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# The United Rhetorical States Of America: A Place For Aristotle In U.S. Citizenship

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THE UNITED RHETORICAL STATES OF AMERICA:  
A PLACE FOR ARISTOTLE IN U.S. CITIZENSHIP

being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of Fort Hays State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Science

by

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## ABSTRACT

The United States of America was founded on rhetorical justifications and has been governed through most of its history by a system designed to operate on rhetorical principles. The process depends on persuasive practices in the selection of the executives and the legislators responsible for governing. The base of this system is in the citizens responsible for electing the leaders and, ultimately, approving or rejecting the actions proposed by those leaders. Persuasive communication is a vital part of governance at every step. Citizenship in such a government is an active process. This paper argues that citizens, to be actively engaged, can and should use rhetorical principles as tools for evaluating persuasive messages. Aristotle's principles of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos* can serve the function of evaluative tools as well as persuasive tools. Rooted in human nature, these principles are as useful in America of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as in Athens 2,400 years ago. Aristotle's principles are used here to analyze an historical communication artifact, Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Union address, and an example of a modern announcement of a presidential candidacy, Ted Cruz's Liberty University speech, to demonstrate that these principles can serve evaluative purposes.

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## INTRODUCTION: RHETORIC AS CITIZENSHIP

The United States of America – 320 million people, 3.8 million square miles, the planet’s richest and most powerful country – is a rhetorical construct. The nation’s foundation is slightly more than 1,300 words that presented a series of moral and legal justifications for a rebellion that was already under way. Before the new nation had a defined citizenry or governmental structure, it had a statement of why it should exist, a statement which was, in turn, printed and distributed for the purpose of persuasion – the attempt to persuade people to join the cause. The document, regarded as the definable point of origin of the nation, has attained sacred status in the national mythology, but these two distinctly rhetorical (persuasive) purposes – justification and recruitment – were primary to its creation. The standard of rhetoric and persuasion used here is that enunciated by Aristotle in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. – *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, the three principles of persuasion by logical argument, display of character on the part of the persuader (which includes a display of good will toward the welfare of the audience, being worthy of the good will of the audience, and demonstrating competence in the argument and in the subject), and by means of appeals to appropriate emotions. These standards are at the heart of the central argument of this piece, which is that Aristotle’s principles can and should be used by the people of a rhetorical nation as an important element in determining the worth – the political and leadership value – of leaders and potential leaders and the actions they propose.

The first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, introduced by the phrase “The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,” is a single sentence that says this:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. (Declaration of Independence, 1776)

The final clause of this sentence promises that the reasons for this extreme action will be explained but, before that, the explanation itself is justified: "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation." Aristotle's three elements of persuasion are here: a display of just character ("a decent respect to the opinions of mankind") and calm rationality ("necessary to dissolve ... political bands"); a notice that logical reasons for this break will be provided; and an appeal to the almost universally understandable emotions that move people to seek "the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them."

Eleven years later, the country having gained nationhood but failed in the first attempt to construct a functioning government, the founders drew up a set of rules under which thirteen fractious, independent nation-states full of individualistic, often obstreperous people, might expect to be governed. The U.S. Constitution, like the Declaration of Independence, begins with a statement intended to persuade the people of the former colonies to cooperate in a national government:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (Constitution of the United States of America, 1787)

Here in the preamble to the Constitution are logical purposes – establishing peace and justice and providing the means to protect the country – alongside an appeal to the human emotions that could instill a desire “to form a more perfect Union” in order to “secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” The phrases “general Welfare,” “ourselves and our Posterity,” and “We the People” are heavy with good intentions and noble purpose. These are not rules being imposed from outside: “We” are agreeing among ourselves on how to proceed. The component of character that can be rendered in English as competence is indicated in the verbs “ordain and establish.” These words do not signify something ephemeral or abstract; they say that this document is a statement of process: We, working together, will create one nation out of what were essentially 13 individual countries. These two sentences, introducing their respective documents, serve the same rhetorical purpose in addition to their introductory roles: The Founders and Framers demonstrate, in Kennedy’s (1991) translation of Aristotle, “an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (p. 36). In a very real way, the first task of the proposed government was rhetorical – to persuade its people to accept it. The practical necessity of the Declaration was to persuade people to participate, or at least acquiesce, in rebellion against a king. The Constitution’s rhetorical necessity was to persuade people to replace a loose collection of individual states with a national government.

The Constitution, furthermore, presents a fundamentally rhetorical system of governance. Citizens will elect the members of a political body that will discuss and debate the actions that will take the new nation into the future. The system will require persuasion at every step: Elections to choose the legislators and executives; negotiations

between executives and lawmakers and among the lawmakers themselves to arrive at decisions; and, finally, winning cooperation from the governed. A fundamental presumption underlies the arguments of the two preambles and the government established by the Constitution: Ultimate decisions are placed in the hands of an aware, engaged and independent audience of citizens who have to be persuaded in choices of leadership and governance. In its theory, formation and function, the government of the United States is a rhetorical system – a system designed to operate through persuasion – that has lasted for more than two and a quarter centuries. The American democratic republic, and the Constitution that gives it shape, has accommodated a fitful, painful but enormous expansion in the number, racial and ethnic makeup, gender and even age of the body of citizens allowed to participate in making decisions.

The United States of the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs public and private leaders with persuasive abilities no less than in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The use of persuasion is not limited to political life, but persuasion is written into the political rules of a representative democracy – to be political is to argue, debate and persuade or be persuaded. “Politics, at its core, is about persuasion,” said Demirdogen (2010, p. 190), in a modern consideration of the Yale Communication and Attitude Change Program of the 1950s, a large-scale study of persuasion and the effects of persuasive activities. Demirdogen’s study of the Yale project and related modern scholarship led him to the conclusion that persuasion is not only central to politics, but has “a bearing on a wide spectrum of real world situations like negotiation and conflict resolution settings” (p. 198). Demirdogen’s persuasive perspective was through Aristotle. Another aspect of the importance of persuasion in politics and government is its role in public administration.

Molina and Spicer (2004) specifically related Aristotle's concepts of persuasion to public administration because it provides a way to consider competing values. Classical Aristotelian rhetoric is valuable to public administrators "because it promotes a greater self-consciousness among administrators about their own values, encouraging them to seek ways of accommodating their values to the values of others" (p. 301), which is another avenue for the character component of persuasion. Triadafilopoulos (1999), in an analysis of the public sphere of life considered from an Aristotelian rhetorical perspective, notes that "Aristotle argues that deliberative or political rhetoric should be the primary concern of citizens, because it deals with their essential interests (p. 745). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, every advance in communication technology increases the number of people involved in the public sphere, most of whom would object to being called orators and would be horrified by the term "rhetors." Yet Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many other social media as well as online and print news outlets, broadcast news and a host of individual blogs are all heavily used in political rhetoric, from people posting their own thoughts to passing along the commentary, essays and screeds of others. All of it, for good and ill, is part of the national discourse. The structure of political life in the United States includes a dismissive, even antagonistic attitude of many Americans to the idea of political speech, which is by its nature heavily persuasive. This reality indicates a need for some education in persuasion beyond the current dominant purpose, which is on the persuader, in public relations, advertising, political science, business, marketing, law and many other fields – the audiences, the targets of persuasion, also need training. The need for this kind of education is worth noting here, but anything beyond a mention is a subject for a different study.

This paper focuses on the rhetorical tools that Aristotle fashioned. Garsten (2011) addresses a key issue in considering what he identifies as a resurgence of interest by political science scholars in Aristotle's principles of persuasion. Speaking of modern democratic republics, he notes that "campaign rhetoric is often about whom to trust" (p. 175). Garsten's considerations lead him to conclude that a modern liberal democracy "puts citizens in the role of an audience tasked with watching and judging political rule from the outside rather than doing it themselves" (p. 177). Garsten's view here is too limited. It can certainly be true that for many U.S. citizens the participatory role in governance is limited to choosing, every election day, between competing candidates, and perhaps voting "yes" or "no" on particular issues. But where Garsten seems ready to attribute this to the nature of persuasion, it seems more likely that the limitation is one that such voters impose on themselves. Voting, for them, is the primary or only governing activity, and therefore they become like the consumers Garsten describes: A mayor, councilor, legislator, governor or president is essentially the same as a choice of laundry detergents.

If, however, voting is seen as the baseline, minimum duty of a citizen rather than the primary duty, casting a ballot then becomes the culmination of a process of evaluation and selection and not as an end in itself: Citizenship becomes a function rather than an act. The focus is shifted to a cognitive act of deliberation guided by rhetorical principles: What part of me is this person aiming for? Emotions? Which ones? Are the arguments logical, reasonable and believable? Does this person seem competent? Does he or she seem to know what he or she is talking about? Taken all together, what kind of character is on display here? Does this person seem trustworthy in both motive and competence?

How far can I trust this person? What does this say about where they want to take us?

Who-to-trust now has another dimension in addition to personal appeal. Do I trust this person's vision? Do I want to go where he or she wants to lead? This process constitutes engaged or active citizenship.

The nature of rhetoric is unchanged from Aristotle's time until ours. Rationality and logic and the emotions as intellectual, abstract concepts are now what they were then. The defining characteristics are different, but the ideas are the same. In daily life, people use logical arguments; consciously and unconsciously, they make appeals based on emotions; and they are careful to present themselves as people of a certain kind of character, which comprises notions of both good intent and competence. People use these techniques whether or not they think of them in Aristotle's Greek terms or in the equivalent English abstractions, or even if they recognize the name "Aristotle."

Techniques of persuasion are used for all sorts of mundane purposes – explaining why a meeting Tuesday night is necessary, or why your office should be moved to include a window. In America, civic leaders and the citizens who select and follow them extend persuasive speech and their awareness of it into the political sphere. In this realm, politicians attempt to sell themselves and their programs to the voting public.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how a set of evaluative rhetorical principles could function. These principles are rooted in the types of "available means of persuasion" identified by Aristotle. His name and his work are still known because human nature has not changed, and his observations of how that nature acts and is acted upon are still valid. Although the study of the techniques of persuasion has been used primarily to train persuaders, these same techniques can also be used as tools to

understand the process of persuasion and evaluate persuaders. Aristotle's principles will serve as a lens to analyze two particular examples of political speech, one historical and one current, and demonstrate how *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*, as formulated in the *Rhetoric*, can be used as instruments of evaluation.

**Method:**

This study was conducted through a review of the academic literature, primarily but not exclusively since 2000, in three areas: Aristotle's *Rhetoric* from a communication perspective; on the place of rhetoric in general and Aristotle's principles in particular in modern American politics; and on Lincoln's political speeches and rhetoric (with a focus mainly on the Cooper Union Address). Lincoln was selected because of the special rhetorical place he occupies in American history. His Cooper Union address, delivered at New York City's Cooper Union hall on Feb. 27, 1860, was chosen as the particular object of analysis because it is regarded as one of the key events that led to his presidency. For the object of current political speech, a contemporary Republican candidate for the presidential nomination, Ted Cruz, was selected for analysis. For much of the race for his party's nomination, Cruz was in a position roughly analogous to Lincoln's at the time of his Cooper Union address, that is, a second-tier Republican candidate looking to break out. Cruz also enjoys a reputation as a debater, in college and in politics, which puts his knowledge of rhetorical principles and practical use of them at a level of development and experience very similar to Lincoln's, and he has actively applied them to an identical purpose – a quest for the presidency of the United States. A third similarity is that both men waged campaigns for the U.S. Senate, in Cruz's case successfully. The Cruz speech chosen for analysis was his announcement speech at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va.,

on March 23, 2015. Each was evaluated using *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* as the evaluative instruments. To begin, what did the speaker identify as the paramount challenge or danger facing the nation, and in presenting the challenge, which kind of appeal was he making? How much of each speech was devoted to reason and logic? How much effort was devoted to emotional appeals? Which emotions were targeted? How were they targeted?

The demonstration at the core of this paper suggests that the principles themselves are not difficult to apply, involving things common to human communication and requiring mainly that a person be aware that these kinds of questions should be asked. In a nation founded on a rhetorical justification and built to operate on citizen involvement in a rhetorical process, this kind of evaluation should be a basic skill.

## PERSPECTIVES ON ARISTOTLE

Sellars (2006) addresses some of different uses of the word “rhetoric” in the course of a brief (one page) essay that ends with a statement of the need for the practice of rhetoric in the original Aristotelian meaning:

“Today, rhetoric is mostly taught in instrumentalized and commodified form; the counterpart to the urgent critique of instrumentality (how to do things with words) and commodification (how to make money with things), though, is the equally urgent resistance to pseudo-literacy, illiteracy, and language death around the world. Rhetoric is always already struggle, and the stakes are high even when that struggle appears internal to readers unfamiliar with its history.” (p. 59)

Sellars thus presents rhetoric as antidote. His essay begins where he says that the study of rhetoric in the West begins, with Aristotle, whose first sentence in the *Rhetoric* opens up rhetoric for use by anyone. Sellars’ preferred translation is Kennedy’s (1991), in which Aristotle introduces his subject by pointing out that it and its counterpart, dialectic, “are concerned with such things as are, to a certain extent, within the knowledge of all people and belong to no separately defined science” (p. 28-29). Sellars stresses Aristotle’s insight that “all people” use rhetoric and dialectic to challenge and make arguments and attack and defend their positions. The elements of persuasion being as the ancient Greek says, available to all people, are practical and useful in any of a multitude of human contexts. Rhetoric is an essential social function.

Sellars (2006), whose essay is a paean to the necessity of rhetoric, includes an indictment of language that uses false reasoning and cheap emotions to sell political positions, candidates or consumer goods, even though these things are also in the nature of rhetoric. Sellars emphasizes the importance of “context,” introduced in the *Rhetoric* in the definition of rhetoric: “an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means

of persuasion” (Kennedy, 1991, p. 36). “Context is paramount,” says Sellars; “there is no rhetoric without context.” The tools of argument – for deliberation, attack and defense, to urge action or argue against it, to raise people up or put them down, to be just or unjust, to seek good or evil – are therefore available not only to everyone, but are also available in every conceivable situation, a consideration which Sellars says is the reason that there should be no mystery as to why rhetoric has been viewed from the beginning with “suspicion and hostility.” Sellars ends his defense of rhetoric with a statement of its supreme importance, but he began with rhetoric’s primary benefit: It “teaches one how to begin, even or precisely when beginning seems impossible,” which is another way of saying that rhetoric is a way of teaching people to think, in 2006 or 2016 no less than in 330 B.C.E. or 1860.

The idea of rhetoric as a means of teaching people how to think is a good place from which to launch into a review of recent literature on Aristotle’s principles of persuasion. The literature is arranged according to its perspective on its subject or its application to it. Not included is literature on using the *Rhetoric* in the service of narrowly focused special interests, such as campaigns for specific political issues or products, or the fairly extensive literature that seeks to make a historical or linguistic case over what Aristotle may have meant by certain words. Also not included is literature that attempts to discern the influences in Aristotle’s personal historical context that may have shaped his thought.

### **Style and arrangement**

Gross and Dascal (2001) mine the *Rhetoric* for the raw material “to construct from the text a consistent theory of persuasion with inference as its base” (p. 276). They

proceed through the three types of proofs asserted by Aristotle, explaining how each is inherently dependent on inference, either directly from the speaker, as in the enthymeme of *logos*, in which the missing premise or premises is or are supplied by the audience. In *ethos*, the speaker, following Aristotle, attempts to create in the audience an assumption, or inference, of the speaker's technical capability and virtue. In *pathos*, the speaker stirs the audience to an emotional reaction by creating in them an inference, or a feeling, of enmity or insult on the part of the opponent and a feeling of good will toward the speaker. Style and arrangement, they argue, are also inferential in nature. In the *Rhetoric*, the inference of style comes through tropes (or figures of speech) and schemes (grammatical constructions such as parallelism) (p. 285). Arrangement is not inferential in itself, but serves the purpose through "controlling audience attentiveness" and by reinforcing "preferred patterns of inference" (p. 286). Arrangement becomes part of the argument by, for instance, attempting to create in the conclusion an inference in the audience that the expectations established in the introduction have been met. Gross and Dascal are not trying to explain persuasion or how it works, but to begin the work of crafting their own theory of rhetoric based on inference "within an Aristotelian framework" (p. 288-289).

Bruss and Graff (2005) analyze the effect of style on the element of character. They make two key points. One is that the *Rhetoric's* approach to style is negative: The speaker should pay attention to style only so that he or she can avoid making an issue of it. A "conspicuous or inappropriate style will arouse the audience's suspicion of the speaker" (p. 63). The second point, however, is that style does have positive value, just not much of it. They note two instructions in the *Rhetoric*: Speak in a certain way so that the speech has "a certain quality," and remember that "the selection of the right words is

a crucial consideration” (p. 51). Bruss and Graff ultimately conclude that style did have some importance for Aristotle, under the heading of character, but that his thinking on the subject was “underdeveloped” (p. 39). Their work could actually fit within a Gross and Dascal (2001) framework of inference. Bruss and Graff discuss style as “a certain quality” and “the right words” (p. 51) depend on an indirect, or inferential effect, in that the words a speaker chooses and the way he or she speaks, and not just what the speaker says, contribute to the opinion the audience forms of the speaker’s character.

### **Vision and emotion**

Hawhee (2011) is an example of the literature of “vision” in Aristotle. She searches Aristotle and the literature on him to find “rhetoric’s role in sense perception and the importance of developing a rhetorical style that infuses words with perceivable movement and life, with visualizable action. . . . Put most simply, through rhetorical vision, words come to life” (p. 141). Her purpose is to explore “the importance of visual capacity, that which aligns with what contemporary neuroscientists call *mental imagery* [emphasis in original], and what Aristotle called *phantasia*” (p. 141). She searches down through the centuries for a theory of rhetorical vision, beginning with Aristotle and continuing through his successors. Her description of the purpose and use of “rhetorical vision” reads like an exposition of style, but her description of its importance, “rhetorical vision resides in short bursts of language, in vivid turns of phrase, in lively and lifelike metaphors” (p. 159), is an illustration of language used to excite the passions.

### **Personhood and social relevance**

Brinton (1990) takes issue with the idea that because Aristotle was an ancient Greek, addressing ancient Greeks about ways to address topics of interest to ancient

Greeks, he has nothing to offer modern society. This view is a natural reflection of a modern Western perception of a culture that practiced slavery and viewed testimony gained through torture as a legitimate source of evidence (p. 205). Nevertheless, the very antiquity of Aristotle's insights makes them useful. Brinton emphasizes that rhetorical practice is inevitably bound up in its time and place, and modern rhetorical theorists and their students can learn much more from Aristotle than from "any particular theoretical artifacts produced by our contemporaries" (p. 207). Brinton's reasoning is that we are too close to our own situations to evaluate the effectiveness of modern theories.

Brinton (1990) also addresses objections that focus on elements of other theoretical bases. "Rhetorical theorists have from the beginning had important connections with other kinds of theoretical frameworks – most conspicuously with psychological and ethical theories" (p. 207). Rhetoric – deliberative, ceremonial, judicial or merely entertaining – deals with human beings interacting with each other and with external forces. Human nature, whether it is called soul or spirit or something else, is involved. Considerations such as these lead Brinton to two conclusions regarding a modern utility for the rhetoric of the ancients. One is that the works of Aristotle, Cicero and others on "technical rhetoric (the *practice* [emphasis in original] of rhetoric)" were produced by human beings in response to rhetorical situations of their time (p. 215). Thus, while many of the engineering practices of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. are of limited modern use except as historical mysteries or curiosities, the practice of rhetoric is still very relevant. The details of modern society are vastly different, but the resulting rhetorical situations must be dealt with in identical fashion, through persuasion operating on the bases of human interaction – reason, emotion, and trying to find the answer to

“Who do I trust?” Similar assumptions about the immutability of human nature support Brinton’s second conclusion as to the modern relevance of ancient rhetorical principles: “at least some of them are written by unusually astute and perceptive observers of human nature” (p. 215).

Tindale (2011) seeks support in Aristotle for argumentation theory. His thesis is based not only on argumentation as a social enterprise, but also as the essence of personhood. “Giving and receiving reasons – being argumentative beings” is a necessary activity to “becoming full persons” (p. 385). In this one statement he defines both argumentation and person. As in the work of Demirdogen (2010), Molina and Spicer (2004), and Triadafilopoulos (1999), discussed earlier, the rhetorical link from ancient to modern humanity, and by extension to human society, is clear.

### **Situation**

Frobish (2003) emphasizes situation as the locus of the efficacy of *ethos* in the speaker. Using a comparison of the differing nature of personal character and reputation in *The Illiad* and the *Rhetoric*, he investigates whether Aristotle’s concept of character has its origins in Homer. The primary similarity is in the differing characters of three human ages – youth, the prime of life, and old age. Both Homer and Aristotle seem to have a similar understanding (p. 28). But the salience to a modern understanding of persuasion is in the primary difference Frobish notes in the two concepts of character. That difference is between the speaker’s history – his character as revealed in the actions in his past – and the appearance of character during the speech. For Homer and for the Greeks of the period about which Homer wrote, character and credibility are based on whether a man was brave or cowardly. Did he stand up for his city? Was he a good

warrior? Was he successful? For Aristotle, character is revealed in the exercise of persuasion, “one’s character is a perception, which depends upon an audience’s moral judgment of one’s abilities, which could vary from one interaction to the next” (p. 27). The character necessary to establish credibility for Aristotle’s persuasive purpose is all in the moment of the speech act and involves whether the speaker presents himself as a capable speaker, addresses the audience appropriately to its age and station, and deals appropriately with the subject under discussion. Personal history is irrelevant.

If this were Aristotle’s reality – the speaker’s personal history being irrelevant – it would be a radical difference from the modern American context, in which personal history is a key factor in selecting particular persons to deliver certain messages. In this reality, former basketball star Michael Jordan can earn substantial money for endorsing a particular brand of underwear, and former U.S. senator and presidential candidate Fred Thompson, after his political career, was paid to serve as a spokesman for reverse mortgages. Trading on personal history is also important for politicians seeking office (What is their history in public service, business or the military?). One does not have to believe that Aristotle’s concept of character reflected the actuality of the time rather than the presentation of an ideal. Human nature would again prevail. A certain amount of accomplishment would have to be present for a man to be allowed to speak in the halls of ancient Athenian government, and his accomplishments would have to be known to the gatekeepers. In modern American language, someone can’t just walk in off the street and declare him or herself to be a candidate for the U.S. presidency. It may be constitutionally allowable and abstractly possible, but unless a record of some sort of success or fame is present – and recognized – the cameras and microphones will not show up to make the

candidacy a reality. Modern American reality adds to but does not replace Aristotle's point about character: The speaker must present a certain character, one that entails both the presentation of the man or woman as a certain kind of person (trustworthy and reliable) *and* a demonstration of competence. "Character," says Aristotle, "is almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion" (Kennedy, 1991, p. 38).

Another "situation" for which rhetoric and Aristotle have been found useful is in the hard sciences. Wickman (2012) explores the usefulness of rhetoric in the scientific process. With the examples of a chemist, an experimental physicist and a theoretical physicist, he uses the physical techniques – the art, the craft: *techne* – and makes the case that a rhetoric is necessary to extend the understanding of the science and explore the possibilities between and beyond the individual scientists and scientific accomplishments. Rhetoric is necessary to the dissemination of the raw knowledge and the science. Explaining the limits of technique and craft, he notes that the "transformation of limits" applies to speech as well as "scientific practice," and he concludes, "I would argue that the scientist's *techne* involves a capacity – something akin to a *dunamis* – to extend his or her work beyond the boundaries of actuality and into the realm of possibility" (p. 38). He is talking here, indicated by *dunamis*, about the power, perhaps even something approaching the miraculous, in the scientist's work. He is explicit in stating that a rhetorical component is necessary in order to achieve the miraculous effect. The knowledge, the technique and the findings must be communicated, and the implication is of the persuasive aspect of communication. Rhetoric "would highlight the work performed by scientists and thus what we can do to incorporate that understanding into our own scholarly practices" (p. 38). "Highlighting" clearly includes a persuasive

component. Rhetoric does not just transmit information, it presents information with an assertive subtext: This is important, this is why, and this is why you should believe me and support the science. Rhetoric is needed here to take the results of hard science and make them relevant in the socio-cultural context in which many hard legislative decisions are made, including, among many other things, whether, and which, hard sciences get government funding.

### **Misuses of rhetoric**

O'Shaughnessy (2007) begins with a lament, "A generation ago, it was still possible to speak of the sovereignty of reason" (p. 109), and then proceeds with an exposition on the ways in which rhetoric is routinely misused in the service of public relations and politics. First, he identifies a "centralization" of the role of public relations in modern business, a centralization which is part of the "major cultural phenomenon of our time, the movement in consumption from function to identity definition" (p. 110): We are what we buy. He is speaking of consumer goods, but the principle can also apply to politics (as noted in Garsten, 2011). The rhetorical result is that public relations and business, willingly or not, "are actually in the propaganda game" (p. 111). He identifies four primary means through which rhetoric is misused: emotion, to bypass rationality; subversion, which offers new interpretations for old values and realities; fantasy, through which people are led into helping to create an alternate reality; and myth, through which entire cultures are created (p. 111-112).

### **Education**

Dimock, Browne and Dimock (2011) begin with "teaching the controversy," created as a way to get controversial "cultural and political" subjects – racism in

*Huckleberry Finn*, for instance – into the classroom (p. 504). “Teaching the controversy” later became a tool to give a scientific basis to cultural arguments such as intelligent design and climate change denial. In this use, the technique is a way to bypass the science of evolution and climatology but create the illusion that the argument is nonetheless being conducted on scientific ground. “Teach the controversy” thus becomes a “topic,” a commonplace in Aristotelian terms (p. 505). As such, any particular controversy carries with it a preset stock of assumptions for a particular audience. “With respect to ‘teaching the controversy,’ there is a defined community which is capable of providing the necessary assumptions and which has accepted the value judgments which connect the reasons with the arguers’ conclusions” (p. 506). Dimock et al. take a lesson from the late journalist and commentator Christopher Hitchens: “ ‘Why not,’ he asked, ‘make school children study the history of the argument?’ ” (p. 510). In this way, Dimock et al. conclude, the students learn to “evaluate evidence, weigh arguments, assess credibility of sources and develop other knowledge” (p. 510). Throughout, the authors make it clear that the arguments for which this tool has been pressed into service are not legitimate, and the purpose of argumentation scholars is not to give legitimacy to them. However, “these arguments are real, they are in the public sphere, and it is important that students understand and can assess these arguments” which, furthermore, “provide rich source material for the study of modes of argument” and a host of other approaches, tools and considerations of argument (p. 510).

Dimock, Browne and Dimock (2011) argue that teaching the controversy began as a legitimate way to explore controversies before being subverted for use as a way to give legitimacy to specious propositions. By teaching the history of the controversy, students

would have to grapple with how the subject became controversial, and in the process students would have to deconstruct, and evaluate, the rhetorical logic by which, say, teaching religion in public schools became a debate over whether “intelligent design” is science or religion. Dimock et al. do not explicitly address the nature of arguments based in character and emotion, but these elements inhabit the subjects they address. Intelligent design is fraught with the deep emotion of religious faith. The rhetoric of climate change denial is based on two assumptions, each of which is an aspect of character: One is the presumption that believers in man-made climate change have ulterior motives in promoting such nonsense, and the other is that the science is not valid, and therefore the practitioners of the science are incompetent.

### **Argumentation**

Searching out the literature on or related to the *Rhetoric* reveals a substantial body of work on argumentation theory. Rapp and Wagner (2013) find in Aristotle the beginnings of a theory of argumentation, which they collect from Aristotle’s *Topics*, the *Rhetoric* and *Sophistical Refutations*. Rapp and Wagner make a direct connection between Aristotle, argumentation and persuasion, stating in the abstract: “Aristotle presents complementary aspects of a theory of sound arguments that are seen as the most effective means of persuasion” (p. 7). The conceptual core of their findings in the various texts is “a coherent and self-contained approach that combines a realistic view of what people actually do when the [sic] dispute, argue, or try to persuade others with the normative emphasis of how people should construct and present sound arguments” (p. 29). Rapp and Wagner’s work on argumentation theory places primary weight on the logic component of Aristotle’s persuasive principles.

## **Political science**

Rhetoric's reputation in modern Western democracies is so bad, according to Kane and Patapan (2010), that leaders have to practice a special kind of speech that they call "The Artless Art." The dilemma Kane and Patapan discern is this: Public discussion, debate and persuasion are necessary, and "rhetoric is absolutely central. Yet, democratic citizens tend to be deeply suspicious of political rhetoric," a suspicion based in the perception that the speech of politicians is either meaningless and deceitful or intended to "subvert legitimate democratic institutions and processes" (p. 372). Their thesis is that in "all" popular-sovereignty democracies, leaders have developed "a unique form of rhetoric, an art of artless persuasion that necessarily presents itself as un-rhetorical, marking a concession to the authority of the sovereign people" (p. 372). The issue for Kane and Patapan is rooted in an Aristotelian concept that political speech cannot depend only on logical argument. The reason is that elements of character in the speaker and the proclivities of the audience depend on appeals to the passions in to create in the audience trust for the speaker. Kane and Patapan offer another take on the same phenomenon addressed by Bruss and Graff (2005), who addressed the issue of style by noting that Aristotle advocated paying attention to style only to avoid an overdone or inappropriate style. Kane and Patapan, however, are asserting a deliberate effort at deception by "all" leaders of democratic nations. This seems on its face overstated. They cite no data and, in fact, the real question may be whether the word "data" can be applied. What could possibly be counted to arrive at a number of instances of "artless art"? Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence is strong. Anyone who has watched even a modest amount of political speech in the media has seen instances where someone adopted a folksy, common style

of speech or dress. Instances of poor technique imply other instances of good technique that could have gone unnoticed. In the inventory of rhetorical technique used as evaluative tools, this would certainly come under the *ethos* heading, in the compartment called competence as well as the one that involves virtue.

Abizadeh (2002) develops “an account of practical reason” (p. 267) from an analysis of Aristotle’s concepts of *ethos* (primarily in its aspect of competence – *phronesis*) and *pathos*. Character and the emotions are necessary complements to practical reason in order to arrive at a practical deliberative process that can result in reasonably good decisions. Abizadeh’s purpose is overcoming the primary danger that he asserts Aristotle saw in democratic forms of government: The danger of deception on the part of a speaker, a ruler, a deliberative body or an audience. The speaker “might be able to deceive the audience about not just his own real *ethos* but the *ethos* embodied in the speech and so persuade in a way contrary to ethics and right reason” (p. 291).

In the same way, the audience, through its own character and emotional predilection, determine what kinds of argument will be persuasive. “The problem with the unvirtuous crowd is that a popular leader (*demagogos*) can persuade it via flattery” (Abizadeh, 2002, p. 291). “If rhetoric is not ethical, then it fails to contribute to the proper ends of the polis” (p. 292). Abizadeh proposes two solutions to the dilemma, one institutional and the other based on addressing “the virtues of the deliberators” (p. 295). The institutional approach involves such things as “placing institutional constraints on the types of discourse that enjoy legitimacy in political deliberative settings” (p. 295). The example he gives of this approach is the kind of restraints placed on speech in courtrooms. The non-institutional approach is based on the premise that virtue can be

instilled in deliberators by what he calls a “*phronetic* leader” (p. 295) – a leader who combines virtue with competence. “If democracy is committed to the universal participation of all citizens in the political process, then Aristotle’s critique makes the virtues a central component of citizenship and points to the fundamental importance of education in political life” (p. 295), an education not only in civics but also in ethics. The kind of education envisioned by Abizadeh appears to be opposite to an educational component that would teach citizens how to use rhetorical tools to evaluate rhetoric. He seems to be advocating an education that would train leaders and deliberators to lead by rhetoric.

## 1860: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AT COOPER UNION

The literature on Lincoln's rhetoric is primarily from historical scholarship, concerned more with ways, means, motives and outcomes than theory, Aristotelian or otherwise. Not all scholars go as far as Holzer (2005, 2010) and claim that Lincoln's Cooper Union Address gained Lincoln the presidency, but a clear consensus is that it was a key turning point in his quest for the Republican Party nomination in the 1860 presidential election. Holzer (2010), an admirer, makes the point that, as the title says, it was "The Speech that Made the Man." The essay is a recreation of the night of the speech and Lincoln's performance, a description of the historical context, and an assessment of its impact on the audience. This speech, Lincoln's "first speech in the big city," was a risk, and as Holzer reconstructs it from accounts of the time, Lincoln's appearance did not at first impress the audience (a quarter of the seats were empty) and neither did his first words, rendered by contemporary accounts as "Mr. Cheerman." By the end, however, the audience was thoroughly his, and Lincoln was on the way to the presidency.

For Field (2011), the genius of Lincoln's leadership is embodied in one aspect of his political speech: "His frequent, fascinating employment of the first-person plural represents a novel, meaningful, and self-conscious masterstroke in leadership" (p. 69). Lincoln's use of "we" in his speeches and writings reveals his view of the American people and his attitude toward them and what they needed to do during the time of his presidency. Field's entire focus is Lincoln's use of "we." In Aristotelian terms, this is another indication of rhetorical character building, establishing empathy with the audience ("We are all in this together.") Field combs through *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* and finds: Lincoln used "we" 12,000 times; "I," by contrast, appears

only once in the Second Inaugural and “not at all” in the Gettysburg Address; and Lincoln “often” resorts “to tortured syntax and impersonal constructions to obviate the need for the first-person singular” (p. 51). Inclusive language was a way of, first, bringing Union Americans together to elect a Union government, not just Lincoln, but an administration, and, second, holding them together in a great undertaking. Field does not agree with Holzer (2010) that the Cooper Union Address “made Abraham Lincoln president,” but notes the enormous impact it had on his audience and quotes a New York editor that “Lincoln ‘made an army of friends at once’ ” with the Cooper Union speech (p. 56).

Zaesky (2010) focused on the “silences” in the Temperance Address. Lincoln was invited to speak at a huge public event designed to promote the temperance movement and celebrate the birthday of the greatest of the founding fathers, George Washington, but he spoke only briefly and indirectly about temperance and Washington. “Lincoln neglected not only mention of the occasion – Washington’s birthday – but also the expected message – condemnation of drinking alcohol” (p. 391). Zaesky attributed these silences to the fact that “he neither opposed the consumption of alcohol, nor did he believe that to command another person was an effective rhetorical tactic” (p. 400), but in the larger sense he was an opponent of fanaticism generally, which he believed “menaced reason and ultimately freedom” (p. 401). This applied to the abolitionist movement as well as to the temperance movement, and his major concern was an interest in “rationality and restraint” in public talk about the major issues of the day. Those two qualities are also evident in the Cooper Union Address.

Zarefsky (2010), offered an explication of a speech in which Lincoln, in modern language, went negative. In the House Divided speech in the 1858 campaign for the U.S. Senate against Stephen Douglas, Lincoln made three points: one, that the nation would shortly be all-slave or all free, and that all-slave was a real possibility; two, that the incumbent Senator Douglas was part of a conspiracy to ensure that the choice would be all-slave; and three, whether or not Douglas was part of a conspiracy, he would be a powerless partner in helping Republicans prevent the expansion of slavery, “‘caged and toothless,’ impotent to help” (p. 443). The outcome was that the House Divided speech hardened a public view in Illinois that Lincoln was “a dangerous radical” and cost him the election (p. 446). Zarefsky’s case, presented in a close examination of the political context of the time and the actual rhetoric of the speech, is that despite the damage this speech inflicted on Lincoln’s electoral prospects in the senatorial election of 1858, the ultimate success of the House Divided speech was in establishing a presumption of a “tendency” toward slavery, in that “it was in that speech that focused on the slavery controversy not so much on immediate concerns as on long-term tendencies, and it was Lincoln’s deployment of the conspiracy argument that enabled him to do that” (p. 448).

Kauffeld and May (2005) conducted an analysis of Lincoln’s Cooper Union Address in terms of “incitement” and “exhortation.” They concur overall in a view of the Cooper Union Address “as the rhetorical foundation for Lincoln’s candidacy for the Presidency,” but they viewed the speech as a shining example of exhortation, exemplifying “the essential means and pragmatic nature of exhortation,” closing in a powerful “statement of resolve, enjoining his addressees to do their duty and oppose the spread of slavery into the National Territories” (p. 321). They also note that, while

exhortation is positive inspiration, “resolve can also be strengthened by inciting negative passions” (p. 322). At Cooper Union, Lincoln played on the negative emotions, among other ways, by portraying the South as “implacably committed to the spread and perpetuation of slavery and willing to rupture the Union to achieve that end,” thereby appealing to fear and anger (p. 322). Kauffeld and May’s analysis of Lincoln’s work, like most others, is not conducted in Aristotelian terms, but their discussion of the emotions involved in positive and negative exhortation is understandable in those terms, and this provides additional emphasis for the general applicability of Aristotle’s precepts.

Sorenson (2008) argues that Lincoln’s appeal as a leader was not manipulation of language, but use of language that revealed the nature of his being – *ethos*. Lincoln’s essence was an unselfish man of superior character and concern for the people for whom he felt a responsibility, which was the people of the United States. Sorenson’s perspective is not that of a rhetorical scholar, and his analysis is therefore not conducted in terms of Aristotelian or any other rhetorical theory. Sorenson’s perspective is from the experience of having been a speechwriter and a special counselor to President John F. Kennedy. “And finally,” Sorenson concludes, “he had the root of the matter in him. The presidents greatest in speechcraft are almost all the greatest in statecraft also – because speeches are not just words. They present ideas, directions and values, and the best speeches are those that get those right.” (Abizadeh (2002) could have used this description as a definition for his “*phronetic* leader” who leads through rhetoric.) For Sorenson, poetic language was part of Lincoln’s nature, but the larger part was that Lincoln had within him “the root of the matter,” by which he means “ideas, directions and values.” His analysis of Lincoln’s rhetoric is that “Lincoln avoided the fancy and artificial” but used “the rhetorical devices

that the rest of us speechwriters do,” citing specifically the literary devices of alliteration, rhyme, repetition, contrast and balance.

### **The address**

A discussion of Lincoln’s Cooper Union Address from the perspective of persuasive speech should begin with the recognition that the primary persuasive purposes were to advance the political causes of the new Republican Party and of Abraham Lincoln himself (Holzer, 2005, p. xix). The intent was not to change anyone’s mind on slavery. The intent was to establish himself as the champion of the prevailing policy and attitude of moderate Republicans. The first and longest part, more than 3,500 of more than 7,700 total words, is addressed to the president of the Cooper Union and the citizens of New York. In the second part, more than 3,100 words, Lincoln speaks directly to southerners. The concluding third part is directed explicitly to Republicans and is the shortest at slightly more than a thousand words. Counts are derived from a Microsoft Word version of the html text of “Cooper Union Address” (2015). Through all three sections, Lincoln uses all the types of proofs asserted by Aristotle as the modes of persuasion, even though, as noted by Wilson (2006), Lincoln most likely had little or no direct experience with Aristotle’s work on rhetoric. Lincoln “uses” inartistic proof (evidence) and “invents” artistic proofs, as Kennedy (1991, p. 37) translates Aristotle’s *atechnic* and *entechnic*. Lincoln’s “inventions” in the three kinds of artistic proofs include the two aspects of character (*ethos*) – technical expertise and virtue – and, under the emotions, *pathos*, he demonstrates and earns good will and at appropriate moments rouses emotions proper to the subject and occasion.

In the first section, Lincoln uses his painstakingly researched history (an “inartistic” proof) of the 39 framers of the U.S. Constitution to construct a logical case that, in Kennedy’s (1991) translation, seems “to show something” (p. 37), which is what would today be called circumstantial evidence. Hard evidence would be direct statements from at least some of the 39 framers that expanding slavery was forbidden. Lincoln’s work contradicts his former rival for the U.S. Senate, Stephen A. Douglas, and all others who asserted a constitutional right to expand slavery into the territories based on the premise that the federal government had no constitutional authority to regulate slavery there. Lincoln builds his argument step by step. He spent months researching the legislative history, as far as it could be determined, from before and after the Constitutional Convention, of each of the 39 framers. He recites their votes on various measures in which the expansion of slavery was an issue, as either the main or a lesser included issue. In almost all cases, the votes in question had the effect of denying the right to expand slavery beyond the states and territories where it then existed.

However, Lincoln’s inartistic proofs are not without art. He begins, for example, by agreeing with his opponents. He references a speech from the previous fall in which Douglas claimed that the founders never intended to limit slavery. Lincoln quotes Douglas’s justification for that claim: “Our fathers, when they framed the Government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now.” Lincoln’s next words are, “I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse” (Holzer, 2005, p. 252). The text of the speech in the appendix to Holzer, based on an edition of the address published shortly after the event and which was edited and approved by Lincoln himself, has a notation of “applause” at this point. With this –

before he has formally introduced the “question” to which Douglas referred – Lincoln turns Douglas’s words into a rhetorical weapon. With various forms of “the framers understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now,” often to applause or cheers, he punctuates point after point, each one based on a “seeming” proof that, contrary to Douglas’s assertion, the framers, out of their greater knowledge of the subject, fully intended that the federal government should have the authority to regulate slavery in the territories. In making his logical case, Lincoln uses art – invention – to do several things in addition to presenting evidence. These additional purposes all fit within an Aristotelian framework. In each instance, the repetition reminds members of the audience that not only are their opinions valid, Douglas’s are wrong. The way Lincoln builds his argument demonstrates his technical expertise – he is knowledgeable of the relevant history, understands it and can apply it to the argument of the moment. The repetition pleases the audience and disposes it favorably toward Lincoln.

Another point relates to Aristotle’s notion of *enthymeme*. “And all [speakers] produce logical persuasion by means of paradigms and enthymemes and by nothing other than these” (Kennedy, 1991, p. 40). Lincoln introduces “this question” when he first quotes Douglas. As previously noted, he has not yet said what he will be talking about. The audience obviously knows what the subject will be, since it applauds Lincoln when he says “I fully indorse this, and I adopt this as a text.” The *enthymeme* in Aristotle is a key to logical argument. It is a shortened syllogism, with one or more premises missing. In dialectic, which is a back-and-forth to arrive at a conclusion, the full syllogism, with all premises leading to the conclusion, are included. But in rhetoric – persuasive speech – one or more is missing because it could get too lengthy and, anyway, the audience

supplies the missing piece out of its own knowledge and understanding. One more reason for using *enthymeme*, according to Aristotle, is that *enthymeme* “is concerned with the sort of things we debate . . . and among such listeners as are not able to see many things all together or to reason from a distant starting point” (Kennedy, 1991, p. 41). Lincoln’s first statement on topic is to agree with his opponent. The audience knows the extent of what Lincoln is saying. His listeners can fill in a long chain of reasoning that they have absorbed from the political situation and discussion or intuited from their pre-existing perspectives. The audience already knows the subject is slavery and knows what Douglas has said about the founding fathers and slavery. The audience supplies the missing links and makes the immediate connection between the literal truth of Douglas’s words – the fathers did know better – and the end to which their beliefs led them: Douglas was wrong about what the fathers intended. The audience approves with their applause (Holzer, 2005, p. 252). One of Aristotle’s statements on the power of *enthymemes* comes in a contrast with paradigm: “Speeches using paradigms are not less persuasive, but those with enthymemes excite more favorable audience reaction” (Kennedy, 1991, p. 41). Lincoln, whether or not he ever learned about *enthymeme* by name, used it effectively here and used it over and over, often to applause.

By the time Lincoln begins his final statements in this portion, he has demonstrated a mastery of logical argument and a comprehensive knowledge of the history and legal considerations involved. He has presented his arguments in an artful way that is in complete accord with the experience and beliefs of his audience. He has earned their approbation, which means he has also earned their trust, and he has caused the audience to be well disposed toward him. He has succeeded in both kinds of

argument, technical and artful. He has made his case, as well, in all three areas of persuasion that Aristotle deems important to the persuasive process – *logos*, using the facts and apparent facts logically; *ethos* in presenting himself believably as an honorable man arguing with knowledge and skill for an honorable result in a matter of public import; and *pathos* in earning the audience’s good feeling toward him simply in the way he has used facts, near facts (circumstantial evidence), logic and art. He has not only earned good will from the audience, he has shown good will toward the audience and toward his opponents. He has disputed their arguments forcefully but respectfully. Even the weapon he has taken from Sen. Douglas – “our fathers, who understood this question better than us” – is wielded gracefully, in such a way that perhaps even Senator Douglas himself could not take offense at the manner of its use. But at the conclusion of this first part, having used Douglas’s justification (the founders) as a hammer to demolish Douglas’s argument logically, Lincoln now uses the founders as a character weapon:

If any man at this day sincerely believes that a proper division of local from federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the federal territories, he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others, who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief that “our fathers who framed the Government under which we live” were of the same opinion – thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. [*Applause.*] (Holzer, 2005, p. 266)

Here, too, the attack, though open, is measured, logical and stated in fair-minded terms:

“If this, fair enough, but if that, then foul.”

In the remaining two sections of the speech, he demonstrates the same command of character, expertise, logic, art and, ultimately, good will. In his address to southerners, he begins with a joke at their expense: “And now, if they would listen – as I suppose they

will not – I would address a few words to the Southern people. [*Laughter.*]" (Holzer, 2005, p. 267). Thereafter he is direct and blunt about where he believes they are wrong in their arguments and attitudes, his demeanor at times scornful and dismissive. The audience, as indicated by the *Tribune* notations, is appreciative. Toward the end, he shows that he can handle paradigm as well as *enthymeme*. The South, he says, charges that if war comes, it will be the North's fault for not giving the South what it demands. "That is cool. [*Great laughter.*] A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth, 'Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer!' [*Continued laughter.*]" (Holzer, p. 280).

The overall purpose of this section of the speech is emotional, although the method, here as in the first section, uses all "available means of persuasion." He demonstrates, logically, the lack of logic in the arguments of the South, presents a forthright character in charging them with it, and in the process solidifies the audience's approval of his own character while at the same time instilling in his listeners a feeling of injustice at the unreasonable demands of their opponents. Yet Lincoln does not breathe fire, and he does not seek to create anger or hatred, further cementing his "character" as a peacemaker, not a warmonger. Lincoln makes the primary case for himself as a serious contender for the Republican nomination for president in his concluding words to Republicans. He begins by presenting all the reasons why the task of reaching an agreement with the South is nearly impossible:

The question recurs, what will satisfy them? Simply this: We must not only let them alone, but we must somehow, convince them that we do let them alone. ... These natural, and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery *wrong*, and join them in calling it *right*. ... Holding, as they do, that slavery is morally right, and socially elevating, they cannot cease to

demand a full national recognition of it, as a legal right, and a social blessing. [*Applause.*]

Nor can we justifiably withhold this, on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. (Holzer, 2005, p. 280-282)

Despite this, his conclusion is that slavery can be left as it is, “wrong as we think slavery is ... because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation” (Holzer, p. 283). Here again is a demonstration of moderation, of bowing to cruel necessity rather than rigidly adhering to a dogma that would guarantee war.

Lincoln’s personal ambition for this address was to put himself in the front rank of candidates for the 1860 Republican presidential nomination. Content was part of the rhetorical situation, and the message he needed to deliver played into notions of his trustworthiness and competence. To meet these requirements, he needed to present himself as reasonable, to show the radical abolitionists and other kinds of hardliners that he appreciated as much as they the evil of slavery but at the same time remind them that to advocate abolishing slavery all at once would create its own evil, requiring at a minimum enormous social and economic upheaval and, most likely, war. A demonstration of reasonableness in content here is part of the image of character and competence he has built over the course of his speech. So also is the show of strength in the rest of that paragraph. It is a statement of resolve that, whatever may come, Republicans must not compromise their most important principles: Above all, the Union must stand, and slavery must not be allowed to expand into the territories, all of which leads to that famous last sentence, printed in all caps in Lincoln’s authorized edition and reproduced in Holzer: “LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT” (p. 284).

“Right makes might” has become famous. The sentiment expressed is not capable of logical proof but is certainly part of the character-building aspect of Lincoln’s rhetoric and is also a direct emotional appeal to the audience’s feelings of duty to a noble cause. The restraint in that call to action is remarkable. This hour-and-a-half speech is on a matter that all present recognized involved nothing less than a conflict between good and evil with national survival at stake. Yet the final exhortation is not a strident howl to rise up and wipe the enemy off the face of the earth, nor does draw a line in the sand. It is, in fact, rather vague as to actual action. “Dare to do our duty as we understand it” leaves a great deal of room to work out specifics; it holds out hope for a reasonable conclusion yet is full of resolve if the worst happens. As a persuasive closing, it is altogether Aristotelian as limned in the *Rhetoric* – a rational and restrained but direct presentation on a dire situation appealing to the appropriate civic virtues and emotions. Over the more than 150 years since Lincoln spoke these words, this speech has come down to us as the epitome of eloquent political speech from a good man engaged in a heroic undertaking. The 1860 audience is recorded as loving it: “[’Three rousing cheers were given to the orator – *The New York Times*; the *Evening Post* reported a standing ovation, with “the waving of handkerchiefs and hats, and repeated cheers.” ’]” (Holzer, p. 284). It fits the definition Aristotle gives of rhetoric, the “ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (Kennedy, 1991, p. 36).

## 2016: TED CRUZ AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Sen. Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, chose Liberty University, a private, politically active, evangelical Christian university, as the location of the speech in which he announced his candidacy for the Republican Party's presidential nomination for 2016. His speech was about 30 minutes. Two references for the speech are included here, Cruz (2015a), from *Vital Speeches of the Day*, for textual accuracy and its availability of page numbers for citations, and a transcript published in *The Washington Post*, (Cruz, 2015b), which included notations of applause and other interjections from the audience. Cruz, in his choice of location, how he identifies his subject, and the composition of his speech, appealed entirely to the emotions of his audience.

His appeals begin with the first two sentences after the opening thank-yous. "I am thrilled to join you today at the largest Christian university in the world. Today I want to talk with you about the promise of America" (Cruz, 2015a, p. 152). These sentences signal the themes that are important to him – his religious faith, a subject with inherent emotional weight, and his topic, an abstraction stated in an emotional phrase, "the promise of America." The body of the speech, which begins immediately after the statement of topic, is divided into four parts. The first three are analogous to Aristotle's divisions, respectively, of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*, but all three arguments are constructed from emotional materials laid on a foundation provided by the verb "imagine." The fourth and concluding section is the call to action, and it too is issued in the emotional language of Christian faith and patriotism.

Cruz's presentation of character comes through his family biography. The first sentence is "Imagine your parents when they were children" (Cruz, 2015a, p. 152; all

citations are from this page until otherwise designated). The “imagine” that begins the next sentence introduces a loving biography of his mother from her childhood in Delaware through Cruz’s own early years. His father’s struggles as a teen rebel against right-wing Cuban dictator Fulgencio Bautista are introduced with another “imagine”; another begins a brief history of his father’s travel to America and his early struggles; and another opens the story of sin and redemption covering the early years of the marriage of Cruz’s parents: The father’s abandonment of his wife and the young Cruz, the father’s subsequent conversion to evangelical Christianity, his return to wife and child and the blessings of God that followed that conversion. The closing paragraph of the father’s biography is Ted Cruz’s personal testimony to the reality of faith and “the transformative love of Jesus Christ.” “Imagine” also begins the biography of Cruz’s wife, the child of missionaries in Africa, who became a successful businesswoman and mother to two girls. Cruz’s own biography is the object of the final “imagine” in this section, the seventh, which takes him from a teenager in Houston listening to his father’s stories of “prison and torture in Cuba, hearing stories about how fragile liberty is,” through his own studies of the Constitution and his parents’ bankruptcy during the 1980s’ crash of the oil market. The bankruptcy story leads into the story of how the young Ted Cruz got through college by working two jobs and obtaining more than \$100,000 in student loans, “loans I suspect a lot of ya’ll can relate to, loans that I’ll point out I just paid off a few years ago” (Cruz, 2015a, p. 152-153).

This character section indicates competence and dedication on Cruz’s part, primarily in his description of his education (his study of the U.S. Constitution), what he had to do to get that education (work two jobs and borrow more than \$100,000), and his

perseverance in paying off those loans. The senator's biography, rendered in third person, occupies the final three paragraphs of the biographical section, and these paragraphs have strong emotional content: He was a thousand miles from home, in the midst of strangers, "alone and scared." Most of the biographical weight of the character argument is borne by other people – his parents and their backgrounds, their motivations, the challenges they faced and how they faced them, their failures and successes. The admiration and respect the audience feels for Cruz at the end of this exposition comes through his parents and wife, is reflected off them onto him – we admire him because of the people who produced him and because he gives them much of the credit for his own success. Aristotelian artistry is evident in Cruz's distance from the center of the story, including the third-person voice of his personal story ("Imagine another teenage boy ...", p. 152). This distance allows him to present his good character indirectly, without seeming boastful.

A primary marker of emotional appeal in this section, as in the others, is the "imagine" device – the audience is explicitly invited seven times to "imagine" itself in these circumstances, to feel what the members of Cruz's family and Cruz himself were feeling at different stages in their lives, to feel the pride and accomplishment in going from extremely humble beginnings to success. An invitation for the listener to imagine being in the speaker's shoes has no purpose unless to activate the emotions of empathy and sympathy, to position the listener on the speaker's side. The biographical section portrays a character that the audience can trust and admire, and Cruz accomplishes this rhetorical task by operating primarily and openly on several emotional levels.

So too with the next section, the *logos*, in which, having established his character, Cruz lays out a rationale for where he wants to take the nation and why his audience should want to go there. (Quotations from this section, unless otherwise designated, come from Cruz, 2015a, p. 153). This rationale is expressed in a series of conclusions introduced, 24 times, by “imagine.” In some cases the premise is stated: “Instead of small businesses going out of business in record numbers, imagine small businesses growing and prospering”; “Instead of a government that seizes your e-mails and your cell phones, imagine a federal government that protected the privacy rights of every American.” In others, the conclusion is stated but the premise is left for the audience to fill in: “Imagine abolishing the IRS”: With the premise, the statement would be, “The IRS is damaging the country, therefore the IRS should be abolished.” This section has 17 arguments on matters of governmental policy, the conclusions to which are introduced with the “imagine” device. In order, the topics are: the economy, which gets three arguments, including the small business example above; energy self-sufficiency; Obamacare gets two, one addressing the damage attributed to it, the other addressing its repeal; the IRS example above is preceded by another that advocates a flat tax; immigration gets two, one on President Obama’s executive order and another promising a new, fair policy; the Second Amendment is addressed in one; privacy rights are in another; education is addressed in two, one advocating repeal of Common Core followed by a call to make school choice “the civil rights issue of the next generation”; relations with Israel’s prime minister; and the penultimate premise, that President Obama is using “the United Nations to end-run Congress and the American people,” is followed by imagining a president (Cruz, 2015a, p. 153-154) who will be faithful to the Constitution and will not allow Iran

to acquire nuclear weapons. The final argument in this section is “Imagine a president who says ‘We will stand up and defeat radical Islamic terrorism ... and we will call it by its name’” (Cruz, 2015a, p. 154) The unstated premise is that the current president either does not say this or says the opposite. The construction of the sentence allows the listener to “imagine” either possibility. [Note: Both transcripts use ellipses in this section as a grammatical device to indicate a pause. The video of the complete address, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8f3DsoMotU>, shows that no material is omitted where Cruz (2015a) or Cruz (2015b) have ellipses.]

Notations in *The Washington Post* transcript, Cruz (2015b), show applause more than 30 times during Cruz’s *logos* arguments, including after the final statement: “We will defend the United States of America,” which comes after an imagined President Cruz shows proper respect to the prime minister of Israel. The audience approved Cruz’s introduction to his “imagine” statements on Obamacare (“Five years ago today, the president signed Obamacare into law”) with a “boo.” When Cruz said, “Imagine a president who seeks to go to the United Nations to end-run Congress and the American people,” Cruz (2015b) indicates a member of the audience interjecting “That’s horrible.” Cruz obviously enlisted the audience in his presentation.

The primary assertions in this large middle section – on issues of governance – would seem to be appropriate topics for logical argument, and are presented in the enthymeme form that Aristotle puts in the *logos* category. However, three aspects of the rhetorical construction of this section put the majority of the persuasive weight on the emotions rather than on considerations based on evidence and logic. First are the introductory paragraphs, which immediately set up a fearful condition and puts that

emotional state in another emotional context, religion: “And yet,” he begins, “for so many Americans, the promise of America seems more and more distant” (Cruz, 2015a, p. 153). In the next sentences he defines the “promise of America,” which he has previously identified as his primary topic, as coming from “God Almighty. (APPLAUSE)” (Cruz, 2015b). A few paragraphs later, Cruz makes fear explicit: “And yet, so many fear that that promise is today unattainable. So many fear it is slipping away from our hands” (Cruz, 2015a, p. 153). He turns to an appeal to historical emotion: “I want to talk to you this morning about reigniting the promise of America,” then notes that on “this very day” 240 years ago Patrick Henry spoke a hundred miles away in Richmond (p. 153). Cruz uses Henry’s words in an overtly emotional launch of the “imagine” *logos* section arguments: “Give me liberty or give me death (APPLAUSE)” (Cruz, 2015b). A call to rhetorical arms immediately follows that statement: “I want to ask each of you to imagine, imagine millions of courageous conservatives, all across America, rising up together to say in unison ‘we demand our liberty’ ” (Cruz, 2015a, p. 153).

The “imagine” that begins that statement, the first in the *logos* section, illustrates the second factor that makes this section much more emotional than rational and logical. “Imagine” potentially contains great emotional power. Here, at the beginning of his exposition on why we should trust his vision of governing, the audience is primed with a reference to the revolutionary adventure that began the United States and then is invited to imagine itself participating in that adventure. Imagination bridges the 240-year gap and makes standing up for conservative values, and for Ted Cruz, the moral and emotional equivalent of having participated in the events of 1776. Imagination serves a similar emotional purpose in the series of statements that follow. The listeners are urged to

imagine the details of how the enumerated evils of Obamacare operate and then imagine, for instance, all the ways that a President Cruz would make “health insurance personal and portable and affordable.” Candidate Cruz, standing in front of them, can thus engender a feeling of hope in an audience that subscribes to the same premises he does without having to acknowledge any potential complications. The selection of the audience is part of this particular rhetorical situation and part of this speaker’s persuasive content. Their approbation becomes another component of the emotional message.

The third emotional factor is the extension of the religious frame that has been present since the opening remarks, since, in fact, the selection of Liberty University as the site of the announcement, which was itself a significant part of the rhetorical situation, in terms of both symbolism and audience. The biographical portion of the address depends heavily on religious faith and evangelical conversion. The *logos* portion of the speech, the governmental, policy portion, begun with a definition of the American promise in terms of religious faith, contains four appeals to religious faith and religious issues in addition to the public policy examples cited earlier. The second appeal in this section, after the call to support conservative values, is explicitly religious: “Imagine instead millions of people of faith all across America coming out to the polls and voting our values” (Cruz, 2015a, p. 153). Two of the “imagine” arguments address religious issues. One, which constitutes a counter to Obamacare in addition to the earlier, purely policy objections, involves the government’s court cases with Hobby Lobby, Little Sisters of the Poor and Liberty University itself. In an additional education argument, Cruz explicitly extends the civil rights umbrella to Christian schools as well as public, private and home schools.

Section three is Cruz's formal *pathos* – an appeal to the uplifting emotions available through the history of American patriotism, sacrifice, suffering and hope. Here, Cruz's "imagine" offers a contrast to the problems the nation faces in 2016 with the problems faced by the founding generations. "Imagine it's 1776 and we were watching the 54 [sic] signers of the Declaration of Independence . . . . Imagine it was 1777 and we were watching General Washington as he lost battle, after battle, after battle . . . . Imagine it's 1933 and we were listening to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt . . ." (Cruz, 2015a; ellipses here indicate omitted material). This section also uses the emotions of religious faith. After the audience's participation in the final imagined historical American accomplishment, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Cruz says, "That would have seemed unimaginable, and yet, with the grace of God, that's exactly what happened" (p. 154).

In the final segment, the call to action, the appeal to religious belief is most concentrated. The call opens, "If you're ready to join a grass-roots army across this nation, coming together and standing for liberty" (Cruz, 2015a, p. 154). A few sentences later he says, "God's blessing has been on America from the very beginning of this nation, and I believe God isn't done with America yet" and, in the penultimate paragraph, he says that the fight to save the American promise and defend American liberty will come not from Washington but "from men and women, from people of faith, from lovers of liberty, from people who respect the constitution" (p. 154). His closing sentence turns Cruz's candidacy into a religious mission: "We will get back and restore that shining city on a hill that is the United States of America. (APPLAUSE)" (Cruz, 2015b).

Cruz has his immediate audience, as Lincoln had his, firmly on his side. As a rhetorical event, the Liberty University speech was as much a success as Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Union speech.

## CONCLUSION: THE IDEAL VS. ASPIRATION

If evaluating persuasive messages stops with what has been presented so far – evaluating rhetorical events – then its usefulness ends with producing a description of what the speaker accomplished and how, and based solely on the presentation and the situation, an assessment of what the speaker wanted to accomplish. Conducting this kind of analysis on two or more rhetorical events and putting them side by side creates the appearance of setting up a competition. Competition is not the intent, nor is it establishing Lincoln as a standard against which to measure Cruz or anyone else. Putting Cooper Union next to Liberty University is to compare two different kinds of presentations with the aim of demonstrating how Aristotle’s principles of persuasion can be used to evaluate speech events and to suggest that this kind of evaluation should be considered a primary duty of engaged citizenship.

The rhetorical climate in 1860 was very different from 2016. Candidates were expected to make themselves known through speaking about issues of the day as well as on special occasions. Their speeches were expected to be long and densely reasoned and to show some style. Lincoln, for his coming out on the main national stage, selected the opportunity to speak at a forum designed to give speakers of some reputation an opportunity to display their worth. For the politically ambitious, this was a method of gaining recognition with the people who would select the candidate. The decision-makers were not voters as we know them, and the route to nomination was rhetorically indirect. Cooper Union was not an announcement speech. It was an audition. In the process of today, a candidate is expected to make some sort of formal announcement – a Twitter

feed a, Facebook post, a news show, or an event designed for the express purpose of announcing a candidacy. Senator Cruz's speech was such an announcement.

The historical and situational distance between them is even greater than the rhetorical distance. Lincoln's America faced the threat of civil war. Cruz has identified the great danger facing the next president as a collection of economic, political and spiritual challenges that he has grouped under the heading "the promise of America." These two rhetorical events were selected in part specifically because of this distance, to reduce the risk of personal bias contaminating the purpose of this study. What these speeches do share, however, separated though they are by time, custom, history and political practice, is a set of operating persuasive principles, the same ones identified by Aristotle 25 centuries ago as the communicative techniques people use to persuade each other to cooperate in, debate and decide on various civic functions and duties.

Lincoln's address has been judged by history as not only a great speech but also as a pivotal historical moment. History has not yet had time to evaluate Cruz's announcement. Considered as speech types, with different, contemporary speakers in a different context, it is possible to see how an alert, engaged, educated citizen might be able to determine that one speaker uses mainly a logical approach and another speaker relies almost totally on various emotional appeals. The speaker's assessment of the situation could also be evaluated, as could his potential knowledge of the audience: This person knows, because I am here, that I am probably predisposed to this rationale. Is this person using that unfairly? One listener might conclude that speaker A's near total dependence on the emotions and lack of anything like evidence or reasoning indicates ulterior motives. Another listener might just as reasonably decide that Speaker B's

presentation, full of numbers and logic but lacking in emotional content is a sign of a lack of empathy and judgment. Without tools, these kinds of considerations are available only through intuition. With evaluative tools, citizens, ideally, could consider the evidence and make deliberate decisions on leadership and governance. Aristotle has provided the tools.

Mercier and Sperber (2011), in the paper where they develop their theory of argumentation, call this kind of evaluation “epistemic vigilance,” evaluating the “communicator and the content of their messages in order to filter communicated information” (p. 60). However, speakers often make arguments only “to confirm their own claim” and receivers operate on “the absence of reasoning,” which “is to be expected when people already hold some belief on the basis of perception, memory, or intuitive inference” (p. 63). Receivers also operate on the basis of selective exposure, seeking information and opinion only from sources that reinforce their pre-existing beliefs. The extent of selective exposure is still debated, but in the widely varied and almost universally available American media landscape of 2016, a multitude of possibilities are available to limit message intake to fit preconceptions. Stroud (2010), studying national assessment data, concluded that selective exposure is one factor that leads to political polarization. She was ambivalent on whether it is harmful or not, but she proposed that a countervailing benefit is that selective exposure may lead to more political participation. “The trick,” she says, “is to devise ways to counteract any detrimental effects of partisan selective exposure while encouraging the beneficial effects” by “balancing forces that pull people apart (e.g., partisan selective exposure and polarization) with forces that pull people together (e.g. shared media experiences)” (p. 571-572). Stroud’s trick sounds highly speculative. Active, engaged citizenship, or “epistemic vigilance,” practiced

universally, would be ideal. In non-ideal reality, many people vote on the basis of shallow or frivolous considerations; many people don't vote at all; political polarization is regarded as serious enough to be worthy of academic study; the foolish and the corrupt are occasionally elected to office; public resources are sometimes expended to no good purpose. This reality, given the constancy of human nature, is permanent.

Aristotle's principles of rhetoric used as evaluative skills are the foundation of vigilant rhetorical citizenship in a rhetorical republican democracy. A working knowledge of the tools creates the ability to recognize the communicative techniques being used in a given situation and with recognition comes the ability to separate "good" messages from "bad," honorable speakers from the dishonorable, and leaders from incompetents or worse. A corollary to the idea of engaged citizenship is that citizens should be educated in the tools of evaluation and how to use them, which, as previously noted, is properly the subject for a different study, but the core proposition remains: Applying one's intellect to measure the worth of those who would lead is a duty of citizenship. the fact that an ideal level of participation is unattainable does not lessen the fact of "duty." If the duty is an "ideal" concept, it is aspirationally ideal, in the way that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are ideal. In a nation founded on rhetorical justifications and governed through rhetorical practice, where the stated, enshrined statement of national intent to "to form a more perfect Union, " a working knowledge of rhetoric is – and should be treated as – a logical and necessary part of citizenship, "ideal" or not.

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