CONCEPTS

Concepts in Criticism

- What are they?
    - Key *vocabulary* that will be wielded to do the criticism
- Different from social science concepts

Social Science	Criticism
A special language that comes from the theory	Often an ordinary language concept that communicates because it is ordinary
Must be measurable	Usually not quantifiable
Must display precision	May exploit ambiguity
Validity in relationship to theory	Validity in clarity of what it communicates to reader
Concepts relate within theory	Concepts relate as critic constructs them

Concepts in Criticism

- What makes a term a concept?
  - It creates space to work in
  - Gives shape
  - Arrays in a particular way
- Where do they come from?
  - Your choice of standard method
    - Burkean: pentad, hierarchy, scope and circumference
    - Aristotle: speaker, message, audience, purpose, style
    - Feminism: patriarchy, power, personal/political
  - Your selection of terms that you will use

"Concepts must be earned!"

To introduce a concept

1. Define it

2. Explicate it

3. Nuance it

4. Use previous work to help elaborate its use

5. Deploy it in short example to see it working

How much is enough?

What concepts? How many?

Examine your own work

- ☐ What terms do you use as *concepts?*

- ☐ Are they all necessary? Do they do work?

- ☐ Apply Occam's razor

- ☐ Can the reader retain them all?

Using concepts in your work

Only after earned

- They give form; mold
- They carry chars to stick to object of criticism
- They assemble elements of criticism
- They convey your attitude
- They orient you to other scholar's work
- They locate the reader toward your orientation (particularly if from a theory of rhetoric)

Dangers in concept use

- Unearned concept

- Too many concepts

- Contradictory uses of concept
  - Particularly when you depend on others

- Too hot to handle
  - Concepts with too much connotative baggage
  - Too ordinary a concept (Managing ordinariness)