

Lauren Yelverton | COM 415WI | Takeaways/Residuals | Chapters 19, 20

Takeaways

Something I found interesting while reading Chapter 19 of our textbook was the way that Plato defined rhetoric in his Socratic dialogue *The Gorgias*. He defined rhetoric as “mere ‘flattery’ and ‘personal adornment,’ nothing more than ‘a habitude or knack’” (Stacks et. al., 248). I found that Plato’s definition of rhetoric was quite different from Aristotle’s definition of the same thing from Chapter 18. While Aristotle seemed to think of rhetoric in a positive light, Plato seemed to be very critical and disapproving of rhetoric, which I found very interesting.

Another thing I thought was interesting while reading Chapter 19 was Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s term, “feminine style.” More specifically, she argued that “women rhetors developed a ‘feminine style’ of public speaking, and, through this style, early women rhetors were able to bridge the tension between norms of femininity and expectations of the rhetor’s role” (Stacks et. al., 254). I found this interesting because I had never heard of there being a feminine style of public speaking before, and I was impressed how Campbell’s coining of this term led to the formation of feminist scholarships in communication studies.

One thing that caught my eye while reading Chapter 20 was quasi-experimental research and designs. In quasi-experimental designs, the experimental variables have been actively manipulated, however, “rather than using random assignment, [the variables] also rely on comparisons made across groups created via at least one measured independent variable, as in nonexperimental research discussed earlier” (Stacks et. al., 266). I found this interesting due to the fact that it is effectively able to measure and manipulate independent variables, which is not something I was aware could be done before reading this chapter.

Something else I found interesting while reading Chapter 20 was the theory of persuasion called self-perception. Self-perception is when, according to our reading, “under certain conditions, people infer their attitudes from observing their own behaviors” (Stacks et. al., 263). I found the theory of self-perception interesting because it allows us to discover our attitudes on our own rather than other people observing our attitudes, and potentially informing us about them.

Residuals

1. Ch. 19: If Plato viewed rhetoric so negatively, why do so many people still use it if his definition of it, according to the reading, informs the way that many people think negatively of language today?
2. Ch. 19: I saw that Celeste Condit expanded on Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s definition of feminine style by further examining how rhetoric can be used to empower other gender identities. How did she end up doing so, and what were the effects of it in the media and beyond?
3. Ch. 20: Are quasi-experimental designs ever seen as biased, since the people conducting the experiment manipulate the independent variable while simultaneously measuring it, since it could be seen as the researchers manipulating the variable for their own benefit?
4. Ch. 20: I saw that pro-attitudinal effects and counter-attitudinal effects were mentioned in the section about self-perception. What are the definitions of each, and what are the effects of each one on an individual’s personality?