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Annotated Bibliography

Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism

Coms 168

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The relationship between all six articles is that they express rhetoric in one way or another. There is rhetoric in scholarship, feminist rhetoric in the Gulf War, feminist rhetoric in collages, philosophical rhetoric, rhetoric in interpersonal relationships with popular magazines, the limits of rhetoric itself, and visual rhetoric in political cartoons. Each had a common theme of gaining greater understanding in which the world we live in and the significance of meaning that are impactful to our everyday lives. Each takes a part of history to develop their arguments for a better understanding of their specific, narrow theme. Rhetoric is found in a vast matter, but not everything is rhetoric unless there is truth seeking involved.

We can find the importance of the subject to a greater extend from the story being told. We can see hegemony at play under the examination of feminist readings. Not only the difference between men and women, but among white women and women of other races and cultural backgrounds. They all share different experiences, but ultimately all the same struggle. In order to understand the intensity of seriousness we must understand that rhetoric may never have one definition answer or solution. It is an art expressed in many fashion via art, collages, magazines, oratory, political cartoons, and its studies overtime in history. Rhetoric can be found everywhere as long as there is significance to its audience and speaker. There must be a concern or relevance to the whole of a community to go beyond what is known, the common, or the norm. Understanding and being aware is the closest one can get to seek the truth and meanings to those subjects that matters.

Bryant, D.C. (1937). Quarterly Journal of Speech. *Some Problems of Scope and Method in Rhetorical Scholarship*, 23(2), pp. 182-189.

Bryant explains the importance of understanding the historical knowledge before enabling a greater understanding for rhetoric today. In order for rhetoric to be effective, there must be a share valued concerns with its audience and speakers. Bryant argues that historical study should continue to be studied, because it is the only way for rhetoric to gain credibility. He states, “rhetorical criticism will be sound only when it uses the results of historical study both in judging the past in terms of the past and in judging the past for the present” (184). Rhetorical criticism in beyond “great figures, personal gossip, and chronology” (185). Nothing can be explained to its fullness as there will always be unanswerable questions and confusions. A rhetor must narrow his choice of topic and decides what is worthy to go deeper into understanding. To understand the present and future of any situation scholars must understand the background of the situation and use already done work to establish evidences for his argument. “None is history; all are history. We must recognize them for what they are worth –for parts, for points of view; and we must struggle for proportion, for perspective…” (188). There is no real ending to any story as there will always be a future that holds new information to be examined and compared to its past.

Crenshaw, C. (1997). *Women in the Gulf War: Toward an Intersectional Feminist Rhetorical Criticism*, 8, pp. 219-235.

Crenshaw explains the importance of understanding the feminist culture of rhetorical criticism in differences in categories of race, gender, and oppression among women during the Gulf War. She states that there is more in the differences between men and women and that is a difference among a woman’s race and gender to another woman’s. How an experience of a white woman is more noticeably talked about than those who are African American or Saudi Arabian. Crenshaw elaborates the differences among women through the intersectional approach. She believes the intersectional concept of difference is a must to best grasp the theoretical and ideological commitment to equality among women. (221). There is a lack of black women’s experiences compared to a white woman’s experience known in academic or scholarly reading, writings, and media. According to Crenshaw, intersectionality is where race and gender are two different categories. She argues that the critic should define race and gender through three different intersections: structural, political, and resentational. Crenshaw points out that the in militarism world it is “centered in sexist constructions of masculinity” (225). Intersectional criticism is used to represent the difference among women promoting the intersection of oppressive ideologies. (225). The news media during the Gulf War did not only differentiate men and women, but women among other women with labeling by omitting and/or placing valuing the expectations of men and women and of different race.

Kidd, V. (1975). Quarterly Journal of Speech. *Happily Ever After and Other Relationship Styles: Advice on Interpersonal Relations in Popular Magazines, 1951-1973.* 61, pp. 31 -39.

Kidd examines the interpersonal relationship in popular magazines during the period of 1951-1973 and how it changed overtime. He explains what a rhetoric can see happens to a person and their relationship with their magazine. The magazine provides a guide to live by and expresses the norms of the time. The social relationships, motives, and qualitative impact it has on people’s lives. There are two different visions rhetoric can see. Vision I, is between the 1950s and 1960s where traditions and the unchanging happened. No one questioned the standards and its purpose was to “create an image which most closely resembled the ideal in order to have high value on the interpersonal market place” (33). There fundamental on was to make others happy. Vision II, on the other hand, began in 1966 by Henry Miller where he allowed for negotiable meanings and changing of the norms. It promoted the “magic” or “miracle” of communication. It helped realizes the “self” which “often equated with an individual’s feeling” (36). Vision I may have gave significance and security to the self, but Vision II allowed for communication, a constant movement, reassessment of values and a world of change. Kidd states, “neither vision ever confronts the awesome possibility that human separation may be unavoidable, may in fact be necessary, in some self preserving way…Togetherness is meaningless if isolation is the ultimate refuge to sanity” (39).

Morris, R. (1993). Visual Rhetoric in Political Cartoons: A Structuralist Approach, 8(3), pp. 195-210.

Morris presents visual rhetoric through structural imperatives and processes. He defines visual rhetoric as “art is a language and that the success of linguistic models is strong evidence that this metaphor should be applied to visual communication” (196). He examines the differences and composition of the metaphor and metonymy in political cartoons. Cartoonists already hold true to their social position depending on which newspaper they work for. The rhetorical imperatives consist of four conditions: adaptation, division of labor, pass on successful behaviors to newcomers, and loyalty to the group. He provides the different concepts of framework of rhetoric: Parson’s, “process of stabling goals and division of labor to attain them”, Greima’s, “set of necessary linkage between knowledge and desire, position inside and outside the group studied” (198). Essentially, all European language follows the same four common modal of verbs: *pouvior, savoir, devoir,* and *vouloir*. The process of visual rhetoric is examined through visual semiotics with “concentration on the perception of art in psychological terms” (199). The process is broken down into two categories: condensation and combination. The importance of domestication in popular art by taking something unfamiliar and making it familiar. Taking old knowledge and applying it to the present and/or future. “Political cartoons are conveyed in the content of their messages about the behavior of political leaders” (202). This can be represented through *carnivlization* and *hypercarnivalization*.

Natanson, M. (Apr55). Quarterly Journal of Speech. *The Limits of Rhetoric*, 41(2), pp. 133-139.

Natanson makes an attempt to define rhetoric from a philosophical view. He uses the ideas from the classical Aristotlelian as well as Bryants, but applies Richard Weaver’s *Ethics and Rhetoric* to help with the confusion of what the philosophy of rhetoric is. “Rhetoric is concerned with persuasion, dialectic with truth” (135). “The ultimate foundation of science and formal logic, then, rest on dialectic: logic is concerned with validity, dialectic with truth” (136). With this being said, we can see that rhetoric is logic, persuasion, and validity, whereas, dialectic stands for truth. Rhetoric cannot exist without dialectic, because dialectic provides basis of the nature of rhetoric. Rhetoric is to “bring together action and understanding into a whole that is greater than scientific perception… Rhetoric is blind, for it has no truth” (136). “Dialectic seeks the truth but conducts the search in the midst of the real world of contingency and doubt… Dialectic understood as the philosophy of rhetoric –concerns itself not with fact but with the theoretical structure that is logically prior to fact” (137). The philosophy of rhetoric and dialectic works upon their “knowledge, existence, communication, and value” (139). Rhetoric is closely related to “functional, pragmatically directed context…critique or rationale of rhetoric which inquires into the underlying assumptions, the philosophical grounds of all the elements of rhetoric. If rhetoric is bound to and founded on dialectic, and dialectic on philosophy, then the limits of rhetoric find their expression in the matrix of philosophical inquiry” (139).

Raagberg, G. (1998). Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts, 31, pp. 154-174.

Raagberg develops her position in the evolution of collage and the critical issues of the collages through arguments and counterarguments. The feminist theories in collages are found in visual modes, verbal/dance, image/word, and film. Through the examples presented they all portray messages of feminist revolution. Women of color develop multiple fragmented cultural traditions can be found in collages. Their heritage intertwines with their own lives and the political and cultural concerns. The importance of multi-cultural traditions is prevalent. The works of feminist collages portrays the breakdown of cultural representations and discourses. They seek concerns with gender issues, social, political, and cultural concerns. She states according to Sanra Harding that, “we can’t share each other’s experiences…we can share the politics” that arise from different experiences. No matter the differences in “class, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual identities, and ages” they all share the same politics of the situation. Each artist may express a different kind of collage, but they all share the same critical strategies and oppositional values.