

# “Research in Rhetoric” Revisited

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*This essay begins with a brief review of past research in rhetorical theory and criticism. Attention then turns to an examination of two present issues—big rhetoric and the critique of postmodernism—that influence rhetoric’s prospects. The essay closes with a consideration of the vibrancy and vitality represented by recent scholarship in the Quarterly Journal of Speech. The diversity and sophistication of current scholarship bode well for rhetoric’s future.*

*Keywords: Critical Rhetoric; Postmodernism; Big Rhetoric; Rhetorical Tradition; QJS*

This essay begins where an earlier one that chronicled the last fifty years or so of rhetoric’s scholarship concluded. In that highly idiosyncratic journey through time, paralleling my own involvement in the discipline, I noted several landmark essays that impacted the direction or scope of scholarly inquiry, and reviewed several tensions (e.g., writing women into history, close textual reading vs. ideological/critical analysis) that created divisions within the field as to which approach was best suited to move scholarly inquiry forward. My response to these tensions then is the same now:

While my own view may well be in the minority, I think the best answer to these tensions is this: be well aware of the consequences of the choices we make, but be driven first by the question, “What approach or direction will best serve in answering the questions I am asking?” It is just as important to remember the classical influences on modern theory as it is to revise judgments about its extent. It is just as critical to recover silenced voices as it is to alter the landscape in which they are placed. If this means taking a proactive stance toward social advocacy, so be it. If it means taking a more traditional public address perspective on a discourse, so be it. Denigrating one approach to highlight the value of another is a

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waste of time. Our needs as a field of study are not going to be fulfilled by a reductive approach to scholarship.<sup>1</sup>

The limitation of a reductive approach can be read in another context, beyond attempts to privilege one specific approach as “the way to do scholarship.” As Carole Blair reminds us, any overview or synthesis of a field’s scholarship (or even a slice of it) will necessarily be incomplete and at times misleading by virtue of having to reduce a complex, highly differentiated body of work into manageable themes.<sup>2</sup> As one example of what can happen when one covers a broad range of studies, the phrase “critical rhetoric” does not appear in the subject index in *The Sage Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, despite the concept’s having generated a body of work within the discipline that should merit recognition. Perhaps Blair’s observation about the shortcomings of such handbooks is apt: “Upstart subareas, challenges to ‘traditional’ scholarship, etc., if they appear, often do not make the index, much less merit a chapter.”<sup>3</sup> While her focus was on the plethora of “handbooks” being published over the past few years, the same caution can be applied to my earlier essay, as well as to this current attempt to review where we’ve been, where we are, and where we might be headed. While I will give short coverage to the first of these “where’s,” my goal is to cover two problematics that have consumed attention over the past decade—Big Rhetoric and the Critique of Postmodernism—and then discuss, with specific attention to work appearing in this journal during my recent editorship, trends offering the promise of new directions in scholarly inquiry. My sense is that our scholarship is thriving, whether one uses a modern or postmodern lens.

### Rhetoric’s Past

As noted earlier, I’ve covered rhetoric’s past in “Research in Rhetoric: A Glance at our Recent Past, Present, and Potential Future”; hence, I’m reluctant to cover the same ground in different language.<sup>4</sup> Recent overviews have also provided resources for recalling the significance of prior scholarship. For example, Lester Olson has provided a review of the relationship between rhetoric and criticism, chronicling developments from the time of Herbert A. Wichelns forward to the present.<sup>5</sup> David Zarefsky has also provided a review of changes in perspective within public address (interdisciplinarity, mode of publication, the “public,” and method pluralism),<sup>6</sup> and Shawn Parry-Giles and Michael Hogan’s co-edited *Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address* provides overviews by the co-editors as well as by Martin Medhurst, David Zarefsky, and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell. As Denise Bostdorff notes on the book jacket, the text “contains insightful, timely analysis ... on where public address scholarship has been, where it is, and where it might be going.”<sup>7</sup> As one example, without slighting contributions by others, Medhurst’s “The History of Public Address as an Academic Study” provides a highly detailed chronology of the early years of the discipline. With a dominant focus on scholarship within English/Composition, the co-edited volume by Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted, *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, begins with selective reconsiderations of rhetoric’s history, then moves through essays focused on “concrete analyses of specific rhetorical topoi,” followed by

more precise studies that "concentrate on offering new ways to interpret familiar literary texts, authors, and movements." The final section features selected scholars speculating, "at least in passing, on the future of rhetoric."<sup>8</sup> Taken together, these essays presume a rhetorical tradition that serves as a framework for the development of new directions in scholarly inquiry. However, whether that "tradition" is seen as a cohesive body of work grounding our present activity is open to question.

Over the past decade or so, there has been a renewed effort to connect scholars working primarily in English/Composition and Communication Studies under the broader umbrella of Rhetoric. The late Michael Leff was one of the driving forces behind the creation of an Alliance of Rhetoric Societies. One outcome of renewed focus on cross-discipline collaboration is the co-edited volume by Richard Graff, Arthur E. Walzer, and Janet M. Atwill, *The Viability of the Rhetorical Tradition*. This volume provides an excellent exploration of the senses in which "tradition" might be understood, as well as challenges to its "viability."<sup>9</sup> Is there a tradition and, if so, how much control does it exert over the direction and scope of rhetorical inquiry? Should there be a unitary tradition at all? In light of these questions, I'm reminded of James Jasinski's recourse to Douglas Ehninger and Donald Bryant in the introduction to his *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*. Jasinski repeats Ehninger's observation on the futility of defining rhetoric, and recounts Bryant's attempt to suggest four primary "aspects" of rhetorically oriented research: instrumental/productive, critical-interpretive, social, and philosophical.<sup>10</sup> As the authors of *Viability* and Jasinski suggest, we emerge from a review of rhetoric's past with a confusing array of perspectives, where virtually nothing coalesces into anything remotely connected to a singular "tradition." That it should begs the question, "why?" One answer is provided by Alan Gross, in the volume just noted: "The existence of a rhetorical tradition is vital because it permits us to give substance to the idea of intellectual progress in rhetorical theory and criticism."<sup>11</sup> Of course, it is difficult to track the progress of a "unified" tradition when taking into account the fragmentation within rhetorical studies writ large (encompassing composition and communication studies scholarship). While I'm not bothered by the apparent concern over the presumed fragmentation of our contemporary interests, I do find it irritating to see ideas being promoted as "new" when they are reflections of arguments that have preceded them by as much as a decade or more. Although I'm likely in the minority, from my perspective whether one calls our past a "tradition" or a set of intermingling traditions is not as crucial as knowing enough of the past to avoid merely repeating it. As one example of a more positive approach to our past, Mark Porrovecchio's edited volume, *Reengaging the Prospects of Rhetoric*, returns to the *The Prospect of Rhetoric*, edited by Lloyd Bitzer and Edwin Black and published in 1971.<sup>12</sup> Bitzer and Black's collection of essays recounted the results of conferences on the nature and scope of rhetorical study at the time. To say it broadened the scope of rhetoric would be an understatement. *Reengaging* contains essays, each of which examines one of the contributions to the earlier volume. As one example, in responding to Samuel Becker's "Rhetorical Studies for a Contemporary World," Barbara Biesecker notes:

one can read the ideological, poststructural, critical/cultural, and new material turns taken over the past thirty years in rhetorical studies as useful elaborations on or, better yet, productive supplements to the message–audience centered approach to communication Becker advanced more than three decades ago.<sup>13</sup>

Biesecker’s point is well taken. Whether our tradition is unified or fragmented is not the issue we need to address. Rather, what is more important is recognizing that, however fragmented and divergent our current interests may be, we would not be “here” without their prior scholarship.

### **Present: Problematics**

The above review is by no means exhaustive but does suggest that concern over the nature and scope of rhetorical studies has not been ignored. There are major issues that the earlier review did not address that impact how rhetoric is viewed at the present time.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1990s, Dilip Gaonkar and others began a conversation about rhetoric’s value.<sup>15</sup> My purpose in revisiting this issue is not to review that conversation in its entirety but, rather, to start with Zarefsky’s succinct summary of the key terms, “big” and “little” rhetoric. As he notes:

the forms of rhetorical inquiry across the human sciences ... [have] opened a debate about the proper size and scope of rhetoric as a discipline, a debate that has been reduced to the competing slogans of “big rhetoric” versus “little rhetoric.” The positions in this debate have been well articulated elsewhere and need not be repeated here. But they involve significant questions. One is whether rhetoric has a distinctive subject matter, or whether it is a perspective that can be applied to any subject, or whether every subject can be reduced to a rhetorical construction. Another is by what authority one makes claims about rhetoric. And another is how the readers and hearers of such claims should understand them.<sup>16</sup>

The most substantive review of the conversation over what, unfortunately, became stylized as Big Rhetoric, is Edward Schiappa’s re-examination of the controversy over rhetoric’s “size” and “scope.”<sup>17</sup> Big Rhetoric, in a nutshell, challenges the notion that that which has no boundaries, hence applies to everything, is thereby rendered useless as a discriminating variable. Definitions, as traditionally understood, should say what something is, as well as give clear implications as to what it is not (the Socrates–Gorgias dialogue on what rhetoric “is” in the *Gorgias* is a key illustration of this principle).<sup>18</sup> As Schiappa notes, Big Rhetoric refers “to the theoretical position that everything, or virtually everything, can be described as ‘rhetorical.’”<sup>19</sup> Schiappa’s conclusion is one that I share:

To define a term broadly does not necessarily make the term meaningless or useless. What is significant about the rhetorical turn is not that “everything is rhetoric,” but that a rhetorical perspective and vocabulary potentially can be used to understand and describe a wide range of phenomena.<sup>20</sup>

The “unfortunate” nature of the label is highlighted by Joshua Gunn who argues, in part, that “our obsession with size has become an enjoyable apocalyptic perversion” and, more precisely, that the “masculinist character” or “tone” of the discussion has

the effect of excluding the "feminine from considerations of rhetoric's disciplinary identity."<sup>21</sup> Working from psychoanalytic theory, Gunn provides a compelling case that

the perverse core of the Big Rhetoric debate is that we want to be told about our demise or irrelevance as an academic discipline over and over again, for such mock revelations allow us to produce substitute satisfactions over and over again in a kind of sadomasochistic frenzy.<sup>22</sup>

Gunn offers a more positive stance in arguing for a "polytonal apocalyptic" position "that (usually) *refuses* to 'take sides.'" His reinterpretation allows us to reconsider Gaonkar's original objection to rhetoric's value: he was not claiming that the "globalization of rhetoric" (e.g., Big Rhetoric) was inherently good or bad, just that it was an inherent outcome of the interpretive turn.<sup>23</sup> While this does not obviate some of Gaonkar's more trenchant critiques of rhetoric's value, Gunn's approach is a more nuanced, and better defended, reading of what became a "this is better than that" debate (a view advanced on both sides of the argumentative divide).

In my view, the entire controversy appears to miss a crucial distinction. In one sense, nothing is "rhetorical" until it is given meaning. It is not the case that death, in and of itself, is rhetorical. It is not the case that what we call a painting is, in and of itself, rhetorical. Death is death; a painting is composed of watercolors or oils with varying texture or strokes culminating in an image. What is rhetorical is how we respond to death, or a painting—the use we make of it in giving it meaning or significance. The title of Donald Bryant's 1973 criticism text, *Dimensions in Rhetorical Criticism*,<sup>24</sup> provides an apt descriptive term—"dimensions"—that may serve to highlight the distinction between what a painting is, as a painting, and how it is seen, read, interpreted by others. Thus, Courbet's *The Stonebreakers* and Picasso's *Guernica* can be used rhetorically to invoke socialist ideas, in the case of Courbet, and images of war in the case of Picasso. In these cases, the connections between specific interpretations and the intent underlying their creation are fairly close. In other cases, a painting may simply be "meant" to exist as a reflection of a particular reality but can be used by a critic as a symbol of a particular political ideology (e.g., Jean-Francois Millet's *The Gleaners*). It may be the case that virtually everything has the *potential* within it to be used to represent a position, argue a point of view, or establish a reason for belief or action. To put this another way, to the extent that an object or event is treated as rhetoric, its use in this sense is not *all* that it is. Death and art are about more or less than their rhetorical use at a given moment in time (and it goes without saying that whatever symbolic value they are perceived to suggest may shift across time). The expansiveness of rhetoric is an outcome of its openness to creative interpretations of objects; the direction or scope of what can mean something to someone, and thereby serve a rhetorical purpose, cannot be brought under control, nor should it be. Conversely, what we choose to study and/or use to illustrate a point of view cannot be controlled in advance. We might, via conventional standards of what constitutes "quality work," serve as gatekeepers. But even then, the boundaries we establish are permeable; they are not fixed for all time. This is why "official"

moratoriums on the ways in which scholars organize their work structurally are always counterproductive. A field's perceived fragmentation is the result of individual agency moving in directions that do not fit prior established patterns. There is no guarantee, given in advance, that such a move will work; there is also no guarantee that the claim "this will never work" will always be true.

A second "problematic" that was not addressed in the earlier essay has a direct relation to my own work within a postmodern approach to rhetoric: the critique of "the postmodern" and its perceived inherently negative impact on rhetorical theory and criticism. James Aune's recent "Coping With Modernity" essay provides us with a trenchant critique of the postmodern orientation that is familiar in its objections. Given his starting point with respect to modernity, one would not expect anything other than a rejection of a position that means, in his view, "the end of the autonomous 'humanist' self."<sup>25</sup> In arguing that "postmodernism has become synonymous with post-structuralism," although Aune recognizes these two conceptual frames "are not identical,"<sup>26</sup> what ensues in his review is the perceived failings of post-structural critique, argued in the guise of an assessment of the limits of a postmodern perspective:

It remains unclear how critical or postmodern rhetoric can assist radical or reform social movements in altering the existing order. ... One searches in vain throughout the texts of postmodern rhetoricians for any examples of effective postmodern rhetoric. Also, by exaggerating the role of academic knowledge and language in creating human subjects, it may be that postmodern rhetoricians are exhibiting their own "occupational psychosis" or "trained incapacity." ... Despite their current distaste for the liberal autonomous subject, perhaps postmodernists might be shocked back into reality (and truth) by the recognition that it is not "subject positions" that can be tortured, but rather lonely, vulnerable, autonomous human beings.<sup>27</sup>

Where to begin? First and foremost, the "postmodern" is not a singular concept, with widespread agreement on its fundamental character or meaning. Pauline Rosenau offers a useful distinction between *affirmative* and *skeptical* postmodern theorists. The skeptics,

offering a pessimistic, negative, gloomy assessment, argue that the post-modern age is one of fragmentation, disintegration, malaise, meaninglessness, a vagueness or even absence of moral parameters and societal chaos. ... [T]he affirmative post-modernists ... have a more hopeful, optimistic view of the post-modern age. ... These post-modernists ... do not shy away from affirming an ethic, making normative choices, and striving to build issue-specific political coalitions.<sup>28</sup>

This may suffice in noting that the "postmodern" is a much more complex, and divergent, set of orientations toward the world than Aune's analysis projects.

Second, and this is the crux of the difference in positions, is the belief that a post-modern perspective can never enable one to act to improve social life. This belief also is a critique aimed at those writing from a critical rhetoric orientation. In responding to this, perhaps the best place to begin is with critical rhetoric as originally presented. In what appears to be an overlooked "feature" that determines the enterprise's

“overall telos,” I argued: “whether the critique establishes a social judgment about ‘what to do’ as a result of the analysis, it must nonetheless serve to identify the possibilities of future action available to the participants.”<sup>29</sup> This may not seem sufficient to establish the potential for action premised on a recasting of rhetoric in terms of a reversal that focuses attention on “symbolism which addresses publics.”<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, it was an attempt to suggest that while critique may be recursive or continuous, this does not elide the potential for social change to occur. While the initial essay did not address what this telos might look like (and prompted a response from Kent Ono and John Sloop),<sup>31</sup> there was never intent to suggest that the perspective would prohibit action. In a more direct response, I’ve suggested that

[i]n terms of a critique of domination, of state or institutional hegemony, the telos is that of emancipation. In terms of a critique of freedom, the telos is that of a never-ending self-reflexivity that does not privilege one form of ‘rationality’ apart from others.<sup>32</sup>

What is meant by the latter critique is not an orientation to inaction because one can’t move while critiquing. Rather, it was intended to suggest that social relations are never fixed for all time—that whatever remedy one enacts at a specific point in time changes the power relations, but does not achieve perfection. Hence, the need to re-examine the new set of relations to see in what ways change might be recommended. In addition, the implication with respect to privileging rationality is simply a recognition that “our” sense of the rational may not be the only sense that exists within a multi-cultural or transnational world. While the commitment is to a relativized world, this does not mean, as Dana Cloud has argued, that “a critical rhetoric that loses sight of the material realm threatens to make critical judgment inconsequential.”<sup>33</sup> The relativism that is implied does not suggest that no decision can ever be made, but that when made, it needs to take into account the specific framework the critique engages. In this time and place, given the specific practices of the social under examination, and the cultural mores in effect, I may judge a discursive act as implicating oppression, as moving toward a “freedom from” or as engaging, as a further action, a possibility of a “freedom to” enter into new social relations of power.<sup>34</sup>

Does a critical, postmodern perspective eliminate the personal—the “vulnerable” in society in Aune’s terms—from consideration by focusing on “subject positions?” The difference between the autonomous self, troubled as it is by the recognition that the self is created via interaction with others, and is seldom if ever completely free to act as she wishes, and the postmodern sense of a “displaced subject” is underscored in Aune’s review. As I’ve argued earlier in response to this issue, the “possibility of the subject” as personal is very much alive within a critical perspective.<sup>35</sup> Aune and Cloud to the contrary, adopting a critical, postmodern, relativist perspective does not automatically and permanently reject a consideration of “real” persons struggling against oppression. What it does do is place that struggle in a context, or framework, that recognizes the manner in which “subject positions” have been subjectivated through language (in contrast to a reliance on Marxist superstructure).

Space and time do not permit a more extensive review of the above issues. My purpose has been to suggest that a postmodern perspective does not, of necessity, entail the limitations that have been so certainly claimed for it. As I have suggested before,

We need to conceptualize a rhetoric that does not privilege, at the outset, any one singular means of achieving goals. Until and unless we are successful in reworking our theoretical assumptions, we will forever be mired in a narrow, provincial perspective that automatically consigns some rhetoric to the world of the irrational, regardless of how its practitioners perceive its utility. ... Were the world as black and white, as simply constructed, as those asking of the postmodern "what is your value?" believe it to be, we might well despair of ever crossing the incommensurable worlds and conversing about matters—in this case the reconstitution of rhetoric. Lyotard ... would say that we have an invitation to silence.<sup>36</sup>

### The Future

As noted at the outset, I am optimistic about our future. That optimism has been fueled over the past few years by reading around 400 essays submitted to the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. That experience suggests that there are a wide variety of approaches to rhetoric that, in their different ways, contribute to an ongoing conversation. The "nature and scope" of rhetoric are written anew across time as various themes are explored, then give way to new directions in scholarly inquiry. With respect to *QJS*, it is difficult to compress the essays published into any kind of thematic unity, much less those submitted and not included. A more diffuse and disorderly collection of interests among contemporary rhetoric scholars would be difficult to find (and I say this with approval). For example, the first issue contained an examination of "self-immolation as photographic protest," an argument for altering the way "citizenship" is understood, via an analysis of *La Gran Marcha*, an analysis of "violence in nonviolent rhetoric," and a study of a "rhetorical transformation of meteorology." The fourth issue in the first volume contained an analysis of "*Lost in Translation* as Sensual Experience," a study of "Obama, the 'Exodus Tradition, and the Joshua Generation,'" "Google and the 'Twisted Cyber Spy,'" and "Remembering 'A Great Fag.'" I could go on with similar recounting of essays that reflected interests in rhetoric and economics, queer rhetoric, visual/mediated rhetoric, and public discourse among others. I suspect, across the three volumes, essays appear that some would say should not have been published, because of perceived lack of quality, or that they were not sufficiently "rhetorical" or did not approach rhetoric in the "right way." Some may even find across the issues evidence confirming the excesses of Big Rhetoric or reasons for suggesting that the disorderly approach to current scholarship is a cause for grave concern. I would disagree, particularly with the latter: within psychoanalytic approaches to the rhetoric of film, for example, you will find there is a conversation that one essay reflects on and continues as analysis extends and/or alters prior perspectives or interpretations. A scholar working with pragmatism for new insights will join a prior conversation, just



as one arguing for a revision in how "citizen" is named will engage a prior conversation. There is order within chaos.

In closing the earlier essay, I offered some "hopes" for future directions.<sup>37</sup> One was the creation of a journal focused on queer studies. I was remiss in not noting that this is a double-edged issue: on the one hand, it showcases an area of scholarship that has experienced some difficulty in finding a "home" in the discipline; on the other hand, it serves to potentially "ghettoize" a specific orientation toward scholarship (the same could be said of *Women Studies in Communication*). In the interim, Charles E. Morris III and Thomas Nakayama have created *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*. They have, I believe, moved beyond the dilemma suggested above, in that the journal's orientation is not limited to communication issues. That said, I remain hopeful that journals such as *QJS* will be seen as receptive venues for queer scholarship.

Where should we be going from here? As I suspect is clear, I am not inclined to suggest a narrowing of the contemporary landscape; instead, broadening and deepening our current "universe of discourse" will prove beneficial. We have a great deal of work to do in "internationalizing" our scholarship—in recognizing the varied ways in which different cultures theorize about and engage in rhetoric, especially in ways that our contemporary terms do not capture. This is not to say that such work is not underway but, rather, that more remains to be done. The same is true, generally, of recapturing our history. One sad result of contemporary moves, especially in terms of present curriculum, is that attention to the history of rhetoric, especially classical to modern, appears to have waned.<sup>38</sup> While scholarly interest continues unabated, there is a concern that if we are not teaching classical–modern history, where is the impetus to engage in such study going to come from in a new generation? The same might be said for courses, and research, in "British Public Address." I'm not qualified to predict where we might be in a decade hence, but my current impression is that we're not as engaged as we once were in covering rhetoric's classical–renaissance–modern history, or in courses focused on British Public Address. At the same time, interest in new philosophers, such as Jacques Rancière, has increased markedly, along with such notables as Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek. We are continuing studies in Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, to cite just a few theorists whose work influences our own. We will continue to be "borrowers," while future studies will serve as new "landmarks" that capture a present conversation and move the field in as yet unknown directions. That it shall be ever thus is a positive sign of our future as a discipline. We need not search for a center that holds; instead, we should privilege an openness toward new, as yet unknown, trajectories in our scholarly inquiries.

## Notes

- [1] Raymie E. McKerrow, "Research in Rhetoric: A Glance at our Recent Past, Present, and Potential Future," *Review of Communication* 10, no. 3 (2010): 206–7.

- [2] Carole Blair, "Mark(et)ing 'The Handbook': Pedagogies of Legitimization, Neutral Expertise, and Convention," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (2009): 425–28.
- [3] Blair, "Mark(et)ing 'The Handbook,'" 427.
- [4] McKerrow, "Research in Rhetoric."
- [5] Lester C. Olson, "Rhetorical Criticism and Theory: Rhetorical Questions, Theoretical Fundamentalism, and the Dissolution of Judgment," in *A Century of Transformations: Studies in Honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Eastern Communication Association*, ed. James W. Chesebro (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 37–71.
- [6] David Zarefsky, "History of Public Discourse Studies," in *The Sage Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, eds. Andrea A. Lunsford, Kirt H. Wilson, and Rosa A. Eberly (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 433–59.
- [7] Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan, eds., *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
- [8] Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted, eds., *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), xvi.
- [9] Richard Graff, Arthur E. Walzer, and Janet M. Atwill, eds., *The Viability of the Rhetorical Tradition* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2005).
- [10] James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), xiv; xxiv.
- [11] Alan G. Gross, "The Rhetorical Tradition," in Graff, Walzer and Atwill, *The Viability of the Rhetorical Tradition*, 36.
- [12] Mark J. Porrovecchio, ed. *Reengaging the Prospects for Rhetoric: Current Conversations and Contemporary Challenges* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010).
- [13] Barbara A. Biesecker, "Prospects of Rhetoric for the Twenty-First Century: Speculations on Eventual Rhetoric Ending with a Note on Barack Obama and a Benediction by Jacques Lacan; A Response to Samuel L. Becker's 'Rhetorical Studies for a Contemporary World,'" in Porrovecchio, *Reengaging the Prospects for Rhetoric*, 17.
- [14] McKerrow, "Research in Rhetoric."
- [15] See Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "Rhetoric and Its Double: Reflections on the Rhetorical Turn in the Human Sciences," in *The Rhetorical Turn: Invention and Persuasion in the Conduct of Inquiry*, ed. Herb Simons (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 341–66; Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "The Idea of Rhetoric in the Rhetoric of Science," *Southern Communication Journal* 58, no. 4 (1993): 258–95; Herbert W. Simons, "Review Essay: Rhetorical Hermeneutics and the Project of Globalization," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85, no. 1 (1999): 86–100; William Keith, Steve Fuller, Alan Gross, and Michael Leff, "Taking Up the Challenge: A Response to Simons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85, no. 3 (1999): 330–34; Edward Schiappa, "Second Thoughts on the Critiques of Big Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 34, no. 3 (2001): 260–74; Joshua Gunn, "Size Matters: Polytoning Rhetoric's Perverse Apocalypse," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2008): 85–86, doi:10.1080/02773940701779744.
- [16] David Zarefsky, "Institutional and Social Goals for Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2004): 29, doi:10.1080/02773940409391288.
- [17] Schiappa, "Second Thoughts."
- [18] Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. W. C. Helmbold (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1952).
- [19] Schiappa, "Second Thoughts," 260.
- [20] Schiappa, "Second Thoughts," 268. For a view that goes further than this, see Victor Vitanza, interview with Jimmy Butts, March 22, 2013, <http://alexreid.net/2013/03/vitanzas-big-rhetoric-and-some-more.html>, accessed 01/8/14; also, Richard Andrews provides an expansive view of rhetoric as the "arts of discourse" in his text: It is not just in speech and writing that rhetoric operates. There is a range of modes—the image, the moving image, sound,

- gesture, movement—in addition to the verbal arts." *A Theory of Contemporary Rhetoric* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), x, xi, italics in original.
- [21] Gunn, "Size Matters."
- [22] Gunn, "Size Matters," 90.
- [23] Gunn, "Size Matters," 104.
- [24] Donald C. Bryant, *Dimensions in Rhetorical Criticism* (Baton Rouge, LA: University of Louisiana Press, 1973).
- [25] James Arnt Aune, "Coping With Modernity: Strategies of 20th-Century Rhetorical Theory" in Lunsford, Wilson, and Eberly, *The Sage Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, 87. Aune is not alone in responding to the perceived limits of a postmodern perspective. Cheryl Geisler, reporting on the Alliance of Rhetoric Societies deliberations on the question of rhetorical agency, notes the same point of view with respect to the absence of the autonomous subject, and the inability of a postmodern orientation to act without engaging that same subject. "How Ought We to Understand the Concept of Rhetorical Agency? Report from the ARS," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2004): 9–17, doi:10.1080/0277394040391286.
- [26] Aune "Coping with Modernity," 100. To be fair, Pauline Marie Rosenau goes on to suggest "they overlap considerably and *sometimes* are considered synonymous." *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 5 (italics added).
- [27] Aune, "Coping with Modernity," 104.
- [28] Rosenau, *Post-Modernism*, 15–16.
- [29] Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 92.
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