Collective Board Notes for 10/13/16 “Rhetoric and/as Genre”

Exploration/Discussion Qs:

Let’s assume we have only the excerpts in B/H for understanding Vico on language, signification, or genre. What might we say about the following?

- sign systems are arbitrary or universal?
- the mind precedes language or arises with language?
- we go to language to discover “real” cultural and sociological theories about a nation or to discover ways that truths are distorted?
- rhetoric is potentially a threat to probability and a harm to inquiry, or a help to probability and a guide to inquiry?
- ingenuity is seen in metaphor or in imagination?
- we should be more concerned with training youth for civic action or with the ways in which knowledge becomes incorporated into social institutions?
- the poet is a scientist or a creationist?

By synthesizing the ideas represented in 2-3 passages below, write in your own words how you think Vico is being presented as a rhetorical player and how his theory might converge with or diverge from some of his “contemporaries” (Bacon, Locke, Campbell).

- Language reveals the processes of reason, passion, and imagination (B/H 862).
- “[Bacon’s] vast demands so exceed the utmost extent of man’s effort that he seems to have indicated how we fall short of achieving an absolutely complete system of sciences rather than how we may remedy our cultural gaps” (865).
- “As for the aim, it should circulate, like a blood-stream, through the entire body of the learning process” (866).
- “Some of the new instruments of science are, themselves, sciences; others are arts; still others, products of either art or nature” (866).
- “I may add that in the art of oratory the relationship between speaker and listeners is of the essence” (869).
- “[W]hereas truth is one, probabilities are many, and falsehoods numberless. Each procedure, then, has its defects. … To avoid both defects, I think, young men should be taught the totality of sciences and arts, and their intellectual powers should be developed to the full; …” (870).
- “Our chief fault is that we disregard that part of ethics which treats of human character, of its dispositions, its passions, and of the manner of adjusting these factors to public life and eloquence” (871).
- “What is eloquence, in effect, but wisdom, ornately and copiously delivered in words appropriate to the common opinion of mankind?” (877).

Terms [courtesy of Dr. Graban, for we did not get to these … and is any of us really surprised?!]

Dialogism (or Dialogics)
This describes or names Bakhtin's critical project, even though he didn’t invent the term. Dialogics are typically used by 3 schools of thought: verbal liberal arts, feminist criticism, and radical critique. Bialostosley (1986) was the first to use the term "dialogics," "advancing it as

correlative to, but distinct from, the Aristotelian arts of dialectic and rhetoric" (Enos, *Encyclopedia of Rhet/Comp* 190). Dialogics are open-ended and personal, rather than topical or decisive. "People discover their own meanings by differing with and appropriating the meanings of others" (Enos 190).

In a way, this term makes a nice critical space for realizing why Bizzell and Herzberg position rhetorical theory the way they do -- e.g., they tend to locate contemporary or 20th century rhetorical theory as occurring at intersections of argumentation (reason), language (communication), and ideology (philosophy). (I guess I would also add psychology and ethnography …) So, underlying their work is definitely a narrative that *begins with and moves away from* Sophistic assumptions about rhetoric as consisting of performances and persuasive acts between interlocutors; and another narrative that tracks a movement *toward* modernist principles of performativity, rather than classical notions of performance (B/H 1186). **-Courtesy of Dr. G**

Discourse
Can be defined as "language in use," is studying a "text's functions in the human world" (this text can be either oral or written) (Enos, *Encyclopedia of Rhet/Comp* 192). Theories of discourse classify groups of discourse "according to broadly defined social functions" (Enos 192). Jurgen Habermas put forward a discourse theory, which "assumes that the specific type of validity claim one aims to justify—the cognitive goal or topic of argumentation—determines the specific argumentative practices appropriate for such justification" (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). Discourse theory, according to Habermas, "thus calls for a pragmatic analysis of argumentation as a social practice." James Gee defines Discourses (with a big "D") as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, thinking, and acting that serve to connect one with a socially meaningful group or social network" ("What is Literacy?").

See esp. Foucault in B/H 1433. There's a nice rift created by F's definition of discourse: a totality in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity may be determined. In this light, discourse is recast as an event. For Foucault, we can't have historical knowledge -- or knowledge of any kind, probably -- without <u>a particular discursive practice</u>. So, he asks us to call into question our "will to truth," to "restore to discourse its character as an event," and to "<u>throw off the sovereignty of the signifier</u>" (Bizzell/Herzberg 1470). When we get to Gates's "Signifying Monkey," we'll consider why he and/or other postmodern theorists might want to throw off that pesky sovereign signifier! **-Courtesy of Dr. G**

Genre - Devitt defines this thoroughly and well for us! I can do no better than she! **-Courtesy of Dr. G**

Langue* vs. *Parole
"Langue" is the French word for language or tongue ("rules"). A set of rules and norms of communication that make up language. This was first used by Ferdinand de Saussure in his Course in General Linguistics (or Cours de linguistique générale) to denote the entire system of a language, its rules of combination, and its system of differentiations.

- For de Saussure and Bakhtin (and others who use this pair of concepts), the langue makes all individual utterances possible.
- For de Saussure, *langue* also helps us realize signification, i.e., as words don't always have exact equivalents in meaning from language to language. This resonates with

Locke a bit, I think … Saussure would say that language is a system of difference.

"Parole" is a particular utterance within the language system ("speech"); the things we do and say in communication; manifestation of the rule (behavior).

- Saussure said that the study of linguistics should not focus on the parole, or specific utterances, but on the langue—the system out of which they emerge. (This was a typical structuralist view.) Bakhtin, on the other hand, seemed to stress the importance of focusing the study of linguistics on the parole, or specific utterances.
- I think we saw in Bakhtin's "Speech Genres" his belief that the system of language (langue) appears only in the behavior of its individual speakers who produce instances of speech (parole), whether or not they know that what they are producing is "correct."
- (This would later inform the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, for anyone interested in discussions about whether thoughts in one language can be expressed (or even thought) in another.) **-Courtesy of Dr. G**

Structuralism/Structuralist Criticism - a way of thinking about the world that is predominantly concerned with the perceptions and description of structures. At its simplest, structuralism claims that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by all the other elements involved in that situation.

Most discussions/definitions of structuralism (as it intersects with linguistics or literary criticism) will emphasize the following facets:

- A belief that all human activity is constructed, not natural or "essential"
- A belief that systems of organization are important (what we do is always a matter of selection within a given construct)
- A reliance on the *differend* to attain meaning (i.e., on the difference or distance or deferral between meanings and actions): "any activity, from the actions of a narrative to not eating one's peas with a knife, takes place within a system of differences and has meaning only in its relation to other possible activities within that system, not to some meaning that emanates from nature or the divine" (Childers & Hentzi, p. 286.)
- Some relationship to Marxist criticism, or certainly some parallels to a kind of textual criticism that relies on the need to study all texts as material discourses, although there are pretty stark differences between how Marxist structuralist critics might view a "text" vs. how Marxist *post-structural* critics might view a "text"

Where rhetorical theory draws the most from this way of thinking is in adapting **post-structuralist critiques or post-structuralist voices** (i.e., a shift from seeing texts as closed entities where the critic's only task is to appreciate or decipher towards seeing texts as an endless play of signifiers that make meaning concrete on their reception -- what Barthes and Foucault might have called their "disentanglement") **-Courtesy of Dr. G**

Collective Board Notes for 10/6/16 "Rhetoric and/as Epistemology"

Sources for looking up these terms (https://eng5028-fall2016.blogspot.com/p/resources.html)

- *Oxford English Dictionary online* (the full OED)

- *Silva Rhetoricae*
- *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- *Glossary of Classical Terms*
- *Glossary of Terms for Rhetorical Argument*
- *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition*

In Bizzell/Herzberg

- *B/H classical rhetoric introduction*
- *B/H glossary*

Key Terms

epistemology: the theory and evolution of knowledge; ways in which people come to acquire knowledge; "ways of knowing" (B/H glossary)--what is the nature of knowledge? What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What are its structures/limits? (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy); Locke extended the epistemological ideas of Bacon and Descartes (p.814).

faculty psychology: divides the human mind into four faculties: reason or understanding, imagination, the passions, and the will; Campbell relates it to rhetoric "a successful rhetor must appeal to each faculty by using a specific form of communication and a corresponding style." The nature of knowledge is tied to performativity. p. 898 for schema

Heteroglossia: the presence of two or more voices or expressed viewpoints within a text (or a person?); a dialogic way of viewing words and meaning-- language is not stable, but rather shifts within various contexts.

"Languages of heteroglossia, like mirrors that face each other, each of which in its own way reflects a little piece, a tiny corner of the world, force us to guess at and grasp behind their inter-reflecting aspects for a world that is broader, more multi-levelled and multi-horizoned than would be available to one language, one mirror." **(Bakhtin)**

Heteroglossia requires an embeddedness in a specific set of social circumstances and also that each utterance is shaped and influenced by that embeddedness; there needs to be some juxtaposition, i.e., two things that would not normally go together where one is more dominant; a dialogue of competing voices or ideologies; explicit or implicit disputes between characters and the groups they represent, "official" ideologies of author's culture, and the traditional expectations of the literary genre in which something is written **- Courtesy of Dr. G**

Mind: consciousness-- "the mind is comprised of the understanding, the imagination, the passions, and the will"(898)-- all need to be appealed to in order to achieve persuasion.

will: The drive or desire to complete an action (903, 905, 906). A faculty of the mind whose end is persuasion and whose form is vehemence (898).

passion: Mind-emotions; a collective abstract. Sometimes synonymous with pathos (904). An

intellectual attachment to a particular thing. Some “elevate the soul,” others “deject the mind,” others can do either (904-905).

sign/signification: has to do with naming something in the external world or naming an idea...sign is what we use to name the thing/concept as part of the process of understanding through language and signification is the internal concept of that connection

System: the system describes the relationship between items, as opposed to *the concept* of rhetoric; Campbell’s form: using rhetoric to achieve a goal (faculties of understanding, imagination, passion, and will) Mao’s breakdown of Dao as a method of recontextualizing an approach to rhetoric is another system. For Locke, rhetoric is one part of a system that involves external phenomena, mental understandings, and verbal propositions/representations