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## The window, the mirror, and the stone: A reassessment of the roles of mimesis and opsis in critical theory

Andrea J Hanson  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

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**Hanson, Andrea J., M.A.**

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1992**

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THE WINDOW, THE MIRROR, AND THE STONE:  
A REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLES  
OF MIMESIS AND OPSIS  
IN CRITICAL THEORY

by

Andrea J. Hanson

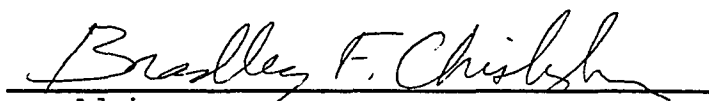
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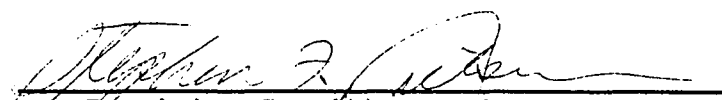
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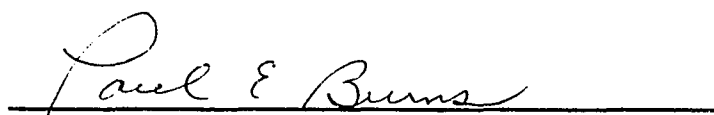
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The thesis of Andrea J. Hanson is approved:

  
Advisor

  
Examining Committee Member

  
Examining Committee Member

  
Graduate Faculty Representative

  
Graduate Dean

University of Nevada,  
Las Vegas

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis develops three interpretive classifications based on mimetic and opsitic verbal structures. First, the classification of the "window" is described. Second, the aspects of the "mirror" are discussed and illustrated. Third, the features of the "stone" are analyzed and clarified.

The theoretical description of mimetic discourse is based on M. H. Abrams' pivotal book on romantic literature, The Mirror and the Lamp. Abrams' description of mimetic verbal structures and how they fit within his classifications is discussed as a starting point for this thesis. From this point, this thesis expands upon his critical classifications for mimetic literature and adds an additional classification to deal with opsitic verbal structures, namely the "stone."

The "window" is shown to include discourse that depicts the world or universe in an objective manner. The function of this discourse is to present a "reality" for its audience that guides and instructs. Examples of discourse in this classification come from the areas of literature, documentary film, and television.

Next the classification of the "mirror" is discussed, showing the function of this discourse is to achieve persuasion through the process of "identification." This is achieved by the reflection of the author or the individual, whereby the audience identifies with the reflected individual. Examples of this classification are drawn from

film, music, and literature.

The final classification of the "stone" is shown to be that discourse that defies traditional methods of interpretation due to its opaque qualities. The levels of difficulty found within particular discourse are delineated in addition to the lack of authorial presence that would allow identification to take place in this discourse. Once again, the examples are drawn from classical literature, music, and poetry.

Finally, the concept of historicity is discussed as an intersection between the classifications. As in any interpretive process, the subjectivity of the interpreter comes into play. The concept of historicity addresses how subjectivity affects these classifications and how different discourses may be interpreted.

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family and friends whose love, encouragement, and moral support helped me through times when I felt frustrated and discouraged.

I am indebted to Dr. Michael McGuire for the time and encouragement he gave me over the last four years. Without his confidence in my abilities, I would have settled for much less in my academic endeavors.

THE WINDOW, THE MIRROR, AND THE STONE:  
A REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLES OF MIMESIS AND OPSIS  
IN CRITICAL THEORY  
TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT . . . . .	iii
DEDICATION . . . . .	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Rationale for Study . . . . .	5
Methodology of Study . . . . .	9
Structure of Study . . . . .	11
II. RELEVANCE OF THESE CATEGORIES TO RHETORICAL THEORY AND CRITICISM . . . . .	14
Narrative Example . . . . .	15
Presence and Persuasive Power . . . . .	18
Identification . . . . .	20
Context Theorem of Meaning . . . . .	27
Summary . . . . .	31
III. A WINDOW ON THE WORLD . . . . .	32
The Question of Reality . . . . .	35
Window on the World . . . . .	37
Window as Historical Chronicle . . . . .	43
Summary . . . . .	47
IV. THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS . . . . .	49
The Second Persona . . . . .	50
Ideology in Mirror . . . . .	53
Discourse Examples . . . . .	56
Summary . . . . .	66

	Page
CHAPTER	
V. THE STONE . . . . .	67
Authorial Presence . . . . .	68
Levels of Difficulty . . . . .	71
Subuniverses of Meaning . . . . .	79
Summary . . . . .	81
VI. INTERSECTIONS: SUMMARIES, CONNECTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS . . . . .	84
The Problem of Perception . . . . .	85
The Problem of Meaning . . . . .	88
Narrative Connections . . . . .	90
Implications . . . . .	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	96

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Ever since the appearance in 1953 of M. H. Abrams' The Mirror and the Lamp, interest has built in theory of criticism around the concepts of mimetic and opsitic verbal structures. Theorists have acknowledged both the imitative function of discourse that pleases and delights the audience as well as the emotive function of discourse that persuades through the evocation of emotions.

Mimesis is a Greek term that means essentially an "imitation" of aspects of the universe or world and has its foundation in the writings of Plato. Further elaboration was contributed by Aristotle in the Poetics where the term implies that a work of art is constructed according to prior models in the nature of things and that the objects the imitator represents are actions.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, mimesis expanded to include the imitation of human character, thought, or inanimate objects. Plainly

<sup>1</sup>  
Aristotle, Poetics, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Modern Library, 1954) 1447a, 16-18.

speaking, mimetic art is that which imitates some aspect of nature through visual or verbal structures. A holograph is probably the most mimetic medium--a three dimensional representation of something. Herman Melville's poem "Shiloh" is mimetic, vividly depicting this Civil War battlefield. We may infer from these examples that imitation suggests a relationship of correspondence between two items.

Opsitic verbal structures are representations of things as they ought to be or appearance. Opsis is a Greek term that means roughly "visionary" and Northrop Frye defines it as "the spectacular or visible aspect of drama; the ideally visible or pictorial aspect of other literature."<sup>2</sup> Art that is opsitic does not try to imitate nature or reality, but transforms it into some vision the artist has. Opsitic art characteristically combines sensation and reflection, the use of an object to generate a mental activity that is related to it. The Vietnam Memorial is an example of opsitic art that is both inspirational and an emotional experience. In literature, Mary Shelley's monster in Frankenstein is an example of opsitic art, conjuring emotions of fear and awe.

M. H. Abrams' view is that literature falls under two distinct interpretive classifications that are characterized metaphorically by the "mirror" and the "lamp." His book "identifies two common and antithetic metaphors of mind, one comparing the mind to a reflector of external objects, the other a radiant projector which makes a contribution to the

objects it perceives."<sup>3</sup> Abrams' "mirror" describes a tendency of discourse to try to reflect society or nature in an objective manner. The discourse is an imitation or representation of what the artist perceives the world to be like. Since a mirror is only capable of reflecting what is presented from a single direction, the metaphor of the "lamp" was developed to demonstrate the reflected world that is bathed in the emotional light of the artist's projection. Abrams' "lamp" describes art wherein nature or society is illuminated by the author--an expression of the artist coming from the depths of the soul.<sup>4</sup> Analogies are used to exemplify this type of art, likening the author to a fountain from which the emotions pour forth to bathe the world in its emotional light. This classification encompasses "romantic" art like that of Coleridge or Wordsworth, Poe or Emerson.

Using Abrams' critical classifications as a starting point, this thesis will argue that linguistically rendered art has not two but three interpretive classifications. This thesis advances the following classifications: the window, the mirror, and the stone. Although a chapter will be devoted to each different classification, a brief introduction to each will prepare the reader for the discussions that follow.

Abrams used the metaphor of the "mirror" to identify

<sup>3</sup> M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) p. ii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

mimetic art. Although a mirror reflects what is seen in nature, a mirror's depiction is always backward, and so significantly in error, as if the product of a shaping perspective, not a neutral or objective one. In contrast, I will argue in what follows, a window is a better analogy for the perspective of mimetic discourse. Sinclair Lewis' novels are representative of this type of discourse as are Frederick Wiseman's films.

The "mirror" has been chosen to represent discourse that reflects the author or audience as opposed to Abrams' "lamp." Abrams himself quotes Oscar Wilde "It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors."<sup>5</sup> The metaphor of the "lamp" was used to describe discourse that is illumined by the author, whereas, it is actually mirroring the author's perspective, presenting discourse that is subjective versus the objectivity of the "window," a simulacrum of some thing. By simulacrum I refer to discourse that represents an image of an object rather than an accurate depiction of that same thing. The novels of Dostoevsky, the films of Oliver Stone, or the musical lyrics of Bruce Springsteen fall within this critical classification.

Finally, the stone takes Abrams' work one step further and addresses that discourse that neither reflects nor offers a worldview in language. This discourse is identified by language that is opaque and appears to take the position of "art for art's sake." This position assumes that art does

not communicate ideas, but exists solely for the pleasure of the moment, our experience and reaction to it.<sup>6</sup> The "stone" refers to such pioneering works as the poetry of Rimbaud and Roethke, or the fiction of Nietzsche.

While the examples given so far have all been narrative, these selections are not intended to preclude the possibility of applying the categories to other linguistic artifacts. Some of the analyses to follow in this discussion will show the relevance of the categories to such things as scientific writing, argumentative political speeches, and lyrical free associationist poetry.

### Rationale

Interest in theories of art, especially verbal arts, can be traced to the times of Ancient Greece, making its first recorded appearance in the dialogues of Plato. Mimesis is discussed in the Republic as impersonation and imitation of objects and circumstances of the actual world.<sup>7</sup> In Book III, he uses mimesis to signify imitation in the much wider sense of the copying of reality by means of literature and visual arts. Socrates discusses the arts claiming that all are imitations, focusing on the world of Appearance and not of

<sup>6</sup>  
Kristen Thompson, Breaking the Glass Armour (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>  
Plato, The Republic, translated by Francis MacDonald Cornford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945) Book X, Chapter XXXV, p. 328. Richard Weaver makes similar observations, especially in The Ethics of Rhetoric, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953). He advocates a rhetoric that is preoccupied with a moral-philosophical emphasis following Plato's lead in the "Phaedrus."

Essence. The corpus of Plato's dialogues provide constructive views of poets and poetry, making distinctions<sup>8</sup> between epic poetry, lyrical poetry, and dramatic poetry. For instance, he speaks of the truest tragedy as that which represents the best and noblest type of life in The Laws (817). In The Republic (387, 605) and the Phaedrus (268) he discusses pity and fear as those emotions most awakened by tragedy.

Aristotle continues the inquiry into mimetic art in the Poetics, expanding on Plato's definitions of the kinds of poetry. The first three chapters discuss poetry as a mode of imitation covered under three headings: 1) the manner of poetic imitation, how the poet represents the object for imitation be it narrative or characterization, or mixed, 2) the object for imitation, that is, the types of men and activities that are imitated, and 3) the medium of imitation, which differentiates the various poetic genres, such as epic and drama, tragedy, and comedy. Aristotle claims that imitation is natural to man from childhood and that it is<sup>9</sup> also natural to delight in works of imitation. The Poetics is a critical system that presents the critic with an arsenal of instruments for the analysis of poetic forms, "an eminently empirical approach that observes and appraises works of art in terms of their forms, possibilities, and

<sup>8</sup>  
T. S. Dorsch, "Introduction," in Classical Literary Criticism (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1967) p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>  
Aristotle, Poetics, translated by Ingram Bywater (New York: The Modern Library, 1984) 1448b5.

<sup>10</sup>  
effects."

A. W. Staub and G. P. Mohrmann argue that the interrelationships between the areas of linguistic communication have been sorely ignored because of the traditional belief in the mutually exclusive categories of rhetoric and poetic. Herbert Wilchens' principle of "immediate effectiveness" has been cited as the criterion for maintaining the distinction between rhetoric and poetic. Poets also compose for immediate effect, their poetry is a communication to a specific audience.<sup>11</sup> Staubb and Mohrmann show that rhetoric can be adequately understood only through poetic, just as poetic can be totally understood only through rhetoric. They contend that rather than viewing these as separate entities, "rhetoric and poetic exist solely because of their relationship to each other, and not in spite of it. To put it positively, rhetoric and poetic constitute a single common ground."<sup>12</sup>

Staub and Mohrmann assert that what Aristotle desired from rhetoric was an art which focused on the product and the consumers of that product. They also show that poetic does what Aristotle wanted from rhetoric; it concentrates on the

<sup>10</sup>  
John Gassner, "Aristotelian Literary Criticism," Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951) p. xxxix.

<sup>11</sup>  
A. W. Staub and G. P. Mohrmann, "Rhetoric and Poetic: A New Critique," The Southern Speech Journal, 28 (1962) 132.

<sup>12</sup>  
"Rhetoric and Poetic: A New Critique," p. 132. Staub and Mohrmann argue for a third category to be included in their "New Critique", that of logic, creating a rhetoric-poetic-logic triplet, that is not addressed in this thesis.

product and then the audience. Aristotle described the same appeals in the Poetics, where drama is described in terms of man (ethos), passing through a reversal which brings recognition (logos), and leads to a scene of suffering or joy (pathos).<sup>13</sup> This position supports the argument presented by this thesis, that the classifications of the mirror, window, and stone will clarify the ways meaning are made in terms of both rhetoric and poetic. Theoretical approaches which might unite rhetoric and poetic are found in literary criticism. Burke's Rhetoric of Motives, "tried to show how rhetorical analysis throws light on literary texts and took the position that all literature must be viewed as rhetoric."<sup>14</sup> And Wayne Booth has argued that "another observation that should be made by anyone surveying the rhetorical scene without prejudice, is that most young people now seem to derive their basic beliefs. . . more from fiction and drama than from forms that at one time were more influential. . . ."<sup>15</sup>

I. A. Richards believes that rhetoric should be viewed as "a philosophic discipline aiming at a mastery of the fundamental laws of the use of language. The traditional

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 133. The authors qualify this by stating that Aristotle implies these categories in the Poetics in support of their concept of the "New Critique." Presupposing that all discourse contains these elements of rhetoric is the basis of this thesis, therefore, this interpretation will be accepted as it stands.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950) p. xiv.

<sup>15</sup> Wayne Booth, "The Scope of Rhetoric Today: A Polemical Excursion," in The Prospect of Rhetoric, ed. Lloyd R. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971) p. 102.

view of rhetoric revolved around learning a collection of rules about how to speak and write effectively. Richards believes the study of rules is not what rhetoric should be but that it should be "a philosophic inquiry into how words work in discourse."<sup>16</sup> His chief concern is with meaning, how language and words come to mean. Since Richards advocates that the study of rhetoric begins with an analysis of the smallest units for conveying meaning, namely words, perceiving meanings of words is central to a theory of rhetoric not only because of their importance as essential components in the function of language but because of the ways in which meaning serve us.<sup>17</sup> In view of the above, an indepth discussion of the ways meaning are made is warranted.

### Methodology

This research constitutes an exercise, not in criticism, but in theory building. A typical criticism begins with some presumed theoretical framework in one hand and a given artifact in the other. The critic then applies the theory to the artifact to disclose how well the artifact fits or does not fit the categories of the theory. Thus in criticism the major goal, despite some critics' claims of refining theory, is to focus attention on some artifact presumed worthy either for its historical significance, its aesthetic excellence, or

<sup>16</sup> I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) 24.

<sup>17</sup> I. A. Richards, So Much Nearer: Essays Toward a World English (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960) pp. 130-32.

some other reason. Rather than the artifact determining the method of analysis, the reverse becomes the priority, the theory's applicability rather than the content of the subject of criticism.

Theory building seems to work at least initially in an opposite mode. Critics deductively apply categories and forms which may be time honored or simply de rigueur. Theorists dissect artifacts which they take to be parts of the phenomenon for which a truly general theory only can be built inductively by the reasoned establishment of general or universal statements. So, for example, progress in linguistics achieved the level of general theory successfully only when it was understood not only that individual languages change or evolve, but also that every known language system was, at any given moment, a complete, whole system which was perfectly adequate functionally.

The research undertaken here does not vainly claim to be anything of the kind of a general theory. This study seeks to establish with clarity the descriptive usefulness, empirical reality, and explanatory power of three concepts derived from the analysis of both current theory and artifacts of rhetoric. By "rhetoric" I mean the deliberate use of language and such language-like systems for communication as may be available in a given social system.

An analysis and evaluation of the elements within each classification dominates the remainder of the thesis. Of primary importance in this analysis is the illumination of the elements in a particular discourse that determine its

interpretive classification. The ability to draw from a variety of critical methods will allow for critical observations that might not necessarily be supported by one specific methodology. As a result, any theory of rhetoric will be employed in the analysis of discourse if it serves the function of making the critical comment convincing.

### Structure

Chapter II will present an overview of the critical theories that are relevant to the window, the mirror, and the stone. Included will be a discussion of I. A. Richards' "context theorem of meaning" and the concept of "interanimation of words" and Kenneth Burke's concepts of "motive" and "identification" in addition to his concepts of "chart," "prayer," and "dream." A discussion of the rhetorical example, especially the concept of artistic proof as described in the Rhetoric, will help clarify the significance of narrative as a rhetorical tool in discussing the discourse in these categories. It would be presumptuous to begin a discussion of the categories without first preparing the reader with this overview of important critical theories.

Abrams' original concepts of "mirror" and "lamp" will be addressed in Chapters III and IV respectively. What Abrams described as an objective reflection of nature in the "mirror" will be more accurately depicted by the metaphor of the "window" in the following chapters. Abrams attributed

discourse that is illuminated by the author to the critical classification of the "lamp." Abrams' "lamp" is too narrow in its description, therefore it is altered to encompass that discourse that reflects either the author or the audience and is reclassified as "mirror."

Chapter III deals with the critical classification of the "window," mimetic verbal structures. A thorough discussion of the incremental elements in this classification, focusing on verisimilitude, will show that specific linguistic cues identify discourse in this category, both historical and literary narratives are used to establish a "realistic" representation of society or nature, and its rhetorical function is achieved by creating a social reality for the reader.

Chapter IV discusses the specific elements that encompass the critical classification of the "mirror." Through careful examination of specific examples of language and language-like artifacts, it will be shown that verbal structures that fall within this classification are representative of either the author's or audience's point of view. It will also be shown that discourse in this classification represents individual perspectives on values, attitudes, or ideologies achieving its rhetorical function through identification.

Chapter V deals with the final category, the "stone." In this chapter it will be shown that discourse that does not fulfill an imitative function nor the reflective function as discussed in the classifications of the "window" and the

"mirror" respectively, encompasses the realm of the "stone." It will be shown that discourse in this category is identified by its freedom from the restraints of traditional rules that bind verbal structures and that interpretation of this classification is entirely subjective, in that the critic is given no clear-cut motivational cues in its narrative.

The final chapter will discuss how these classifications intersect. Focusing on the concept of historicity, this chapter will discuss the degrees to which the "window," the "mirror," and the "stone" overlap and why. In addition to this category of historiography, aspects of narration, especially tense, will be discussed as sources of ambiguity between the classifications.

CHAPTER II  
RELEVANCE OF THESE CATEGORIES  
TO RHETORICAL THEORY AND CRITICISM

Theory building does not progress in a vacuum but is influenced by and dependent upon previous theoretical concepts. To proceed without discussion of the prominent rhetorical theories that are relevant to the development of this thesis would be presumptuous and foolish. Therefore, this chapter presents a somewhat brief overview of the theories (including Aristotle, Richards, and Burke) that I believe are instrumental to the understanding of the concepts that will be discussed in the following chapters.

Rhetoric takes place in public and for the public and because of this rhetoric always has its social side. This social perspective of rhetoric holds that social structure is created and perpetuated by language and that, as individuals, it is through language that we learn whatever else makes us<sup>1</sup> distinctively human. From this perspective, the rhetorical example is important because it is the narrative part of rhetoric that informs people about the world and persuades them how to act and evaluate behavior. Rhetorical scholars,

<sup>1</sup>  
Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967).

recently joined by Walter Fisher, have asserted that persuasion through narrative is a phenomenon of importance at least equal to that of "rational" or argumentative language.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, rhetorical example is a justifiable starting point for discussing relevant rhetorical theory.

### Narrative Example

Aristotle defines rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic and a branch of politics which has as its special task discovering means to persuade. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle identifies two "universal" forms of "proof" suited to social contexts: enthymeme, which is a term for argument (inductive or deductive); and example, which consists of narratives used to inform or persuade by their analogical quality and concreteness. Aristotle says of the example, that example has the "nature of induction, which is the foundation of reasoning."<sup>3</sup> What Aristotle means to suggest is that argument based on example reasons from particular to particular.

At 1393a Aristotle says, example "has two varieties; one consisting in the mention of actual past facts, the other in

<sup>2</sup>  
Research making the claim include Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966); Gerard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method (Ithaca: Cornell Unive. Press, 1980); Walter Fisher "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument" Communication Monographs, 1984, 1-22 and "The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration" Communication Monographs, 1985, 347-367.

<sup>3</sup>  
Aristotle, Rhetoric, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Modern Library, 1954) 1393a, 24-26.

the invention of facts by the speaker. Of the latter, Aristotle suggests two varieties, the illustrative parallel and the fable (e.g. the fables of Aesop, or those from Libya.)" This creates three distinct types of rhetorical example. First is historical, which offers actual past facts for comparison to a present case. In argument by historical example, actual facts are applied for their ability to create some reality: the factual accounts and Zapruder footage of the Kennedy assassination used in Oliver Stone's JFK lends credence to the film's overall credibility. The second type of example is invented, which, although not reporting actual events, is intended to be taken as reports of actual events. Again using JFK, the fictitious interview between Garrison and his contact "X" is presented in a manner that suggests a realistic interview, although it never occurred. The third type is literary narrative, which posits a fictive universe and is neither intended nor interpreted as reports of actual events (i.e. the fables of Aesop in which foxes and crows engage in conversation).<sup>4</sup> The rhetorical example, as described above is significant in the development of this thesis. Narrative becomes an essential tool in creating the "realistic" or "naturalistic" presentation of the fictive universe. When using the rhetorical example, no matter the type, the author is creating a context from which the audience draws and builds their image of reality.

4

Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1393a. Aristotle says example has two varieties: one consisting in the mention of actual past facts, the other in the invention of facts by the speaker."

There are two problems with the rhetorical example. The first is that no rhetorical theory offers any systematic advice about the invention of the example. To merely state that they may be classified into three groups does not help one find or create them. Second, rhetorical theorists have complained that the example sometimes only appears to be stylistic ornament. On the topic of invention, Aristotle makes only rather general comments in Rhetoric, 1394a:

Fables are suitable for addresses to popular assemblies; and they have one advantage--they are comparatively easy to invent, whereas it is hard to find parallels among actual past events. You will in fact frame them just as you frame illustrative parallels: all you require is the power of thinking out your analogy, a power developed by intellectual training. But while it is easier to supply parallels by inventing fables, it is more valuable for the political speaker to supply them by quoting what has actually happened, since in most respects the future will be like what the past has been. (emphases added)

Assertions that the example requires "power of thinking" and "intellectual training" contrast significantly with the<sup>5</sup> lengthy delineation of the topoi for enthymemes.

Bishop Richard Whately follows Aristotle's lead regarding the issue of invention. He considers the same types of paradigmatic argument, and offers no concrete guidelines on which to build example. Whately does differ with Aristotle on an important issue however. Where Aristotle recommends the use of extended examples, Whately argues that in contrast with full narration, allusion to the story is "preferable, from its brevity, whenever the allusion can be readily understood," because narration may become

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Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1397a - 1402a.

<sup>6</sup>  
 boring or offensive. Whately also warns against the danger  
 of a brief example or allusion being mistaken for a figure of  
 style--an ornament.<sup>7</sup> This leads us to a discussion of the  
 stylistic possibilities of form. That is, what differences  
 exist between first person, third person, and third person  
 omniscient and how does narrative function to inform and  
 persuade through these differences? To discover how  
 narrative functions to inform and persuade, the concept of  
 presence will be discussed as a basis for understanding the  
 persuasive power of narrative.

#### Presence and Persuasive Power

Presence requires a more thorough definition for the  
 purpose of this discussion. The term is meant here to refer  
 to "being at hand" or "being generally proximate" in time and  
 space. It has been suggested that "the greater the presence  
 of the narrator in the story, the greater the likelihood that  
 it will be believed."<sup>8</sup> This means that the presence of "I"  
 seeing, hearing, and saying, creates a situation that is  
 analogous to firsthand experience or eyewitness testimony.  
 Presence may be manifest highest by using first person  
 narration featuring direct discourse or lowest in third

<sup>6</sup>  
 Bishop Richard Whately, Elements of Rhetoric (Boston:  
 James Munroe and Co., 1855) p. 107. Aristotle cautions against  
 brief example, suggesting that it may be mistaken for mere ornament.

<sup>7</sup>  
 Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>8</sup>  
 Michael McGuire, "Narrative Persuasion in Rhetorical  
 Theory," in On Narratives, ed. Hellmut Geissner (Frankfurt:  
 Scriptor, 1986) pp. 163-178.

person with indirect discourse. This means that the narrator seems more within a story when telling us, e.g., "Then I said to her, 'Jane you're very special'," than when saying, e.g., "She told Jane that she thought she was very special." The presence of narrator is conceptualized as a direct function of grammatical categories that function to increase or decrease the level of presence.

Direct discourse enhances the persuasive power of narrative because it increases the presence of the narrative and its characters for the audience. The use of direct discourse in the lyrics of a song creates a stronger identification with the character and the actions in which he engages. So when a singer tells us that "I ain't a boy, no, I'm a man/And I believe in a promised land" the character's presence is felt more profoundly, identification is more clearly established than if the singer chooses indirect discourse. First person narration also compels the narrator to enter and remain within the narrative. Therefore, the participation in the narrative creates a sense of on the spot reporting, enhancing the credibility of the narrator. The increase in narrator presence through first person narration has a double function: first, because the person reciting the story is present to them, the veracity of the story is perceived as more likely to be true; and secondly, the descriptive dialogue provided by first person narration satisfies the audience with the feeling of a similitude between the example and real life.

The use of third person narration is also a choice in

creating presence. Whereas first person narration creates an individual within the narrative with whom the audience identifies. Third person narration creates a narrator who becomes an historian or reporter, recreating the historical literary or alleged characters however he/she wants. The question then becomes is there a difference in presence between third person and third person omniscient? To be sure, there can be, especially regarding direct and indirect discourse. The use of third person omniscient using direct discourse has the advantages of being able to put thoughts into the minds of the character and pull the exact words out of their mouth. Third person narration is merely a recounting of the words and actions. The power of third person omniscient should be obvious: to create a character and regulate their every thought and word is to take control of how those characters appear to the audience. The question then becomes, how does presence of the narrator affect the persuasive power of the discourse? A discussion of Kenneth Burke's concept of identification will help clarify how narrative functions in rhetoric.

### Identification

Burke defines rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" and as such is "rooted in an essential function of language itself, . . . the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature

respond to symbols."<sup>9</sup> Burke's definition of rhetoric appears to be very similar to traditional definitions of rhetoric, however, Burke expands on his definition by introducing other characteristics of rhetoric.

"Identification" is Burke's major addition to the definition of rhetoric and has its foundation in the notion of substance. Individuals form identities through various properties or substances, including occupations, physical objects, friends, beliefs, values, and activities. We become "consubstantial" or united in substance when our beliefs, values, attitudes, material possessions, or other properties are the same as those with whom we associate. For instance, two men from different backgrounds become consubstantial because they share the same substance as owners of Mercedes Benz or two students are consubstantial in that they share the substance of being students.

Burke argues that persuasion can only occur as a result of this identification process. "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his."<sup>10</sup> Burke goes on to explain the three basic ways that identification functions. First, it may be used as a means to an end. Political candidates use this form of identification in an attempt to win votes by showing they have the same interests as their audience. The second type

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) pp. 41, 43.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-22.

of identification is achieved through the operation of antithesis. Individuals may unite in opposition to a common enemy as exemplified by the United States and Russia's joint endeavor against Germany in World War II. The third kind of identification is that which is derived from situations in which it goes unnoticed and the identification is unconscious. For example, the person who purchases a Datsun truck may be identifying subconsciously with the image of the adventurous man in the advertisement. This is often considered the most powerful form of identification because it occurs subtly and unconsciously among individuals. The concept of identification is most powerful in the classification of the "mirror" in which the author or audience is reflected by the discourse. Discourse encompassed in the classification of the "mirror" bridges the division perceived between author and audience.

Division is what Burke identifies as a basic motive for rhetoric. "Identification is compensatory to division."<sup>11</sup> People strive to eliminate division by proclaiming their unity through the process of identification. Language or communication become the means by which individuals attempt to bridge the differences that are inevitable in the human condition. Narrator presence helps eliminate the distance between author and reader. As observed above, narrator presence offers the reader a more tangible individual with whom to identify, or become consubstantial. The more intrin-

<sup>11</sup>  
Ibid., p. 25.

sically inhered in the narrative the narrator appears to be, the greater the presence and the greater the likelihood the story will be believed. The exception to this is in third person narration where the narrator's presence is low. In this case, the identification process occurs between the auditor and either the well described so realistic situation or some character(s) in the narrative. This process of identification is exemplified by discourse in the construct of the "window." The author presents his audience with an objective view of the world, describing the world as if observed through a window.

Imagery and symbolism are the linguistic tools used to create the effect an author desires to have on his audience. In symbolism, consubstantiality is achieved by acceptance of a symbol for the real entity the symbol represents. This is best exemplified by the act of communion. The wafer becomes the body of Christ and the wine His blood; participants in this symbolic ritual achieve consubstantiality. Burke discusses symbolism in Nazi propaganda in his essay on Hitler's "Battle" and claims that Hitler found a symbol to ensure unification within his own nation, a common enemy. The "international" devil or "international Jew" became a<sup>12</sup> terrifically successful propaganda scapegoat. The symbol of the Volk was established to create a common bond between the people against this enemy. The German people identified with Hitler as the "father-figure" of the symbolic "mother-

12

Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action (New York: Vintage Books, 1941) p. 166.

land" symbolically represented as the Volks.<sup>13</sup>

It is this same principle of identification that compels individuals to purchase a certain shampoo, march in a rally, or vote for a candidate. Burke states that "In identification lies the source of dedications and enslavements, in fact cooperation."<sup>14</sup>

Among the most difficult and nebulous topics for discussion in the realm of all theory of art and certainly verbal art are two thorny seemingly epistemological issues: the relation of the author to the text, and the relation of the audience to the text.<sup>15</sup> These relationships are important in classifying a specific discourse as "window," "mirror," or "stone" because of the significance of audience perception. The artifact, or text, is the empirically given object to which a casual critic may attribute this and that effect on a particular audience, or this and that intention by the author. Past efforts to discuss these relationships sometimes have failed because they treated intention too narrowly (to inform, to persuade) or as altogether

<sup>13</sup> Ernest K. Bramstead, Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda, 1925-1945, (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1965) p. 202.

<sup>14</sup> Burke, Rhetoric, p. xiv.

<sup>15</sup> See for example, Barry Brummett, "Some Implications of 'Process' or 'Intersubjectivity': Postmodern Rhetoric" in Philosophy and Rhetoric, 9, 1976, pp. 21-51; Richard Cherwitz, "Viewing Rhetoric as a 'Way of Knowing': An Attenuation of the Epistemological Claims of the 'New Rhetoric,'" in Southern Speech Communication Journal, 42, 1977, 207-219; Henry W. Johnstone, "Rationality and Rhetoric in Philosophy," in Quarterly Journal of Speech, 71, 1973, 381-389, and Robert L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," in Central States Speech Journal, 18, 1967, 9-17.

inaccessible. Other times have they failed because they treated effect as only the observable, empirically verifiable. Sentences like "Please pass the salt" always seemed fair game for simple analysis; speeches like "I Have a Dream" were less so. Both, however, reveal in common something which often seems hard to explain: the merger of form and content in what Kenneth Burke has called "rhetorical form in the large."<sup>16</sup> This does not encompass Burke's taxonomy of five types of form but instead addresses form in a broader sense, form in the sense of communication between the author and the reader be it comedy, tragedy, sonnet, speech, lyric, etc.<sup>17</sup> The categories of the "window," the "mirror," and the "stone" take Burke's concept of form in the large one step further; the classifications are the form within which the genres fit.

Burke defines form as "the creation of an appetite in a reader and the successful use of language to satisfy that appetite."<sup>18</sup> He states that art is "a means of communication" that is "designed to elicit a 'response' of some sort." The general approach is to assume that a form, say a poem, is designed to "do something" for the poet and its readers, an act. The "act" for the poet is to create an interest, an appetite, in the reader through language. To successfully achieve the whetting of an appetite in a reader, the poet

<sup>16</sup> Burke, Rhetoric, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) pp. 123-83.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

must utilize all the weapons he has in his arsenal; stylistic devices like metaphor, imagery, repetition, exposition, description, etc. The reader brings his own expectations to the poem that are dictated by the form. The reader's act is less strenuous but just as active as the author's. The reader expects the content of the form to satisfy the appetite the author has created. When the author falls short of satisfying the reader's expectations it may be for a number of reasons. If the reader expects the form to be that of a sonnet and instead is presented with a haiku, the poet will have failed in satisfying that reader's appetite. An established author has created an appetite in his/her loyal followers because of the "form" that has been successfully used in the past; failure to follow this same form will leave expectations unfulfilled. So too with the "window," the "mirror," and the "stone." These critical classifications create and fulfill an appetite in the reader. As we shall see, the author has sorely failed to satisfy the appetite of an audience whose expectations of a documentary are that of a "window" and instead finds a "stone."

A relevant final note on Burke is required. In The Philosophy of Literary Form Burke finds three ingredients common to all verbal action: the spell or curse; the prayer and prayer-in-reverse, oath; the dream and the reverse, the nightmare. From these common ingredients Burke makes the following subdivisions for the analysis of verbal action, three dimensions of language; "chart," "prayer," and "dream." These concepts are analogous to the "window," the "mirror,"

and the "stone." "Chart is the realistic sizing-up of the world, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit (window). "Prayer" is the dimension of language that attempts to reach out and communicate to others (mirror). "Prayer" is deemed successful if identification is achieved. Finally, the "Dream" is the unconscious or subconscious factors of language, the unconscious flow of words from a pen or rhetor (stone).<sup>19</sup> Burke creates and defines these dimensions, however, never applies them to literature, in fact he drops them completely.<sup>20</sup> To fail to mention Burke's dimensions would be remiss on my part because of the similarity to the classifications that will be discussed in the following chapters, however, unlike Burke, I will apply them to artifacts that represent each category.

### Context Theorem of Meaning

Meaning is a thorny issue which many scholars choose to assign to the realm of limbo or ignore altogether. I. A. Richards sees meanings of words as central to a theory of rhetoric not only because of their importance as essential components in the function of language but because of the ways in which meaning serve us. Richards urges that rhetoric should be the "study of verbal understanding and

<sup>19</sup>

Burke, Philosophy, pp. 6-7.

<sup>20</sup>

Whereas Burke's concept of "pentad" has been the method-de-rigour in rhetorical criticism, the concepts of "chart, prayer, dream" have rarely been used. A treatment of these three concepts can be found in Bruce Gronbeck's "John Morley and the Irish Question: Chart-Prayer-Dream," Speech Monographs 40 (1973) 287-295.

misunderstanding" and "must undertake its own inquiry into the modes of meaning."<sup>21</sup> To this end, Richards' "context theorem of meaning" addresses the problems of the aims of discourse (the functions of language) and what the connection is between the mind and the world by which events in the mind mean other events in the world.

Richards' interest in how words come to mean for individuals leads him to contemplate the workings of the human mind. He begins his theorem by stating that "we are things peculiarly responsive to other things" and that we almost never "respond to a stimulus in a way which is not influenced by the other things that happened to us" when struck by a similar stimuli from the past.<sup>22</sup> Meaning is therefore derived as a process of "delegated efficacy." Our responses are governed by and given their character by our perception of past and present occasions. Our perception is never of an "it"; "perception takes whatever it perceives as a thing of a certain sort."<sup>23</sup> Meaning is the process of delegated efficacy, a word comes to mean by substituting for what is not physically there and is accomplished through the assimilation of the surrounding contexts.

Richards describes context as "a name for a whole cluster of events that recur together--including the required conditions as well as whatever we may pick out as cause or

<sup>21</sup> I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965) p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

effect. In these contexts one item--typically a word--takes over the duties of parts which can then be omitted from the recurrence. When this happens, what the sign or word--the item with delegated powers--means is the missing parts of the context."<sup>24</sup> In other words, words mean whatever you choose them to mean, drawn from your past experiences with the word and the word's surrounding context. We live in the here and now, but our reactions to this world are directly correlated to our individual and collective histories. Richards states that we are engaged in a sorting activity whereby we perceive incoming information, compare them with our past, analyze them, classify and process them, and attach meaning accordingly. Again we are engaged in a process of identification, with the word and with the context in which we find the word.

Important to the understanding of how words come to mean is the concept of "interinanimation." Interinanimation is the mutual dependency and interaction which links words and symbols together in a literary relationship. Richards states that "no word can be judged as to whether it is good or bad, correct or incorrect, beautiful or ugly, or anything else that matters to a writer, in isolation."<sup>25</sup> So it follows that words in a sentence, a phrase, or a paragraph are dependent upon one another and their interaction (interinanimation) provides the literary context.

<sup>24</sup>  
Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>25</sup>  
Ibid., p. 51.

Richards' central concept of "delegated efficacy" leads us to his theory of abstraction, in which metaphor is a prominent component. Richards holds that in the process of sorting, comparing, analyzing, and classifying metaphor is the use of one reference to a group of things between which a given relation holds, for the purpose of facilitating the discrimination of an analogous relation in another group.<sup>26</sup> Metaphor is a symbol and as such stands for things in the real world. Richards suggests that metaphor is the heart of our language system and defines it as an attribution of meaning in which we are seeing in one context an aspect similar to that encountered in an earlier context and is a method by which a communicator may provide listeners with the experience needed to elicit similar references for a particular symbol. Richards goes so far as to claim that "we cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it."<sup>27</sup> Metaphor works with the context of the message to create meaning within the audience's frame of reference. So, each new contextual encounter with "the grapes of wrath" (biblical, musical, novel) changes the meaning of the metaphor. This is significant in understanding how metaphor works in each of the following classifications.

<sup>26</sup>

C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism, 4th. ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936) p. 213.

<sup>27</sup>

Ibid., p. 92.

### Summary

In this discussion of relevant rhetorical theory and criticism the important links between the author and audience and form and content have been examined. The order in which these are discussed is not as important as the fact that each is significantly related to the following critical classifications. The combination of the different theories or concepts creates or helps to define the distinctive elements that make up the different classifications. For example, Burke's concept of identification, Richards' idea of context and meaning, and narrator presence are essential in determining the reflective property of the "mirror." The following chapters will utilize these different concepts and theories to delineate the workings of each classification.

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**32**

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analysis of discourse that attempts to objectify "reality."

Mimetic theory has changed dramatically since its conception over two thousand years ago. Aristotle limited<sup>2</sup> imitation to the areas of poetry, tragedy, and art. In formal imitation, or Aristotelian mimesis, Northrop Frye states that order and clarity are emphasized: order because of the importance of grasping a central form, and clarity because of the desire not to dissolve into ambiguity, but to preserve the relationship between nature and its content.<sup>3</sup> The authors of the "Classical" era use images and examples to create poetry that is more historical than philosophical, presenting chronicles of what they perceive in the world. The author describes his world with language that elicits emotion but at the same time accurately depicts nature, objectifying this world for his reader.

John Greenleaf Whittier's poems exemplify this type of writing. Using a palate of descriptive words, Whittier vividly paints a picture for his audience. His poetry presents the world as if viewed through a picture window, we "see" what Whittier observes through this window. For example, Whittier's poem "Snow-Bound" is a narrative that chronicles the isolation that a snow storm inflicts upon his family. An excerpt from the poem will help clarify:

<sup>2</sup>  
Aristotle, Poetics, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Modern Library, 1954) 1447a, 14-16.

<sup>3</sup>  
Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) p. 84.

So all night long the storm roared on:  
 The morning broke without a sun;  
 In tiny spherule traced with lines  
 of Nature's geometric signs,  
 In starry flake, and pellicle  
 All day the hoary meteor fell;  
 And, when the second morning shone,  
 We looked upon a world unknown,  
 On nothing we could call our own.  
 Around the glistening wonder bent  
 The blue walls of the firmament,  
 No cloud above, no earth below,---  
 A universe of sky and snow!<sup>4</sup>

The description of the storm is enhanced by the use of metaphors that call up images of the stark beauty created by the storm. Metaphor is an inseparable element of all discourse, including discourse whose purpose is neither persuasive nor aesthetic, but descriptive and informative. By objectifying this imprisoning "reality," Whittier distances himself from nature which allows him freedom to describe, with accuracy and vividness, that which he perceives.

Frye states that "imitation of nature in fiction produces, not truth or reality, but plausibility, and plausibility varies in weight. . ."<sup>5</sup> Mimetic art today has broadened to encompass "realistic" portrayals in literature, film, television, and art that, at times, surpass the concept of plausibility by offering an audience not the mere realistic representation of an event but the event itself. These forms of mimetic discourse achieve persuasion through

<sup>4</sup>  
 John Greenleaf Whittier, "Snow-Bound," from The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier, ed. H. E. Scudder (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1894).

<sup>5</sup>  
 Frye, p. 51.

the imitation of reality which influences, instructs, or pleases its audience.

### The Question of Reality

At this point a definition of "reality" is warranted. Berger and Luckmann define "reality" as "a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition" (we cannot 'wish them away').<sup>6</sup> Knowledge of this reality comes to us through the course of everyday life in which we confront and interpret this phenomena to create a coherent world. Berger and Luckmann state that the reality of everyday life is an ordered reality that has been objectified before our arrival, seeming a priori even though it is a human product (for instance such "conceptual machinery" as religion and science pre-date our own biological existence).<sup>7</sup> This "reality" is determined by face-to-face interactions and communications with others which combine to form our conscious knowledge of reality through typifications. A typification is how we apprehend or deal with others in the face-to-face situation. That is, the other is apprehended as "a man," "an American," "a professor," and so on. In sum, Berger and Luckmann contend that "specific conglomerations of 'reality' and 'knowledge' pertain to specific social contexts;" in other words, the "reality" that orders phenomena and assigns them

<sup>6</sup> Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, (New York: Anchor Books, 1967) p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

8

relevance is human-created, or social.<sup>8</sup> We cannot apprehend reality as exclusively limited to face-to-face interactions as this does not account for highly anonymous abstractions, such as our predecessors or the designated audience of a specific discourse. Social structure establishes these typifications by indirect experience. We know there is a President of the United States, not because of a face-to-face meeting but through reliable knowledge. This is achieved by means of a highly sophisticated system, language.

Language has its origins in the face-to-face situation, but is not restricted to this mode because we can speak on the telephone or via television/radio, or convey linguistic signification by means of writing. It is through language that our "reality" or experiences are objectified. Language goes beyond our own experience; by means of language, an entire world can be actualized for us. Language "makes present" for us not only individuals who are absent but entire periods of time or experiences that have long since passed. These presences can be extremely significant in the ongoing reality of everyday life by influencing the way we think or feel about a given experience. For instance, when the Berlin Wall fell in 1990, news programs aired footage of the construction and arming of the wall in 1961. These broadcasts actualized a period of history, establishing a "reality" by objectifying the Berlin Wall, thus influencing the perspective of millions of viewers regarding the present experience.

8

Ibid., p. 3.

Window on the World

We find today that there are no restrictions to the imitative arts. The mimetic concept now refers to "realistic" portrayals in literature, film, television, and art. Authors from Sinclair Lewis to Robbe-Grillet objectify reality with minute precision, describing with detailed accuracy the world they perceive. The novel in the classification of the "window" is a documentation of society, culture, and/or business in general. Sinclair Lewis' novel Babbitt is structured as set pieces that provide a comprehensive analysis of the sociology of American commercial culture. The dissection of American middle-class is performed with exactness and precision, exposing the absurdities, corruption, and materialism of American life.

Also encompassed within the classification of the "window" are true stories that are presented in narrative form. These representations of reality include such novels as The Miracle Worker, And The Sea Will Tell, and In Cold Blood. Objective description is imperative to preserve the factual integrity and credibility of the novel, and in so doing provides the reader a view of the world outside of his own, a perspective on an otherwise unknown realm that possibly will change the reader's world view or persuade the reader to accept a belief, attitude, or plan of action as his or her own.

Television has most recently embraced the concept of verisimilitude, presenting the public with programs that depict the "real" problems of everyday life. Television,

like no other medium, has the ability to objectify the reality of everyday life and do so instantaneously. Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey aside, the major networks fill their evening hours with programs that address the concerns of the American public. Viewers cannot escape this barrage of "realism" nor do they appear to desire release.

Television has been moving in this direction for many years with its "based on a true story" movies, "docudramas," and "re-enactments." News programs compete with each other to present their viewers with the most recent atrocities perpetrated by society. The first-hand footage of the violence that erupted in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdicts were handed down is but one example of the lengths to which the evening news will go in order to meet the American public's taste for "realism." The public was rewarded on April 30, 1992 with the live broadcast of the brutal beating of truck driver Reginald Denny. This brief but horrific footage became the antithesis to the police beating of Rodney King, which in March 1991, became the pivotal video footage of news broadcasts all over the world. As if it weren't enough to observe these beatings once, these tapes were aired repeatedly, showing up on Phil Donahue, "Now It Can Be Told," morning shows, evening news, etc. ad infinitum. These windows on the world of South Central Los Angeles actualize an experience for millions of viewers that influences how they will perceive their own world. Reactions from all over the United States and the world have varied from abhorrence of the random violence to acceptance of the

beating as an "eye for an eye" revenge. Since realistic presentations can influence the way we think and feel about a given experience, these representations have the potential of becoming another barrier between races, creating a greater gap that separates the races. The repercussions have already manifested themselves across the United States in the form of increased violence toward police by minority groups, intensified paranoia in the white community, and an overall negative perception of the United States' fight against<sup>9</sup> inequality, at home and abroad.

News programs are not solely responsible for presenting reality programming to the public. Networks have recently begun exploiting America's infatuation with realism by producing shows that present a view of the world. For example the new NBC program, "I Witness Video," on February 23, 1992, televised shocking footage of murders that had been captured by amateur camcorders. The first was Texas constable Darrell Lunsford who installed a camcorder in his patrol car to record drug-related arrests on a deserted back-road in Texas. Because of his conscientiousness, he taped his own death at the hands of three men. This footage was shown three times, the first in slow motion to intensify the shocking effect of the crime. Next the viewers witnessed the high-speed car chase of a getaway truck that plowed over an innocent bystander and culminated in a police shootout that rendered the suspect lifeless, his head dripping blood onto

<sup>9</sup>  
George J. Church, "The Fire This Time," Time May 1992: 139.

the side of the highjacked truck.<sup>10</sup> This is but one of the "reality shows" offered by networks as an alternative to escapism programming. On any given night, a viewer can tune into "Hard Copy," "Disaster," "Now It Can Be Told," and "48 Hours" to name but a few. These programs offer real life, presented to the audience without any "enhancement" save a musical soundtrack and/or slow motion that serves to increase the drama. What is the impact of this type of realistic representation? The American public has become so conditioned to seeing life through a camera that the perception of reality is decreased. We have become<sup>11</sup> desensitized to violence. For example, evening news programs aired the footage of the people in the car going down through the bridge immediately after the San Francisco earthquake in 1990. The first viewing was a horrifying image, but by the tenth showing, it wasn't so horrifying.

The persuasive power of these shows is achieved through a process of narrative and identification. Third person narration in the form of a reporter provides the audience with an account of what occurred, breaking into the action occasionally to clarify points. A context is created into which the audience projects themselves as a process of identification. Not all persuasion is positive as in the case of the Los Angeles riots of May, 1992. Viewers were persuaded to unite in the fight against a common enemy, the

<sup>10</sup>

Stewart Weiner, "Shock TV," TV Guide April 1992: 40.

<sup>11</sup>

Ibid., p. 32.

police, heightening hostility toward these representatives of a government that has inadequately addressed the needs of minorities, especially the black population. The riots were triggered by the acquittal decision in the case of the Rodney King beating which added to the established perceptions of decades of oppression and inequities heaped upon the black population by a biased government. The identification with the Rodney King beating incident allows blacks to make the frightening realization that in another circumstance, that could be them. Steven Hawkins, an attorney for the NAACP, states that "police terrorism is a form of oppression that black people intimately understand, because they are the victims of it."<sup>12</sup> The identification process in the instance of the Rodney King videotape was a short leap for the majority of the black population to make. This shared identification was perpetuated by television's window on the world presentation of the riots. Programs presenting horrific images of reality offer a moral outlook on and ethical position within the world.

The antithesis to the Rodney King incident was found in the senseless beating of Reginald Denny, who has come to represent the white equivalent of Rodney King. The world watched with horror as the helpless figure on the street was pummelled, shot at, and finally left for dead; becoming almost a replica of the horror witnessed over a year before. Denny was merely one of many random acts of violence

inflicted on innocent bystanders who inadvertently wandered into the "war zone." The violent attack on Denny may be interpreted as the accumulation of frustration and anger of a population which exploded in revenge on a scapegoat representative of the jury who handed down the not-guilty verdict and a criminal-justice system that is historically biased toward blacks. Robert Starks, professor of inner city studies education at Northeastern Illinois University, states that the King verdict reinforces the 1857 Dred Scott dictum that no black man has any rights that a white man is bound to respect.<sup>13</sup> The Rodney King videotape has the effect of confirming this argument profoundly by visually presenting the reality of the issue for the public to scrutinize.

These "reality" shows are significant because they set the agenda for discussion. In an election year, when workplaces, homes, and recreational gathering places are prone to be filled with discussions of "real" events that loom large in the consciousness of the body politic at large these reality shows may assume a special importance. Reality shows omit the middle-man, creating a two-step process between the information and the informee. This is no longer Dan Rather telling me about the riots, I am seeing them first hand, intensifying the significance of the experience. Persuasion is achieved through the use of witnesses, confessions, documents, and objects: those material representations brought from the world for us to see in the form of

<sup>13</sup>  
Ibid., p. 22.

historical example.

Emotional proof based on appeals to an audience's emotional disposition are found in the compelling images seen on the evening news or the "realism" programs and juxtapositions that attach feelings of empathy or repulsion to subjects in a novel way. An example of a juxtaposition of this kind would be the simultaneous airing, on a split screen of the Rodney King and Reginald Denny videotapes on CNN. Each tape had been seen by the public separately, exciting emotions of indignation and hatred in specific targeted audiences. Presenting the tapes simultaneously gave the audience a different perspective of the violent attacks, supporting a specific argument. The message was clear, excessive force was used in each incident--but the question becomes, can the black men who beat Denny expect the same outcome for their actions against a white man? If we go back to the argument presented by Professor Starks, the answer is no. These are issues that are addressed in the realm of the window.

#### Window as Historical Chronicle

Whereas television is an instantaneous presentation of the reality of the world, documentary film presents specific views of the world, chosen to support the inherent argument of the film. Bill Nichols states that rhetoric is an important element of documentary film and is the means by which the author attempts to convey his or her outlook

14

persuasively to the viewer. Two ways arguments achieve persuasive support is through the Aristotelian methods of evidence and "artistic proofs." Evidence in the documentary film is guided by the "indexical" relationship of the film to the historical world.<sup>15</sup> The evidence used in documentary film is not that which can be witnessed as it happens, on a first-hand basis, as in television, but evidence that refers us to the world and supports arguments made about that world directly. It is the documentary film to which we turn not to see what Hitler, Kennedy, Khrushchev, Holocaust survivors, or the Vietnam War victims looked "like" but how they themselves actually looked.

Early documentarists like John Grierson, Paul Rotha, Humphrey Jennings, and Basil Wright were extremely critical of the fiction film as an entertainment form that provided escapist spectacles that ignored the compelling issues facing society. Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov condemned the play-film as an entertainment form alien to the needs and wishes of the audience.<sup>16</sup> These early documentary filmmakers influenced the way current documentarists present reality to their audience.

The documentary film is important in the function of

14  
For a comprehensive examination of documentary film and its relationship to the presentation of reality see Bill Nichols, Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) p. 134.

15  
Ibid., p. 116.

16  
Jay Leyda, KINO: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 177.

informing its audience about the whys and hows of the world we know. The world we see through a documentary window may be modified in a number of different ways to heighten its impact, but it is essential to understand that the rhetorical ploy used shapes the way we view this world and may guide our subsequent actions.

Frederick Wiseman's documentary films such as Hospital, Welfare, and High School present evidence of how public service institutions structure demeaning exchanges between public servants and their clientele. Wiseman goes to great lengths to document the dehumanizing process that has become the mode of dealing with individuals in the ongoing routine of the job. His cameras infiltrate the offices of the institution officials treating them with the same cold, objectifying scrutiny with which they regard their clients. A movie made for television can only present a re-enactment of what has become institutionalized behavior, Wiseman and other documentary film directors objectify the world whereby a set of assumptions and an image of the world implant themselves, becoming available to us to use as orientation and guide in the future or more overtly whereby our own conscious beliefs and purposes align with those proposed for us in the documentary.

Another important element of the documentary film is the author's presence. This may manifest itself overtly as in the narrator or subtly as in Wiseman's films where the infiltration of the camera becomes the author's voice. In the case of the narrator, it is extremely important that the

ethical credibility of this individual is firmly established. The speaker offers us the benefit of dispassionate analysis or, if emotion is called for, the commentary will make rhetorical appeals to the common sense of injustice, inhumanity, or barbarism. In the documentary series, Millineum, the narrator is the anthropologist/author of the series. His purpose is to provide analytical commentary on our societal problems and how we deal with them as compared to more primitive cultures. The authorial presence is double-fold in this series because of the combination of voice-over narration and visual presentation of the author. The credibility of the author is enhanced by his visual presence; a distinguished, silver-haired anthropologist whose presentation defies the suspicious scrutiny of his audience.

Frederick Wiseman on the other hand does not use voice-over narration in his documentary film, on the contrary, his subjects' voices are all we hear. Wiseman's presence is felt in the manipulation of the camera angles and techniques for which he has become reknowned. Reminiscent of Dziga Vertov's The Man with a Movie Camera, Wiseman goes to great lengths to impose his camera into the various aspects of everyday human existence. Wiseman's most recent documentary film, Aspen, uses the camera to expose the excentricities of human life in this resort town. Using juxtapositions of lifestyles and life conditions, Wiseman bombards the viewer with a barrage of images that are at times poignant and other times absurd. The viewer becomes part of the audience of a wedding, a beginning for a young couple. This is juxtaposed against the

golden wedding anniversary of a couple who are in the twilight years of their marriage. Wiseman scours the streets of Aspen to show us the "beautiful" people that inhabit this resort, at least part of the time, which is juxtaposed against a plastic surgery seminar where before and after pictures of individuals are shown, the lengths to which these "beautiful" people will go to become beautiful.

Indicative of Wiseman's voice is this style of camera work that infiltrates the space of his subjects and the omission of any narration. Wiseman lets the experience speak for itself, leaving any interpretation of the events to the audience. Wiseman's presence is the insistent probing of the camera into the specific reality of each moment. Wiseman's films are truly representative of the idea of the implied author as conceptualized by Wayne Booth and further elaborated upon by Seymour Chatman. Wiseman becomes the "implied" author, that which is reconstructed by the audience. Seymour Chatman states, the implied author "has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn."<sup>17</sup>

### Summary

Discourse in the realm of the "window" presents reality in a powerfully didactic mode. The audience is influenced by the presentations of everyday life, and because of this may

17

Seymour Chatman, "Discourse: Nonnarrated Stories," in Story and Discourse (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

be persuaded to change their attitudes of beliefs regarding certain issues. The extent to which an individual is influenced is dependent upon their personal identification or historicity with the issue. Reality as presented by television or documentary film brings the audience into the experience but the extent to which an individual is influenced is dependent upon their historicity with that experience.

Written discourse in the form of poetry or literature verbally presents reality through objective description. The author objectively paints a picture of his world for the audience to visualize and interpret. The function of this discourse is to instruct and delight its audience, thus broadening and influencing their worldview to include these experiences. As Cicero explained, in order to persuade the author must inform and move the minds of his audience.<sup>18</sup> Discourse in the realm of the "window" achieves this and more.

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reality which takes us not only into literature but beyond into the realms of documentary film and television. This chapter will show how Abrams' concept of the "lamp," which deals with literature that is illumined by the author, changes in dimension when it is extended to include discourse that reflects both author and/or audience becoming a "mirror." This chapter will clarify the dynamics of the "mirror" through analysis of the various types of discourse that encompass this realm.

### Second Persona

An important dynamic of the "mirror" is the concept of audience identification. The suggestion of an implied audience who identifies with the perceptions or ideologies presented by the rhetor pursues the stream of analysis suggested by Edwin Black and later expanded upon by Michael McGee. Black urges that we attend to the implied auditor of a discourse--the "second persona"--to see "a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become."<sup>1</sup>

Black describes the process:

Especially must we note what is important in characterizing personae. It is not age or temperament or even discrete attitude. It is ideology--ideology in the sense that Marx used the term: the network of interconnected convictions that functions in a man epistemically and that shapes his identity by determining how he views the world.

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It is this perspective on ideology that may inform our

<sup>1</sup>  
Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (1970): 113.

attention to the auditor implied by the discourse. It seems a useful methodological assumption to hold that rhetorical discourses, either singly or cumulatively in a persuasive movement, will imply an auditor, and that in most cases the implication will be sufficiently suggestive as to enable the critic to link this implied auditor to an ideology.<sup>2</sup>

When we examine messages to discover the implied auditors, the people to whom they are addressed, we consider the rhetorical function of identification.<sup>3</sup> Whether these people are implicitly or explicitly present in discourse, the discourse seeks to define them. The possibility and necessity of identifying or defining the people is clear from McGee's observation that "Typically, 'the people' justify political philosophies; their only concrete significance is their existence, for not even their identity is agreed upon<sup>4</sup> by those who appeal to them.

Certainly ideologies addressed to "the people," and other audience generating tactics of rhetoric, are not uniformly prevalent in discourses. One may find, for example, more and more detailed implications about the audience in Carl Sandburg's "Chicago" than in Henry James' The Ambassadors,<sup>5</sup> and not alone because one is a poem and the other a novel. The clarity with which "the people," the

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., 112.

<sup>3</sup>  
Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950) pp. 55-59.

<sup>4</sup>  
Michael McGee, "In Search of 'The People'," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 61 (1975): 238.

<sup>5</sup>  
Carl Sandburg, "Chicago," The New Oxford Book of American Verse, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) p. 422. Henry James, The Ambassadors, (1903).

implied auditors, emerge from a discourse is a function of what Wayne Booth has described as the "balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker."<sup>6</sup> Northrup Frye discusses the importance of authorial persona to the critical understanding of discourse. Frye sees a close connection between the presence of the author's persona and the (rhetorical) "thematic modes" of literature describing the theme or idea of poetic thought as dianoia. The importance of the relationship between the auditor and the author is posited in "There can hardly be a work of literature without some kind of relation, implied or expressed, between its creator and its auditors."<sup>7</sup> His analysis is also suggestive about the auditor's felt presence or absence and his tendency to respond to the discourse and to its authorial persona in different ways, e.g., worship, follow, derogate. This closely parallels the relationship of the real author to the implied reader discussed by Wayne Booth. Booth describes the "implied reader" as "not the flesh-and-bones you or I sitting in our living rooms reading the book, but the audience

<sup>6</sup>  
Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," in Contemporary Rhetoric, ed. Douglas Ehninger (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1972) p. 220.

<sup>7</sup>  
Northrup Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: University Press, 1957) p. 53. Frye's discussion of the author's persona in fiction is significant in understanding the identification process in literature versus public address.

8

presupposed by the narrative itself. The "implied reader" is intrinsic to the narrative, an active participant in the narrative world. The real reader enters the fictional contract, providing the "implied reader" who may or may not ally himself with the suggested world-view or the narratee-character presented in the narrative. We may conclude that how and how much the rhetor manages his audience are rhetorical choices; and as such, they may reveal to us something about the author's perceptions of the rhetorical situation.

#### Ideology in Mirror

If we continue to follow the lead of the rhetorical situation, our path must cross that of the thematic emphasis of literature. Frye's concept of "thematic modes" includes both didactic and illustrative qualities of literature which suggest the exigency of the rhetorical situation which reflects the ideology of the author or mirrors the audience's problems.<sup>9</sup> For example, the films of Oliver Stone reflect the ideology of the film maker. Stone's films have been described as exercises in the examination of the sordid side of life from his first single enterprise Salvador to his most current film JFK. Stone's exploration of the twisted

<sup>8</sup> Wayne Booth, Rhetoric of Fiction, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 70-71. See Seymour Chatman's discussion of the relationship of the implied author to the implied reader in Story and Discourse (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) pp. 147-151.

<sup>9</sup> Frye, p. 53.

elements of life have prompted critics to conclude that his "mission" is to "dispense downers to a movie public famously addicted to escapism."<sup>10</sup> Stone's current film, JFK, is reflective of his impressions of the Kennedy assassination, and which Stone disclaims any resemblance to the truth by stating "Now we're through the looking glass here, people. White is black, and black is white."<sup>11</sup> Stone presents a film that is based on fact and conjecture which are signaled by prefaces in the dialogue such as "For all we know, it could have been. . . ." and "Let's just for a moment speculate, shall we?" These linguistic cues alert the audience to the fact that they are watching a fiction based on a real event, not reality, thus providing the exigency of the film, a need to get at the truth of the assassination. The audience Stone wishes to define in this instance, is possibly that which, like him, want to have the circumstances surrounding the assassination brought out into the open. Stone constrains his audience to look at and question the facts that have been presented the public regarding the assassination, to find a new truth. The speculations that have arisen as a direct result of this film attest to the effect this film has had on the American public.

When a work of fiction is interpreted thematically, the emphasis shifts from plot to narrative, creating an illustrative example. This discussion leads us to the

<sup>10</sup>  
Richard Corliss, "Who Killed J.F.K.?", Time December 1991: 66-70.

<sup>11</sup>  
Ibid.

artistic proofs or rhetorical example as an element of discourse in the "mirror." As argued in Narrative Thought and Narrative Language, the rhetoric of narrative is functionally significant indeed for it is part of what informs people about the world and persuades them what to do in it, and how to evaluate behavior.<sup>12</sup> Discourse in this classification mirrors the individual through the emotional light of the author. In other words, although the individual is being reflected, the image is influenced by the author's worldview.

The rhetorical function of this discourse is in its persuasion through the audience's identification with the projected reality. Also important is the fact that narratives form aggregates that collect unevenly. This means that although some adults have been influenced by a specific narrative, not all share in that same common stock of knowledge. The question becomes, is the reflection in the eye of the beholder, the mind of the manufacturer or even the omniscience of a Godhead?

Kristin Thompson discusses the problem of deriving meaning in reference to film. "When we speak of a film's non-explicit ideology, or of the film as a reflection of social tendencies, or of the film as suggestive of the mental states of large groups of people, then we are interpreting

12

Michael McGuire, "The Rhetoric of Narrative," in Narrative Thought and Narrative Language, eds. Bruce K. Britton & Anthony D. Pellegrini, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Pub., 1990) p. 222.

its symptomatic meanings."<sup>13</sup> This concept is not exclusive to film but can be applied to any linguistically rendered art as supported by I. A. Richards' discussion on the purpose of emotive language, which states that it is used to express or<sup>14</sup> arouse feelings and attitudes.

### Discourse Examples

Many of Bruce Springsteen's lyrics represent discourse that falls within the realm of the mirror. The descriptive lyrics mirror many in the audience; they find their dreams and lives are set to music that reflect their emotions. Themes of despair, broken dreams and promises, and optimistic hope evoke emotional identification in the listener.

Springsteen uses both first and third person narration in his lyrics. First person narration is used to instill feelings of extreme hopelessness whereas third person narration describes individuals in helpless situations. "Streets of Fire" is a song that neither develops a story nor identifies a specific character, instead there are only images of feelings. The listener is not aware of any particular time or place, nor the cause of the despair. The lyrics express a feeling, a glimpse into the mind of a person discouraged with life. The singer expresses feelings of emptiness, telling us that "the weak lies and the cold walls

<sup>13</sup>

Kristen Thompson, Breaking the Glass Armor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) p. 12.

<sup>14</sup>

I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1924) pp. 178, 240.

you embrace/Eat at your insides and leave you face to face  
 with/Streets of fire so that "you don't care anymore."<sup>15</sup> The  
 despair felt by this individual is symbolized by the journey  
 he's taking; "I'm wandering, a loser down these tracks." The  
 feelings of isolation that accompany despair are symbolized  
 by the company this singer finds he is keeping: "I live now,  
 only with strangers/I talk to only strangers/I walk with  
 angels that have no place. The strangers are those you know  
 only through the tricks and lies that have strung you along.  
 "Streets of Fire" is a metaphor for the desperation and  
 isolation felt by anyone who has ever felt totally betrayed.  
 The musical accompaniment is a melancholy dirge, mirroring  
 the feelings expressed in the lyrics.

This theme of despair is continued in "Downbound Train"  
 in which the source of betrayal is more clearly identified  
 through narrative. This is the story of a man whose life has  
 been laid waste through a series of events that climaxed with  
 the departure of his wife. The "Downbound Train" is a  
 metaphor for the continuous downward pull of his life on a  
 track he can't escape. The song perpetuates the train  
 metaphor when he explains how his wife left him. "She bought  
 a ticket on the Central Line/Nights as I sleep, I hear that  
 whistle whining."<sup>16</sup> Not only can he not escape the

<sup>15</sup>  
 Bruce Springsteen, "Streets of Fire," Darkness on  
the Edge of Town, Columbia Records, JC 35318, 1978. Lyrics  
 quoted are taken from printed lyric sheets accompanying the  
 albums, even when those differ slightly from what is sung on  
 the album.

<sup>16</sup>  
 Bruce Springsteen, "Downbound Train," Born in the  
U.S.A., Columbia Records, PC 38653, 1984.

"downbound train" but his wife became a passenger on a train out of his life. The last lines of the song describe the utter hopelessness of this individual when he tells us:

Now I swing a sledge hammer on a  
railroad gang knocking down them cross ties;  
working in the rain  
Now don't it feel like you're a rider on a  
downbound train.

This person's life will not change for the better because he now has become a slave to the railroad, working on the tracks. Springsteen involves the audience in these feelings of despair through direct discourse.

The two examples of despair we have examined here show the personal, experienced side of despair and how it reflects the listener. The rhetorical qualities these songs elicit are those of creating meaning that is expressive of a feeling of hopelessness. Springsteen asks us to look at this emotion but at the same time cautions the listener against it.

This examination shows that Bruce Springsteen's music is representative of the type of discourse that reflects the audience. Other musicians, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, The Who, U2, and Jackson Browne, to name but a few, write music that reflect either themselves or their audience. For instance, Bob Dylan points a finger at the audience in songs like "Positively Fourth Street" and "Advice for Geraldine on Her Miscellaneous Birthday." Dylan's lyrics reflect the desire to reject the rules that bind us. By holding the mirror up to the audience, he shows the narrow-mindedness of prejudice and the pressures to conform to norms established by society. Dylan appears to be asking his audience to open their eyes to

the situation in which they find themselves and in so doing, declare independence. Dylan, like other musicians, speaks directly to the frustrations and aspirations of his audience. His universal appeal comes from his ability to talk about real issues, in a manner that demonstrates actual concern. His music, like "Masters of War," a testimony against the profiteers of war, is as important today as when he wrote it, reflecting the ideology of its creator, one that is worthy of our attention. At the same time, Dylan's work reflects all we need to know about the man.

Musical lyrics are only one type of discourse that fits into this category. Many genres of film also encompass the realm of the "mirror." The broad diversity of film has opened up new horizons for the rhetorical critic. The reflective potential of film can be observed in many of the recent criticisms of popular films. In a study of The Deer Hunter, the authors suggest that the film's message reflects the transformation that men experience in war and the universality of the message.<sup>17</sup> Another study discusses the importance of film in its ability to reflect societal values and the "American Dream." Analyzing the 1977 film Rocky, Hocker-Rushing and Frentz claim that "film often dramatizes symptoms of particular societal needs of an era. They continue to state that "films arouse an audience to recognize, with varying degrees of consciousness, the most critical societal

<sup>17</sup> Janice Hocker Rushing & Thomas S. Frentz, "The Deer Hunter": Rhetoric of the Warrior," in Rhetorical Dimensions in Media, eds. Martin J. Medhurst & Thomas W. Benson (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1984) p. 62.

18  
problems. . . ."

Ideological problems are not exclusive to American films. Foreign film-makers from France, Russia and other countries have used their talents to reveal inequities in society, present personal reflections of bygone eras, and profess a political ideology. Russian films from the early 1900s to the present have strived to direct a mirror outwardly, exposing the brutal repressions and inequities that have been perpetrated upon the proletariat. Tenghiz Abuladze's film, Repentance, chronicles the monstrous inhumanities of the Stalinist era. Set in a small village in Russian Georgia, Abuladze sets the tone for these revelations by introducing a mysterious woman who is put on trial for repeatedly exhuming the body of Varlam, the town's despotic ruler. It is at her trial that she unmasks Varlam's vicious reign of terror by detailing the atrocities he performed in the name of Marx-Leninism. Abuladze uses this film to make the statement, let us not forget how this system can be abused in the wrong hands. This is echoed by the female character, Ketik, who states "burying him means forgiving him" and later "for as long as they defend him, he still lives." These statements reflect the attitudes taken toward Stalin after his death, when his body was taken from public display

18

Janice Hocker Rushing & Thomas S. Frentz, "The Rhetoric of "Rocky": A Social Value Model of Criticism," in Western Journal of Speech Communication, 42 (1978), 64. See also "Dialectical Disorientation in Vietnam War Films: Subversion of the Mythology of War," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 77 (1991), pp.176-195 for a current analysis of film and its ideological impact.

and buried in an unmarked grave.

Abuladze uses flashback sequences to develop this compelling expose. Ketik's memories of her mother and father, Nino and Sandro, are seared into her brain with a vividness that is only experienced by those who lived the horror. Varlam's character unfolds before us in allegorical complexity. His ability to show a benign face to his foes is indicative of his duplicitous nature. He is able to register any opposition to his authority and deal with it accordingly, all under the auspices of serving the people. Varlam abuses any pretense that presents itself, be it a familial tie or a contrived letter from the citizens, to justify his behavior and defuse any serious objections to his tyrannical rule.

Abuladze effectively creates powerful images to illustrate the abominations performed in the name of Marx-Leninism. A pan through the town's church juxtaposes classical beauty with the new icons of modernization. A montage sequence in which paintings depicting the crucifixion of Christ are contrasted with the polished steel pillars of the factory that now reside within the church's walls. Abuladze adds the ironic touch of Albert Einstein's warnings of pending disaster as an accompaniment to the visual. Einstein's words are a forewarning of things to come, but they fall on deaf ears.

Dream sequences complete Abuladze's visual techniques with richly graphic and suggestive images. Nino's dreams are prophetic, depicting Varlam as an insane dictator from whom there is no escape. The dream sequences are dark, reflecting

Nino's fear and Varlam's inherent treachery. In one of the dream sequences, Nino and Sandro are running through maze-like alleys that eventually lead to an open field. It is here, in the open, that Nino and Sandro believe they have found safety, hiding in the plowed dirt, only their faces revealed. Varlam's ability to seek out his enemies is presented as pervasive and their capture is imminent. Sandro tells Nino that "they'll get us from under the earth" mirroring her dream's prophesy. This sequence symbolizes the paranoia inspired by Stalin.

Repentance is replete with bizarre and darkly humorous allegory. In the opening of the film, the police arrest Varlam's corpse taking him away in a paddy wagon. As Abuladze unfolds the depths of this madman's vicious tyranny, the audience reflects on the irony that this arrest did not happen while Varlam was alive. Another instance is found in Ket'i's obsessive desire to exhume Varlam's body, which she deposits in various spots in the town. This is only equalled by the compulsive baking and decorating of her cakes, all depicting a church. This reflects the final disclosures Ket'i makes at her trial in which she tells of the destruction of the church and her mother's subsequent arrest. In yet another ironic scene, Sandro is being interrogated in a beautiful garden by a man dressed in a tuxedo. A woman attired in the robes of justice is present during the interrogation, but she is led away by the interrogator. Her pointed departure suggests that Sandro can expect no justice in any considerations of his sentencing. Once again this

reflects the horrors of the Stalin era and is indicative of the justice those who oppose the government and its dictator may expect.

Abuladze effectively paints a telling picture of the mutant direction Stalinism took from Marx-Leninism. Varlam's paranoia seems unreal but is merely a scratch on the surface of the secrecy that conceals the atrocities of Stalin. Varlam's crucial remark made during a speech to the people illustrates the direction this man's mind took, "four out of three people are our enemies," and later, after quoting Confucius, he claims that "we will find a black cat in a dark room, even if there are no cats." These statements represent the fanaticism of a leader gone awry. The rhetorical function of this film is to create an awareness in the audience bidding them to become sentries, their job, to scrutinize the ambitious so as not to allow this kind of terrorism to occur again.

Tenghiz Abuladze's Repentance uses film to expose a problem. The earlier example of the Oliver Stone film JFK shows a current use of film to dramatize a perceived problem (in this film, the perception of the director) that arouses an audience to react with a desired response. The public is influenced by all types of media, including and especially television. Television is an invasive medium whose dramatic programs exert a mirror-like power on its audience. Horace Newcomb addresses the function of television, stating "television dramatic programs often deal with contemporary historical concerns as subject matter, but place their

characters within an older time frame. In this "mythical realm," where values and issues are more clearly defined and certain modes of behavior, such as violence, are more permissible, we recognize our own problems or ourselves."<sup>19</sup>

A final example is given from the medium of fiction to show the diversity of this classification. Fiction often presents a mirror of individual or societal values, in which the audience perceives a magnified image of themselves in the discourse. This is exemplified in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. In this novel we find metaphoric conditions that reflect all areas of human experience; social, political, cultural, economic, and scientific. What is presented in this novel is a widely accepted weltanschauung, a way or set of ways for perceiving the nature of self or the relative-natural world. This is a central concept in the sociology of knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

Using first person narrative, Shelley draws the reader into the novel, creating the appearance of intimate disclosures of the characters' lives. The reader shares in the dark passions of Victor Frankenstein, who relates his obsession to create life from death. The reader is appalled and at the same time intrigued with these disclosures. Maintaining a distance from this character, the implied

<sup>19</sup> Horace Newcomb, "Toward a Television Aesthetic," in Television: The Critical View, Horace Newcomb, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) p. 286.

<sup>20</sup> Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (New York: Doubleday, 1967) p. 8. Berger and Luckmann discuss this concept as a study of almost any facet of human thought.

reader acknowledges that the narrative mirrors the scientific knowledge of the period, specifically Charles Darwin's

21

experiments. Shelley reduces the distance between narrator and implied reader with the start of the monster's narration, where he turns the mirror on the audience, presenting a dissection of society that is both probing and illuminating. Speaking in first person, the monster relates how his wonderment at the marvels of man turned to disgust and loathing as the deprivations of human society unfolded before him. He discovers that riches and breeding are what is most cherished by human society, and without possession of either of these advantages, you are no better than a "vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste powers for the profits of the chosen few." The monster is then forced to turn the mirror on himself and in so doing discovers "a monster, a blot upon the earth. . . ." The monster despairs at the hopelessness of his condition, a mutant that is abhorred by the rest of the population because of his grotesque semblance. The monster desires a more complete humanization through interaction with other selves, but his keen intellect and knowledge of mankind reinforce the impossibility of this occurring for he is "solitary and abhorred." In the monster, Mary Shelley creates a character that is more human than his creator which gives the careful reader a shock of consciousness in which a heightened realization of self is achieved. The monster

21

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein: Or, The Modern Prometheus, (New York: Penguin Books, 1963) p. x. Shelley's introduction discloses the motivation for writing this novel. All lines quoted are from this edition.

reflects the inherent desire to be accepted for what we are, not what we appear to be, reinforcing this societal value. The book is consciously didactic, establishing proprieties and scales of value in certain areas of conduct; emotions, intellectual perceptions, and natural inclinations. It exalted conduct that was primarily associated with the Protestant middle class. The ultimate destruction of Victor Frankenstein becomes necessary because of his obsessions, first in creating the monster for his own glory, a transgression against religious beliefs and finally in his unswerving desire to destroy his creation.

#### Summary

The classification of the "mirror" has been shown to encompass discourse that reflects either the author or the implied reader. In reflecting the author of the discourse, an ideology may be presented to effect a desired change in the audience. This involves the concept of the second persona developed by Edwin Black which states that we must look at the implied auditor of the discourse to determine the model auditor of the discourse. Kenneth Burke's concept of identification is also significant in contributing to the understanding of the reflecting power of the "mirror."

## CHAPTER V

### THE STONE

In 1953, M. H. Abrams identified two distinct interpretive classifications, labeling them the "mirror" and the "lamp." In defining these terms, Abrams stated that the "mirror" has the tendency to reflect nature or society in an objective manner and the "lamp" is that discourse that is illumined by the author himself. In Chapters III and IV, this thesis changed Abrams' original concepts to the "window" and the "mirror" respectively, and identified discourse that falls within these classifications. The "window" alters Abrams' original "mirror" to encompass discourse that objectively describes "reality" whereas the "mirror" is that discourse that reflects either the audience or the author through a process of identification. Abrams' omitted or ignored the final classification of this thesis, the "stone," that discourse that does not depict reality nor reflect the author or audience. Discourse in the classification of the "stone" is that which is opaque and as such defies traditional methods of interpretation. This is not to say that this type of discourse is not interpreted by critics. On the contrary, critics take pride in deciphering this discourse because of the difficulty in doing so, gleaning whatever possible interpretation they can from the work. The

purpose of this chapter is to identify the types of discourse that encompass this final classification through a discussion of authorial presence in the discourse and the levels of difficulty in the work itself.

### Authorial Presence

In addressing the topic of authorial presence, we must go back briefly to the "window" and the "stone" to look at the levels found within these categories. Presence refers to being at hand or being generally proximate in time and space. Authorial presence enhances the identification process, increases the persuasive power of the discourse, and in general creates a more believable situation. Authorial presence is achieved through the use of first person narration, direct discourse, and third person narration. The classification of the "window" relies heavily on third person narration to create a narrator who performs as an historian or a reporter, objectively commenting on reality. Discourse found within the "mirror" employs first person or direct discourse to create an individual with whom the audience may identify or presents the author's ideologies. This brings us to the "stone" and the level of authorial presence found within this classification.

Discourse within the "stone" may employ the traditional forms of narration, but the audience is not given an individual with whom they may identify, there is no distinct reflection of the author's persona, nor is narration used for the purpose of reporting objectively on the world. Whereas,

authorial presence is felt strongly in the other two classifications, authorial presence is virtually non-existent in the "stone." The audience may attempt to construct an "implied author" from the narrative structure, or from previous works from the same author, but the picture constructed by the audience will be highly abstract.

The function of presence, as described in Chapter II, is to eliminate the distance between author and reader. Language or communication become the means by which individuals attempt to bridge differences. Presence offers a more tangible individual with whom to identify or become consubstantial. The greater the presence of the author in the discourse, the stronger the identification between author and audience. When we analyze discourse that encompasses the realm of the "stone," we find that this discourse does not meet these expectations.

Theodore Roethke's poetry exemplifies this type of discourse and the problem of identifying authorial presence. His poems are said to be spiritual autobiographies exploring prerational speech to capture a nonlogical state of being.<sup>1</sup> Referring back to Burke's concept of the "Dream," his definition of this term as the unconscious or subconscious factors of language flowing freely from the author or rhetor's pen is found to dominate Roethke's poetry. His poem "The Lost Son" engages in childlike riddles of prehuman or childish speech. Although the reader is engaged with first

<sup>1</sup> Baym "et al.," The Norton Anthology of American Literature 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979).

person narration, the presence of the author is impossible to identify; authorial presence is missing, his subjectivity is not ruling over the language. Take the opening stanza:

At Woodlawn I heard the dead cry:  
 I was lulled by the slamming of iron,  
 A slow drip over stones,  
 Toads brooding wells.  
 All the leaves stuck out their tongues;  
 I shook the softening chalk of my bones,  
 Saying,  
 Snail, snail, glister me forward,  
 Bird, soft-sigh me home,  
 Worm, be with me.  
 This is my hard time.

Or in a later section of the poem:

Where do the roots go?  
     Look down under the leaves.  
 Who put the moss there?  
     These stones have been here too long.  
 Who stunned the dirt into noise?  
     Ask the mole, he knows.  
 I feel the slime of a wet nest.  
     Beware Mother Mildew.  
 Nibble again, fish nerves.<sup>2</sup>

The audience may glean a meaning from these oddly constructed lines and the intricate language useage, but the author's presence is hidden or missing entirely. There is no inhered presence with whom the audience may identify. The ambiguity of the "I" in Roethke's poem leaves the audience the task of constructing a picture of this individual. Wayne Booth states that an "implied author" may be reconstructed by the audience from the narrative.<sup>3</sup> In many of Roethke's poems and other discourse found in the classification of the "stone" it

<sup>2</sup>  
 Roethke, Theodore, "The Native Son" in The Norton Anthology of American Literature 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979).

<sup>3</sup>  
 Wayne Booth, Rhetoric of Fiction pp. 70-71.

is an impossible task even to determine an implied author. This does not suggest that there is no voice in the discourse, on the contrary, the narrator is always present, but as such misdirects our construction of any presence other than his own. It is not the author's presence that is felt but that of the language itself. As a result, the lack of authorial presence works hand in hand with the level of difficulty found within the discourse.

#### Levels of Difficulty

What does it mean to say: discourse within the realm of the "stone" is opaque and difficult to interpret? We can agree on the fact that discourse is a language-act and as such is charged with the intent to communicate with its audience. If this is so, then how can a specific piece of discourse (a poem, political speech, or musical lyric) be perceived to be opaque, resistant to understanding and comprehension? This can be answered partially by looking at the different levels of difficulty encountered when trying to determine meaning in discourse.

Difficulty is a concept that has a diversity of meanings when applied to discourse. It may merely suggest that we must look something up which, in more cases than naught, will make the discourse more intelligible to us. This is not the case with discourse in the classification of the "stone." Difficulty takes on a more serious meaning, referring to the inaccessibility of the reader; it removes itself from the pragmatic realm of perception. Discourse within the "stone"

takes on the appearance of incomprehensible language or perhaps a secret lore that is hermetically sealed, available only to a privileged few if that.

George Steiner developed a taxonomy of levels of difficulty that will help clarify the opaqueness of discourse. Steiner breaks difficulties into four groups. These are "contingent," "modal," "tactical," and "ontological."<sup>4</sup> The first group, contingent, refers to difficulties that arise from the plurality of meaning in words, requiring the reader to look up the words that are denying total access to understanding the discourse and does not fall within the classification of the "stone." "Modal" difficulties lie within the reader, the poem seems alien or inaccessible to us because we fail to see a justification for the discourse and the poem "repels our sense of what poetry should or should not be about."<sup>5</sup> Again, this is not an element of the "stone" but more a matter of individual taste.

The third level of difficulty, "tactical," refers to the intentional obscurity on the part of the author to achieve certain stylistic effects.<sup>6</sup> The author may also be compelled toward obfuscation by political circumstances beyond his control. There are authors who aim to change the texture of language by making "new" the faded inventory of language. The author creates new words to convey his meaning. In many

<sup>4</sup> George Steiner, "On Difficulty," in On Difficulty and Other Essays, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

cases the exclusivity of language is created and perpetuated by the creator. We are not meant to understand easily and quickly, we are to come to meaning step-by-step and only to a point. This is decided upon by the author. This level of difficulty would also include discourse that uses jargon such as scientific journals, computer literature, political double-talk, or any other argot.

Each of these three classes of difficulty entails a contract of ultimate intelligibility between author and audience, between text and meaning. The final order of difficulty breaks this contract because the difficulties cannot be looked up; they cannot be resolved by readjustment of sensibility; they are not an intentional technique of retardation and creative uncertainty.<sup>7</sup> Difficulty in the "ontological" order confronts us with blank questions about the nature of human speech and about the status of signification. Discourse in this level of difficulty appears to move toward darkness, leading the audience into an abyss from which no meaning is discernible. Unlike "tactical" difficulties, it is often the case that we are not meant to understand at all, and our interpretation, even our reading itself, is an intrusion into the private world of the author. Referring back to authorial presense, we find in this class of difficulty the author is not a persona, but an openness that brings us to the position of art for art's sake. This states that art is assumed not to communicate ideas, but to

<sup>7</sup>  
Ibid., p. 41.

exist for the pleasure we experience in our reaction to it.<sup>8</sup>

Discourse in the realm of the "stone" may be identified by their "tactical" and "ontological" difficulties. To better understand the significance of these difficulties let us look at an example of each type. Lewis Carroll's book Through the Looking-Glass introduced the frightening Jabberwock dragon.<sup>9</sup> It is in "Jabberwocky" that we discover the tactical level of difficulty found in the "stone:"

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.  
"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"  
He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he sought--  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

<sup>8</sup>  
Kristen Thompson, "Neoformalist Analysis" in Breaking the Glass Armour (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>  
Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass, The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll, (New York: The Modern Library, 1896). All quotes come from this edition.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
 All mimsy were the borogoves,  
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

Alice's comment after reading this poem is "It seems very pretty, but it's rather hard to understand!" Carroll interjects: "You see she didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all." Carroll creates new words to call up an imaginative world in which a monstrous dragon exists, using a secret tongue that only those who inhabit the Looking-Glass world can understand. We are not expected to understand the secret tongue of this discourse, or to interpret its underlying meaning. Like Alice, we are merely expected to enjoy the poem for its rhyme and the feelings it evokes.

Later in the poem, Alice turns to Humpty Dumpty for his expertise in explaining all poems, including the "Jabberwocky." It is here that the reader becomes aware of the subtleties and intricacies of Carroll's manufactured language. This text gradually yields the meanings behind the words, however, the poem is still opaque because of Carroll's imaginative description of each word. For example, take the line "T'was brillig, and the slithy toves." "Brillig" means "four o'clock in the afternoon--the time when you begin broiling things for dinner." Then there are the intricacies found in Carroll's portmanteaus--a word that is a combination of two other words. "Slithy" is a word that combines the words lithe and slimy allowing the reader to envision an animal that is active and sticky. "Toves" are something like

badgers--something like lizards--and something like corkscrews. The definitions serve to diminish the abstract quality of the words, but this does not enlighten the reader as to the meaning of the poem. Recreating the line with the new definitions appears as confusing as the original line:

It was four o'clock, and the sticky, active  
badger/lizard/corkscrews

In the case of Carroll's "Jabberwocky," context does not make or shape the meaning, but makes meaning totally impossible.

Meaning becomes useless in the category of the "stone" because there is no context from which to build the meaning. I. A. Richards' concepts of delegated efficacy and interinanimation of words become worthless in relation to discourse in the "stone." Richards states that meaning is the process of delegated efficacy, a word comes to mean by substituting for what is not physically there and is accomplished through the assimilation of the surrounding contexts. In Richards' construct words mean whatever you choose them to mean, drawn from your past experiences with the word and the word's surrounding context. In the classification of the "stone" the words are manufactured by the author, therefore the word has no power to elicit meaning in the audience, thus, there is no delegated efficacy. The analysis of the incoming information cannot be compared to our past experiences with the word because there is no past experience. Interinanimation is the mutual dependency and interaction which links words and symbols in a literary relationship. The words in a sentence or

phrase, in the traditional sense, are dependent upon each other to create a literary context. Discourse in the "stone" denies this interaction of words which obstructs the creation of meaning.

This holds true with the ontological level of difficulty as well. Ontological difficulties are best demonstrated by the surrealist poetry of the late nineteenth century, especially by French poets such as Stephane Mallarme, Arthur Rimbaud, and Charles Baudelaire. These authors experienced freedom from the restraints of traditional rules, exploring hidden or subconscious sources for creativity. Their poetry gives the appearance of a game of free association of ideas. Relying on hallucination as a poetic source or reaching into childhood sensations for inspiration, the poetry at times resembles a chaotic assemblage of words.

Arthur Rimbaud is exemplary of the surrealist movement, an author whose poetry defies the traditional restraints and rules which allows the free flow of words from pen to paper. In his poem "Vowels," a compilation of what appears to be hallucinatory thought greets the reader. Traditional approaches to objects and human beings cease to exist and sensations are mixed indiscriminately. Vowels take on human characteristics and the world becomes that of a highly imaginative child where white kings live in pavillions and animals exist on peaceful pastures next to viridian seas:

Black A, white E, red I, green U, blue O--vowels,  
Some day I will open your silent pregnancies:  
A black belt, hairy with bursting flies,  
Bumbling and buzzing over stinking cruelties,

Pits of night; E, candor of sand and pavillions,  
 High glacial spears, white kings, trembling Queen Anne's  
 lace;  
 I, bloody spittle, laughter dribbling from a face  
 In wild denial or in anger, vermillions;

U, . . .divine movement of viridian seas,  
 Peace of pastures animal-strewn, peace of calm lines  
 Drawn on foreheads worn with heavy alchemies;

O, supreme Trumpet, harsh with strange stridencies,  
 Silences traced in angels and astral designs:  
 O. . .OMEGA. . .the violet light of His Eyes!<sup>10</sup>

The audience of this poem is confronted with darkness, the primal mystery of the magic of language. The author does not present an objective picture of nature nor is the audience able to perceive the author or themselves in the lines. The poetry lies outside the conventional boundaries of the realistic and informational purpose. In this case and many others, a poem does not and should not "mean" but should simply "be."

Ontological difficulties in the classification of the "stone" are not exclusive to poetry. Musical lyrics often fall into this class of difficulty. Bob Dylan, Bernie Taupin, Bruce Springsteen and many other musicians write lyrics for the pleasure it brings others or as Bernie Taupin states, "I know we all write things that we don't know what they mean. . . . We pretend that we do. But again that's great fun. There were so many songs we've written purely for the way that it just felt together."<sup>11</sup> Taupin speaks for many song writers.

<sup>10</sup>

Arthur Rimbaud, "Vowels," Arthur Rimbaud: Complete Works, trans. Paul Schmidt (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

<sup>11</sup>

Bernie Taupin, Two Rooms: Celebrating the Songs of Elton John & Bernie Taupin, (New York: Polygram Records, Inc., 1991).

Bruce Springsteen provides an example of lyrics that are not contextually grounded in the song "Blinded by the Light." The words come at the audience free of any binding form, a seemingly random combination of words that are an aural experiment:

Madman drummers bummers  
 and Indians in the summer  
 with a teenage diplomat  
 In the dumps with the mumps as  
 the adolescent pumps his  
 way into his hat  
 With a boulder on my shoulder,  
 feelin' kinda older I tripped  
 the merry-go-round  
 With this very unpleasing  
 sneezing and wheezing the  
 calliope crashed to the ground<sup>12</sup>

This sample of Springsteen's lyrics gives evidence to the void created by the ontological difficulty that is inherent in the classification of the stone. The audience faces a dark void when attempting to create meaning from the given text.

### Subuniverses of Meaning

Tactical and ontological levels of difficulty lead us to a discussion of what Berger and Luckmann call "subuniverses of meaning." These are structures of language that are esoteric, meanings that are manufactured and perpetuated by a chosen few. These subuniverses may be socially structured by various criteria--sex, age, occupation, religious inclina-

12

Bruce Springsteen, "Blinded by the Light," Greetings From Asbury Park, Columbia Records, 31908, 1973. Lyrics quoted are taken from the printed lyric sheets accompanying the album.

13

tion, aesthetic taste, education, etc.      The significance of the subuniverses to the classification of the "stone" is that the meaning is produced and carried by a particular group within which these meanings have objective reality. These groups become esoteric enclaves, "hermetically sealed" to all those who have been properly initiated into the mysteries. The outsiders have to be kept out and this is accomplished through techniques of intimidation, propaganda, mystification, and the manipulation of prestige symbols. An example will help clarify.

The medical profession has been set up as a subuniverse of meaning. The lay public must be kept out but at the same time convinced that this is justifiable. Thus, the general population is intimidated by images of the possible consequences that follow "not following doctor's advice." To enhance its authority, the medical profession shrouds itself in the age-old symbols of power and mystery, including an incomprehensible language and outlandish costumes. Medical and scientific journals can be read by the general public, but meaning will be unattainable without access to this secret lore; it is a "stone" to those without this knowledge. This same structure is observable in other areas of society. Many religions develop subuniverses, for instance, the Catholic Mass in many areas is presented in Latin by priests dressed in elaborate robes.

On another level, subuniverses have developed in the form of "street speak" that has become embedded in many contemporary films. The presentation of an incomprehensible language denies access to any but those individuals who encompass this esoteric enclave. In the film "White Men Can't Jump," meaning is shared between a specific group, those uninitiated into this group will find meaning unobtainable, creating a "stone" for many in the audience. Common language comes to represent an entirely different object, thus "drain" becomes "to make a shot without hitting the rim" or "ice" refers to "cool under pressure."<sup>14</sup> The 1977 parody film "Airplane" presented a sequence in which "jive" was spoken, using subtitles to translate the incomprehensible language to anyone but those who speak "jive."

Subuniverses of meaning take the tactical and ontological levels of difficulty to a different plane, in which only specific segments of any society are privy to the meaning. This has been adopted in the music world by rap singers, in which street talk has become a mainstay of the lyric sheet. Again, meaning is denied to all but those who inhabit this collective.

### Summary

When M. H. Abrams wrote The Mirror and the Lamp, a significant interpretive classification was omitted from his discussion, that discourse that neither reflects the author

14

Jamie Reno, "L. A. Speak," Los Angeles Times Magazine June 1992: 6.

or audience and that which does not reflect reality. This classification has been identified in this thesis as the "stone," that discourse which is opaque and as such defies traditional methods of interpretation. This chapter has discussed two means of identifying discourse that encompasses the "stone." These are lack of authorial presence in the discourse and tactical and ontological levels of difficulty in interpreting the discourse.

Lack of authorial presence inhibits interpretation by eliminating the process of identification as established in Kenneth Burke's A Rhetoric of Motives. The lack of presence in discourse creates a void in the discourse, rendering meaning incomprehensible. Lack of presence is closely related to the levels of difficulty discussed in this chapter. Tactical difficulty refers to the intentional obscurity on the part of the author to achieve certain stylistic effects. The author creates language that is meant to obfuscate meaning and is a manipulation on the part of the author to increase the mystification properties of this subuniverse of meaning. Ontological difficulty confronts the audience with blank questions about the nature of human speech, that is, signification becomes a moot point because the author discards the traditional rules of language useage and presents the audience with discourse that lies outside the traditional boundaries of the pragmatic purpose of discourse.

The importance of this classification as an addition to the interpretive categories established by Abrams is

manifold. The "stone" fills the hermeneutic void for discourse that defies the tradition of interpretation. The stone brings a greater awareness of the limitations of interpretation, that we should be aware that "truths" may not be eternal and that we should be willing to change beliefs if presented with good reason to do so. It is also important to note that the claim for context-bound or tradition-bound understanding does not preclude the re-evaluation of previous ways of understanding the methods interpretation is addressed.

## CHAPTER VI

### INTERSECTIONS:

#### SUMMARIES, CONNECTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

As stated in the first chapter, the purpose of this thesis is to redefine and enhance the original concepts presented by M. H. Abrams in his book The Mirror and the Lamp. The previous chapters replaced Abrams' concepts of "mirror" and "lamp" with what I believe are metaphorically richer ways to capture these critical classification, namely the "window" and the "mirror." The classification of the "mirror" broadened Abrams' original definition of the "lamp" to encompass discourse that not only reflects the author but can be perceived as selecting the audience as well. Finally, an additional classification was introduced to fill the void in Abrams' original work, to address that discourse that neither presents an objective view of the world nor is a reflection of the author or audience, namely the "stone." The "stone" refers to that discourse that is opaque, that confronts the audience with language that appears incoherent and without context--that which cannot be deciphered.

The previous chapters have provided the reader with examples to help clarify the types of discourse that fit within each classification. Also identified are the different theoretical concepts that are useful in

interpreting the discourse in the "window," the "mirror," and the "stone." The purpose of this chapter is to address the degrees to which these classifications are mutually exclusive and how audience perception influences the interpretations, specifically how historical grounding influences the ways an audience perceives any given discourse.

### The Problem of Perception

Integral in the understanding of how the classifications may overlap is the concept of historicity and how it pertains to interpretation. Historicity is a category of historiography; it is "the distinctive ontological mark of man, whose existence is always temporally and historically situated."<sup>1</sup> The application of historicity to these classifications involves a two-fold analysis, the historicity of the interpreter and the historicity of the artifact. Both the interpreter and the artifact have their own contexts and are conditioned by the tradition in which they stand.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the interpretation of any given discourse is influenced by both the preconceived ideas the audience brings to the discourse and the historical context or situation surrounding the discourse. In other words, if the chosen discourse is the "Jabberwock," the audience is influenced by past interpretations of this poem, any historical accounts of

<sup>1</sup> David Couzens Hoy, The Critical Circle: Literature, History, and Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Lewis Carroll as its author, and the significance of the message on the current audience; thus making meaning becomes a highly subjective exercise.

How does historicity affect the perceptions of discourse in the critical classifications identified in this thesis? The historicity of any given individual will influence the way a discourse will be perceived. An example will help clarify. A specific discourse that has been identified by one auditor as falling within the classification of the "window," an objective description of events, may present itself to another individual as reflecting the author or even himself. The same holds true in the opposite direction.

Oliver Stone's movie, Platoon, has been described as "the first real Viet Nam film," ". . . historically and politically accurate," and "a time-capsule movie that explodes like a frag bomb in the consciousness of America, showing how it was back then, over there."<sup>3</sup> For many, including a whole generation of individuals who did not experience this period of history, Platoon became the objective retelling of the experience. In other words, it presented itself to many as a "window," making present for us an entire period of time that has long since passed. At the same time this film presents itself to many individuals as a "mirror," a reflection of both the author, Stone, and themselves. Many individuals perceived it as "part of the healing process. . .speaking to our generation (those who

<sup>3</sup>  
Richard Corliss, "Viet Nam, The Way it Really Was, on Film" Time January 1987: 57.

experienced the war first hand)."<sup>4</sup>

Both perceptions are colored by the historicity of a specific audience. Individuals whose perceptions are influenced by the stories they have heard or read of the war see the film as an actualization of reality, a "window." Those who experienced the war first hand, or have read about Oliver Stone and his personal investments in his films, see the film as a "mirror." The beauty of this model is that if an interpreter does not see himself or the author in the discourse, this individual's interpretation falls under another category (stone or window).

We should think of the lines drawn between the classifications of "window," "mirror," and "stone" not as firmly etched demarcations but more as a dotted line that allows the individual the room to decide in which category a discourse belongs. Another reason for this movement between categories is in the perception of "reality." Historical accuracy is not necessary in the mimetic depiction of "reality;" however, the suggestion of an historical context is. Another Oliver Stone film, "The Doors," does not claim to have depicted "accurately" the events of the sixties from an historic point of view, but the essence of that period is accurately depicted, creating a reality in its presentation. Stone takes us beyond the historical to create a socially constructed reality. Another example is found in the Sinclair Lewis novels of the 1920's. That which many see as

<sup>4</sup>  
Ibid.

a chronicle or documentation in literature of American business, others perceive as a mirror of their own lives. Again, the concept of historicity plays a significant part in the determination of the classification.

The movement between "mirror" and "window" has been discussed, but movement between any of the three categories is conceivable. Because the audience brings their own subjectivity to each discourse, there is always the possibility of perceptual differences. Abrams cites one such perceptual difference between two critics, J. von Schiller and August Schlegel, one perceiving Shakespeare as supremely objective, the other as subjective.<sup>5</sup> In Schiller's view, Shakespeare was expert in representing the particulars of nature (window) whereas Schlegel's view was that Shakespeare was most visible in his works (mirror) and could not be subtracted from them. The perceptual subjectivity of an audience must always be taken into account when discussing the attribution of meaning.

#### The Problem of Meaning

From what has been observed so far about historicity, the central concept of contemporary hermeneutics, it begins to become clear that the wider phenomenon of meaning is here raised, not the narrower, special case of interpretation by professional critics like some mentioned above and more

<sup>5</sup>  
M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) p. 238-39.

quoted throughout this thesis. The critic as audience may constitute a special case in audience history, representing one totally immersed in and acutely and personally interested in the tradition in which a given artifact seems to stand, against which it can be judged and appreciated, into which it fits, even if it broadens and redefines the tradition itself in fitting into it. One literary and rhetorical theorist and critic whose work centered on language and meaning offering concepts sympathetic to this analysis was I. A. Richards. The "context theorem of meaning" offers two mainsprings to describe the dynamic process by which meaning is made of utterances: delegated efficacy and the interinanimation of words. Delegated efficacy refers to the power or effect a given individual assigns to a given word based upon that individual's past experiences with that word, things at which that word can point, similar words, and similar objects. Words make up part of any individual's historicity, and different experiences with them and their referents form part of the differences between our separate historicities. This historicity, this context, is psychological--it lies inside the individual's head, abstracted from previous concrete and objectively real occurrences.

Interinanimation, as discussed in previous chapters, is the mutual constraining of word upon word in a verbal context. Simply put, it's the normal meaning of the word "context," the hanging around together of words. What Gadamer calls the "Wirkungsgeschichte" of a text or artifact is its being within a "context" of similar works, related

perhaps by time or by theme or by author or school (as in Romantic versus Realist).<sup>6</sup> Now we appreciate that a given presidential inaugural may be understood partly in light of other inaugurals. Moreover, we have firm evidence in many cases of speech writers attempting to recall glorious past eloquence by imitation, either subtle or clumsy.

Historicity, in the context of a general theory of meaning, is of paramount importance in the determination of a tradition by which individuals perceive an artifact. The general public is influenced by what has been embedded as tradition in presidential rhetoric; that is, asked what a presidential inaugural should sound like, the majority of the general public would answer with Kennedy's "ask not what your country can do for you. . . ." This phenomenon is not exclusive to presidential inaugurals but to any political rhetoric and is the result of the experience with and indoctrination to this type of discourse. In other words, it is our historicity.

#### Narrative Connections

Historicity is significant in discussing the ways the classifications overlap each other but it would be wrong to state that this is the only area of connection. Narrative cues are also important in understanding how the "window," "mirror," and "stone" intersect. Narrative cues manifest themselves in various ways including tense (past, present,

<sup>6</sup>  
Hoy, p. 42.

and future) and narration.

Let us first turn to tense as a narrative connection between the classifications. Tense is usually determined by the discourse, for instance, one would not write an historical novel in the future tense. The window, however, which attempts to present an objective view of the world, using a narrator who acts as an historian, could conceivably write in future tense. The most obvious example of future tense useage in the window classification is the weather report. Every evening, audiences across the country and the world make plans around these predictions because these reports become their reality. This very simple example shows the viability of future tense in the classification of the window; however, future tense used in other discourse that would normally fall within the "window" is often confused or misinterpreted as "mirror" or even "stone." Another example of the connections between categories in reference to tense is in George Orwell's futuristic novel 1984. 1984 is set in a society of extreme right- and left-wing totalitarianism where there is no place for truth, where historical records are destroyed and propaganda replaces information. This book presents a world that appears to be a reflection of Orwell's imagination, but it was Orwell's keen insight into the reality of Russia in 1949 (this year was the original title) that created a window on the world of Stalin. The use of future tense often blurs the demarcations between the classifications creating confusion in determining within which category a particular discourse should fall.

Present tense in combination with direct discourse is another area where connections or intersections may be observed. In Lewis Carroll's the "Jabberwock" any given audience might state that because he uses present tense and direct discourse, this would fall under the classification of the "mirror" rather than the "stone." In this poem we find an individual with whom the audience may identify, in this case a father speaking to his son. This is an accurate assessment and once again we find the subjectivity of any audience influences within which classification a specific discourse may fall. The audience is constrained to look toward the other areas of identification in order to determine the interpretive classification of any given discourse.

The tense that is used by an author leads us to another narrative device, that of the narrator. It has been established in the previous chapters that the "window," "mirror," and "stone" use narrators differently; however, each classification uses a narrator in some manner. Narration often blurs the demarcations between classifications because of a tangible voice in the discourse, an anchor within the verbal structure.

The use of homo-diegetic narrator versus hetero-diegetic narrator is a narrative choice that creates intersections between classifications. Homo-diegetic narrators are within the story, a character in the novel, film, etc. who cues and channels the audience's construction of the story. The hetero-diegetic narrator serves the same function; however,

the narrator is not within the story itself, but serves as a commentator on what is occurring from a point outside of the action. An example of a homo-diegetic narrator would be Mary Shelly's use of Frankenstein and the monster to relate their specific stories. A hetero-diegetic narrator is found in Sir Lawrence Olivier's voice-over narration in the documentary series "The World At War."

The connections created in using narrators may be observed in instances where the narrator is presented as a specific individual with whom the audience may identify. For example, in the documentary "Age 7 in the U.S.S.R." the narrator provides voice-over commentary to establish contextual grounding for the questions he asks each subject. The objective presentation of the surroundings in each of the provinces (Russian Georgia, Lithuania, Siberia, etc.) provides a window on this piece of the world and its inhabitants. On the other hand, because the narrator is the only English-speaking individual in the film he becomes the anchor with whom many in an audience may identify. Another intersecting aspect of this example is found in the narrator's directorial presentation of the questions each child is asked. Each answer represents a specific point of view, creating for another audience a mosaic of mini-"mirrors." Once again the subjectivity of the audience plays a significant role in the determination of classifications.

### Implications

The previous chapters have discussed the means of

determining the types of discourse that fit within the established interpretive classifications of the "window," the "mirror," and the "stone" and provided the analysis of specific discourses for each classification. The analyses have been limited to specific areas, not because of limitations within the classifications but because of the constraints of writing. The further implications of these classifications to specific discourses is manifold. For example, the different ways advertising fits within the classifications of the "window" and the "mirror" should be addressed, specifically focusing on objective presentations of reality and the mirror-like quality of many advertisements to induce identification within its audience. The opaque quality of political rhetoric on one hand versus the reflective projections of the individual rhetor is another area for future research. Besides the "reality shows" that have already been discussed, television is replete with examples for analysis that fit within each classification. How propaganda presents itself as a "window" but actually acts as a "mirror" is but another area of interest for this researcher. Another area not touched upon in this thesis but which has implications for future research is the concept of augmentation in the classification of the "window." What I mean by this is the continuum of micro to macro and how this changes the perception of reality through the window. The closer we are to what we perceive presents itself as more realistic than that perceived through a window, whereas, the further away we are from the reality, the more the discourse

takes on the appearance of a "mirror." Fodder for future research is not constrained by area of discourse nor genre within the area, the possibilities are unlimited and waiting to be tapped.

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