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Steven J. Mailloux

Loyola Marymount University, Steven.Mailloux@lmu.edu

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Steven Mailloux

DISCIPLINARY IDENTITIES: ON THE RHETORICAL PATHS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Abstract: This essay explores some rhetorical paths of thought connecting the discipline of English Studies and Speech Communication. I focus on the rhetoric of science during two periods of disciplinary development: the use of scientific rhetoric to articulate new disciplinary identities in the 1910s and the debates over the rhetorical study of science in the 1990s. The transition from the former to the latter period was significantly affected by what might be called a rhetorical hermeneutics developed around 1960 by Chaim Perelman, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Thomas Kuhn. The establishment of Composition Studies provides an example of the changed rhetorical context for disciplinary legitimation in the late twentieth century. The main purpose of this rhetorical history is to encourage renewed dialogue among rhetoricians studying Literature, Composition, and Communication.

The intellectual imperialism of rhetoric often provokes disciplinary anxiety these days. In some human sciences this anxiety takes the form of a general epistemological worry over whether everything we can know is “only” rhetorical, constituted entirely by language. A feared rhetoricism purportedly asserts that there is nothing outside the text, free of discursive practices, beyond the web of words.¹ In other academic fields, the disciplinary anxiety manifests itself as a more specific methodological question about “hermeneutic globalization”: Does rhetoric provide an appropriate and comprehensive vocabulary for interpreting human practices, or does calling every human production “rhetorical” stretch the term far beyond its serviceable limits (rhetoric becoming everything and nothing)?²

Periodically this worry over rhetoric merges with various other disciplinary anxieties in those two areas embracing rhetoric (more or less) as a subfield, English Studies and Speech Communication. During their twentieth century histories, these two disciplines have at various times explicitly discussed the place of rhetorical study in their curricular plans, research agendas, and professional organizations; and both departmentalized disciplines find many self-identified rhetoricians among their faculty. Though organizations like the Rhetoric Society of America attempt to bring these English and Communication rhetoricians together at national conferences, each group carries on its teaching and research quite independently of the other. In the following essay, I would like to explore some rhetorical paths of thought connecting these two separate but related domains.

I will carry out my purpose in a rather circuitous way by focusing on the rhetoric of science during two periods of disciplinary development: the use of

scientific rhetoric to articulate new disciplinary formations in the 1910s and the controversies over the rhetorical study of science in the 1990s. Though I will say much about the rhetoric of science, I am not doing so to make a contribution to that burgeoning subfield but rather to better understand the past and present rhetorics of disciplinary identity on my way to advocating a renewed dialogue between rhetoricians in English and Communication.

SEPARATING ENGLISH AND SPEECH

As disciplinary history became a growth industry during the last decade, the individual histories of both English Studies and Speech Communication received increasing attention. But what of their interrelation? Where are detailed accounts of how these two disciplines separated and how they maintained independent but sometimes parallel paths during the twentieth century? A look back at their initial separation will be informative for my purpose of overcoming their mutual isolation.³

In 1915 seventeen speech teachers met to establish the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking. These “Seventeen Who Made History” were originally dissenting members of the Public Speaking Section of the National Council of Teachers of English (Weaver; Cohen, *History* 29-36). The NCTE was founded in 1911 to protest the uniform lists of required books for college entrance exams and had as its founding members English teachers from high schools and colleges (Applebee 51-53). The NCTE soon took up the pedagogical issues that the Modern Language Association of America was abandoning in its developing preoccupation with research. The NCTE was not a competing organization to the MLA, however, but rather a complementary professional group. Even today faculty in college English departments include members of both the NCTE and the MLA. In contrast, though the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (NAATPS) did not terminate all ties with the NCTE in 1915, the establishment of autonomous Speech departments before and after that year encouraged the formation of a disciplinary identity and professional affiliations separate and independent from scholars and teachers in English departments.

The institutional establishment of Speech as a discipline occurred within the American research university, and its founders used the available scientific rhetoric to achieve their professional autonomy and academic legitimation. Again and again in the earliest discussions, teachers of public speaking argued for developing their field as a scientific discipline, and it was through such a development that Speech distinguished itself clearly and decisively from English Studies. That is, scientific differentiation as a specialty with its own subject matter and disciplinary practices became a significant basis for identity formation.

But this disciplinary identity was clearly driven by speech teachers’ desire to leave behind their subordinate status within English departments and attain intellectual acceptance within the research university more generally. One can imagine that a more hospitable departmental home within English and a more

conducive intellectual and material environment might have made possible a different path for teachers of public speaking. A more welcoming disciplinary ecology within English departments would probably have been encouraged by a deeper and broader scholarly embrace of rhetorical traditions within those departments. Such, however, was not the road taken by early twentieth-century English Studies.

While Speech's disciplinary identity was being rhetorically produced and institutionally resituated, its old home discipline, English Studies, evolved an identity that was more and more centered on literature specifically rather than language more generally and on interpretive scholarship rather than composition pedagogy. Still, oral rhetoric was not immediately abandoned by all English faculty. In fact, a few years before the founding of the NAATPS, English professors heard a past MLA president call for the academic rebirth of oral and written rhetoric. He too urged the development of rhetoric as a science.

Fred Newton Scott, 1907 MLA president and later the first president of NCTE, delivered his paper, "Rhetoric Rediviva," at the annual MLA meeting of December 1909. He first outlined what he considered the characteristics of a "genuine science—at least of a concrete science such as rhetoric may claim to be": a rich, distinctive, and "unified subject-matter"; methods of research "based upon accurate observations, experiment (when possible), and generalization"; and "an organized body of interlocking principles, laws and classifications" (414). Scott then contrasted two ancient rhetorical traditions, one derived from Korax and Aristotle treating rhetoric primarily as a practical art and the other derived from Plato who, according to Scott, viewed rhetoric with "the attitude, if not of the scientist, at least of the speculative philosopher intent solely on the truth" (415). Scott argued that the Korax-Aristotle tradition with its emphasis on practices of persuasion had dominated "the course of rhetorical speculation for more than 2000 years" and that Plato, in contrast, had perversely been regarded as "rhetoric's uncompromising enemy" rather than as the advocate he was for rhetoric as a philosophical science.

Scott's paper was thus a surprising plea for a return to Plato as the long misunderstood philosopher of rhetoric, the theorist who broadened the scope of rhetorical science beyond persuasion or oratory to "every use of speech, whether spoken or written; not only speeches, but history, fiction, laws, and even conversation" (415). Plato's rhetorical theory was "a criticism of the practical and sophistical system of Korax" and fulfilled the three scientific criteria Scott had earlier enumerated.

We may trace in Plato's dialogues, then, the beginnings of a complete science of rhetoric: (1) a subject-matter of sufficient richness and extent, embracing all the uses of speech for the communication of intelligence; (2) a noble and comprehensive conception of the function of discourse as the molder of a healthy public opinion; and (3) a fundamental principle of [organic] structure. (416)

Admitting that this rhetorical science was still “little more than a point of view,” Scott concluded his remarks by noting the value of recent work in sociology and psychology for the future development of rhetoric as a science.

Thus, teachers of public speaking were not alone in adapting scientific rhetoric to promote and shape their language arts discipline; at least one influential rhetorician trained in English and active in the MLA and NCTE was also using that rhetoric. Unfortunately for those who now desire a closer relationship among all scholar-teachers of rhetoric, the overlap in general subject matter, research agendas, and scientific vocabulary in the 1910s did not result in closer ties between Speech and English. Nor did the common rhetorical heritage of the two fields result in long-term collaboration. Scott’s call for a rebirth of rhetoric fell on deaf disciplinary ears within English Studies⁴; and even among Speech teachers, “rhetoric” as a professional marker appeared to have only a few champions in the institutional politics of naming.

In a 1916 essay on the proper university location for “speech science,” Charles H. Woolbert argued strenuously that Speech and English should be two separate departments because the “two lines of study . . . *are essentially different disciplines.*” He gives several arguments for this thesis including the fact that “they differ in their field of operations,” with English “given up specifically to thought that is written” and “speech science to thought that is spoken” (65). They differ in “viewpoint and outlook,” with English focused on “the literature of the past” and Speech on “an art to be used in the present.” English study aims to increase the self-culture of the student, while “speech studies prepare the student to affect others rather than himself” (66-67). In these various ways, argues Woolbert, English and Speech “present different aims, ideals, subject matter, methods, and products” (67); they are already separate and independent disciplines.

“Rhetoric” does make its way into Woolbert’s discussion, rhetoric as the area of overlap between English and Speech. He includes this schematic diagram of disciplinary interrelationships (see page 9).

But the Speech-English intersection pictured here by Woolbert was not nearly strong enough to counteract the growing divide between the disciplines interested in oral and written rhetoric. Woolbert himself provides one reason for this outcome. At a moment of disciplinary identification that relied heavily on scientific rhetoric, Woolbert explains that where speech “impinges upon the field of English” it does so “where English as a science confesses to be least strongly academic: rhetoric, composition, the art of effective presentation” (66). He goes on to speculate that:

Probably the reason why English at its highest is restricted to philology is that only in philology can the English scholar find activities that lie near enough the boundaries of science. Speech, on the other hand, claims as its ancestry disciplines that are of the elect among the sciences: physics, physiology, anatomy, psychology. (66)

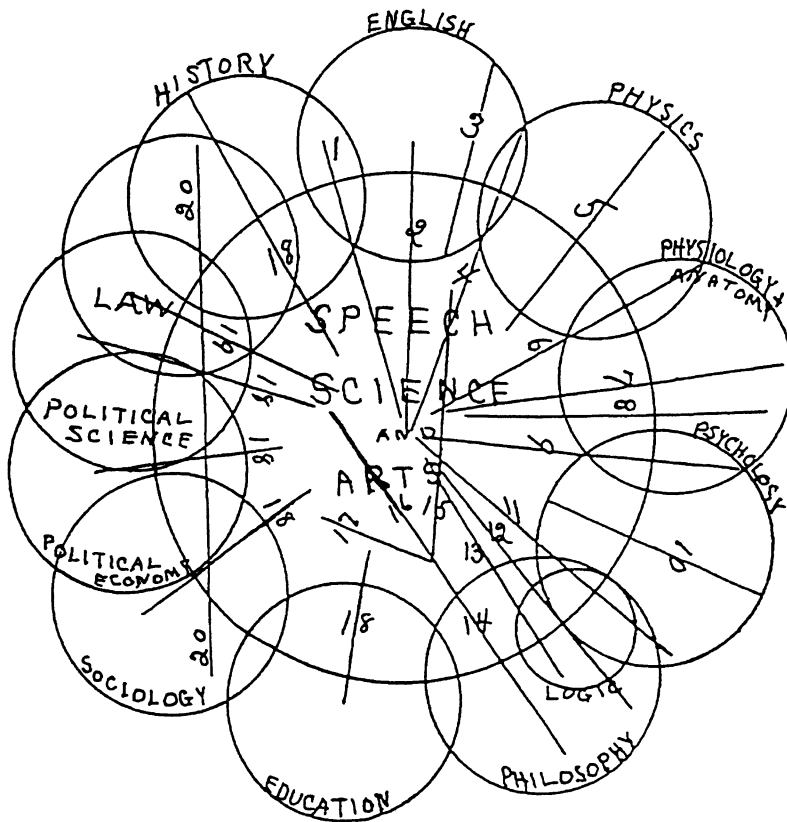


Diagram showing the existence of a special field or Speech Science and indicating the relation of this subject to others.

Let the central circle represent the field of speech science and arts, and the smaller circles those disciplines that touch upon and contribute to it. The numbered lines represent the subjects that these disciplines have in common with speech studies. It is obvious that there is a large field of study and investigation within the large circle, the greater part of which is not provided for by the present departmental divisions of university curricula.

Key to the scheme of numbering:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The literature of Public Address | 11. Persuasion |
| 2. Rhetoric | 12. Argumentation |
| 3. Criticism | 13. Debating |
| 4. Phonology | 14. Aesthetics |
| 5. The Physics of Sound | 15. Speech Art |
| 6. Elocution | 16. Stage Art |
| 7. Use of Vocal Apparatus | 17. Stage Craft |
| 8. Hygiene | 18. Speech Material |
| 9. Expression | 19. Evidence |
| 10. Thought-Processes | 20. Social Adjustments and Human Behavior |

Here Woolbert separates English and Speech because the latter is closer to the “pure sciences” (66), and their shared territory—rhetoric—does not offer an especially strong motive for moving closer because of its non-scientific character, which was inconsistent with the scientific aspirations of Speech, at least in Woolbert’s opinion.⁵

Others did not completely share Woolbert’s scientific attitudes toward rhetoric, but the institutional politics of naming still played a decisive role. For Woolbert, “rhetoric” named an area of overlap between English and Speech, but it was not central to the latter as a scientific discipline. For other teachers of public speaking, “rhetoric” might have been more conceptually central but it still was not acceptable as an overarching name for their disciplinary enterprise. In a paper delivered at the third NAATPS annual meeting, J.P. Ryan surveyed the various candidates for the name of his new discipline. He admits that the words “Rhetoric and Oratory” are “old and worthy” and still have their advocates. Indeed, “rhetoric as science and Oratory as the art of expression at one time was in reputable usage in our colleges.” But these traditional meanings would need updating, and to bring the phrase “with its full meaning into present usage” would take “time and energy which should be spent upon the work of the day” (Ryan 6-7), including, I suppose, the disciplinary work of scientific research, institutional development, and professional organization. After rejecting other candidates (such as “public speaking”), Ryan declares that the best title for the discipline within university structures is “Department of Speech” (9).

So at the moment when a new discipline was gaining increased visibility and intellectual autonomy for public speaking, the interdiscipline of rhetoric and its humanistic tradition was being ignored or at least marginalized in both that discipline and its former institutional home. Whereas the new discipline, Speech, viewed rhetoric as not scientific or modern enough, the older one, English, valued rhetorical traditions primarily as literary background, rhetoric not being in itself literary enough, and relegated its pedagogical practices to composition teachers. This turn of disciplinary events led to the missed opportunity of an early twentieth-century rebirth of rhetoric, one called for by Fred Newton Scott even as speech teachers set out alone along paths well trodden by a 2000-year-old rhetorical tradition.⁶

REINTRODUCING RHETORIC AND HERMENEUTICS

From the science of rhetorical study to the rhetorical study of science: The path to the latter was significantly mapped out by three books published around 1960: Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Wahrheit und Methode*, and Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s *La Nouvelle Rhétorique*. These three monumentally influential books helped change how European and American intellectuals understood practices and theories of knowledge production within the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the arts. Not only did these books argue for the interpretive

nature of all disciplines, they also contributed significantly to the return of rhetoric to the humanities and related social sciences. In so doing, they led to a different way of doing histories and theorizing practices of disciplinary identification. Or, to borrow one of Kuhn's key phrases, these books led to a "paradigm shift" in describing disciplinary formation and development. Soon a new rhetorical hermeneutics began emphasizing communal rhetorics and shared interpretive strategies within professionalized disciplines instead of focusing on idealized rationalities and purported objectivities.

Redefined concepts such as "paradigm" were not only employed by historians and philosophers of science; they also became pieces of a new metacritical rhetoric for disciplinary practitioners in their theoretical moments of describing and justifying their own specific disciplines and changes within them. Gadamer, Perelman, and especially Kuhn helped transform the academic contexts of disciplinary self-understanding and legitimation, and the term *paradigm* itself became an example of how a new vocabulary gets introduced as such changes take place. That is, the self-reflexive rhetoric available for disciplinary identification altered in such a way that the role of rhetoric and interpretation was given new prominence in accounts of all disciplines, including the natural sciences; and this new prominence became a rhetorical resource for practitioners of academic fields in shaping and explaining their disciplinary identities. This double rhetoricity not only led to the development of a subfield called the "rhetoric of science" within rhetorical studies; it also more generally encouraged a new self-consciousness about disciplinary identity formation and a new non-scientific vocabulary for defending and developing new disciplines. In effect, scientific rhetoric was displaced as the rhetoric of choice for disciplinary defense and development in the humanistic disciplines.

To describe the development of normal science, Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* adapts the term *paradigms*, which he defines as "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (viii). Paradigms as "accepted examples of actual scientific practice—examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentation together—provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research" and include such historical instances as Aristotelian, Newtonian, and Einsteinian physics, Ptolemaic and Copernican astronomy, and corpuscular and wave optics (10). Paradigms are shared exemplars learned by students so they can become identifiable members of particular scientific communities. Because a student joins established members "who learned their field from the same concrete models," that student's

subsequent practice will seldom evoke overt disagreement over fundamentals. Men [and women] whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. That commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are prerequisites for

normal science, i. e., for the genesis and continuation of a particular research tradition. (11)

In this way, paradigms become the basis of disciplinary identity.

It is difficult to overstate the explanatory richness of Kuhn's theory of paradigms. All I can do here is suggest a few points relevant to tracing the rhetorical paths of disciplinary thought. Kuhn's theory shifted accounts of scientific disciplines away from abstract concepts of universal rationality and claims of objectivity and put in their place notions of specific, historical practices, including interpretive and rhetorical practices within disciplines. Paradigms as shared exemplars constitute the enabling and limiting conditions of a research community's interpretive and rhetorical activities. They not only provide interpretive conventions for recognizing problems and producing solutions; they also incorporate rhetorical strategies for publicly disseminating and discussing experiments and their findings. We might say, then, that Kuhn's theory suggests, among other things, a kind of rhetorical hermeneutics for understanding disciplinarity.

Among the most controversial claims of Kuhn's rhetorical hermeneutics was his assertion that in a scientific revolution when the paradigm changes (from, say, Aristotelian to Newtonian physics), scientists in the post-revolutionary normal science are practicing in different worlds than their pre-revolutionary ancestors. Furthermore, those different worlds cannot somehow be compared to an objective "Nature" independent of any and all paradigms. There is no description of "Nature" that is not already theory-laden, already communicated from within this or that paradigm. What scientists see and how they talk, their shared interpretations and rhetorics, are all dependent on paradigms established within their respective disciplinary communities. Indeed, a paradigm "is prerequisite to perception itself" for practitioners (113), and scientific disciplines are, among other things, the institutionalized organization of practices for troping and arguing over these paradigm-determined interpretations. All of this makes for a very different notion of science than the one assumed by those disciplines trying to establish their identities in the first half of the twentieth-century.

But such a reconception of science leads Kuhn into philosophical perplexities. That is, his practice of doing history of science results in theoretical dilemmas during his moments of self-reflection. At one point he pauses to ask:

Do we . . . really need to describe what separates Galileo from Aristotle, or Lavoisier from Priestley, as a transformation of vision? Did these men really *see* different things when *looking at* the same sorts of objects? Is there any legitimate sense in which we can say that they pursued their research in different worlds?

Kuhn first responds to these questions hypothetically with the traditional answer: "Many readers will surely want to say that what changes with a paradigm

is only the scientist's interpretation of observations that themselves are fixed once and for all by the nature of the environment and of the perceptual apparatus." This answer, Kuhn then points out, "is an essential part of a philosophical paradigm initiated by Descartes" (121). What Kuhn has done here, of course, is apply his notion of paradigm to philosophy, moving from paradigms *within* particular sciences to "the traditional epistemological paradigm" that talks *about* these sciences (121). Kuhn could not quite give up that philosophical paradigm, which assumed an epistemological subject-object split more basic to "reality" and its investigation than all things rhetorical and hermeneutic:

But is sensory experience fixed and neutral? Are theories simply man-made interpretations of given data? The epistemological viewpoint that has most often guided Western philosophy for three centuries dictates an immediate and unequivocal, Yes! In the absence of a developed alternative, I find it impossible to relinquish entirely that viewpoint. Yet it no longer functions effectively. (126)

Thus, though his theory of paradigms began redefining disciplinary thought about science, Kuhn's rhetorical hermeneutics stopped short of explicitly rejecting the old Cartesian paradigm of modern epistemology.

Kuhn recognized no "viable alternate to the traditional epistemological paradigm" (121), but just such an alternative was developing elsewhere as a more thorough-going rhetorical and hermeneutic account of disciplinary identity. Both Chaim Perelman and Hans-Georg Gadamer were well along their ways to rejecting Cartesian theories of knowledge. *The New Rhetoric* and *Truth and Method* argued for practice-oriented, rhetorically-based, interpretively-focused accounts consistent with *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

In *Truth and Method* Gadamer rejects the methodological model of the natural sciences as an accurate description of the disciplinary practices of the human sciences. "Scientific research as such derives the law of its development . . . from the law of the object it is investigating, which conceals its methodical efforts," whereas "the human sciences cannot be adequately described in terms of this conception of research and progress" (283). Rather, "in the human sciences the particular research questions concerning tradition that we are interested in pursuing are motivated in a special way by the present and its interests. The theme and object of research are actually constituted by the motivation of the inquiry." Gadamer argues that "in the human sciences we cannot speak of an object of research in the same sense as in the natural sciences, where research penetrates more and more deeply into nature" (284). The methodological *techne* of the natural sciences is simply inadequate as a model for understanding the tradition-embedded *phronesis* of the human sciences.⁷ Gadamer thus makes a clear distinction in *Truth and Method* between the natural and the human sciences. We must note, however, that Gadamer's claim for the universality of hermeneutics necessarily

complicates this distinction as even the natural sciences cannot escape their relation to everyday hermeneutic being-in-the world. In later editions of *Truth and Method*, Gadamer himself comments that the question of scientific research involved in his distinction now “appears much more complicated since Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*” (283, n. 209; cf. 559-61).

Throughout *Truth and Method* Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is thoroughly rhetorical in orientation. When he comments on the relevance of humanism to his project, Gadamer notes that “‘talking well’ (eu legein) has always had two meanings; it is not merely a rhetorical ideal. It also means saying the right thing—i.e., the truth—and is not just the art of speaking—of saying something well” (19). This humanistic ideal “is obviously important for the self-understanding of the human sciences; especially so is the positive ambiguity of the rhetorical ideal, which is condemned not only by Plato, but by the anti-rhetorical methodology of modern times” (19-20). It is against this scientific “anti-rhetorical methodology” that Gadamer has set his own rhetorical hermeneutic account of the human sciences.

“Where . . . but to rhetoric should the theoretical examination of interpretation turn?” Gadamer later asks in “Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Ideology-Critique” (318).⁸ In *Truth and Method* Gadamer elaborates his rhetorical hermeneutic case against method as a specific anti-Cartesian alternative for the disciplinary self-understanding of the human sciences. Contrasting “immediate living certainty” to the claims of methodological “scientific certainty,” Gadamer notes that the latter “always has something Cartesian about it” for “it is the result of a critical method that admits only the validity of what cannot be doubted” (238). Gadamer rejects such “artificial and hyperbolic doubt” (238) and rehabilitates prejudice within tradition as necessary to understanding. In contrast to Descartes’ idea of method and its Enlightenment legacy of attacking all prejudice, Gadamer argues for the necessity of legitimate prejudice (productive assumptions, useful presuppositions) as the only way to get interpretation going in the first place.

With Gadamer’s rhetorical, anti-Cartesian stance toward disciplinary self-understanding for the human sciences, it is not surprising that he sees Perelman’s work as “a valuable contribution to philosophical hermeneutics” (*Truth and Method* 569n). He once commented that he oriented himself “expressly to rhetoric in *Truth and Method*” and “found confirmation for this from many sides but above all in the work of Chaim Perelman, who looks at rhetoric from the point of view of law” (Gadamer, *Philosophical Apprenticeships* 182). Gadamer here cites Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s *The New Rhetoric*, which declares at the outset:

The publication of a treatise devoted to argumentation and this subject’s connection with the ancient tradition of Greek rhetoric and dialectic constitutes a break with a concept of reason and reasoning due to Descartes which has set its mark on Western philosophy for the last three centuries. (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1)

The authors explain how Descartes' concept of method established "the self-evident as the mark of reason" and led to both rationalist and empiricist demonstration models of logical proof.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca then question the Cartesian conclusions "that reason is entirely incompetent in those areas which elude calculation and that, where neither experiment nor logical deduction is in a position to furnish the solution of a problem, we can but abandon ourselves to irrational forces, instincts, suggestion, or even violence." The authors see these conclusions as an "unjustified and unwarranted limitation of the domain of action of our faculty of reasoning and proving" (3). In their attack on the "idea of self-evidence" (3), we can see an implied rejection of all non-interpretive givens, an agreement with Gadamerian claims for hermeneutic universality. In their advocacy of alternatives to scientific methods of proof, we see a rhetorical turn to argumentation within disciplinary inquiry. *The New Rhetoric* is based on a careful examination of how various professional and lay debates are actually carried out, how rhetorical paths of thought function within the public sphere, how human beings argue rationally about value. Thus, like *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and *Truth and Method*, *The New Rhetoric* makes available a rhetorical hermeneutic account for disciplinary self-understanding and, consequently, a new rhetorical resource for disciplinary self-identification and legitimation.

Though we have moved from Kuhn to Gadamer to Perelman to develop a rhetorical hermeneutics, we could just as easily have cut our path in the opposite direction. On this alternative route, we travel from *The New Rhetoric's* 1958 study of argumentation in the professions related to the human sciences; to Gadamer's 1960 argument that the human sciences are rhetorical and hermeneutic rather than methodical on the model of the natural sciences; to Kuhn's 1962 claim that the natural sciences themselves manifest their own rhetorical hermeneutic—scientific paradigms as shared practices embedded in disciplinary matrices including traditions of interpretive argument. That is, we could have moved from rhetoric in the human sciences; to the human sciences as rhetorically and interpretively distinct from the natural sciences; ending up with the natural and human sciences—all disciplines of knowledge—as understood in terms of rhetorical hermeneutics.

In the establishment of a disciplinary identity for composition studies after 1970, we find manifest these rhetorical paths of disciplinary thought—both the rise of a new rhetorical and hermeneutic paradigm for theorizing disciplinarity and the decline of earlier scientific rhetorics for disciplinary identification in the human sciences. The academic growth of rhetoric and composition is a story told many times in recent years, so I will limit myself here to only a few historical observations before moving on to the contemporary scene.

In the late forties English and Speech had another opportunity to work together in response to a national interest in general education programs and communication courses at the post-secondary level. At its 1946 annual convention,

the NAATPS, by then renamed the Speech Association of America (SAA), included eight papers in a session on Basic Communications (Bohman), and its Committee on Communication Skills resolved to “sponsor a conference on the combined course in oral and written communication” (“Minutes” 231). The following year, the NCTE convention included a panel on undergraduate communication courses, and two of the papers were soon published in *College English*: Harold Briggs’s “College Programs in Communication as Viewed by an English Teacher” and Clyde Dow’s “A Speech Teacher Views College Communication Courses.” English and Speech journals printed several other essays on communication during these years, often arguing for the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In February 1947 the NCTE and the SAA co-sponsored a meeting on communications in freshman college courses, again emphasizing the integral relationship among the four language arts (Wilson 127; Applebee 160; Berlin 104-105). Unfortunately, this formal collaboration was short-lived, and each organization continued on its separate disciplinary path in 1949, with the SAA founding the National Society for the Study of Communication (NSSC) and the NCTE establishing its own Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). The 1950 report by the CCCC secretary ended with a description emblematic of relations among the professional organizations. Part of the item reads:

Discussion of the problem of closer unity, cooperation, and coordination between the National Council of Teachers of English and the Speech Association of America, especially in view of the fact that the CCCC (dealing with written composition and communication) is a subsidiary of the NCTE and a similar organization (dealing with oral composition and communication) is a subsidiary of the SAA. No conclusion reached.⁹

This momentary intersection and immediate re-separation of professional pathways embody another missed opportunity for disciplinary co-operation between English Studies and Speech Communication.

The meetings and publications of the CCCC constituted the major site for the emergence of a new disciplinary identity for composition within English. James Berlin tells this tale of emergence as a “return of rhetoric to the English department” (121). Rather than adopting a rhetoric of science to legitimate their developing discipline, at least some composition specialists in the sixties and seventies used a hermeneutic rhetoric articulated through disciplinary vocabularies learned from Kuhn, Gadamer, and Perelman, among others; and some compositionists also called explicitly for a “New Rhetoric” that built on the long humanistic tradition of rhetorical study. From this combination of old and new traditions, compositionists in the seventies and eighties did not find it necessary to claim to be a scientific discipline but instead began to argue that science itself was an identifiable discourse, a historically specific form of disciplinary rhetoric.

The changed rhetorical conditions of disciplinary formation become strikingly evident in the 1982 volume of *College Composition and Communication*. The February issue alone contains Janet Emig's "Inquiry Paradigms and Writing" and Maxine Hairston's "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," as well as reviews of rhetoric and composition collections that refer explicitly to disciplinary paradigms.¹⁰ Addressing her fellow researchers in composition studies, Emig argues that "our responses concerning the nature, organization, and evaluation of evidence reveal our inquiry paradigms, both those we elect to inhabit, and those we may even help to create" (64). She then goes on to elaborate the most important characteristics of an inquiry paradigm:

1) a governing gaze [a steady way of perceiving actuality]; 2) an acknowledged, or at least a conscious, set of assumptions, preferably connected with 3) a coherent theory or theories; 4) an allegiance to an explicit or at least a tacit intellectual tradition; and 5) an adequate methodology including an indigenous logic consonant with all of the above. (65)

Emig demonstrates how these characteristics inform disciplinary research into writing and how such phenomenological and ethnographic paradigms contrast with traditional positivistic paradigms, which sometimes are "simply, globally, and, of course, mistakenly" identified with "The Scientific Method." Not only does Emig cite Kuhn in explaining her notion of "paradigm," but she also clearly distances composition from traditional notions of science out of which came the scientific rhetoric used by teachers of public speaking earlier in the century.¹¹

Hairston's essay depends even more explicitly on Kuhn's notion of paradigm as she argues that his theory of scientific revolutions can be used "as an analogy that can illuminate developments that are taking place in our profession" (77). She refers to Richard Young's earlier "Paradigms and Patterns" as she describes the current-traditional paradigm for composition teaching, which is being replaced by a new paradigm focused on the writing process.¹² Though Hairston is primarily addressing an audience already convinced of composition's disciplinary status, she provides detailed arguments that non-specialists would recognize as a case for the field's developing disciplinary: its growing research and scholarship, its professional training programs and graduate degrees, its journals and conferences, and so on. Moreover, her arguments for a major paradigm shift in composition studies constitute a renewed rhetoric of disciplinary identity for her specialist readership. This rhetoric not only narrates the required story of a continuing research tradition and a general pedagogical framework; it also concludes with a motivating mission statement for the discipline's contribution to a larger community: "to refine the new paradigm for teaching composition so that it provides a rewarding, productive, and feasible way of teaching writing for the non-specialists who do most of the composition teaching in our colleges and universities" (88).

In these essays and others, we see the specific transformation of the conceptual language for disciplinary identification in the late twentieth century.¹³ An earlier scientific rhetoric gets folded into a disciplinary rhetoric modified by a Kuhnian rhetorical hermeneutics that views disciplines as collections of practices providing practitioners with interpretive frameworks and suasive strategies for producing and disseminating their specialized knowledge.¹⁴ Along with this changed rhetoric of disciplinary identity comes a transformed view of science that makes possible a new subfield of rhetorical studies: the rhetorical analysis of scientific discourse.

THE RHETORICAL HERMENEUTICS OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

In one of its forms, the rhetorical study of science emerged from within Speech Communication in the 1970s. Specific case studies and general essays on “The Rhetoric of Science” were instrumental in carving out a disciplinary space for the examination of scientific discourse. In one of the early general essays, “The Scientific Community as Audience” M. A. Overington explicitly used Kuhn and Perelman in developing his analytic framework and applied it to sociology as a science. Nearly twenty years later, Dilip Gaonkar employed Overington as a case in point for his critique in “The Idea of Rhetoric in the Rhetoric of Science.” In this important critical examination of a growing subfield within Speech Communication, Gaonkar specifically singles out the appropriation of Kuhn’s work as part of that subfield’s justification for its rhetorical enterprise (73-74).¹⁵ I, in turn, will use Gaonkar’s critique to illustrate the continued separation of English and Speech and the parallel paths rhetoricians in both disciplines are traveling. One might see the contemporary rhetoric of science as the marker of another crossroads in the disciplinary histories of those twentieth-century fields concerned with written and oral rhetoric.

Gaonkar’s “The Idea of Rhetoric” is the lead essay in *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*, a collection that explores the intersecting roles of rhetoric and hermeneutics in the recent study of science.¹⁶ It contains the editors’ introduction, Gaonkar’s piece critiquing the field, several responses by rhetoricians of science, and then Gaonkar’s response to the responses. In opening the discussion, Gaonkar describes rhetoric as “a way of reading the endless discursive debris that surrounds us” (25) and adds this note: “Literary critic Steven Mailloux (1989) has [a] catchy phrase for this reading practice—‘rhetorical hermeneutics.’ But, alas, in our postmodern times a clever turn of phrase invariably turns into a method. Unlike Nietzsche, we won’t let aphoristic wisdom run its course” (78, n. 1).¹⁷ Here Gaonkar identifies one rhetorician as a specifically “literary” critic, and it is this category of the “literary” that becomes significant for understanding where, in my view, Gaonkar goes astray in his criticisms of the rhetoric of science. But it is primarily the implications of his argument for rhetorical studies more broadly that will be my focus in what follows. For I take Gaonkar at his word that one significant reason for commenting on the rhetoric of science is that in such a field one can usefully

trace the disciplinary anxieties of contemporary rhetorical studies in general (36). I too am interested in those anxieties—over hermeneutic globalization and disciplinary recognition—registered in discussions about the rhetoric of science. Yet at least here I find myself a fellow traveler with the very rhetoricians of science Gaonkar criticizes rather than with Gaonkar himself.¹⁸

Let us continue a bit longer on the parallel path of Gaonkar's endnotes: after the first one which mentions a literary critic, a later endnote ignores the academic home of such critics when Gaonkar locates the rhetoric of science among the disciplines grouped according to prestige. The penultimate note to his essay reads: "The explicit rhetoricians of science usually belong to the low status disciplines (speech communication and composition), while the implicit rhetoricians belong to the high status disciplines (history, philosophy, and sociology)" (80, n. 18). Perhaps it is just nit picking to notice that this taxonomy leaves out the literary critics and theorists working in the rhetoric of science.¹⁹ But I think it is important to remark that if Gaonkar were to include literary studies in such hierarchical groupings, he would probably list it with the high status disciplines. If so, that revised list would at least qualify a bit the final point he makes in this endnote: Gaonkar claims that because the "referencing has been exclusively one sided"—with, say, low status speech communication (with its explicit rhetoricians) redescribing high status philosophy (exposing its implicit rhetoricians) and not vice versa—we can see here "the marginality of rhetoric . . . manifest institutionally." If some rhetoricians within a high prestige discipline like literary studies in English departments are arguing for the hermeneutic globalization of rhetoric, some using scientific texts and communities to make their cases, then explicit rhetorical study might not be as institutionally marginal as Gaonkar suggests in this note. And even if I am exaggerating the number and influence of explicit rhetoricians, it might still be strategically useful for such scholars throughout the academic disciplines to form coalitions so they might further the institutional cause of rhetoric more effectively across the human sciences. This is precisely why I call myself a fellow traveler with Alan Gross and others within the rhetoric of science.

But now having marked in Gaonkar's essay the disappearance of the field that examines the literary, I want to turn to the surprising reappearance of the literary in the conclusion of his reply to his critics. Here Gaonkar presents what he calls "literary hermeneutics" as a model for his own "close reading of the third kind" (351). He opposes his model to the two strategies he identifies with the approaches of the rhetoricians he has been criticizing: "In rhetorical hermeneutics, the public text is generally read either instrumentally or contextually. The instrumental reading maps the surface in terms of its strategic/purposive design; the contextual reading dissolves the surface in terms of constraints and possibilities." The "close reading of the third kind" that Gaonkar proposes "reads the surface as a layered and sedimented space, where the visible and the invisible are contiguous. Such a reading . . . refuses the readability that can be procured by erasing the text through recourse to extra-textual frames, as in the instrumental and contextual approaches"

(351). This call for “close reading” is a very recognizable rhetorical move in the disciplinary space I usually occupy: It is a call back to the text itself. Michael Leff has helped me understand why in rhetorical studies within Communication departments such a call has sometimes been necessary.²⁰ This lesson has in turn helped me to see that rhetoric might move in exactly the opposite direction in another discipline; for example, a call for rhetorical studies in literary criticism might end up meaning a focus on instrumental and contextual approaches within a framework of the reception study of specific literary texts (as in my own version of rhetorical hermeneutics²¹). Still, I am worried about the unintended consequences today of the rhetorical call back to the text for rhetorical studies, and Gaonkar’s version of this call does not reassure me.

My worry takes two forms: first, about Gaonkar’s characterization of literary hermeneutics and, second, about his untheorized acceptance of a textual/extratextual (inside/outside) dichotomy. To return to the surprise reappearance of the literary in Gaonkar’s conclusion: Gaonkar’s call for close reading, especially of the sedimented textual surface, is prefaced by a distinction he makes between the public text and the literary text. The surface of the public or oratorical text is traditionally treated as “translucent”: it can easily be read in terms of a “textual design that links the implied character with the imagined community by argument, affect, and ideology.” In contrast, the surface of the literary text is “dense and opaque. It is muddied by figuration and resists easy comprehension” (350). Gaonkar ends up suggesting that rhetorical criticism should treat the public text more like a literary text, that rhetoricians should dwell on the surface, unpack the sedimented layers of textuality.

We start to see the problem with this setup when we look at Gaonkar’s more detailed characterization of literary hermeneutics:

When faced with a literary text, the critic reads it so as to make what is opaque transparent. Here interpretation moves from complexity to simplicity. If we bracket for the moment deconstructionist interventions, the practice of literary hermeneutics is motivated, among other things, by a desire to make an opaque text legible and readable. (350)

The bracketing of deconstruction and the subsequent mention of the old New Criticism (351) are the most prominent indicators that something about Gaonkar’s characterization of literary hermeneutics is amiss here. The New Critical formalists theoretically argued for a rigorous distinction between text and context, a textual inside and contextual outside (whether the outside was authorial intention, reader’s response, or historical circumstances), and they called for a focus on the text in and of itself. Now this call back to the text in the 1940s had specific rhetorical functions within the institutional context of English Departments, and its success story in the fifties and sixties has been told many times within the discipline of literary studies.²² But after the sixties with the rise of High Theory

and later Cultural Studies, the autonomy of the literary text was increasingly challenged in theory and practice. Indeed, deconstruction names a particular tendency within critical theory that calls into question the distinction between the inside and the outside. By using an outdated formalism as an example of literary hermeneutics and by bracketing deconstructive questioning of the text/context relation, Gaonkar's defense of his reading strategy perpetuates a version of theoretical practice that I don't find useful for rhetorical hermeneutics.²³

Rhetorical analysis in practice offers humanistic studies generally a near perfect instrument at this historical moment for overcoming the now artificial distinction between textual and extra-textual interpretive approaches. Rhetoric is both inside and outside the text, and constitutive of the distinction between the two in particular historical situations of performance and criticism, production and interpretation. Rhetorical motives and purposes of speaking and writing subjects; tropes, arguments, and narratives of texts, genres, and traditions; rhetorical effects in communities and across communities: rhetorical studies offers the opportunity to treat all of these topics in a complex interpretive mixture that simultaneously calls into question easy inside/outside distinctions and opens up to the most interesting work now being done in a wide range of interdisciplinary projects (projects focused on such topics as class, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, gender, sexuality, postcoloniality, and ecology), including the trans-cultural rhetorical studies Gaonkar himself is working out. That is, I take it that such an integrated rhetorical studies could contribute significantly to a transnational cultural studies, of which Gaonkar and other editors of the journal *Public Culture* have this to say: "Our principle concern is to map and critique the material effects and articulations of an emergent transnational order, whose structure remains open to, but also resists, decipherment." Potentially, rhetorical hermeneutics would have a great deal to contribute to such a decipherment, which, the editors continue, "involves the effort to characterize this [transnational] order, its global forms, its contingent logics, and the realities of the local. Since the characterization of this order is inevitably subject to struggles between knowledges, their producers and the sites of their dissemination, we are necessarily concerned with the politics of theory" (Appadurai et al. vii-viii).

But it is precisely "the politics of theory" that is strangely elided in Gaonkar's essay and reply. Because he sees himself as focusing only on critical practice, he sees no need to discuss in detail certain epistemological and hermeneutic claims connected with the rhetoric of science.²⁴ For example, he claims that "Gross does not specify how the constructivist thesis [about scientific knowledge] links up with (or updates) [the] neo-Aristotelian critical approach he recommends" (62), and therefore Gaonkar argues further that "it is not necessary here to examine and critique Gross's constructivism in evaluating his critical performance" (80, n. 15). But such an exclusion prevents Gaonkar from taking up the way Gross's theory of rhetoric (especially its proclaimed relativism) connects up to a larger cultural politics of theory that transcends the narrowly disciplinary.

I agree with Gross that there are good disciplinary reasons “for rhetoricians to enter into philosophical quarrels concerning the epistemic status of rhetoric” (Gross x). But my additional point is that in the aftermath of the Culture Wars it is still quite important for academic intellectuals to enter into the “philosophical quarrels” within general debates over the future of higher education. The question of relativism (cultural, ethical, and epistemological) remains a critical topic within those public debates. See, for example, the complaint by contributors to an interdisciplinary collection, *Reinventing Nature?* “that certain forms of intellectual and social relativism can be just as destructive to nature as bulldozers and chain saws” (Soule and Lease iv). Or see the more recent attacks on “multicultural Leftists” who hold the view that “there is no fixed point from which to value or analyze cultures objectively. They believe, in theory, that all cultures are inherently equal, rightfully judging themselves from perspectives relative to themselves” (Kors 99). On both the Cultural Left and Right, claims and counter-claims, understandings and misunderstandings of relativism fuel public debates over intellectual movements, curricular reforms, and educational policies. To ignore the rhetoric of science’s contribution to the clarification (or even the productive confusion) of these debates seems to me to miss an important opportunity for engaging in the very politics of theory that Gaonkar seems to endorse. Rhetorical hermeneutics in science studies and elsewhere should not let this opportunity pass, no matter how cleverly or not it helps disciplines turn down the road to academic recognition and professional influence.²⁵

But mention of the old Culture Wars of the nineties brings me to the final points I want to make here at the beginning of a new decade of disciplinary and interdisciplinary development. Rhetorical studies of the twenty-first century should reexamine its history during the previous one hundred years, not only in relation to the public sphere beyond the academy but also in its institutional and professional development as an interdiscipline. As we have seen, it was early in the century just passed that the language arts within the U.S. university were artificially and, I believe, unfortunately split apart into different departments and sub-divisions of departments. The study of oral rhetoric (public speaking) was institutionally and professionally separated from the study of written rhetoric (composition and literature), as new departments of Speech were established separate from English departments and a new professional organization (National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Address) was created outside the Modern Language Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. At the same time, literary scholarship came to dominate English departments at the expense of pedagogy and composition study, both of which were often conceived as more rhetorically-oriented than either historical research or critical interpretations of literature. By the middle of the twentieth century, rhetoric as the study of the language arts found itself radically fragmented into separate disciplinary domains with faculties that did not and, for the most part, still do not talk to each other. With minimum modification, this unfortunate sorting continues: “speech criticism” into Communication departments, “literary reading” into English departments, and “writing research” into Composition programs.

This is the story I have tried to sketch in broad outline. I have not provided anything like a detailed map of the disciplinary routes traveled, but I hope I have at least suggested some of the key crossroads where opportunities were missed along the way to disciplinary separation, fragmentation, and isolation. These roads not taken led to the academic separation of written and oral rhetoric in the first quarter of the century just passed, the non-cooperation of Speech and Composition regarding communication courses at midcentury, and the continuing self-isolation of Literary Studies, Composition, and Speech Communication at the end the century, even in such fields as the rhetoric of science or the rhetoric of the disciplines more generally, areas to which all three have made contributions. One might be tempted to single out Literary Studies as being the most awe-inspiring in its total obliviousness to the work in both Composition and Speech Communication. It seems counter-productive, however, to give in to such temptations (as, alas, I have just done); far better to focus on reasons why rhetorical scholars in all three broad fields of communications/media, composition/literacy, and literary/cultural studies should come together and make common cause in promoting the research and teaching of the language arts.

A multi-disciplinary coalition of rhetoricians will help consolidate the work in written and spoken rhetoric, histories of literacies and communication technologies, and the cultural study of graphic, audio, visual, and digital media. Such consolidation can lead to more historically fine-grained analysis and more rigorous theorizing of the discursive interplay between the local and the global and of the rhetorical exchanges among and within different cultures. Re-uniting the language arts at the college level will also facilitate working more effectively with K-12 teachers, who in many schools have kept these arts together in their curricula.²⁶ And (not) finally, increased collaboration between English and Communication rhetoricians will help establish a more useful framework for refiguring the relation of what is old and new in the humanistic tradition, especially by encouraging the rethinking of various inherited oppositions: between classical traditions and postmodern discourses, between renewed aesthetic formalisms and newer socio-political critiques of culture.²⁷ Such results will lead down new roads of interdisciplinary cooperation, moving us perhaps toward still unexplored rhetorical paths of thought.

English and Comparative Literature
University of California, Irvine

Notes

¹ See, for example, the rejection of rhetoricism by one of its alleged advocates, Jacques Derrida (Derrida 156, n. 9). Cf. Gadamer's hypothetical objection from his critics: "Surely the universality of language requires the untenable metaphysical conclusion that 'everything' is only language and language event" (*Truth and Method* xxxiv).

² See Gross and Keith; Simons, "Rhetorical Hermeneutics and the Project of Globalization"; Keith, Fuller, Gross, and Leff 330-31. Gross and Keith define the globalization of rhetoric as "its extension to every instance of text, artifact, or communication" (7).

³ A disclaimer: Mine is only a very limited and narrowly circumscribed piece of rhetorical disciplinary history. For more comprehensive histories of English and of Communication, see the bibliographies in Goggin, whose introductory remarks call for more accounts interrelating the various individual disciplinary histories. Unfortunately, my focus on English and Communication, the two largest academic homes for rhetoric in the twentieth century, neglects other departmentalized disciplines such as anthropology, history, philosophy, classics, and modern languages other than English, which also include rhetoricians today.

⁴ Scott's paper "excited no comment" (according to his diary quoted in Stewart and Stewart 109) and was not published in his lifetime.

⁵ Scott's and Woolbert's contrasting attitudes toward the potential scientificity of rhetoric has as much to do with the flexibility (or vagueness) of the available scientific rhetoric as it does with the different senses of "science" assumed by Scott and Woolbert: Scott uses "science" as nearly synonymous with "professionalized academic discipline," whereas Woolbert means a particular form of that discipline, one resembling the natural sciences.

⁶ Though the earliest calls for research in Speech during the mid-teens did emphasize the behavioral sciences, especially psychology, it is also true, as Cohen points out, that the classic rhetorical tradition remained a resource for scholarship in the discipline (Cohen, "Development of Research," 289). Not only did articles on Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero get published in the *Quarterly Journal* in the late teens and early twenties, but the same journal published a heated exchange between Everett Lee Hunt, a supporter of humanistic rhetoric, and Woolbert, an important advocate of the scientific rhetoric I have been describing as most significant for the discipline's early identity formation (see Cohen, *History* 54-57). Interestingly, Plato as rhetorician again played a role in these early debates, even in exchanges among advocates who more generally agreed on behavioral science as a model for research in Speech—see Yost 120-21.

⁷ In "The Hermeneutic Relevance of Aristotle," Gadamer distinguishes the technical knowledge of method from phronesis, situated practical wisdom, "the virtue of thoughtful reflection" (*Truth and Method* 322), and he sees Aristotle's analysis of the latter to be "a kind of model of the problems of hermeneutics" (324).

⁸ Also see Gadamer, "Rhetoric and Hermeneutics."

⁹ Wykoff 21. Equally emblematic is the fact that the most detailed history of the early NSSC, which later became the International Communication Association, makes no mention of the 1947 joint SAA-NCTE meeting on communication. It does, however, note that Wesley Wiksell, one of the first NSSC vice-presidents, delivered papers at both the SAA and NCTE annual conventions in 1946 (Weaver, "History" 608). I have already mentioned another organization "crossover" at the 1947 NCTE convention, Clyde Dow, who became the first NSSC Executive Secretary (Weaver, "History" 618).

¹⁰ I have not chosen this issue of CCC arbitrarily. Sharon Crowley's *Composition in the University* recently singled out Hairston's essay in this issue as especially significant in moving composition studies along in the formation of its disciplinary identity (194-95). Crowley argues that composition needed an object of research to establish itself as an academically recognized discipline and found such an object in the composing process. Hairston's essay represents a self-conscious marking of the discipline's identity as constituted by the establishment and then the shifting of a paradigm for the field. Also see Connors 3-4; North 318; Miller 105-106.

¹¹ In an earlier essay, Emig glosses "paradigm" and "pre-paradigm" with references to Kuhn, whom she describes as "one of the central figures" in "the tacit tradition for writing and

rhetoric research.” Regarding disciplinary identities, Emig helpfully asks “What constitutes membership in a field or discipline? What do we know and do?” and then answers that knowledge of a tacit tradition “probably most securely identifies us as members.” Scholars in this tacit tradition are cited and emulated throughout the field of composition studies; “share and affirm what others in the tradition find interesting and important concerning the nature of learning and of language, especially written language”; and provide writing researchers with (at least) pre-paradigmatic theories for the discipline (Emig, “Tacit Tradition” 10).

¹² Young uses “the lens of Kuhn’s theory” to argue that in the seventies the discipline of composition “appears to be in a crisis state” (Young 39) and then recommends some needed research in the field.

¹³ For a related book-length account within Composition Studies during the eighties, see Phelps, who uses Kuhn and Gadamer in her history of “the critique of scientism” and “the rise of postmodern consciousness” (7). She argues “that the framework on which the positive directions of postmodern culture converge is an essentially rhetorical one, and as such both fits the needs of composition for a global philosophy of knowledge in relation to praxis, and also opens the way for composition to help articulate and realize this paradigm” (6).

¹⁴ See the role played by Perelman, Gadamer, and (again) especially Kuhn in accounts of the rhetoric of inquiry as an intellectual movement in the 1980s (Nelson, Megill, and McCloskey; and Simons, “Rhetoric of Inquiry”).

¹⁵ Also see Gaonkar, “Rhetoric and its Double,” 354, 361.

¹⁶ In their opening sentence, the editors of *Rhetorical Hermeneutics* provide a statement of their volume’s central question and a gloss on their title’s meaning: “Can a rhetorical hermeneutic, or way of reading texts as rhetoric, be anchored in coherent and enabling theory?” (Gross and Keith 1).

¹⁷ The reference is to Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power*, which argues for rhetorical hermeneutics as both a therapeutic critique of foundationalist accounts of interpretation and a constructive proposal for doing rhetorical histories of specific interpretive acts (15-18).

¹⁸ At other times and on many another disciplinary pathway, Gaonkar and I can be found traveling together, or rather I a little behind, from his more recent advocacy of a transnational cultural studies all the way back to his early call for a reconsideration of the Older Greek Sophists in his dissertation.

¹⁹ Scholars such as Susan Wells, trained and published in literary studies as well as rhetoric and composition; see Wells, “‘Spandrels,’ Narration, and Modernity,” and “Reading Science Rhetorically.”

²⁰ In fortuitous conversation at the book exhibit during the Eighth Biennial Conference of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric at Johns Hopkins University in September 1991; also see Leff, “Hermeneutical Rhetoric.”

²¹ See Cain, *Reconceptualizing*; and Mailloux, *Reception Histories*.

²² See, for example, Cain, *Crisis* 85-212; Graff 145-243 and Leitch 24-59. Also see Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power* 19-30, which includes a brief history of the institutional rhetoric of literary criticism within the U. S. university. This history takes up not only the role of scientific rhetoric in the academic legitimation of literary study; it also addresses an important issue that I have only noted glancingly throughout the present essay: the relation of disciplinary formation and development to the rhetorical context beyond the university, that is, the *relative* autonomy of rhetorics for disciplinary identity in relation to socio-political aspects of the broader cultural scene.

²³ In fairness to Gaonkar, I should note other places where he has been at the forefront of Communication Studies in recognizing the potential of deconstruction for rhetorical criticism; see Gaonkar, "Deconstruction and Rhetorical Analysis."

²⁴ Gaonkar writes: "I am not particularly interested in the work of those who seek to globalize or deglobalize rhetoric primarily through definitional maneuvers or philosophical speculation. . . . Critical practice, the heart of inquiry in the humanities, is neither enhanced nor defeated by such definitional extensions or exclusions" (347).

²⁵ For more on the relativism controversy in the public sphere, see Mailloux, *Reception Histories*.

²⁶ See, for example, the *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools*: "Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are not disembodied skills. Each exists in context and in relation to the others. These skills must not be taught independently of one another" (Ong vii).

²⁷ Elsewhere I have tried to outline other advantages for adopting rhetoric as central to the future of the academic humanities and social sciences; see Mailloux, "Rhetorical Pragmatism" and the last chapter of Mailloux, *Reception Histories*.

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