

P & C



A CRITIC'S VIEW

Keys to being an effective critic



- **Sensitivity to rhetoric**
 - Let the rhetoric speak
 - Do *not* overpower it with categories
- **Flexibility in perspective**
 - So you can hear the rhetoric when it speaks
 - Avoid trained incapacity; “hardening of the categories”
 - Perspective by incongruity
- **Critical “tools” only to execute the perspective**
 - Vocabulary (concepts/categories)
 - Theoretical frame

Burke has been productive of rhetorical theorists



Developing productive new frameworks for understanding rhetorical events derivative of Burke

- Fisher, Narrative
- Ivie, Presidential Motives for War
- McGee, Ideographs, <the people>

Key is perspective, not tool

- “Tools” to texture agency of rhetoric

Perspective of P & C: pp. 262-72



1. Orientations: linguistic structures w/ force toward completion (p. 262)
2. List of 40 or so things stranded to capture mvmt toward perfection. (p. 262-63)
3. Timeline to poetic discourse, transforms wholeness of persp into poetry of uttered stmt in time. (p. 263)
4. Now we see steps 1-3 as a metaphor to interpret rhetoric. The poetic animal. (pp. 264-65)
5. Social character of discourse leaves utterance striving to appeal. (p. 266)

Perspective of P & C: pp. 262-72



6. Catharsis. Entelechy to timeline. (scene-purpose ratio). (pp. 266-68)
7. In force of social, dialectic of coop and competition. (pp. 268-70)
8. Historic adjustment. Reference must be located in time. (p. 271-72)

Critic starts with discernment of orientation. Opens up the rhetoric which shapes it (permanence) and challenges it (change). Social order and social change grounded there.

Perspective of P & C, Poetry of Action



1. All humans are active.

- “It is absurd to ask what induces a man to activity generally speaking. He is an active being and that is all there is to be said on that score. But when we want to get him to act in this specific way rather than that, when we want to direct his activity that is to say in a specified channel, then the question of motive is relevant.” John Dewey, 1922.

2. That introduces choice.

- Need not imply brain at work; action is contingent and moment demands choice. Converts diachronic to synchronic.

3. In humans action social and symbolic.

- Critique of traditional rhetoric.

Perspective of P & C, Poetry of Action



4. Dimensions of action.

- a. An acting together. Social/individual. Identity/identification. Recalcitrance of social.
- b. Situation/reference. Recalcitrance of environment.
- c. Judgment. Criticism imposes.
- d. Catharsis. Purpose is inevitable
- e. Permanence & Change. Rhetoric negotiates familiar and novel.

5. A philosophy of becoming.

- Not a sequence of moments of being.

Scene-act ratio. Rhetoric is interpretation arising w/i philosophy of the act.

A turn from a rhetoric of content



- **Traditional rhetoric: Referential dimension primary**
 - What are you talking about? How do you manipulate it? Do you affect understanding? (rhetoric of knowledge) Do we motivate from that undg?
- **Grounded in enlightenment**
- **Instead, Language works in the dimensions of action**
 - a. An acting together. Social/individual. Identity/identification. Recalcitrance of social.
 - b. Situation/reference. Recalcitrance of environment.
 - c. Judgment. Criticism imposes.
 - d. Catharsis. Purpose is inevitable
 - e. Permanence & Change. Rhetoric negotiates familiar and novel.
- **Map language's power in these dimensions to shape action**
 - Cf. P. 274.

The Critic's Flexibility



- What happens when we leave behind our agent-agency framework for rhetoric?
- Can the flexibility arouse our curiosity in new ways?
- Can new ways of seeing rhetoric answer old problems?
 - Perspective by incongruity, *par excellence*