

## **Seminar Preparation** **Thursday, September 22**

### **D. The Purposes of Criticism**

*Reading:* Robert L. Scott and Bernard L. Brock. *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. pp. 3-10  
Philip C. Wander. "The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism." *Central States Speech Journal* 34 (1983):1-18.

James F Klumpp and Thomas A. Hollihan.. "Rhetorical Criticism as Moral Action." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989): 84-96.

Charles E. Morris. "(Self-)Portrait of Prof. R.C.: A Retrospective." *Western Journal of Communication* 74.1 (2010): 4-42

Dana L. Cloud and Joshua Gunn. "Introduction: W(h)ither Ideology?" *Western Journal of Communication* 75.4 (2011): 407-20.

*Discussion:* Who is the critic? Why does s/he do criticism? What is the legitimate purpose(s) of criticism? What is the power of criticism? Is criticism a mode of "social science" or a mode of "artistic expression" or a mode of "public engagement" or something else? What difference does the answer to that question make on your practice of criticism?

*To prepare:* This is in fact a continuation of the discussion from last week in the sense that the purpose of criticism has been an important part of its history. But now we want to focus more on the questions that determine what we should do as critics in 2011. Read the work above. To assimilate the readings we will:

1. Make a list of purposes that we have encountered
2. From these construct the persona of the critic

### **E. Criticism as Argument**

*Reading:* Brockriede, Wayne. "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60.2 (1974): 165-174.

Select a criticism from a journal. Report on how it achieves "significant argument"? Or why it does not?

*Discussion:* What makes a significant claim? How does the criticism you have been reading achieve such significance?

Then, we want to understand the variety of arguments that compose criticism.

*To prepare:* Read Brockriede for his sense of significant argument. Then, in a bit of a play with words (Brockriede's notion is not *just* about arguments of

significance), read and critique the significance in a piece of criticism. Be prepared to discuss your argument in the seminar. Please send me this in electronic form prior to the seminar.

*Lecture:* There is more argument in a criticism than just the argument of significance. Put another way, there is a logic at the base of criticism. In fact, like most sorts of inquiry, there are several. Brockriede portrays criticism as argument. If you have any confusion so far about criticism, the Brockriede article should end it. But there are other things to be said about the logic of criticism and your head critic will say them.

*Writing this week:* The reading is reduced this week because most of the reading you did last week. And I am getting concerned about progress on your papers.

Your writing this week is 250-750 words in which you (1) explain your project to me. Explain what you plan to do. If your choice is to rework a project rather than begin a new one, please be specific about your goals for the rewrite. (Not “to make it better.” What specifically will you work on to make it better.) And (2) using your thinking on purposes, and your reading of Brockriede, formulate an argument for the significance of your project. Why is it significant enough for the reader to read? I do not need to receive this in advance. Bring it in hard copy to the seminar.