

Jim A. Kuypers, editor

*Purpose, Practice, and Pedagogy in Rhetorical Criticism*

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## *Chapter Thirteen*

# **Rhetorical Criticism and Citizenship Education**

Robert E. Terrill

The question with which I begin is a simple one: what is the purpose of teaching rhetorical criticism to undergraduates? Unlike graduate students, undergraduates are not being trained to become professional critics and most of them will never publish an essay of rhetorical analysis—not even on their blogs. Most of them have little interest in learning about the history of rhetoric, or the arcane terminology of rhetorical theory, or how to articulate their insights within a disciplinary conversation. It is true, as with almost any critical exercise, that students taking a course in rhetorical criticism may improve their reading and writing skills. Depending on the artifacts chosen for study, they also may learn some history or otherwise gain cultural literacy. And they may develop habits of revision, or begin to imagine an audience for their writing, or gain skill in the use of supporting evidence. I might argue that each of these things is very nearly an absolute good, and that the world would be a better place if more individuals had more facility with each of them. But none of these things specifically justifies the teaching of rhetorical criticism to undergraduates.

I believe strongly that one such justification lies in connecting the practice of rhetorical criticism to the practice of citizenship. As Brian Jackson reminds us, “The core of rhetoric is education for civic engagement as an activity worthy of study and practice, which is something quite different from (although at points intersecting with) specialized knowledge in literary appreciation, psychology, philosophy, drama or any of the social sciences.”<sup>1</sup> Although almost any undergraduate course in the humanities, if properly conceived, encourages the development of skills that might contribute to practices of citizenship, a rhetorical education is specifically focused on the

production of effective citizens. Rhetorical criticism, representing the interpretive mode of rhetorical practice, is central to this project of forming citizens to the extent that habits of effective citizenship are dependent upon interpretive practices. Roberto Alejandro, for example, argues that citizenship is not “a juridical category or a collection of civic attitudes, but . . . a hermeneutic horizon, a practice, and even a textual reality.”<sup>2</sup> The more productively an individual can understand and craft a response to the statements of another, the more effective a citizen he or she may be. Rhetorical criticism possesses a capacity to weave together the practices of interpretation and citizenship, so that when a critic is engaging with a text he or she can be imagined to be doing so in a way analogous to the way that citizens should engage one another.

I am not calling here for a revision of the practice of rhetorical criticism, then, but for a revision in some of the ways that it is taught. I begin by discussing the *purpose* of teaching rhetorical criticism in terms of what I refer to as citizenly virtues; I then discuss ways to introduce students to the *practice* of rhetorical criticism, as manifest in exemplary essays by professional critics, that emphasize the points of contact between critical practice and these citizenly virtues; at the close, I discuss some of the broader implications for these ideas with respect to rhetorical *pedagogy*. Throughout, I rely primarily, but not exclusively, on Isocrates as my exemplary pedagogue. As Jeffrey Walker has reminded us, “Without its teaching tradition, rhetoric is not rhetoric, but just another kind of philosophy or literary criticism. The teaching, the production of rhetorically habituated selves in an educational theater devoted to enacting and experiencing a dream of civic life, is what has always distinguished, and still distinguishes, what we do.”<sup>3</sup> This essay is an effort to contribute to our understanding of how to emphasize for undergraduates this distinguishing feature of a rhetorical education.

### PURPOSE: CULTIVATING CITIZENLY VIRTUES

Isocrates was the most influential teacher of rhetoric in ancient Athens, and was explicit about both the purpose of his rhetorical pedagogy and about the role of the interpretive mode of rhetoric within that pedagogy.<sup>4</sup> Josiah Ober, for example, describes the goal of Isocrates’s civic education as “the development, through speech, of a complex yet integrated identity,” the production of students “capable of intervening, through speech, in an equally complex social and political realm.”<sup>5</sup> When describing his pedagogical goals in “Against the Sophists,” Isocrates notes that “those who desire to follow the true precepts of this discipline may, if they will, be helped more speedily towards honesty of character than towards facility in oratory.”<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that he claims to be able to make unethical individuals into ethical citi-

zens; he is quick to point out that he does not think that a rhetorical education, or perhaps any education, can accomplish that. What Isocrates does seem to mean here is that a “true” rhetorical education is not merely about producing well-crafted speeches but also about producing well-crafted persons—individuals who have developed the “faculty of civic life disciplined by deep-seated norms of effectiveness and virtue” described by David Fleming.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of such an education is “to develop a capacity, a *dunamis* of thought and speech, a deeply habituated skill, that can be carried into practical, grown-up, public life—as the student gathers experience and matures.”<sup>8</sup> When teaching rhetorical criticism to undergraduates, we are providing a key component in a process of developing rhetorically habituated selves, which in turn is a key component in producing effective citizens. Teaching students to engage in rhetorical criticism directs them not merely toward the purposes of discovering meaning or appreciating artistry, but rather encourages them toward the process of civic engagement. Specifically, the purpose of teaching rhetorical criticism to undergraduates is to cultivate virtues of citizenly practice, which are habits of speech and thought that embody an ethic of reciprocity and a commitment to communal action for the common good.

These citizenly virtues are too numerous to list, so I will focus on four: flexibility, engagement, mimesis, and duality. They are, as virtues tend to be, interdependent and interconnected rather than separate and discrete; practicing one of them generally implies, or invites, the practice of one or more of the others. Therefore, as I endeavor to describe each of them in turn, inevitably they shade somewhat into one another.

According to Robert Hariman, the goal of Isocratean pedagogy is “to inculcate a disposition to just conduct and creative problem solving, without fostering the arrogance and rigidity that come from excessive confidence in one’s expertise.”<sup>9</sup> Such a pedagogy, in other words, is not designed to inspire a sterile mastery of theory or the memorization of data. In fact, as Hariman suggests, such mastery and memorization may lead toward an isolating arrogance that erodes the flexible sensitivity to audience, topic, purpose, and situation that rhetorical fluency demands. Isocrates famously berates those teachers who “cannot see that they are applying the analogy of an art with hard and fast rules to a creative process.”<sup>10</sup> He further reminds us that “no system of knowledge” can account fully for rhetorical situations, “since in all cases they elude our science. Yet those who most apply their minds to them and are able to discern the consequences which for the most part grow out of them, will most often meet these occasions in the right way.”<sup>11</sup> Isocrates does not mean that there are no rules at all, of course, but rather that rhetorical mastery cannot be achieved through the mere application of precept.

Carrying these insights into the teaching of rhetorical criticism, it becomes a key component in cultivating an appreciation for flexibility because

students very quickly discover that rhetorical discourse as it lives and breathes in public culture tends not to play by the rules. The application of rhetorical terminology to a text leads to interpretive insight exactly as rarely as the deployment of theoretical vocabulary contributes to rhetorical eloquence. Students engaged in learning how to perform rhetorical criticism quickly find that their ability to account for the potential influence of public discourses depends on their ability to understand such discourse as responding to and as attempting to influence an audience and a situation that constantly is in flux, as much as on their ability to mobilize a vocabulary drawn from rhetorical lore. Rhetorical criticism, as an integral part of rhetorical pedagogy, inspires a flexible appreciation for the potentially infinite variety of human discursive production.

Importantly, however, a student habituated into rhetorical self-consciousness is not only capable of discerning the subtleties of rhetorical invention, but also is inclined to engage in civic life. A rhetorical pedagogy, ideally, eventuates not only in an aptitude for understanding the strategies and tactics of civic engagement, but also in students who are apt to perform such engagement. Education in rhetoric, as Jackson puts it, "is a *training of a capacity* in the students that can be, and according to this model of education, *ought* to be used in public life."<sup>12</sup> Among many other things, rhetorical criticism teaches that public discourse, in whatever form one finds it, is not an idol to be worshipped, an artifact to be displayed, or a work of art to be appreciated, but rather is an invitation for more discourse. A rhetorical act, in whatever form it may take, is but one turn in a conversation and awaits, and invites, a response.

Rhetorical criticism, as a pedagogical practice, seeks to foster in students not only the facility to craft that response but also the inclination to do so. The close study of public discourse cultivates this inclination by introducing students to the fundamental intertextuality of public texts. It reveals to students, generally for the first time, the fact that public discourse is produced as a response to previous discourse, that new discourse always is fashioned from previous discourse, and that rhetoric always is produced in response to other rhetoric. When they write their critical essays, then, students are invited to see themselves as participating in this public conversation, as they understand that they are producing their own rhetorical discourses in the only way that rhetorical discourses can be produced: by responding to the call issued by public texts to engage with and collaborate with the discourse of others. As students are taught how to write like a rhetorical critic, they are being taught how to listen like a citizen.

*Imitatio* is the most robust practice of critical listening available to the critic and to the citizen. The specifically rhetorical version of mimesis, *imitatio* does not consist, as some would have it, of "the mere repetition or mechanistic reproduction of something found in an existing text" but rather of

"a complex process that allows historical texts to serve as equipment for future rhetorical production."<sup>13</sup> As Edward P. J. Corbett reminds us, it is unfortunate that *imitatio* is so often rendered into English as "imitation," which carries connotations of copying or duplication which are not emphasized in the classical notion.<sup>14</sup> The object of *imitatio* is to produce a new text that stands alongside the original, shaped and informed by it, and thus engaged in an intimate response to it, but not overlying or mimicking it. The texts that students produce through rhetorical mimesis, Quintilian reminds us, should "rival and vie with the original" and thus avoid merely repeating them.<sup>15</sup> From our vantage point on the far side of the Enlightenment, we might not immediately recognize *imitatio* as a critical practice, but of course the rephrasing, reinventing, and repurposing at the heart of rhetorical mimesis also are at the heart of critique.

As a pedagogical practice, *imitatio* traditionally has been divided into two phases, which Corbett calls "analysis" and "genesis." Analysis consists of a close analysis of a model text to discern the sources of its eloquence, and genesis is the attempt by students to produce a new text that is informed by the model text.<sup>16</sup> These are two phases of a single critical practice, and should not be misunderstood as a separate practices of "criticism" and "production." As students tacks back and forth between these two phases, they are by turn plunged into the model text and then pulled back out of it; they can never become fully immersed in the world addressed by the model text because their attention repeatedly and insistently is drawn to the world they wish to address in their own critical text. While the two phases of *imitatio* are of course closely connected, they never devolve into a single practice; they are, instead, two parts of a self-sustaining productive cycle in which the analysis is informed by the need to produce a critical text designed for a new audience, and the rhetorical production is grounded in the analysis of the model text. Student rhetors, in other words, learn to oscillate their attention between the poles of analysis and genesis, and thus between the roles of interpreter and performer, in a way that is analogous to the give-and-take of citizenly practice.<sup>17</sup>

As a student of rhetorical criticism learns how to slip between the voice and their own voice, they are learning how to slip between their own perspective and that of another. A course in rhetorical criticism, then, fosters a facility not for duplication but for duality. The student critic must keep in mind two simultaneous conceptions of purpose—that which might be ascribed to the text, and that which might be claimed for the critic. Critics must give themselves over to the texts with which they engage, must be willing to allow the text to take the lead—but never fully, because critics have their own agenda, their own audiences, and their own purposes. Although they should be able to enter the world of the text, they always have to keep one foot, or one eye, outside of it. As Michael Leff describes the process, "the

interpreter attempts to assimilate a text that is distant or alien into his or her understanding, but the discourse the critic produces is always other than the discourse that is being studied, and the critic's understanding can never replicate another person's understanding of the world."<sup>18</sup> To be a critic means that you cannot fully relinquish your claim on either perspective, either yours or the text's, so that you have to be able to see stereoscopically, from two directions at once. Indeed, much of the work of performing effective rhetorical analysis comes from sustaining this oscillating balance, responding at the same time to the resistances and invitations exerted by the text and to the expectations and opportunities presented by the rhetorical situation that the analysis is intended to address. Citizenly engagements can be imagined in much the same manner, I believe, exerting similar resistances and constraints while also opening similar opportunities for invention and collaboration, and thus necessitating similar oscillations between an immersive engagement and a critical response.

### PRACTICE: PRESENTING EXEMPLARY CRITIQUES

I have been describing some of what I understand to be fundamental purposes of teaching rhetorical criticism to undergraduates: developing critical faculties and hermeneutical attitudes that are among the same faculties and attitudes required by citizenly engagement. In this section I describe some of the ways that students might be introduced to the practice of rhetorical criticism, as exemplified in landmark essays written by professional critics, in ways that emphasize and demonstrate these fundamental faculties and attitudes. An Isocratean student, Walker argues, "first comes to knowledge of *ideai*—the things [about rhetoric] that can be taught—through hearing the teacher's explanations of them and through the careful reading and detailed discussion of sample texts."<sup>19</sup> Explaining rhetorical concepts and then showing students examples of those concepts as they are put to use in actual public discourse are things that most of us do in our classrooms. This also accounts for the generally "recursive" format of many textbooks intended for use in introductory rhetoric classes, as the students' attention is shifted repeatedly between theory and example.<sup>20</sup> We introduce our students to exemplary public texts, however mediated, that we feel are significant for their artistry, for their place in history, for their association with particularly important figures from the past, or for some other reason that generally comports with Isocrates's dictum that students study the most "celebrated" examples.

My point of departure is another component of Isocrates's pedagogy, which seems to have involved the instructor himself preparing and presenting rhetorical texts to his students as demonstrations of the principles that he was explaining. He suggests in "Against the Sophists," for example, not only that

the teacher should "so expound the principles of the art with the utmost possible exactness as to leave out nothing that can be taught," but also that the teacher should "set such an example of oratory that the students who have taken form under his instruction and are able to pattern after him will, from the outset, show in their speaking a degree of grace and charm which is not found in others."<sup>21</sup> This is a tall order, indeed. Isocrates provides a glimpse into this process near the end of the *Panathenaicus*, where he describes revising one of his rhetorical texts together with some of his students, and even calling in a former student to debate with him.<sup>22</sup> While most of us bring into class the exemplary discourses of others, few of us would attempt to compose such exemplary discourses ourselves. Certainly, I cannot imagine myself preparing a speech, and delivering it to my students, and then opening the floor for a critical discussion. It is ideal, of course, for teachers of rhetoric to be eloquent. In fact, it would be ideal if all teachers of all subjects were eloquent. But realistically, there is no necessary connection between an ability to teach rhetorical criticism and an ability to produce rhetorical artistry.<sup>23</sup>

I do believe, however, that teachers of rhetorical criticism can be expected to be outstanding readers of rhetorical criticism. We can be expected to know the field well, to make judgments about what published works present exemplary models, and to select from within that archive the essays or books we wish our students to study. Generally we select these essays because of their value for aspiring rhetorical critics, and I am not suggesting that those criteria should be replaced. I am suggesting that another set of criteria join these—that at least some of the exemplary essays should be selected and taught with an eye to the sort of inventional resources they provide for aspiring citizens. I continue by focusing on three essays of rhetorical criticism that are often anthologized and frequently assigned in undergraduate courses, and I describe some of their potential to serve as exemplars within a course in rhetorical criticism that is informed by the purpose of citizenship education. My purpose here is neither to offer model lesson plans nor to provide a thorough assessment of the value or insight of these published essays, but rather to discuss some of the ways that these examples of critical practice can be presented as modeling the four citizenly virtues discussed above—flexibility, engagement, mimesis, and duality.

Forbes Hill's analysis of Richard Nixon's "Silent Majority" speech of November 3, 1969, undeniably is a classic. It often is paired with Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's response as a way to illustrate vividly contrasting perspectives on the scope and purpose of rhetorical critique.<sup>24</sup> Among the many pedagogical merits of Hill's essay is that it offers a succinct and explicit definition of neo-Aristotelian criticism; according to Hill, it "compares the means of persuasion used by a speaker with a comprehensive inventory given in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*."<sup>25</sup> Judgment of the effectiveness of Nixon's speech, in this paradigm, relies on the degree to which the text exhibits the qualities

that Aristotle tells us should be present in effective discourse. Hill describes the situation and audiences faced by Nixon, the disposition of the text, the "potentially effective choice of premises" upon which Nixon's argument was constructed,<sup>26</sup> and other factors that correspond to categories that Hill understands as presented in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. In the end, Hill determines that in "choice and arrangement of the means of persuasion for this situation this message is by and large a considerable success."<sup>27</sup>

Hill's essay illustrates a mode of criticism in which the assessment of discourse is rendered according to a codified, external body of precepts. In Hill's case the precepts are Aristotelian, but they need not be; any theory will do, as long as it is treated as a stable standard against which the quality, effectiveness, or value of the discourse of others is evaluated. As such, this approach to criticism presents a quite limited resource for young persons being trained in citizenly virtues. Hill certainly demonstrates a close engagement with his text, for example, quoting extensively from Nixon's address as he substantiates his claims, but at the same time, Hill's approach rather tightly confines the possibilities for response, mitigating the potential for flexibility: either Nixon's address does fulfill Aristotelian expectations or it doesn't. Hill has an explicit theoretical framework in place, and he is assessing Nixon's speech according to that framework. Of particular note is the diminished mimetic potential of Hill's piece. Hill is not interested in inhabiting Nixon's point of view but instead in providing something like an objective assessment. This requires a conceptual distance between critic and text that clearly is demonstrated in Hill's essay, and as such precludes the more intimate critical engagement fostered through a mimetic critique. Hill's analysis is not animated by an effort to become immersed into the world addressed by Nixon's text, but instead is regulated by the critical vocabulary he deploys. Hill's essay does not demonstrate a tacking back and forth between the world of the text and the world of the critic, and instead demonstrates a rather steady gaze through a critical lens explicitly defined by an Aristotelian vocabulary. Hill is attempting to describe Nixon's voice rather than to absorb a part of that voice into his own or to lend his voice to Nixon's. As a result, Hill's essay does little to demonstrate or to foster the give-and-take of citizenly practice.

Ed Black's close reading of the Gettysburg Address, "Gettysburg and Silence," is also often anthologized, and often assigned. It is accessible, even for undergraduates, and it takes as its object a text with which many undergraduates believe themselves to be nominally familiar. In contrast to Hill, Black does not approach Lincoln's text with a preformed theoretical framework in place. Rather, Black describes Lincoln's text as "prismatic," and seeks in his analysis to look at it "through one facet after another, in no particular order." This, he promises, "is a method without system and therefore scarcely a method at all, at least not a predetermined one."<sup>28</sup> Black's

analysis, of course, is thoroughly informed by a deep understanding of rhetorical theory, but rather than a rigid normative standard of eloquence against which Lincoln should be judged, for Black it becomes a flexible and adaptable resource. A part of the essay's pedagogical value is that it delivers precisely what it promises, as Black turns Lincoln's address through multiple interpretive axes. Black notes, for example, how Lincoln's speech "links us to the dead by virtue of . . . [a] common task," how its geographical references invite us to associate "the resting place of the dead" with "the habitation of a vital principle," how the structure of the speech renders its auditors "coiled by the Address, and then sprung," and how the "dedication of the cemetery is transformed into the dedication of the audience."<sup>29</sup> Black concludes that the speech is "a projection of Lincoln himself," confident that through his close reading of Gettysburg the speech he has grasped something of Lincoln the man.<sup>30</sup>

One thing Black's essay demonstrates is that too many of us, too often, vastly underestimate what there is to be said in response to the discourse of others. This realization can be invaluable for undergraduates in citizenship training; in response to Lincoln's 272 words, Black wrote over 8,000. He also reminds us that discourse requires our close attention, as it is our primary way into another mind, whether an individual as distant in time and circumstance as Lincoln dedicating a battlefield in 1863 or as close by as your neighbor declaring her support for a candidate for the school board. The close analysis of public discourse is a skill and inclination fundamental to effective citizenship, and the critical citizen must sustain a receptive stance that is mobile and flexible enough to listen to the discourse of others in all of its multifaceted complexity. Black's essay is not structured by an effort to fit Lincoln's text to preformed categories, but instead is structured by qualities that he perceives to be present in Lincoln's text itself. Black could be said to be rewriting Lincoln's speech in his own terms, and to that extent his essay is a textbook study of mimetic critique. Through this effort, then, he embodies a dualist aspect, keeping both his own aims and Lincoln's firmly in view, self-consciously performing his own rhetorical artistry before his own reading audience even as that artistry is informed by Lincoln's performance before those gathered amid the graves in Gettysburg. Placing himself, as he puts it, under the "spell" of the speech, Black has enacted some version of the "deliberate self-effacement" in which he finds Lincoln himself engaged.<sup>31</sup> It must be noted, however, that it also is clear that Black is engaged with a text with which he is highly sympathetic. Black admires Lincoln's genius, and desires perhaps to imbibe some part of it into himself, so that the effort to become identified with Lincoln raises no specter of dissonance. Black's critical approach seems well-suited for texts that the critic admires, or toward which the critic feels some intimate connection. As a resource for citizenship, then, Black's approach, for all of its potential, also is sorely limited; it seems

to provide guidance for interacting only with those fellow citizens we may be inclined to like.

What of the rhetorical critic—and rhetorical citizen—who would grapple, as we all must from time to time, with public discourse with which consubstantiality is more problematic? Kenneth Burke's analysis of *Mein Kampf*, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle,'" provides an example of a relationship between critic and text quite different from that exhibited by either Hill or Black, and as such it yields different resources as a model of citizenship practice. Unlike Hill, Burke approaches Hitler's text with no preformed evaluative categories and no recalcitrant theoretical system. But unlike Black, he is not interested in appreciating the multifaceted artistry of a text that he admires. Rather, as Burke explains his purpose, after chastising critics who dismissed Hitler's book as unworthy of serious attention: Hitler has been "helpful enough to put his cards face up on the table, that we might examine his hands. Let us, then, for God's sake, examine them."<sup>32</sup> Though Burke acknowledges the text to be "exasperating, even nauseating," he still approaches it with interest and care. Too much is at stake to do otherwise. The resulting analysis is not as tidy as Hill's work with Nixon's address, and certainly lacks the fawning quality of some of Black's commentary, because Burke's task here is to understand the particular brand of "snake oil" Hitler is selling, both so that we might critique Hitler specifically and so that we might resist others who would use similar rhetorical strategies.

As a resource for the practice of citizenship, Burke's essay suggests a tactic and rationale for listening carefully to a position with which an individual might vehemently disagree, or even find virulent. This is a radical interpretive flexibility indeed, illustrating not merely a willingness but a compelling motivation to engage closely even with the vilest of discourses, together with an effort to persuade others to do so as well. He is not only modeling a mode of citizenly engagement but also encouraging others to follow suit, to never dismiss entirely the discourses of others no matter how viscerally we may disagree. Understandably, Burke's analysis is not as mimetic as Black's, and he maintains a sanitizing distance between himself and his object, yet still Burke displays an impressive degree of at least partial consubstantiality, standing with Hitler, for example, to the extent to which this allows Burke to see that perhaps Hitler "genuinely suffered" in poverty and from the ridicule of his Marxist critics, which in turn allows Burke to trace "the *spontaneous* rise of his anti-Semitism."<sup>33</sup> This tremendous mimetic effort only serves to emphasize the duality on display in Burke's analysis, his ability to enter provisionally into the worldview crafted in Hitler's text while at the same time never losing sight of his own critical purposes. This is a powerful model of democratic engagement, one that stands in stark contrast to the dismissive incivility of so much contemporary civic discourse. Burke provides a demonstration of the imperative to listen especially attentively to even the most

heinous of voices; to fail to do so would make it impossible for us to formulate a robust, compelling, and productive response, and thus would leave us in abdication of our central citizenly duty.

### PEDAGOGY: IMPLICATIONS FOR RHETORICAL TEACHING

I have been focused throughout this brief chapter on the teaching of rhetorical criticism to undergraduates, arguing for a reemphasis on an appreciation of the practice of rhetorical criticism as training for citizenship. I have discussed the purpose of training in rhetorical criticism as preparation for citizenship, and implications of that training for the ways that students are introduced to exemplars of the practice of rhetorical criticism. In this concluding section, I discuss the broader implications for rhetorical pedagogy. Although I have drawn primarily upon Isocrates, I do not intend to suggest that I have sketched an Isocratean pedagogy in any specific sense (though I do think there are resemblances), or that all students trained through the pedagogies I have described would be as illustrious as some of Isocrates's students (though perhaps some might be), or even that Isocrates would approve (though I'd like to imagine he might). Rather, I have been trying to articulate something with more universal application, something for those of us who teach rhetorical criticism to consider, regardless of whether we take Isocrates as an exemplar.<sup>34</sup> I believe that becoming trained in the art of rhetorical criticism is the surest way to become rhetorical, and that becoming rhetorical is an essential component in the process of transforming an individual into a citizen.

I have attempted to avoid providing a mere *encomium* to the vital connection between rhetorical education and effective citizenship. Instead, I have suggested four specific hermeneutic virtues that are cultivated specifically in rhetorical criticism and have argued that these are not merely analogous to citizenly virtues but indeed are those virtues themselves. And more importantly, I have suggested a revision to the ways that we present exemplary rhetorical analyses to our students, so that these young people might begin to think of those essays not merely as an archive of interpretive strategies but rather as inventional resources for practices of citizenship. Certainly the four practices I emphasize are neither the only citizenly virtues nor the only such virtues associated with the practice of rhetorical criticism. And certainly the essays by Hill, Black, and Burke are not the only works of rhetorical criticism that might be said to model modes of citizenship, and nor are the modes that they do model the only ones or the best. I offer them here as exemplars only in the sense that my discussion of them might foster further discussion of other exemplars.

Perhaps much of the rhetorical criticism that routinely is published in our field is animated, like my own, at least to some degree by a conviction that we are exploring and enacting modes of citizenly engagement. It may be that we often imagine ourselves as standing proxy for individuals who are striving toward a more perfect democratic practice, and that our objects of study are proxies for the discourses to which democratic citizens must gain a facility in addressing, critiquing, and responding. If that is so, then perhaps this essay amounts to a suggestion that we reveal to our students these often tacit assumptions about our own critical practice and those of our colleagues. But it may also be the case, as Jackson puts it, that the “practice of rhetoric in a representative democracy, a scene in which the arenas of face to face deliberative performance are protracted, invites us to consider the civic implications of our interpretive strategies and how those implications can be realized in our students.”<sup>35</sup> In that case, this essay is an effort to respond to the invitation of which Jackson reminds us, to reconsider our interpretive practices at a time when the study of rhetoric, like the humanities and liberal arts more generally, is being asked to defend itself and to justify its curricula. The idea that training undergraduates in the arcane arts of rhetorical analysis is a worthy pursuit for its own sake may become increasingly difficult to support. We can lament this fact, and we should, but we also must resist by all means necessary the slow march of commodification and vocationalization that threatens to eviscerate the humanities.

One of the available means to resist this evisceration is to reclaim more fully for rhetoric its traditional role in citizen education, and this full reclamation must include rhetoric’s interpretive modes. The “productive” side of rhetoric often is considered in this regard, and public speaking and composition courses increasingly are presented as integral to this reclamation. But if we are to have any hope at all of reclaiming rhetoric’s central position as an “architectonic” liberal art, and through this to reinvigorate the humanities generally, then we have to be sure that our hermeneutic pedagogies are well integrated into an effort to reclaim rhetoric’s central role in citizenship education.<sup>36</sup> This would include not only thinking carefully about how our speaking and writing assignments contribute to the cultivation of citizens, but also about how the readings that we select as interpretive exemplars, those that we set before our students as worthy of emulation, might model modes of citizenship.

## NOTES

1. Brian Jackson, “Cultivating Paideweyan Pedagogy: Rhetoric Education in English and Communication Studies,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37.2 (2007): 184.

2. Roberto Alejandro, *Hermeneutics, Citizenship, and the Public Sphere* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 37.

3. Jeffrey Walker, “On Rhetorical Traditions: A Reply to Jerzy Axer,” *ARS Conference* (2003), <https://webpace.utexas.edu/jw2893/www/RhetoricalTraditions.htm> (Accessed: July 12, 2012).

4. Representative publications that examine the relationship between Isocratic pedagogy and civic education would include: William L. Benoit, “Isocrates on Rhetorical Education,” *Communication Education* 33 (1984): 109–119; Takis Poulakos and David Depew, eds., *Isocrates and Civic Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); Ekaterina V. Haskins, *Logos and Power in Isocrates and Aristotle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004); Arthur E. Walzer, “Teaching ‘Political Wisdom’ Isocrates and the Tradition of Dissoi Logoi,” in *The Viability of the Rhetorical Tradition*, ed. Richard Graff, Arthur E. Walzer and Janet M. Atwill (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 113–124; Jeffrey Walker, *The Genuine Teachers of this Art: Rhetorical Education in Antiquity* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012).

5. Josiah Ober, “I, Socrates . . . The Performative Audacity of Isocrates’ *Antidosis*,” in *Isocrates and Civic Education*, ed. Takis Poulakos and David Depew (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 40.

6. Isocrates, “Against the Sophists,” trans. George Norlin, in *Isocrates II* (1929; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 21.

7. David Fleming, “Becoming Rhetorical: An Education in the Topics,” in *The Realms of Rhetoric: The Prospects for Rhetoric Education*, ed. Joseph Petraglia and Deepika Bahri (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 93. See also: Fleming, “Rhetoric as a Course of Study,” *College English* 61.2 (1998): 169–187.

8. Walker, “On Rhetorical Traditions.”

9. Robert Hariman, “Civic Education, Classical Imitation, and Democratic Polity,” in *Isocrates and Civic Education*, ed. Takis Poulakos and David Depew (Austin: University of Texas, 2004), 219.

10. Isocrates, “Against the Sophists,” 12–13.

11. Isocrates, “Antidosis,” trans. George Norlin, in *Isocrates II* (1929; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 184.

12. Jackson, “Paideweyan Pedagogy,” 185. Emphasis in original.

13. James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 201.

14. Corbett suggests that “emulation” would be a better term. Edward P. J. Corbett, “The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric,” *College Composition and Communication* 22.2 (1971): 245.

15. Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education (Institutio Oratoria)*, trans. D. A. Russell (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), X.v.4–5.

16. Corbett, “Imitation in Classical Rhetoric,” 245.

17. For an expanded version of some of these arguments, see: Robert Terrill, “Mimesis, Duality, and Rhetorical Education,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 41.1 (2011): 295–315.

18. Michael C. Leff, “Cicero’s Redemptive Identification,” in *Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and the Criticism of Discourse and Media*, ed. William L. Nothstine, Carole Blair and Gary A. Copeland (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 324.

19. Walker, *Genuine Teachers*, 74.

20. Walker, *Genuine Teachers*, 80.

21. Isocrates, “Against the Sophists,” 17–18.

22. Isocrates, “Panathenaicus,” trans. George Norlin, in *Isocrates II*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 200–265. See also: Walker, *Genuine Teachers*, 83–84. That this was a common sophistic pedagogical practice is evident from the way that it is parodied by Plato in the *Phaedrus*.

23. It might be argued that there is indeed a necessary connection between the ability to produce elegant prose and the ability to produce insightful rhetorical analysis, but that is a different proposition.

24. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “‘Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form’: A Rejoinder,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58.4 (1972): 451–454.

25. Forbes I. Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—The President's Message of November 3, 1969," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 1995), 162. I have selected all of the examples of rhetorical criticism referred to in this essay from Burgchardt's volume because it is one of the collections most commonly used in classrooms. See also: Forbes I. Hill, "The Traditional Perspective," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*, ed. Jim A. Kuypers (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 39–61.
26. Hill, "Nixon," 169.
27. Hill, "Nixon," 171.
28. Edwin Black, "Gettysburg and Silence," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt, (1994; State College, PA: Strata, 1995), 548.
29. Black, "Gettysburg," 550, 551, 552, 555.
30. Black, "Gettysburg," 560.
31. Black, "Gettysburg," 559.
32. Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle,'" in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (1941; State College, PA: Strata, 1995), 207.
33. Burke, "Hitler's Battle," 209–210.
34. Consider Stephen Olbrys Gencarella's suggestion that "it is time for contemporary rhetorical studies to rethink its allegiance to Isocrates." Gencarella, "Purifying Rhetoric: Empedocles and the Myth of Rhetorical Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96.3 (2010): 232.
35. Jackson, "Paideweyan Pedagogy," 189.
36. Richard McKeon, "The Uses of Rhetoric in a Technological Age: Architectonic Productive Arts," in *The Prospect of Rhetoric*, ed. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971), 44–63.