

A book, an article, or a talk starts off by discovering rhetoric; I know what comes next. The author, having seen the land fertile, and declared it empty, will plant his banner and claim it for his own. We, the aboriginal inhabitants will be deemed too primitive for citizenship under the new dispensation. So we'll probably be sent off to some apparently barren terrain at the edge of the known university.

Existence at the margins isn't all bad, though. For one thing, we can continue there to lead our traditional way of life, which for twenty five hundred years has involved helping young adults cultivate the communication skills their society values—what this conference is calling "pedagogy." This commitment to pedagogy more than anything else constitutes the distinguishing feature of rhetoric in an age where so many disciplines have taken a linguistic turn. And this commitment is what we all share. Speaking as one trained in the Speech Communication tradition, but now a member of an English department, I observe that all my fellow natives of rhetoric, Speech and English alike, regularly and proudly teach "skills" classes.

A good first move beyond the confines of the reservation would be to work a bit harder to make our pride conspicuous. Rhetoric as a *dunamis* permits synergy between our teaching and our research. Rather obviously, any deeper understanding of rhetorical ability in practice should improve our teaching. Less obviously, perhaps, our teaching can also contribute to our theory, for in the classroom we encounter intimately and daily a not unskilled group of practicing rhetors, and get to watch how they think close up. (My students, for example, act on a different conception of deliberation than that proposed by Habermas; I suspect they're right, but at least they're worth listening to.) So the contemporary movement towards respecting teaching as a form of scholarship could look to our traditions for a model.

We also have a lot to learn from each other; or to speak more exactly, I know I have a lot to learn from my new colleagues in English. Composition pedagogy is rich in theories, publications, conferences and epic battles—it is much more self-conscious than anything that can be found in the single Speech journal or our occasional "tips & tricks" talk. Still, while more conversation between Speech and English scholars is bound to be helpful, I doubt whether anything like a unification is possible or desirable.

Rhetoric in the English tradition circles around the activity of composition. Most importantly, this means rhetoric teachers each year introduce many of the United States' four million freshman to the mysteries of the term paper. But the orbit easily expands centrifugally, as on my campus, to encompass teaching more advanced, discipline-based writing tasks, technical writing, business writing, writing for the new electronic media, and beyond these to the "composition" of visual and perhaps even oral aspects of texts.

Rhetoric in the Speech tradition, by contrast, remains centripetal. It is civic, oral, and contentious; and these are not just another genre, medium and stance to be enclosed within the English orbit. Rather, they are aspects of the rhetorical situation central to our research and teaching. A person takes her stand among her fellows—those who are, though in some ways her equals, also profoundly other; she appears before them, earns their attention, musters the resources of reason, passion and character to say something worth hearing, and risks the always unpredictable event. It is this situation that our students perceive correctly, if somewhat vaguely, through their "fear of public speaking," and for which they express a desire to gain "self confidence" (a concept worth studying) by taking our classes. It is this situation that Cicero has Crassus describe in *De oratore*:

It is indeed a great task and enterprise for a person to undertake and profess, that while everyone else is silent, he alone must be heard on the most important subjects, and in a large assembly of men; for there is scarcely anyone present who is not sharper and quicker to discover defects in the speaker than merits; and thus whatever offends the hearer effaces the recollection of what is worthy of praise. . . . To me, those who speak best, and speak with the utmost ease and grace, appear, if they do not commence their speeches with some timidity, and show some confusion in the exordium, to have almost lost the sense of shame; . . . for the better qualified a man is to speak, the more he fears the difficulties of speaking, the uncertain success of a speech, and the expectation of the audience. . . . Indeed, what I often observe in you I very frequently experience in myself, that I turn pale at the outset of my speech, and feel a tremor through my whole thoughts, as it were, and limbs (1.116-121).

And it is this situation Arendt takes as basic to public life:

In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world. . . . This disclosure of "who" in contradistinction to "what" somebody is—his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide—is implicit in everything somebody says and does (*Human Condition*, c. 24).

"These things being so," as Cicero would say, teachers of rhetoric in the Speech and English traditions should probably plan on cultivating their own gardens, even out here at the margins.