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Glossary

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Agency—Controlling forces in discourse production and subjectivity formation. Agency is a key issue for composition theorists who try to determine how much and what kind of control writers have in the composing process.

Aleatory Procedure—A trial and error or chance-based approach to problem solving.

Algorithm—An unchanging rule for solving a problem (i.e. a mathematical formula).

Antifoundationalism—Philosophical position that there is no absolute, immutable truth grounding reality. Antifoundationalists believe that truth is relative to specific situations.

Art—The use of principles and strategies to guide a complex process like composing. Art is often contrasted to *knack*, a habit acquired through repeated practice, and *magic*, a mysterious natural ability or talent. Those who consider rhetoric an art believe that while not all of the writer's composing processes are subject to conscious direction, many are and can be improved by learning heuristics.

Backing—Proof that supports the warrant of an argument. According to Stephen Toulmin, when an audience does not accept the warranting principles of an argument, a speaker must support these principles with another argument, or backing.

- Circumference**—In Burkean theory, the overall scene against which human relations, behavior, and conduct are examined in a pentadic analysis.
- Collaborative Planning**—Model of planning in which co-authors begin, explore, and position a project together. A collaborative plan functions as a contract, schedule, and possibly as an evaluative tool for a group.
- Commonplaces**—A rhetorical *techné* or art. The commonplaces are often thought of as regions, storehouses, or locations since arguments are “housed” there. The term *commonplaces* was used historically to mean both the common topics like cause and effect and also in the Renaissance to mean “apt sayings.” In the first sense, they assisted rhetors in discovering, arranging, and delivering culturally relevant and audience specific arguments. In contemporary usage, the term often refers to lines of argument.
- Cultural Codes**—Historically and socially specific semiotic practices, usually constituted by a set of opposing terms, that work like terministic screens, influencing or constructing particular interpretations of reality, as well as forms of subjectivity.
- Current-Traditional Rhetoric**—Refers to the predominant composition theory and pedagogy of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Based on redactions of eighteenth-century rhetorical theory, current-traditional rhetoric is formalistic and rule-governed. In accordance with its belief that invention cannot be taught, it emphasizes the arrangement and superficial correctness of discourse. This emphasis can be seen in its “four modes” theory of discourse (exposition, description, narration, and argument) and in its part-to-whole approach to writing, especially the five-paragraph essay assignment.
- Deconstruction**—Strategy of reading associated primarily with French philosopher Jacques Derrida that seeks to show how textual meanings are unstable and multiple. By isolating and rearranging key hierarchies and binaries in texts, deconstruction attempts to reveal that what is present in a text depends upon what is absent in it. In America, deconstruction is most frequently associated with the rhetorical analysis

of Yale theorist Paul de Man, who tried to show that the rhetorical figures upon which philosophical texts depend continuously destabilize the texts' meaning.

Deliberative Discourse—One of the three genres of rhetoric classified by Aristotle. Deliberative or political discourse is concerned with counseling an audience of judges about a future course of action. Examples of deliberative topics include advantage and disadvantage, expedience and inexpedience, war and peace, and finances.

Dialectic—The counterpart of rhetoric, dialectic is an art of inquiry and argumentation in which two opponents debate an issue. While both rhetoric and dialectic begin with probable premises, the latter, according to Aristotle, is more concerned with testing truths than with persuading an audience. Dialectic, therefore, usually involves expert interlocutors while rhetoric usually involves a speaker and a popular audience.

Dianoetic—Pertaining to reasoning, intellectual activity, processes of thinking.

Discourse Community—Related to the linguistic concept *speech community* and the literary concept *interpretive community*, a discourse community is a group of individuals who share ways of understanding and communicating. Discourse communities usually have a regulatory function, determining what objects and methods are suitable for examination, as well as what conventions are appropriate for communication. Social and social-epistemic theories of composition emphasize the role that discourse communities play in writing.

Dissoi Logoi—An anonymous fifth-century BCE sophistic text that examines the relationship between culture and nature, epistemological relativism, and the art of rhetoric. In Greek, the phrase means “different words” and refers to the rhetorical epistemology of arguing both sides of an issue.

Dissonance—A tension or puzzlement which occurs when experience differs from values and expectations or when a writer's conceptual systems clash. Dissonance often provides a starting place for inquiry.

Dramatism—Kenneth Burke's theory that language is primarily a form of action rather than knowledge. Dramatism looks at the ways in which humans use symbols and how motives

are represented in and created by such usage. Burke's pentad provides a vocabulary and methodology for analyzing motives in language.

Enthymeme—Defined by Aristotle as a form of rhetorical reasoning, the enthymeme is one of the two modes of rhetorical proof (the other being example). Enthymemes are claims supported by probable premises that the speaker assumes the audience will accept. As such, they form the basis of arguments.

Epicheireme—A more complex form of rhetorical reasoning used to structure proofs according to five parts: the proposition, the reason, the proof of the reason, the embellishment, and the resume.

Epideictic discourse—One of the three genres of rhetoric first classified by Aristotle. Epideictic or demonstrative discourse tries to entertain, inspire, or impress the audience, which is composed of spectators rather than judges or political assemblies. Examples of epideictic discourses include funeral orations (eulogies), festival orations (panegyric speeches), ceremonial addresses, and encomia. Such speeches commonly address topics such as virtues, vices, condemnable acts, and praiseworthy acts.

Epistemic—Refers to the ability to generate or create knowledge. *Epistemic rhetoric* refers to the use of discourse to construct knowledge or to the processes of rhetoric as knowledge-making. Although there are several variations of this position, it is opposed to the view that rhetoric merely communicates pre-given knowledge. Rhetoric as epistemic positions often facilitate or lead to an inquiry-based approach to teaching composition since they maintain that rhetorical acts begin with questions, exploration and possibilities rather than with certainties.

Epistemology—Derived from the Greek word, *episteme* (knowledge), epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature and origin of knowledge. Epistemologists ask what counts as knowledge, how it is created or obtained, who can create knowledge, and what its conditions are. Debates about the epistemic status of rhetoric are epistemological debates.

Ethos—One of the three means of persuasion identified and systematically studied by Aristotle. *Ethos* refers to persuasion

through the text's construction of the character or virtue of the rhetor. When using *ethos* as an appeal to the audience, rhetors attempt to show that they possess traits such as credibility, fairness, modesty, and intelligence. Throughout history rhetoricians have debated the nature of *ethos*, some maintaining that it is the actual character of the speaker, others arguing that it is more of an image the speaker creates in rhetorical situations.

Field-dependent—A term Stephen Toulmin used to refer to and describe the elements of arguments that changes from context to context. The criteria used to evaluate arguments, for instance, are field-dependent elements, while the force of qualifying terms is field-invariant. The notion of field-dependence supports Toulmin's claim that no particular field of arguments is inherently more logical than another.

Focus—The statement of the insight gained from inquiry that sets the stage for a text and contains two parts: the subject and the point of significance for the writer. The subject names the situation investigated by the writer and the point of significance presents the writer's new understanding.

Freewriting—Invention strategy in which writers write quickly and without stopping for ten to twenty minutes in order to generate as many ideas as possible without editing their text. Freewriting can also be seen as a strategy for helping writers develop voice.

Freirean—Term used to describe pedagogies influenced by the work of Brazilian educator and scholar Paulo Freire. Among other things, Freire advocated a form of pedagogy based on dialogue between students and teachers that proceeds from and always takes into account the material conditions of students' lives. As a Christian Marxist, Freire also believed that consciousness raising was a primary educational aim that required a commitment to teaching literacy skills.

Hermeneutic—A theory of interpretation. Hermeneutics began as theories of scriptural interpretation and was developed in philosophy by scholars such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, and in literary and rhetorical studies, by scholars like Stanley Fish and Steven Mailloux. Hermeneutics is a prominent component

of rhetorical studies, especially in rhetorical criticism, a sub-field of rhetoric that uses rhetorical theory to interpret texts. Scholars such as Michael McGee, Wayne Booth, Edwin Black, Michael Leff, Carolyn Miller, Charles Bazerman, and Alan Gross—among many others—have used rhetorical theory to interpret texts from popular culture, professional environments, and academic disciplines. Some rhetoric and composition theorists argue that hermeneutics ought to be the only inventional act.

- Heuristics**—Modifiable strategies or plans that serve as guides in creative processes. Writing heuristics try to prompt thinking, intuition, memory, inquiry, and imagination without controlling the writer’s writing process. Heuristics are based on expert writers’ strategies, which can be taught.
- Imitation**—Method of rhetorical training in which students try to emulate the styles, voices, conventions, and themes of master texts. In addition to learning the art of rhetoric, natural talent, and practice, classical rhetoricians believed that imitation was a key element of the rhetor’s development. The use of readings and models in composition classes demonstrates the role that imitation continues to play in composition pedagogy.
- Inquiry**—Pedagogical approach to writing in which students begin with questions rather than a thesis or a focus. Based on the idea that writing creates new knowledge, inquiry-based pedagogies believe that by starting a writing project with questions, curiosities, or puzzlements, students will be more invested in their work, more likely to go beyond what they already know, more likely to explore, and therefore more likely to learn something new. In short, writing to inquire is writing to investigate, gain insight and communicate that insight.
- Insight**—The outcome of inquiry. Insight refers to the new understanding, perspective, or knowledge that results from the exploratory and creative processes of writing to inquire.
- Intertextuality**—Refers to the ways in which texts refer to and depend upon other texts for their meaning. First used by French psychoanalyst and linguist Julia Kristeva, the concept of intertextuality turns critical attention from a text’s author to the social conditions of its production (i.e., the discourse community to which it belongs). Composition theorist James

Porter identifies two types of intertextuality: iterability (the repetition of certain parts of a text in another text, i.e., citation) and presupposition (assumptions a text makes about its referent, readers, or context).

Issue—A point of discussion, debate, or dispute. Issues in the field of Rhetoric and Composition arise from disagreements over theoretical and pedagogical aspects of written discourse.

Judicial discourse—One of the three genres of rhetoric first classified by Aristotle. Also called forensic discourse, judicial speeches are usually about the past and concerned with issues of guilt, innocence, justice, and injustice. Audiences for judicial discourse are judges and jurors.

Kairos—Rhetorical principle of discoursing at the appropriate time and in due measure. For the Sophists, particularly the Pythagoreans, *kairos* was the rhetorical principle of determining which truth to argue according to the specifics of time, place, and audience. As such, it was a generative principle, a way of initiating discourse by considering the conflicting elements (or truths) in light of a particular rhetorical situation.

Logocentrism—Central term in Derrida's critique of metaphysics. Logocentrism refers to the belief that words and truth correspond, thereby making language a truth-conveying medium. Derrida argues that the Western metaphysical tradition is characterized by logocentrism, or philosophy's desire to make true statements about the world.

Logos—One of the three means of persuasion identified and systematically studied by Aristotle. *Logos* refers to artistic appeals made to reason or the validity of arguments. These appeals involve the use of enthymemes or examples. Unlike analytic logic, rhetorical reasoning entails probabilities, presumptions, and values.

Master Narratives—Teleological narratives that structure societies or communities by requiring that all parts of life relate to an overarching whole. French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard introduced the virtually synonymous term, grand narratives, in his treatise on postmodernity, *The Postmodern Condition*. There Lyotard argues that the two grand narratives of modernity are political liberty and complete philosophic

knowledge or totality. Lyotard also argues that postmodernity is characterized by incredulity toward these master narratives.

Ontology—The branch of philosophy that examines being.

Ontologists are concerned with what exists. Ontology is closely related to and often confused with metaphysics, the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature or essence of what exists. The work of philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger investigates ontological questions.

Paralogy—Term used by Jean-Francois Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* to refer to the method by which players in postmodern language games create new rules for the language games. According to Lyotard, postmodernity, with its *petit recits* (or small narratives) depends on performativity rather than consensus as its mode of knowledge legitimation. The rules of language of postmodern language games, then, cannot depend on consensus; they must be local, agreed upon by their present players, and subject to cancellation. Paralogy seeks to produce these new rules by questioning consensus, which is to say, by creating dissensus.

Pathos—One of the three means of persuasion identified and systematically studied by Aristotle. *Pathos* refers to rhetorical appeals made to the audience's emotions. Aristotle establishes the relationship between emotions and persuasion in *Rhetoric* when he defines emotions as "those things through which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments, and which are accompanied by pain and pleasure (2.1.8). In order to move the audience through *pathos*, Aristotle says that a rhetor must understand what the emotions are, the states of mind caused by particular emotions, and the kinds of people toward whom one feels particular emotions. In addition, the art of pathos requires that speakers understand the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of their audience. Many classical rhetoricians warn that the use of emotion in speeches must be proportionate to the subject at hand.

Pedagogy—The art of teaching. Concerned with teaching students how to analyze and produce discourse, composition pedagogy encompasses many philosophic, political, and theoretical positions, and has a long history. Because citizens in ancient Greece had to advocate for themselves, rhetorical training

was a key component of classical rhetorical treatises. Classical as well as contemporary debates about pedagogy often deal with the relationships among art, natural talent, practice, and imitation. While most classical rhetoricians defined rhetoric as an art, and taught it as such, subsequent rhetoricians and pedagogues, for instance the current-traditionalists, considered it a mere skill or an unteachable natural talent. During these periods, composition pedagogy became formalistic, rule-governed, and product-focused, if not nonexistent. Renewed interest in rhetoric as the art of persuasion in the mid-twentieth century led to major pedagogical changes, such as the process movement, inquiry-based writing, critical pedagogies, and cultural studies pedagogies.

Pentad—Analytical tool associated with dramatism, Kenneth Burke's theory of language as symbolic action. The pentad allows one to analyze motive in terms of five elements: scene (where something happened), act (what happened), agent (who acted), purpose (why something happened), and agency (the power used to make something happen). According to Burke, any complete statement of motive will incorporate all five terms, showing how they interact with each other in relationships he calls ratios. Burke also maintained that philosophies can be distinguished from each other on the basis of which pentadic term they privilege. For instance, materialist philosophies privilege scene, while idealist philosophies privilege the agent.

Phenomenology—Branch of philosophy initiated by Edmund Husserl that attempts to study the nature and structure of human consciousness by analyzing mental acts such as perception. Key to phenomenological analysis is Husserl's notion of "phenomenological reduction," or isolation of the phenomena to be studied. Although many of Husserl's followers questioned the possibility of exclusive focus on the "thing itself," his ideas were developed by other philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Phenomenology has influenced a number of other areas of inquiry, including existentialism, reader-response theory, discourse theory, and rhetoric.

Pragmatism—Type of philosophy that measures the truth-value of

an action or idea in terms of its consequences. Pragmatism originated in America with the work of Charles Sanders Peirce and is also associated with American philosophers William James and John Dewey. Although it does not focus on discourse in the same ways that poststructuralist theory does, pragmatism shares poststructuralism's critique of metaphysics or any kind fixed, essential value.

Prewriting—The stage in writing when a writer assimilates the subject to himself or herself. First used by composition scholar Gordon Rohman, *prewriting* refers to the “groping” processes through which writers try to conceptualize or personalize the subjects about which they wish to write. Examples of prewriting include journaling, meditating, and creating analogies.

Probability—A statement whose truth is contingent rather than certain. Probability is the cornerstone of rhetoric, distinguishing it from analytic logic as well as propaganda. Beginning with uncertain premises that audience is likely to accept, rhetorical proofs seek to establish probable, yet ethical, forms of knowledge that are responsive to the particularities of situation, time, and place.

Postmodernism—Highly contested term referring to modes of cultural production, phenomena, and thought seen in tension with various aspects of humanism, the Enlightenment, and modernism. Jean-Francois Lyotard defines postmodernism in two ways: first, in terms of knowledge legitimation, as incredulity toward grand narratives; and second, in terms of avant-garde aesthetics, as that which puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself. Fredric Jameson elaborates the concept of the postmodern in terms of capital and space, arguing that postmodernism corresponds to a third stage of capitalism (global capitalism) in which the market has become a substitute for itself. The result of this substitution is that everything is commodified, producing “barrages of immediacy” that destroy spatial coordinates and make it impossible for an individual to map his or her location in postmodern space. Jean Baudrillard combines economic and semiotic approaches in his analysis of postmodernism, arguing that signs, no longer valued in terms of use, exchange,

or reference to models, have moved into a fractal stage of existence in which they have no referents or determining principles. This loss of reference through the increasingly accelerated production of signs results in the loss of the real, or what Baudrillard calls the creation of the hyperreal. Importantly, these brief descriptions by no means represent all of the theories that fall under the rubric of postmodernism. A fuller account would include theories of subjectivity, epistemology, feminism, post-colonialism, literary production, and aesthetic production, just to name a few.

Poststructuralism—Term referring to theories from a number of disciplines that problematized structuralism's attempt to show that all aspects of human culture can be accounted for systematically through a science of signs. Although there is no unified poststructuralist position, poststructuralists generally reject the determinate view of meaning yielded by structuralist analysis in favor of an unstable or indeterminate view of meaning. For instance, poststructuralism is often associated with deconstruction and its aim to show that a text's meanings are multiple and ultimately undecidable. Influenced greatly by Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault's genealogical approach to history is poststructuralist insofar as it tries to understand truth not in terms of origins or essences but rather in terms of chance events, personal conflicts, errors, and discontinuity. Many theorists, including Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, and Julia Kristeva, have extended structuralist theory into a poststructuralist critique of subjectivity. Foucault and Barthes, for example, argue that traditional notions of the author as the unique, individual, creative force behind a text are no longer viable and that authorship should be seen as a product or function of the text. Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva bring psychoanalytic theory to bear on poststructuralism, both providing accounts of subjectivity that challenge Freudian theories by focusing on discontinuity and language.

Ratios—Formal relationships among the five terms of Burke's pentad. Ratios describe motives for action and are analyzed in order to determine how one term affects the other. For instance, a scene-act ratio encourages the analyst to look

at how a person's actions could be the result of his or her environment, while an agent-act ratio asks the analyst to understand the action in terms of the characteristics, beliefs, and practices of the person who performed it.

Signifying Practices—The historically and socially specific ways in which particular groups of people create and interpret meaning (i.e. essay writing, scholarly debate, film-making, conference presentations, sculpture, quilting, etc.) In addition, poststructuralists argue that material conditions and subjectivity are mediated, if not constructed, by signifying practices, which always bear the mark of the dominant ideology.

Social Construction—A group of epistemological theories maintaining that knowledge cannot be understood as the product of ideal forms (metaphysics), unmediated experience with the world (empiricism), or the logical workings of the mind (rationalism) but rather as the product of the interaction of a group of people in a specific context at a specific time. Social constructionists argue that these interactions are mediated if not constructed by language and that the conditions of knowledge vary from situation to situation. Arguments for rhetoric as epistemic, for intertextual interpretations of texts, and for inquiry-based pedagogies are examples of social constructionist arguments in Rhetoric and Composition.

Sophists—Traveling teachers in fifth-century BCE. Greece who taught politics, philosophy, and rhetoric for a fee. In addition to their rhetorical and poetical skills, the Sophists are known for believing that knowledge was relative to specific situations and that only probable knowledge was available to humans. Because of their epistemological beliefs, *kairos* (the situational appropriateness of speech) and *dissoi logoi* (arguing both sides of an issue) were key elements in sophistic rhetoric. Protagoras and Gorgias are two of the most well known Sophists.

Stasis, status—technique of rhetorical invention in which discourse is initiated by determining the issue at hand or the point of contention in an argument. The key treatise on *stasis* is Hermogenes of Tarsus's *On Status*. Written in approximately 176 CE and based on Hermagoras of Temnos's earlier text,

On Status, prescribes a set of questions for helping rhetors determine which of thirteen stases (literally, “stopping places”) is at issue in their dispute. Example stases include conjecture, definition, quality, and justification. Identifying issues through this stasiastic procedure provides a first step toward finding appropriate topics and creating an argument.

Subjectivity—A broad term referring to theories about the nature of the self, the ways in which individuals come to know themselves as selves, as well as the kinds of agency or control individuals have over the formation of their selves. Initially a phenomenological or psychoanalytic concern, subjectivity has become a highly debated issue since the advent of structuralist, poststructuralist, and postmodern theory. Generally speaking, contemporary theories of subjectivity replace the term *self* with the term *subject*, which is often opposed to the Freudian ego and the Cartesian *cogito*, or any model of the subject as a present, unified, rational entity. The psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan represents perhaps the most radical break from the notion of a present self, arguing that the subject is a decentered, divided entity created by a failed attempt to represent the Real. Other theorists, such as Louis Althusser, have taken a Marxist approach to subjectivity, maintaining that it is constituted by dominant ideologies. Still others, such as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, argue that the subject is a collection of many relationships, connections, and assemblages that constantly change according to new desires.

Tagmemics—A modern theory of linguistics initiated by Kenneth L. Pike and developed into a method of rhetorical invention by Pike, Richard Young, and Alton Becker. Tagmemics is based on the ideas that sentences and whole discourses have to be interpreted in the light of larger contexts, that understanding cultural differences is important, and that any unit of behavior can be identified, classed, differentiated, and employed in itself (particle), in a system (wave), or as a system within a particular discourse or context (field). Tagmemics is also based on the idea that disagreements happen because different groups of people can view units from these different perspectives. One way to begin inquiry, then, is to locate possible disagreements or dissonances by exploring units as

particles, waves, and fields and to examine their distinctive features, range of variation, and distribution. Young, Becker, and Pike formalized these assumptions into a nine-cell heuristic in their textbook, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*.

- Terministic Screen**—Kenneth Burke’s idea that the qualities of a person’s terminology affect the nature of his or her observations. According to Burke, terministic screens are verbal filters through which reality is reflected, selected, and deflected and by which an individual’s attention is directed to one set of concerns, issues, or ideas rather than another.
- Topics**—Resources for inventing arguments that include lines of reasoning, types of evidence, and appeals to audiences. Aristotle divided the topics into two kinds: common and special. The twenty-eight common topics could be used across subjects in deliberative, judicial, and epideictic speeches. Examples include arguments based on opposites, definition, cause and effect, and contrast. The special topics served as guides to finding subject matter or content (although they were not considered subject matter themselves) for the three types of discourse. Special topics for deliberative discourse include finance and defense; injustice and justice are special topics for judicial rhetoric; and courage and prudence are special topics for epideictic discourse. Rhetoricians throughout history have debated the epistemic status of the topics, some maintaining that they are non-epistemic storehouses or checklists, others arguing that they function epistemically as socially shared instruments for creating new knowledge.
- Tropes**—Rhetorical figures of thought that change meaning by changing the way something is named or identified. Opposed to schemes, which rearrange the order of words, tropes change the meaning of words, often creating new meanings. Metaphor, the trope in which one thing is substituted for another, is considered the master trope. Other tropes include hyperbole (exaggeration), synecdoche (substituting the part for the whole or the whole for the part), metonymy (replacing an object with one of its attributes), and periphrasis (circumlocution).
- Warrants**—General hypothetical statements or lines of argument that allow movement from the grounds to the claim of an

argument. Stephen Toulmin described warrants as registers of the legitimacy of the bridge between claims and grounds and said that they are usually appealed to implicitly.