

derstandably desirable from a conservative point of view and understandably unacceptable from a liberal viewpoint, hardly qualifies as an objective appraisal of Nixon's characterization of the origins of the war or of my response to it. My point was and is that Nixon wished to disclaim all U.S. responsibility for the events with which we now wrestle in Indochina and place all blame on a monolithic Communist conspiracy. I think it highly doubtful that the "scientific historian" to whom Hill refers would support that characterization.

It should also be evident that I do not agree with Professor Hill that neo-Aristotelianism is the only, or even the best, methodology for rhetorical criticism. As Hill's essay illustrates, such an approach has explanatory power for revealing how a speaker produced the effects that he did on one part of the audience, what Hill calls the "target audience," but it ignores effects on the rest of the audience, and it excludes all *evaluations* other than the speech's potential for evoking intended response from an immediate, specified audience. Because I do not believe that the sole purpose of criticism is an assessment of a discourse's capacity to achieve intended effects, I cannot accept Hill's monistic view of critical methodology. I am strongly committed to pluralistic modes of criticism, considering that the questions the critic asks have such a significant effect on the answers generated. I think we know more about Nixon's rhetorical act because a variety of critical approaches have been brought to it than if Professor Hill's critique stood alone.

The objections I have made so far to Professor Hill's views of criticism and of critical methodology have been, I believe, important ones, but my final objection is, for me, the most important. In describing and defending the uses of rhetoric, Aristotle says that we should

be knowledgeable about both sides of a question so that "if our opponent makes unfair use of the arguments, we may be able in turn to refute them," and he continues, to remark that although rhetoric and dialectic, abstractly considered, "may indifferently prove opposite statements. Still, their basis, in the facts, is not a matter of indifference . . ." (I. 1. 1355^a 30-37). If rhetoric is to be justified, then rhetorical criticism must also be justifiable. For criticism, too, is rhetoric. Its impulse is epideictic—to praise and blame; its method is forensic—reason-giving. But ultimately it enters into the deliberative realm in which choices must be made, and it plays a crucial role in the processes of testing, questioning, and analyzing by which discourses advocating truth and justice may, in fact, become more powerful than their opposites.

The analogy that Professor Hill draws between neo-Aristotelian methodology and metrical conventions as "limitations that make true significance possible" (p. 386) is an interesting one, particularly for an Aristotelian. After all, it was Aristotle who recognized that poetry could not be defined metrically: "though it is the way with people to tack on 'poet' to the name of a metre . . . thinking that they call them poets not by reason of the imitative nature of their work, but indiscriminately by reason of the metre they write in" (*De Poetica*, trans. Ingram Bywater, l. 1447^b 12-16). Perhaps a more apt analogy is that the strict application of a rhetorical inventory may make the critic a versifier, but not a poet.

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REPLY TO PROFESSOR CAMPBELL

Professor Campbell's rejoinder states clearly the positions opposed to mine

on certain important issues in criticism. I mean the model neo-Aristotelian critique, embodying an ideal form of neo-Aristotelian methodology based on a closer reading of the *Rhetoric* than common to many following Thonssen and Baird, to raise just such issues. They may be grouped in the following three questions: 1) Does neo-Aristotelianism warrant a critic to praise a leader for addressing a target audience and pushing the citizens who are off-target into an isolated and helpless position? 2) Does Aristotle's text authorize excluding considerations of truth from rhetorical critiques, and should such considerations be excluded? 3) Does the text authorize excluding considerations of morality from rhetorical critiques, and should such considerations be excluded? To all parts of these questions I answer yes—though in some particulars it must be a qualified yes. I understand Professor Campbell to answer no in every particular.

Aristotle nowhere uses the concept of target audience. This adaptation of Aristotelian theory to modern conditions is necessary because Aristotle put together his lectures on rhetoric with a group of Athenian students in mind. For them, auditors of a deliberative speech suggested three to five thousand decision-makers gathered in the Pnyx within the sound of the orator's voice. All these decision-makers were male citizens born on that rocky coastland; none were very rich by any standard; few were well-traveled; few had allegiances abroad. In short, they were a highly homogeneous group. That is what Aristotle assumed when he made a demographic analysis into categories of young, old, rich, poor, well-born and powerful. He did not use categories like Greek-descent and non-Greek descent, educated and uneducated, or urban and rural. And he seemed to assume that a speaker will be able to get

all sub-groups of auditors to shout assent as did the Achaeans in the epic.

Obviously an American president communicating through the electronic media makes no assumption about getting assent from all his auditors; the audience is not homogeneous enough to permit it. He must start the preparation of his message by trying to decide who his potential supporters are, that is by making a construct of a target audience. Such procedure is entirely in line with Aristotle's, which starts with the question: who is expected to make a decision for or against what? The group expected to make a decision in this case can be only part of that auditing the discourse. When we thus extend Aristotle's method to deal with the greater national audience of a modern country, we are working along Aristotelian lines, not following his *Rhetoric* like a slavish copyist.

Aristotle aside, is it reasonable to demand, as Professor Campbell does, that the President not declare certain groups off-target but promote unity in the nation? It is—up to a point. But if the critic demands that he win over everyone in a policy address to the nation—not a discourse in praise of freedom but a policy address—an unreasonable standard is being maintained. Not Truman, nor even Eisenhower ever met that standard; it was not met save perhaps when Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war after Pearl Harbor. But Roosevelt also derided the money-changers in the temple; was he not acting on the sound precept that someone has to be off-target, that every drama needs an antagonist? Only if the critic wants an American president to fail scrutiny, will he hold up such a standard.

What did Aristotle decree was the role of truth in rhetorical criticism? Professor Campbell interprets the passage about rhetoric being useful since when true and just causes do not win out that

must be because of the inadequacy of their advocates' use of rhetoric¹ to mean that Aristotle demands us to determine the truth of an advocate's statements as part of a critique of his rhetoric. That interpretation is in my opinion incorrect. The passage itself assumes that the same rhetoric used to advocate true and just causes is also used by the advocates of untrue and unjust ones. A little further on Aristotle says that though rhetoric persuades impartially to contrary conclusions, we (i.e., good people like us) should not use it to advocate bad causes (*Rhet.* I. 1. 1355^a 29-33). A distinction is presupposed here between rhetoric—used to argue either to true conclusions or false—and how a good person uses it—only to argue conclusions he believes to be true. The means of persuasion themselves (enthymemes, examples, and the like) are considered free of truth value, but we who use them should be committed to truth. Rhetoric is the

study of our use of the means, not our commitments to ends.

This notion that the means of persuasion are in themselves truth-indifferent fits with other Aristotelian doctrines. Take the well-known distinction between demonstrations and dialectical arguments. The former proceed from premises that are true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to their conclusions (*Post An.* I. 2 71^b 20-25; *Top* I. 1. 100^a 25-30) elsewhere called first principles. The latter assume as starting points premises chosen by the respondent from among those generally accepted (*Top.* I. 1. 100^b 23-24). Now rhetoric is the counterpart not of demonstrative reasoning but of dialectic. Instead of assuming as premises statements accepted by a single respondent, it assumes those believed by the type of people who are in attendance as decision-makers. In a few cases these premises may be first principles, but they seldom are. That is because men debate about human affairs, which are in the realm of the contingent (*Rhet.* I. 2. 1357^a 22-23). Indeed, the more accurately a rhetorician examines his premises, the more likely he is to light on the first principles of some substantive field, and then he will have left the field of rhetoric altogether (*Rhet.* I. 2. 1358^a 23-26). Another way of putting the distinction between dialectic or rhetoric and the study of demonstrative reasonings is to say that the former argue from probable premises to probable conclusions (*Rhet.* I. 2. 1357^a 27-28). What does probability mean in this statement? A common Aristotelian synonym is *ta endoxa* (what are today called subjective probabilities), defined in the *Topics* as propositions accepted by all, or by the majority, or by the most distinguished people (*Top.* I. 1. 100^b 22-24).

It is easy to see from this review of Aristotelian doctrine that Aristotle pos-

¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I. 1. 1355^a 21-24. This paraphrase, like Lane Cooper's translation (used by Campbell), construes a text that is here utterly ambiguous. Literal translation: "Rhetoric is useful because true and just causes are by nature more powerful than their contraries, so that when decisions do not turn out according to what is fitting, necessarily [they] have been defeated through themselves." What does 'themselves' refer to in this passage? True and just causes? Their contraries? Or must we from our own minds supply 'advocates of true and just causes' as subject of 'have been defeated' and antecedent of 'themselves'? 'Their contraries' has had defenders, e.g., Victorius and Spengel, cited by Edward Meredith Cope, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle with a Commentary*, rev. and ed. by John Edwin Sandys (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1877), Vol. I, p. 23. But Mr. Cope rightly asks why, if true and just causes are naturally superior, would they be defeated by their contraries? Making 'advocates of true and just causes' the subject brings sense to the argument, but these words certainly have to be supplied out of thin air. I mention this ambiguity because one who would maintain that Aristotle believed determining truth necessary to rhetorical criticism probably needs to give what I consider an incorrect reading of this passage, but he also needs to think the text as we have it here meaningful enough to bear a definitive interpretation. This is probably not the case.

itively commands the critic of demonstrative arguments to inquire whether or not premises are true, but he says that if a rhetorician examines accurately into this question he leaves the field, ceasing to be a rhetorician and becoming some other kind of scholar. Dialecticians are commanded to examine whether the premises are accepted by all or by the majority, or by the most distinguished people; rhetoricians, by implication, must examine whether the premises will be accepted by the type of people who are decision-makers in this particular case.²

A careful look at my critique shows that this is precisely the activity I engaged in. The generalization I worked from is that other things being equal, the more commonplace and universally accepted the premises of prediction and value in a deliberative discourse, the more effective the discourse will be. Applying this principle to Nixon's address, I remarked that "we [the reader, myself, and all other potential members of Nixon's target audience] know that the premise [the future will be like the past] is not universally true, yet everyone finds it necessary to operate in ordinary life as if it were." Professor Campbell accuses me of being inconsistent with my interpretation of what Aristotle demands of a critic by making a judgment about the truth of the premises Nixon used. My remark, taken in context, however, can clearly be seen as a prediction about the acceptability of the premise to potential decision-makers. So can all other comments that taken alone seem to be about the truth of premises or the reality of values.

Only once did I depart from this methodological limitation: when I wrote that Nixon's account of the origins of the war would be preferred by the his-

torian of the future to Campbell's. I was indeed in violation of my own principles. This is, perhaps, as happy an example as could be found of the peril of entering into controversy over the truth of a contemporary speaker's statements.

What is at work in her analysis compelling the conclusion that the United States is responsible for what has happened in Viet Nam is the revisionist theory of the cold war, so popular now in New Left circles. The theory isolates America's militant support of the *status quo ante* as the key element disrupting world peace, in contrast to Communist reaction, which is largely defensive. It informs the whole of Professor Campbell's critique. Naturally Richard Nixon does not analyze the situation this way, and, of course, that must mean he is guilty of gross misrepresentation.

If a critic will write of Nixon's address from any such point of view, he has the choice of two ways to treat his theme. He can carefully sift the evidence for the revisionist view as it relates to the war in Viet Nam, or he can simply assume statements reflecting this view—like "the truth is that America supports totalitarian governments all over the world"—are to be accepted by his reader. In either case he is not writing rhetorical criticism.

In the broadest sense rhetorical criticism of any kind primarily assesses how a message relates to some group of auditors. In doing this it may, and usually must, secondarily consider some questions about how the message relates to what is known about the external world. Whenever this secondary consideration becomes the greater part of a critique it ceases to be a rhetorical critique—unless, of course, rhetoric is defined to include the universe.

Criticism of any kind, however, rests on established principles of one sort or

² See Lloyd F. Bitzer, "Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," *QJS*, 45 (Dec. 1959), 407.

another. A discourse where many starting-points must be taken on trust is an epideictic speech, or to put it another way, a tract for the faithful. Readers not among the faithful are blocked off from whatever insights about structure and strategies the critique may present. To assess the truth of a contemporary speaker's claims is to take either the scholarly way or the partisan way out of the area of rhetorical criticism. Of course, a critic is just as certainly led out of the area if he judges Nixon accurate in his account of the origins of the war. I hereby apologize for my inconsistency in characterizing Nixon's statement of these origins as more adequate than Campbell's.

It is not always plain whether Professor Campbell thinks that President Nixon fails to tell the truth because he is mistaken or because he deliberately tries to give a false impression. Her rejoinder, though, charges me with applauding deception, which she finds central to the *logos* of the address. I said the finely crafted structure concealed what needs to be concealed, but I avoided using the word deception because it implies a wrongful intention to suppress what the suppressor knows to be true. It demands a judgment on Nixon's intentions, his knowledge of the truth in this case, and the wrongfulness in this case of suppressing the truth. When speaking to my neighbors for George McGovern (as I often have lately; Professor Campbell's inference to the contrary I am a liberal) I easily make these judgments, but when writing rhetorical criticism I avoid them. Both Aristotle and sound critical practice sanction avoidance.

I appeal first to the passage cited by Campbell. Aristotle develops his categorization of rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic by saying

[rhetoric's] function is to examine both proof and counterfeit proof, just as dialectic's is [to examine] both real and counterfeit syllogism. For the sophistry is not in the art [*dynamis* in this context = *techne*], but in the moral purpose [*proairesis*]. Except here a man will be a *rhetor* whether in relation to his art or to his moral purpose, but there [in the case of dialectic] he will be classified as a sophist in relation to his moral purpose, but a dialectician not in relation to the moral purpose but in relation to his art (*Rhet.* I. 1. 1355b 15-21).

Professor Campbell interprets Aristotle as enabling "the critic to recognize the skillful use of the faculty and to condemn the moral purpose and the rhetorical act as sophistic." True, but this interpretation misses the important distinction here drawn: the distinction between artistic judgment and ethical judgment. Built into the language is the proper distinction about dialectic: viewed artistically someone is a dialectician if he understands dialectical method; viewed ethically he is a sophist if he uses this method to bad ends. Employing a non-Aristotelian technique, we might distinguish between *rhetor*₁, who understands the art of rhetoric, and *rhetor*₂, who uses it purely for self-serving ends. Judgments about *rhetor*₁ are rhetorical criticism; those about *rhetor*₂ are in the field of ethics.

What the text shows us here follows from an important Aristotelian preoccupation. Whereas Plato wished to bring all arts and sciences (*technai kai epistemai*) under a single deductive system unified by the idea of the good, Aristotle conceived of the arts and sciences as separate and distinct areas of study, each with its own first principles (or probable premises that serve the function of first principles). His great endeavor was to separate all human knowledge into these studies and outline for each the basic

principles.³ He also created hierarchies—political science is for him the architectonic study which coordinate subfields like ethics, the rationale of personal moral choice, and dialectic-rhetoric, the study of methods for arguing about political and ethical subjects (*Nic. Eth.* I 1. 1094^a 27-30).

What I have just said about the Aristotelian doctrine of the moral neutrality of rhetoric as art and the consequent separation of ethical judgments and rhetorical judgments is not the whole truth; a large section of the *Rhetoric*, (I. 4 to I. 9) is devoted to the value premises from which a speaker may argue. In this section we find a hierarchy of goods—admitted and disputed. We might see the section as an objective description of what people believe—of the value consensus of Aristotle's time. But it clearly is not that; it consists of an adaptation to rhetoric of the rationalized value system of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle here commits himself to his own value system. How can he, then, maintain the moral neutrality of rhetoric? Perhaps Campbell is right saying that "an amoral reading of Aristotle is open to question."

Professor Olian in an admirable article, which thoroughly establishes that the dominant thrust of the *Rhetoric* is amoral, maintains that we can see these sections as descriptive and not Aristotle's own value system just so long as we understand that he is describing the values of persons of breeding, wealth, and education (*hoi aristoi*) and not the values of the masses (*hoi polloi*).⁴ I will not here attempt a complete examination of this sophisticated view. I only hazard the opinion that if one understands the full

context of Aristotle's remarks about the best citizens he will judge that sound ethical principles are discovered by finding they are held by such citizens. But they are verified as being the true principles by an argument from the parts: alternative principles are demonstrably inferior so these must be the right principles. I think that Aristotle establishes by reasoning and not empirically that his value system is the right one.

Aristotle attempts to have matters both ways in the *Rhetoric*. His prologue makes rhetoric the counterpart of dialectic, i.e. amoral. But he introduces the section on value premises by calling it an offshoot (*paraphues*) of the ethical branch of politics. An even better translation might be "a graft onto the ethical branch of politics." He does not say that rhetoric is the mirror-image of ethics; its connection to ethics is not that intimate. But even this way of verbalizing the matter does not quite get him out of contradicting himself.

Friedrich Solmsen, in my opinion the greatest of the twentieth century interpreters of the *Rhetoric*, explained that the first draft of Aristotle's lectures maintained the moral neutrality of the art with consistency. Later drafts, however, introduced the value system precisely because it was needed in any treatment of the art that would be competitive with the completeness of rival sophistic rhetorics all of which laid claim to having ethical foundations.⁵ The evidence for this explanation is skimpy, but it has some inherent probability.

As a practical matter it makes for better neo-Aristotelian criticism to interpret the *Rhetoric* as if it were consistently amoral. There are two reasons why. First, no critic can realistically commit himself

³ I have drawn here on a good popular treatment, John Herman Randall, Jr., *Aristotle* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 32-58.

⁴ J. Robert Olian, "The Intended Uses of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," *SM*, 35 (June 1968), 137.

⁵ Friedrich Solmsen, *Die Entwicklung der Aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik*, IV, *Neue Philologische Untersuchungen* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1929). For English presentations of material from this book see Forbes I. Hill, "The

to Aristotle's value system as a basic inventory of American values and their hierarchy. Aristotle omits thrift, hard-workingness, chastity, piety, honesty, and humility from the list of virtues. (As Lawrence Rosenfield once remarked to me, he does not know about the Protestant ethic.) He omits progress and efficiency from the list of goods. It is by no means plain that happiness in the Aristotelian sense of the term is or should be the ultimate goal for the rational mid-century American. If, then, we are forced to abandon the value system to which Aristotle was committed, what should we do when judging a discourse—commit ourselves to a value system of our own? Or should we try objectively to describe what we think are the value commitments of the target group—the decision-makers in this case?

The second reason why in practice a neo-Aristotelian critic should give an amoral reading to the *Rhetoric* is that if he judges a speaker's values not to match reality, he is inevitably driven to decide the truth on questions that are best avoided: e.g., "who is really responsible for the cold war?" It has already been argued that attempting to answer such questions leads us to take an indefinite leave of absence from rhetorical criticism.

One more minor point: I never advocated critical monism. The several critical methods applied to this address have each produced essays with considerable virtues. Stelzner, in particular, revealed facets of its artistry I had not dreamed of before. Nevertheless, I think neo-Aristotelianism can do more to render a comprehensive assessment on it than other methods. This has something to do with Nixon and his *logographers* be-

ing products of highly traditional training. Their tendency is ever to produce another brand of the conventional wisdom structured in traditional forms.

The same is emphatically not true of other discourses. In *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* Campbell prints an essay of Eldridge Cleaver's. By neo-Aristotelian standards that essay must be judged childishly ineffective: the society at large constitutes the body of decision-makers in this case, and these decision-makers will predictably not respond favorably to this selection of means of persuasion from the available inventory. But experience with hundreds of discussions warns me that in some sense Cleaver's essay is a considerable work of art. If neo-Aristotelianism compels a quick negative judgment on it, that is probably because Cleaver plays another kind of ball game from a different game plan. A method that has more explanatory power for Cleaver's game can certainly be found, as Professor Campbell's critique of the essay well shows.

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SPEECH AND SCIENCE

In an age when vagueness and ambiguity are sometimes considered linguistic virtues, it is still surprising to find that the label applied to one of our most cherished and admired intellectual activities is frequently misunderstood, often employed as some kind of mysterious superlative, and invariably the subject of heated argument concerning its relationship to the kind of scholarship in which each of us engages. I refer to the label "science"—a label most of us have come to use in inconsistent ways, often to describe our own rewarding contributions to knowledge or someone else's mechanistic and feeble attempt to prove the "obvious." The point is over-

Genetic Method in Recent Criticism on the *Rhetoric of Aristotle*," Diss. Cornell 1963, and George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 82-85.

