discourse on an institutional level. Russell complains that without these programs, most writing teachers are co-opted into the university's "myth of transcience" (66). The myth of transcience means that basic writing programs, writing across the curriculum programs, and writing classes that emphasize entrance into the academic discourse communities are seen as only a temporary part of the university's mission, and not the primary part. In other words, when the student

body gets "up to the appropriate university level," then these remediating programs can be scrapped. The myth of transcience does not recognize that the university's contemporary mission is to open itself to the wider reality of all the various discourse communities. Writing across the curriculum programs, particularly epistemic ones, fight against the myth of transcience as well as the university's privileged hegemony and exclusionary discourse. Epistemic writing across the curriculum programs enable students to acquire the normal discourse and eventually add to the abnormal knowledge-generating discourse. Discourse community entrance, acceptance, and knowledge generation for the contemporary student is the core of the university's mission (that is from an epistemic rhetorician's point of view) whether this epistemological and pedagogical mission is acknowledged or not by the university power structure.

Inclusion, Exclusion, and Discourse Communities

The tension of whether to include or exclude students as a university mission brings me back to the all-important and underlying theme in this chapter, and for that matter this whole thesis. Discourse, contemporarily debated from foundational and anti-foundational views, is bound up in a continuing inclusionary/exclusionary dialectic. Having explained discourse, discourse communities, and some of the pertinent epistemological and pedagogical issues, I'll now look at the foundational and anti-

foundational tensions and how they exclude and include writers and thinkers from and into discourse communities. From there I'll be able to discuss how this tension both enables and limits the legacy of epistemic rhetoric as a composition practice.

Discourse communities can be defined as groups of "people who are more or less equals and agree upon values (Clark 68). Clark, author of "Rescuing the Discourse Community," asserts that there is a problem in this sort of definition or any definition of discourse communities," founded primarily upon shared commitment to common principles or even to common projects" (65). Composition studies likes to think of discourse communities as a way of understanding the power of democracy and as a way to enter into its power. But according to Marilyn Cooper, teachers that insist that students confine themselves to the value, language, and genres of the academic discourse community "will effectively withhold power within academic discourse from students who come from a different generation, a different ethnic background, a different race, a different sex, a different economic class" than the hegemonic majority of the university (Cooper 219). These teachers will present their view of academic discourse as a discourse that is foundational with no room for knowledge-generating abnormal discourse or possibly even for entry by their students. On the other hand, if we invite students to understand and participate, as epistemic rhetoric and its transactional epistemology advocate, then we will include

students with our anti-foundational, but community-regulated, view of discourse.2

Some scholars, like Joseph Harris who has researched collaborative pedagogies, are concerned about construing the words "consensus" and "community," particularly because consensus is the avowed aim of many in collaborative learning groups. Harris contends that communities seldom reach consensus. The word community may describe the social and linguistic fabric that a group may share, but it does not denote complete epistemological agreement within this group. However, Harris concedes that, "Our aims and intentions in writing are thus not merely personal, idiosyncratic, but reflective of the communities to which we belong" (The Idea of Community 12). That is, writing and speaking are social, and consequently anti-foundational acts. Instead of depending on consensus as a way to describe any discourse community or collaborative group, Harris suggests the use of words like "discourse, language, voice, ideology, hegemony," to describe the contentious language and contradictions in any academic grouping (20). Harris asserts that the word community should only be used to denote the physical entity, including the people we directly associate with on a daily basis.

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2 Pedagogically, yet not epistemologically, this could even be true of the epistemic, yet foundational, legacy going back to Socrates. Socrates used dialectic, an inclusive pedagogy, to discover knowledge, thus enabling the student to acquire knowledge, but limiting the scope of that knowledge.

Greg Meyers, who has written on collaborative learning, also falls into this skeptical group. Meyers writes "we should not let our enthusiasm for this social view lead us to accepting social construction of knowledge as something good in itself" (171). Social construction of knowledge must be questioned and examined closely to be vibrant and enabling. Meyers makes the point that consensus may not reflect "reality" and that composition practioners need "to decide whether the groups in our classes are introducing students to new communities, or are confining them in ideologocal structures" (166-167). In other words, teaching collaborative learning can reinforce the exclusionary nature of discourse communities, or collaborative groups can become so inclusive that they are not capable of generating any meaningful knowledge. Meyers and Harris are responding to a fear of foundationalism that the word community, when used in discourse community, could denote if the collaborative process does not avail itself of the continual and well-examined social construction of knowledge. In addition to Meyers and Harris, Marilyn Cooper also warns of this non-generative exclusion that can take place in discourse communities in her well titled article, "Why Are We Talking About Discourse Communities? Or, Foundationalism Rears Its Ugly Head Once More."

Part of the foundational problem is what Kenneth Burke calls the "terministic screen" (Grammar 59). Edward Schiappa, a social constructionist, melds this Burkean concept with Kuhn's idea of a paradigm. Schiappa writes, "Once a given discourse community (such

as an academic discipline) employs a particular set of terms
consistently over time to describe particular aspects of experience,
the terms tend to perform a filter-like function by directing attention
to some aspects of the 'objects' under study and not to others" (415).
If this continues, the discourse community will bring itself to crisis,
and eventually to a paradigm shift, because of its insularity. A
vibrant discourse community must engage in what Bruffee, Fish, and
Rorty call abnormal discourse, that is knowledge making and
knowledge questioning discourse. In other words, a vibrant
discourse community is epistemic, and that means anti-foundational.

Yet even anti-foundationalists find themselves in the
uncomfortable position of representing the academic discourse
community, which to students from the outside can seem
foundational and exclusionary. Despite that, Patricia Bizzell in
"Beyond Anti-Foundationalism" sees this hegemonic stance as an
opportunity to reshape the university into an anti-foundational and
progressive institution, yet still short of a nihilistic post-modern
nowhere. She calls for the following:

> "I can invite everyone to join seriously in a rhetorical process
> for articulating an alternative to which many of us can agree.
> This process will be a risky business; it will require arguing
> about what we should read and write, arguing about what
> canon we want to endorse instead of pretending we can will
> away the power of canons. It will require ideological avowals
> very uncongenial to anti-foundationalist philosophers. But I'm
> just not willing to concede yet that the smirk of skepticism is
> all we academics, or we Americans, can achieve in the face of
> the present crisis in our communal life" (674).

Bizzell's point of view represents the feeling of the various movements in composition that have created curricula within feminism, multi-culturalism, and writing across the curriculum programs, vibrant and meaningful programs, but programs that are often not understood or supported. For instance, David R. Russell points out that writing across the curriculum not only supports the anti-foundational view inherent in generative discourse communities, but also that its structure threatens the foundational power that the university, or its academic discourse community, wants to maintain. Socially contructed discourse communities inherently involve change, and that change can be threatening particularly for those who feel they are excluded by the community's discourse. Russell continues:

> "Cross-currcular writing instruction has never made a permanent impasse on academia for two structural reasons. First, it resisted the fundamental organizing principle of modern academia, the compartmentalization of knowledge. Second it upset the usual methods of regulating access to coveted social roles by challenging the convenient assumption that writing is a single, generalizable skill, learned (or not learned) outside a disciplinary matrix" (Russell 53).

As we have seen though, the ideal of a uniform academic discourse community has been broken down into so many areas that writing across the curriculum can only begin to address all the epistemological and pedagogical concerns. Discourse, particularly academic discourse, is anything but constant and uniform, and the university is a perfect example of the variety of truths and ways of making knowledge that exist.

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Yet to the freshman student, who has no epistemic instructor to aid in acquiring the discourse of the various disciplines, it does not seem that way. The university can be a monolith of exclusion, and this exclusionary tension must be fought against by an epistemic and inclusionary curriculum. Hence my thesis for this chapter: the foundational and exclusionary tension limits, but the anti-foundational and inclusionary tension enables.

If discourse communities become foundational and their normal discourse goes unquestioned, a tension emerges, a tension that many composition practitioners have become aware of and have tried to loosen with the interjection of abnormal discourse that can create knowledge and/or a paradigm shift. A foundational discourse proves to be excluding because anyone who has not mastered the normal discourse will not be allowed to enter. A discourse community that engages in both foundational-normal discourse and anti-foundational-abnormal discourse will be a more inclusionary than exclusionary discourse community because people within and on the margins of the discourse community can use the abnormal discourse as an avenue of entrance or for knowledge creation through the influences of both. In fact, finding a balance, and consequently a productive tension, between inclusion and exclusion

will make the most vibrant and generative discourse community.3

An established "discourse community is a way of regulating who has access to resources, power, even to discourse itself, and it creates gatekeepers to make sure that the right people get in and all others are excluded," writes Marilyn Cooper (205). Cooper continues, "The concept of discourse community is like the concepts of Standard English and cultural literacy" (205). If discourse is left unexamined, this is true, so an enabling role that epistemic rhetoric must take is to examine these discourse communities and understand their exclusionary nature so that they can be made more inclusionary if desired. Marilyn Cooper calls this "a hermeneutic rather than a foundational way" of looking at discourse communities (205). This hermeneutic quality is representative of both the knowledge making quality of discourse communities and the dialectic that exists in epistemic rhetoric, both in its history and in its constant self-definition. As I demonstrated in chapter two, Nietzsche went back to the Platonic dialogues to show us that the foundational/anti-foundational dialectic, and not the ethical/unethical dialectic, was at the heart of rhetoric. Since Nietzsche, Foucault and others have

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3 Take for the example the different discourse used by Congress and the C.I.A. Congress has both normal and abnormal discourse and the country as a whole can feel relatively included in the political debate. The C.I.A runs on a code of exclusionary normal discourse, and the public and even Congress have difficulty finding entry in the discourse of the C.I.A. in order to debate it's purpose and outcomes. The C.I.A has little tolerance for abnormal discourse. The C.I.A. has a restricted and foundational discourse, whereas Congress has an evolving and anti-foundational discourse.

brought us forward to further understand that same dynamic in greater depth. Discourse communities, as part of that legacy, and as the touchstone of modern epistemic rhetoric, represent that dialectic, a dialectic that if left unexamined will bring us back to a foundational way of thinking, knowing, and exercising power.

Beyond Hegemony in Discourse Communities

Scholarship that examines this hegemony is coming from people who are both inside and outside of traditional academic discourse. In my opinion though, the most interesting work has come from the points of view of feminist writers and people of color, groups that have deeply experienced their exclusion from the truth and power claims of our predominantly white patriarchal culture.

For instance, David Theo Goldberg demonstrates how racist discourse is socially formed. "In a field of discourse like racism what is generally circulated and exchanged is not simply truth, but truth claims or representations. These representations draw their efficacy from traditions, conventions, institutions, and tacit modes of mutual comprehension" (298). As Plato was aware, any discourse, including racist discourse, rises out of values, and as these values change so does the discourse. Racist discourse will try to hide under the guise of foundational values, but as Goldberg points out, it's through anti-foundational and multi-cultural understandings that racism can be exposed. "To succeed in dissolving racist discourse, then the opposition must assume suitably diverse forms" (313). Epistemic

rhetoric, as a questioning and knowledge creating rhetoric, provides the intellectual understanding and heuristics to resist racism and other forms of hegemony.

Discourse communities see power coming from the bottom up, each community creating its own epistemological and power structure. For feminism, especially in relation to the bottom up geneaological theories of Foucault, an understanding of discourse communities can give awareness to the primarily productive, but also repressive, aspects of power as played out in language. In other words, a discourse community represents will to power in action. Consequently discourse analysis gives feminists, or any groups that have been marginalized, a way to understand, resist, or change the power structure exhibited in the discourse, a way to fight back against will to truth in action. Language has become one of the major vehicles for social change within the feminist movement. Maybe this is why Stanley Fish feels that feminism has "energized more thought and social action than any other 'ism' in the past twenty or thirty years, including Marxism" (Olson 265).

Yet in feminist epistemic rhetoric there also exists the foundational and anti-foundational tension. As Jana Sawicki points out in "Foucault and Feminism: Towards a Politics of Difference," universalizing women and women's experiences undermines progressive efforts, since power rests in the differences of women (32). Sawicki's anti-essentialist argument asserts that universalizing women is reverting women's thinking back to a foundational

feminism. Foundationalism, at least in its patriarchal displays, has

brought the repression of women. Foucault writes that the

differences amongst people, the anti-foundational realities of the

world, represent the true bottom up structure. Sawicki writes:

> In short, genealogy as resistance involves using history to give voice to the marginal and submerged voices which lie 'a little beneath history' - the voices of the mad, the delinquent, the abnormal, the disempowered. It locates many discontinuous and regional struggles against power both in the past and present. These voices are the sources of resistance, the c reative subjects of history. (28)

Discourse communities and epistemic rhetoric, giving light to anti-

foundational differences, can both resist the repression that comes

from essentializing, universalizing, and creating foundations for

normalcy and hence repression.

It's no coincidence that contemporary epistemic rhetoric's post-

modern resurgence has been articulated during the civil rights and

feminist movements. The political power that epistemic rhetoric can

assert should make it clearer now why James Berlin perfers an

ideological definition of epistemic rhetoric over a Fulkerson-like

theoretical one. Epistemic rhetoric is a way for composition

practitioners to understand and resist the limiting effects of

language, as well as understand and use the enabling effects of

language, since epistemic rhetoric is inevitably ideological and

political.

Gregory Clark, a proponent of discourse community theory,

argues that we must deal directly with the exclusionary tensions in

discourse communities if we are to ethically and democratically teach

reading and writing: "The political assumptions that underlie the rhetoric of the discourse community as it has been articulated in composition studies during the last decade seem to support democracy in principle, yet tend to undermine it in practice" (61). If Clark is right, epistemic rhetoric, a rhetoric that is knowledge creating and aware of the legacy of will to truth and will to power within language, is in danger of encouraging non-participatory practices that it has struggled so hard to become aware of. Clark feels that this is true because, "It does so by denying the presence of unresolved conflict, and denying in the process equal participation in the discourse to those who disagree" (61). Agreement, therefore, can not be the only basis of a truly participatory discourse community, because in disagreement knowledge is found. But this knowledge making through disagreement can tear a discourse community apart. Keeping the feeling of community within this tension, a productive tension that balances inclusionary/anti-foundational and exclusionary/foundational forces, takes a different ethical and epistemological point of view, a point of view that encourages "a politics of difference" (63). Clark writes:

> "The discourse I am describing here renders the progress of
> expertise in a community secondary to a relational and
> epistemological practice of confronting differences so that its
> participants can come to understand how the beliefs and
> purposes of others can call their own into question ... This is the
> only agreement that supports a democratic discourse of
> community. A classroom reconstructed along these lines would
> situate the development of expertise in writing and reading, or
> in anything else, within this agreement to rescue the discourse
> of community from domination and exclusion" (73).

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An epistemic classroom that can do this and retain its sense of history can rise to Clark's call.

In "Discourse on Language" Foucault demonstrates how difficult entry into a discourse community can be. He describes this sense of exclusion as the "I" being trapped between "Inclination" and "Institution" That is, the self doesn't know where to start in the river of discourse that has been placed before it by the powers that be. Kurt Spellmeyer makes an ingenious reading of this difficult Foucault piece in "Foucault and the Freshman Writer: Considering the Self in Discourse." Discourse is more often than not seen by young writers as exclusionary. Young writers can feel that exclusionary tension, but usually can't put it into the language of the discourse they are being excluded by. For many students this seems like a traditional rite of passage or possibly a game; they must adapt to the discourse because the initiate has always adapted not the community. Yet by giving the students the discourse to understand its exclusionary power, the students can reverse the"game" and use that same exclusionary discourse to enter, to make it inclusionary. "Foucault maintains ... we speak first, and then learn what we have said and whom we have become" (Spellmeyer 723). This is a friendly way to use Foucault in the writing class, a way that epistemic rhetoric would enable. An epistemic classroom would have the students use the discourse, find the meaning in their writing, and worry later, possibly in revision and portfolio use, whether that discourse is appropriate for entry.

Does each epistemic composition practitioner need to create their own curriculum from scratch and tie in all these pedagogical and epistemological issues into a perfect web? No. Epistemic rhetoric is continually in the process of social construction, and pedagogical help is continually being written. There is a lot of support to be found, and continual possibilities exist for collaboration with the vibrant and knowledge generating epistemic rhetoric discourse community. For instance, in the English and composition journals there is a lot of support to be found. Across the nation there are English and composition faculties that subscribe to the epistemic rhetoric theory. And there are many student centered composition textbooks that represent the epistemic stance. To list a few: *Ways of Reading* by Bartholmae and Petrosky, *Inquiry* by Bloom and White, *The Informed Reader* by Bazerman, *The St. Martin's Guide To Writing* by Axelrod and Cooper, *Forming, Thinking, Writing* by Berthoff, and *Style: An Anti-Textbook* by Lanham. For those composition practicioners who are not already part of the epistemic rhetoric discourse community, entrance can easily be made available.

Foucault sums up the thoughts of most anyone trying to enter a discourse community, including a composition practitioner trying to enter the epistemic rhetoric discourse community, as follows:

> "In a society such as our own we all know the rules of exclusion. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns is what is prohibited. We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of just anything. We have three types of prohibition, covering objects, ritual with its surrounding circumstances, the privileged or

exclusive right to speak of a particular subject; these prohibitions interrelate, reinforce and complement eachother, forming a complex web, continually subject to modification. I will note simply that the areas where this web is most tightly woven today, where the danger spots are most numerous, are those dealing with politics and sexuality" (The Discourse on Language 216).

Conclusion

As discussed above, epistemic rhetoric is political, and its ideology is busy unweaving the web of repression through such examples as anti-racist and feminist discourse. It is doing this in standard composition classrooms where the teachers are epistemic rhetoricians, and it is doing this in writing across the curriculum programs that are institutionalizing the theory of diverse and anti-foundational discourse communities. The legacy of influence, that I believe epistemic rhetoric will create in contemporary composition studies, is a legacy of continual self-definition, or continual knowledge creation. Within an ethos of inclusion over exclusion, inclusion enables the student reader and writer instead of limiting him or her. Epistemic rhetoric will continue to embody the dialectic of truth and its relationship to language, a truth that was once seen dominantly as foundational and exclusionary, and is now seen as anti-foundational and inclusionary. Its history has been long, and its continuing legacy will remain influential, I believe, whether it is called epistemic rhetoric or not.

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