

THE CULTURAL RHETORICS OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

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ABSTRACT

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The following study investigates the genre of after-dinner speaking (ADS) as articulated within US public discourse in the twentieth-century. Though ADS is an integral facet of speech communication pedagogy and was, in the early twentieth-century, the most popular site of public address outside of pulpit oratory, because the genre is identified as a form of epideictic oratory for the personal sphere, the history of the genre is obfuscated. This dissertation argues that during the early twentieth-century ADS provided a space for the expression of nineteenth-century platform oratorical culture in the banquet halls of the twentieth-century US urban landscape. As a central part of this historical moment of US rhetorical and political culture, ADS functioned to remediate platform oratorical traditions and provide opportunities for cultural identification.

Dedicated to my family.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Rationale	5
The Scope of the Study	10
Studies of After-Dinner Speaking	11
Cultural Studies and Rhetoric	14
The Cultural Perspective of This Study	16
Rhetorical Theory	17
Epidictic Discourse	18
Cognitive Rhetoric and Symbolic Inducement	22
Rhetorical Criticism and Methods of Inquiry	29
Genre Criticism	30
Procedure	33
Research Questions	36
Overview of Chapters	37
CHAPTER II. THE HISTORY OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING	40
Fasting, Feasting, and the Ancient Tradition of After-Dinner Speaking.....	40
The Oratorical Culture and Rhetorical Traditions of US Public Address	48
Material Rhetoric, and the Space of Culture	48
The Cultural Space of Parlor Rhetoric	54
Rhetorical Education as a Cultural Program	58
Literary Societies and Oratorical Culture in the US	59

Rhetorical Culture in Twentieth-Century America	65
Urbanization and the Temporal Rhythms of Industrialization	65
The Banquet Halls and Hotels of American Modernity	69
Conclusion	73
CHAPTER III. AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING AND CULTURAL POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FORM AND CONTENT OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING AS DESCRIBED WITHIN RHETORICAL TREATISES AND NEWSPAPER DISCOURSE	77
Rhetorical Textbooks and the Transition from Oratory to Public Speaking	78
The Rhetoric of Public Discourse	79
The Discursive Analysis of Institutional Rhetoric	80
Rhetoric and the Realm of Discourse	82
Deliberative and Epideictic Oratory in the American Tradition	84
Formal Considerations for After-Dinner Speaking	87
Humor and Deliberation	88
Brevity, Arrangement, and Invention	91
Preparation and Extemporaneous Delivery	94
The Character of After-Dinner Speaking	95
After-Dinner Speaking and Discourse about Culture	97
Vernacular Discourse	98
After-Dinner Speaking and American Culture	100
After-Dinner Speaking and Cultural Criticism	102
CHAPTER IV. BANQUET ORATORY AND THE INTERCULTURAL RHETORIC OF BEN REIFEL	105
Introduction	105

The Rhetorical Legacy of Ben Reifel	108
Theories of Intercultural Rhetoric	112
“To Be or To Become?: Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment”	118
Conclusion	126
CHAPTER V. THE WESTERN ROUND TABLE ON MODERN ART	131
Introduction	132
Kenneth Burke, Communication, and the Rhetoric of Art	135
US Art Patronage and Public Deliberation	137
<i>A Life</i> Round Table on Modern Art	140
Kenneth Burke and Art Criticism	143
Analysis of the Western Round Table on Modern Art	147
The Artists versus the Critics	150
Deliberative Strategies	152
Conclusion	156
CHAPTER VI. AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING AS PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC ...	158
Technology, the Public Sphere, and Presidential Rhetoric	161
The Public Sphere	164
Presidential Dinners	167
Political Banquets and Presidential Criticism	169
New Media and the Remediation of Political After-Dinner Speaking ..	174
Barrack Obama and After-Dinner Speaking	181
Conclusion	189
CHAPTER VII. CONCLUSION	195

Research Questions and Answers	191
Implications for Rhetorical and Cultural Praxis	193
Limitations	197
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	198

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the twentieth-century revival of rhetoric in departments of oral English, composition, and public speaking helped to forge the discipline of communication studies,¹ now an increasingly international academic tradition.² While historians of rhetoric point to Plato's *Gorgias* (385 B.C.E.) as the earliest appearance of *rhetorike*,³ scholars also identify the study of persuasive symbolic action within societies predating ancient Greece.⁴ Nonetheless, scholars and students focused on rhetoric throughout the Western academic tradition, from the Greco-Roman antiquities to the twentieth-century.⁵ Traditionally, historians of rhetoric identify the nineteenth and early

¹ For the history of the discipline specific to the study and teaching of speech communication in the US, see Karl Wallace, ed. *The History of Speech Education in America: Background Studies* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954); Herman Cohen, "The Development of Research in Speech Communication: A Historical Perspective," in *Speech Communication in the 20th Century*, 282-298, Thomas W. Benson, ed. (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985): 282-298. For a disciplinary history that is more focused on the social scientific study of communication, see Schramm, Wilbur, *The Beginnings of Communication Study in America: A Personal Memoir*, Steven H. Chaffee and Everett M. Rogers, eds. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997).

² The international scope of public speaking is covered by David Boromisza-Habashi, Jessica M. F. Hughes, and Jennifer A. Malkowski, "Public Speaking as Cultural Ideal: Internationalizing the Public Speaking Curriculum," *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* (December 2015): 1-15.

³ George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric: And Greek Rhetoric Under Christian Emperors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1.; Plato, *Gorgias*, Walter Hamilton and Chris Emylyn-Jones, trans. (New York: Penguin, [385 B.C.E.] 2004).

⁴ See, for example, Robert T. Oliver, *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971); and George A. Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

twentieth-centuries as dominated by mechanistic elocutionary schools of thought and, ultimately, less vibrant than other periods. Contemporary scholars, however, are revisiting these previously taken-for-granted moments.⁶ Specifically, the nineteenth-century reintroduction of rhetorical studies provided a paradigmatic orientation for the speech communication discipline, and the shift from elocution to New Rhetoric,⁷ architectonic institutions for US rhetorical studies today.

In the US, the foundations of twentieth-century rhetorical studies drew from two sources: the Western rhetorical tradition as traced through European scholarship and, according to Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, US cultural transformations.⁸ The major transformation seen in US rhetorical culture during the nineteenth-century involved the rise and fall of a robust array of platform oratory traditions including public displays

⁵ George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Its Christian and Secular Tradition: From Ancient to Modern Times*, 2nd. Rev. ed. (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

⁶ See, for example, J. Michael Sproule, "Inventing Public Speaking: Rhetoric and the Speech Book, 1730-1930," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 15, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 563-608; Thomas O. Sloane, "From Elocution to New Criticism: An Episode in the History of Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 31, no. 3 (2013): 297-330.

⁷ For the relationship between elocutionary education and New Rhetoric, see Sloane, "From Elocution to New Criticism," 297-330. For the development and impact of the speech communication discipline, see William M. Keith, "We Are the Speech Teachers," *Review of Communication* 11, no. 2 (April 2011): 83-92; and Pat J. Gehrke, and William M. Keith, eds., *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Conversation* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁸ According to Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, along with changes in the nineteenth-century cultural atmosphere of the United States came transformations in the theory and practice of rhetoric. See Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, "Afterword," in *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Transformations in the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric*, Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, eds. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993): 247-270, 247.

by local literary and debating societies, Fourth of July orations, traveling orators presenting on the lyceum lecture circuit, and the community hosting of the Chautauqua movement. While public engagement with such organizational activities, institutions, and events transformed over the nineteenth-century, the practice of attending and adjudicating oratorical performances and deliberative displays helped constitute US public culture and model political participation for generations to come.⁹ By the twentieth-century, however, the once vibrant US oratorical culture had dissipated as civic participants focused attention instead on an array of activities and technologies that emerged alongside industrialization.

As displays of platform oratory diminished, an educational movement to revive the tradition emerged, culminating in the 1914 establishment of the speech communication discipline. Today, communication studies spans a vast terrain of subjects related to interpersonal, intercultural, media, and organizational communication. The earliest disciplinary voices, however, belonged to an array of speech teachers focused on rhetoric, argumentation, and oral interpretation. Grounded in the Western rhetorical tradition, the resurgence of rhetoric provided the communication studies discipline with both valuable tools for contributing new insights in teaching as well as research and the ideological baggage associated with Western homogeneity. Specifically, scholars criticize the foundation as reiterative of a dominant perspective inherently alien to non-Western situations and students.¹⁰ In other words, the perspective provided through the Western

⁹ Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 8.

rhetorical tradition undoubtedly reflects realities experienced by some, through a process of selecting aspects of experience that, owing to the reductionist nature of symbolic action, inherently deflects the realities experienced by others.¹¹

To counter-balance such inclinations, critical scholarship utilizes historicity to reconsider historical narratives and revisit foundational texts, activities, events, and institutions to identify the ideological construction of power and create opportunities for praxis. One area of rhetorical history available to critical scholars is after-dinner speaking (ADS), a highly popular genre of public address that has received little academic investigation. The dearth of ADS-related research is especially remarkable given that, at the turn of the century, ADS was the most popular form of oratory in the US, a time when the lyceum culture of the nineteenth-century began to fade from US public life. According to Henry L. Ewbank, in fact, ADS was (with the exception of pulpit oratory) “the most prevalent form of public speaking in America.”¹² The study of ADS is also

¹⁰ See, for example, Richie Neil Hao, “Rethinking Critical Pedagogy: Implications on Silence and Silent Bodies,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (2011): 267-284.

¹¹ Such reductionism is, seemingly, an inherent component of language. See, Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950). For an argument about the historical construction of public speaking as an “Anglo cultural ideal” that “may not resonate with the experiences of students socialized in non-Anglo speech communities,” see Boromisza-Habashi, Hughes, and Malkowski, “Public Speaking as Cultural Ideal, 20-34.

¹² In the essay cited here, Ewbank Jr. is recalling the way his father, Henry Lee Ewbank, Sr., an important contributor to the foundation of rhetorical studies in the United States. Though the quotation is a recapitulation by Ewbank, Jr., I am referencing what Ewbank, Sr. thought. See, Henry L. Ewbank, Jr., “Henry Lee Ewbank, Sr.: Teacher of Teachers of Speech,” in *Twentieth-Century Roots of Rhetorical Studies*, Jim A. Kuypers and Andrew King, eds. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), 42.

pertinent because paralleling the rising status of ADS was the emergence of what would become the National Communication Association. Within this early cohort of speech teachers, various voices called for focusing on ADS,¹³ a genre of epideictic speech still taught in public speaking courses today.¹⁴ The following dissertation examines turn-of-the-century ADS as presented in public discourse about oratory. In doing so, the study identifies the emergence of material situations that provided a hub for public culture to remediate the tradition of platform oratory within the banquet hall domain of ADS. Given the widespread popularity of ADS, coupled with a rising middle class and vibrant public discourse about the norms of banquet oratory, ADS functioned as a cultural rhetoric.

Rationale

This study examines the US rhetorical tradition as manifested in public discourse about ADS in the hopes of locating cultural rhetorics capable of identify new space for mediating tension and bridging cultural divides. The reflexive search for more inclusive spaces within rhetorical studies is hardly new. In the US, rhetorical studies historically stressed the imitation of Demosthenes and canonizations of Quintilian, Cicero, and

¹³ See, for example, “Banquet Oratory Now College Course,” *New York Times* (August 14, 1910), 6; “After-Dinner Oratory,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 1, no. 1 (1915), 90-91; C. L. Mense, “An Extension Course in Short Speeches,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 6, no. 3 (1920), 22-24; “Speech as an Art: Mt. Holyoke’s Aim,” *New York Times* (February 17, 1935), N3; “Colgate Tests Seek a New Chauncey Depew; Students Tried Out as After-Dinner Speakers,” *New York Times* (May 3, 1936), N7.

¹⁴ See, for example, William Keith, and Christian Lundberg, *Public Speaking: Choice and Responsibility* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2014).

Aristotle,¹⁵ an emphasis that situates rhetoric as the counterpart to dialectic.¹⁶ Though rhetorical activity has maintained consistent forms and principles throughout the last two centuries, the dialectical impetus driving the US rhetorical tradition would inevitably propel transformations. Hence, by the middle of the twentieth-century, scholars peered beyond traditional orientations toward New Rhetoric and considerations of culture and symbolic action. In so doing, communication scholarship began disrupting the longstanding neo-Aristotelianism among scholars and eventually expanded the field into new areas. From the largely neo-Classical study of great oratories and political rhetoric came a maieutic consideration of new epistemological frameworks accounting for critical, cultural, and post-colonial studies.¹⁷

While critical and cultural studies provide a unique *telos* to the study of rhetoric, in creating critical distance from the classically infused foundations of the US rhetorical tradition, scholars risk abandoning important resources for reflexivity and critical investigation. Prior to the cultural turn, the study of rhetoric maintained a concrete adherence to the classical traditions outlined in the works of Greece, Rome, Medieval and Renaissance Europe, and early modernity.¹⁸ In the United States, the classics provided an analogical bridge between colonists and the idealized cultural space of Athens,

¹⁵ See Carol Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁶ See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Lane Cooper, ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940).

¹⁷ See Raymie McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 91-111.

¹⁸ See Raymie McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric in a Postmodern World," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (February 1991): 75-79.

suggesting a model for rationality and Western democracy. In other words, the function of Western rhetoric and the image of classical Athenian society delivered a model for the enactment of democracy in the United States.¹⁹ Athenian rhetorical theory as articulated in the work of Aristotle, as well as via consequential treatments from Rome, namely *Rhetorica Ad Herrenium* and the works of Cicero and Quintilian,²⁰ circulated about North American educational and civic institutions.²¹ Societies interacted with rhetorical programs in a variety of different ways. Burgeoning US society was not homogenous and various local exigencies and colonial traditions provided unique rhetorical landscapes within which vernacular rhetorical ecologies emerged. Returning to this tradition, therefore, can allow for critical-historical scholarship of disciplinary paradigms by illuminating the exigencies informing the US rhetorical foundations of communication studies.²²

Owing, in part, to the eclecticism of regional populations, the relatively sudden development of communication technologies, printing availability, and rising rates of literacy, one is hard-pressed to identify coherent linear narratives explaining the

¹⁹ See Wilbur Samuel Howell, “English Backgrounds of Rhetoric,” in Karl R. Wallace, ed., *History of Speech Education in America*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954): 3-47.

²⁰ See George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

²¹ Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, “Introduction: Transformations of Public Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America,” in *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America: Transformations in the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric*, Gregory Clark and S. Michael Halloran, eds. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993): 1-28.

²² For studies of paradigmatic change in scientific disciplines, see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 2014).

rhetorical tradition in the US.²³ Variations and adaptations emerged, to be sure. Critical study of the Western rhetorical tradition is nonetheless important for at least three reasons. First, as seen in bibliographic analyses of rhetorical texts, the aggregate body of published rhetorical theory circulating within spaces of US rhetorical education drew heavily upon European models of classical Greek and Roman treatises, informative works constituting the Western rhetorical tradition,²⁴ that diverge in unique ways in order to incorporate strategies related to culture addressing the changing environment. In other words, while the Greco-Roman traditions may sit atop the ideological hierarchy of the Western rhetorical tradition, alternative cultural voices are nonetheless implicit.

Second, traditions are important sites of investigation because traditions are highly useful mechanisms for directing symbolic action and facilitating human relations. From traditions come paradigms and models for understanding the explicit and implicit situations encountered in discursive and cultural spaces that mark the paths crossed when dealing with the range of experiences that occur as one traverses through life. In demarcating the ground upon which critics discover and invent models for rhetorical practice, traditions direct discursive action and therefore inform activity ranging across the plane, from the minutia of day-to-day survival to methods of artistry. In sum, re-engaging the intellectual tradition through a screen adjusted to incorporate culture provides renewed vitality to the toolbox of rhetorical artistry as something applicable to contemporary times.

²³ Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers*, 1-15.

²⁴ See Sproule, "Inventing Public Speaking," 563-608.

Third, charting traditional paths provides critics with a trajectory needed to identify pivotal moments of intellectual development. During the twentieth-century, for example, the Western academy faced trenchant criticisms related to the increasingly clear incapacities stemming from traditional training. In anthropology, scholars such as Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, and Victor Turner engaged in ethnographic studies of cultures across the world and produced clear depictions of alternative epistemologies that upended traditional Western assumptions. In turn, scholars also began investigating the absence of such insights by critically interrogating the methodologies of disciplines.

The 1970s were a particularly pivotal decade for understanding the various objects of study as produced in accordance with the rules of language. Specifically, *The Interpretation of Cultures* by Clifford Geertz and *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* by Hayden V. White challenged the epistemological ordinances of anthropology and history by pointing toward the rhetorical nature of language and the constitutive strictures subsequently embedded within the linguistic norms of Western disciplinary culture.²⁵ In 1978, Edward Said, a literary and cultural critic, published *Orientalism*, a critical analysis of manifest and latent structural traces of Western dominance undergirding the study of Eastern society.²⁶ The importance of the landmark turns in scholarship are more clearly identifiable against the backdrop of studies from which they departed. In better understanding the *telos* of disciplinary

²⁵ See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1977).

²⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

scholarship, therefore, individuals are better able to engage in *praxis*, theoretically-informed practice, especially in response to critical and cultural exigencies.

While it may be tempting to dismiss historical studies of oratory in order to avoid perpetuating the dominance of Western homogeneity, doing so ignores the important role such activities had on the epistemological development of the US public. This dissertation approaches the historical study of the Western rhetorical tradition as an important site for re-imagining ways the tradition infuses US oratorical culture with hierarchic strictures. Such recognition expands the idea of the US rhetorical tradition and, by extension, public engagement within US democratic practice, in order to identify the voices silenced or forgotten in the contemporary historiography of rhetoric.

The Scope of the Study

Guided by the above rationale, the following study analyzes the generic form of ADS as articulated in the twentieth-century in order to identify the banquet oratory as a species of epideictic rhetoric that functioned as an important site of cultural production in American public address. As a site of cultural production, such rhetorical occasions can provide models for mediating cultural conflict, engaging in intercultural communication, and negotiating power within modern institutions. Specifically, the study focuses on two types of texts: (1) macroscopic discourses in which news circulated through mainstream and vernacular channels uses postprandial address as a topic for deliberating cultural and rhetorical proprieties, and (2) transcribed speeches highlighting the relationship between

banquet epideictic and public deliberations about culture.²⁷ I argue that ADS reincorporated a variety of platform oratorical events and functioned as a form of cultural epideictic rhetoric through which Americans adapted to new urban landscapes, cultivated identifications, and generated power relationships. Because public discourse framed ADS as vital to US democratic participation, this study investigates ADS as a rhetorical act within a larger deliberative episode and, as such, aims to understand ADS as a generic form that functions within various acts and spheres of discourse. Such a perspective should help generate models and concepts for facilitating praxis via rhetorical criticism and cultural studies.

Studies of After-Dinner Speaking

Typically recognized as a species of epideictic oratory, the banquet speech often marks the special occasion of a dinner shared amongst individuals with common interests, association, or invitation. At such an occasion, participants subordinate the consumptive act of dining to the socialization purpose associated with dining amongst others. To signify this order, banquets provide a series of rhetorical activities, the pinnacle of which involves an invited guest who speaks after dinner. After-dinner speakers often focus attention on humor and entertainment. In the twentieth-century, the domain of ADS expanded beyond the typical private sphere address unique to a household or organization. With the proliferation of a newspaper-reading public and the

²⁷ Throughout this dissertation, I use a variety of terms interchangeably to refer to ADS as articulated within public discourse. Terms include after-dinner oratory, postprandial address, and banquet speaking.

establishment of hotels and banquet halls capable of providing a “public table” to the emerging middle-class, ADS became a public medium.

Over the years, teachers of public speaking and historians of public address produced a variety of calls for researching the event. The first call researching ADS, in fact, appeared in the inaugural issue of what would become the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.²⁸ Within contemporary scholarship, educators continue to produce arguments for studying and incorporating ADS as a pedagogical tool. Brandi Lawless’s critical review of studies addressing the pedagogical utility of ADS emphasizes a Freirean framework and invites educators to recognize ADS as a tool for enhancing critical consciousness, or *conscientization*.²⁹ Adam J. Sharples’s identifies classical scholarship that, when applied in tandem with subsequent communication research on the topic of humor, could enhance the practice and study of ADS.³⁰ Additionally, in their critique of the rules governing intercollegiate ADS, Jack Kay, Timothy A. Borchers, and Susanne L. Williams argue that regulations against impersonation and stand-up comedy legislating intercollegiate forensics alienate students from being able to apply the communicative skill sets of the laboratory to ADS situations in larger society. Hence, Kay, Borchers, and Williams call for studies of the “public analogue,” or ADS performed outside of the competitive

²⁸ “After-Dinner Oratory,” 90-91.

²⁹ Brandi Lawless, “Problems, Causes, and Still No Solutions,” *National Forensic Journal* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 161-173.

³⁰ Adam J. Sharples, ““Do You Know Why That’s Funny?’: Connecting the Scholarship of Humor to After-Dinner Speaking,” *National Forensic Journal* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 4-21.

forensics tournament.³¹ While the specific rules of forensics have since changed, the larger argument remains: ADS education will benefit from a better understanding of the relationship between the versions of ADS practiced in the technical sphere of argumentation (competitive forensics) and the versions of ADS practiced in public.

Second, historians of American public address have also called for studies of ADS. In 1943, Bower Aly provided a roadmap suggesting a range of destinations for future historians of American public address, paying close attention to a variety of promising topics within the speech communication literature. Aly called for scholars to investigate public address as intersected with social movements, institutions, race, leadership, aging, education, intellectual history, rhetorical theory, criticism, and ADS.³² Though in-depth studies of ADS are absent from the historiography of public address, ADS is nonetheless recognized as an important rhetorical form. During the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, as J. Michael Hogan explains, ADS was “the paradigmatic rhetorical genre” of the day.³³

Perhaps scholars neglect the topic because of the nineteenth-century designation of ADS as a private oratorical form, the meaning of which was specific to attendees and unimportant to larger publics. This analysis considers ADS as a public medium, a space in which the diminishingly popular platform oratorical activities of the nineteenth-century

³¹ Jack Kay, Timothy A. Borchers, and Susanne L. Williams, “Gridiron Nights, Comedy Clubs, and After Dinner Speaking: Prescriptions from Real World Analogues,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 28, no. 4 (Spring 1992), 10.

³² Bower Aly, “The History of American Public Address as a Research Field,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 29, no. 3 (October 1943), 310.

³³ J. Michael Hogan, “Introduction,” in *Rhetoric and Reform in the Progressive Era*, J. Michael Hogan, ed. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 14.

reemerged in tandem with a host of exigencies and cultural factors. Hence, ADS is a site of cultural rhetoric within public discourse, a function of the genre emerging as the banquet hall became the dominant space of twentieth-century platform oratory, about which the US had long deliberated.

Cultural Studies and Rhetoric

To understand how ADS functioned as a cultural rhetoric, I now provide a review of the intersection between rhetoric and culture. For Alberto González and Amy N. Heuman, rhetorical communication responds to surface level goals by addressing the immediate exigencies of a situation. In so doing, one simultaneously strives to achieve “a deeper goal of renewing, (re)creating, opposing, or preserving the ‘sacred centers’ of the culture: identity, community, motive, power, and value.”³⁴ Studies of culture and rhetoric are important components for the critical consideration of ADS, a cultural event maintaining rhetorical forms. The relationship between rhetoric and culture is complicated and evolving. According to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, the term *culture* identifies “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms” that are “historically transmitted” through familial lessons, folklore and mythology, and everyday interactions with other members of a cultural group.³⁵ The culmination of this inheritance results in the individual obtaining a “pattern of meanings” with which she or

³⁴ Alberto González and Amy N. Heuman, “The Latin Grammys and the ALMAs: Awards Programs, Cultural Epideictic, and Intercultural Pedagogy,” *Journal of Latinos and Education* 2, no. 1 (2003): 48-49.

³⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89

he can “communicate, perpetuate, and develop [his or her] knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”³⁶

The study of rhetoric is highly influenced by the emergence of cultural studies in the late twentieth-century.³⁷ As Alberto González and Hsin-I Cheng point out, the Western rhetorical tradition rests upon cultural values that differ from the rhetorical traditions of Asian and African culture. The emergence of intercultural rhetoric is associated with the 1980s and 1990s when “rhetorical theorists influenced by cultural studies, the rise of ethnic and area studies, critical ethnography, and intercultural studies in communication began to ask questions about the mixing of rhetorical traditions.”³⁸ Such questions encouraged scholars to investigate rhetorical occasions, the evaluation of which shows tremendous influence over “cultural discourses.” Research in this area emphasizes praxis, theoretically informed practice. Praxis is, of course, difficult because in researching differences scholars risk concretizing identity markers and widening the gap across boundaries of identity. One approach for maintaining the program of cultural studies and minimizing the baggage of emphasizing cultural differences is to gear studies toward the actualization of *differential belonging*.³⁹ According to Karma R. Chávez,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ronald Walter Greene, “Rhetoric (Dis)Appearing,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 10, nos. 2-3 (2013): 259-264.

³⁸ Alberto González and Hsin-I Cheng, “Intercultural Rhetoric” in *The Rhetoric of Western Thought: From the Mediterranean World to the Global Setting*, 8th ed., J. L. Golden, G. F. Berquist, W.E. Coleman, and J. Michael Sproule, eds. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2004): 471-478, 471.

³⁹ Karma R. Chávez, “Spatializing Gender Performativity: Ecstasy and Possibilities for Livable Life in the Tragic Case of Victoria Arellano,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 33 (2010), 144.

differential belonging fosters coalitional togetherness without ignoring the asymmetrical power relationships inherent within groups that cut across identity markers. “As a politics of cultural citizenship,” Chávez concludes,

differential belonging is a strategy where variegated groups choose to belong across seemingly strong lines of difference at the same time that groups demonstrate the fiction of divisions upheld within normative constructions of belonging.⁴⁰

As such, the concept dislocates presupposed notions of cultural, racial, sexual, or gendered identity as the salient marker within a group, highlighting instead the identification of the individual as a member of an intercultural coalition that cuts across socially constructed segregations, providing a formal rhetoric through which resistance is enacted and demonstrated but left potentially unaddressed. Such notions agree with the study of intercultural and comparative rhetoric as articulated by speech communication and intercultural scholars.

The Cultural Perspective of this Study

This dissertation investigates ADS in the twentieth-century, arguing that public discourse about the oratorical genre focused attention on the proprietary norms of rhetorical practice as a means of subversively disciplining cultural identification. In this regard, such a study functions to uncover cultural rhetorics in the content and form of ADS-related public discourse. As part of the critical rhetoric tradition invested in disrupting rhetorical acts of domination as a means of enhancing freedom, the study seeks to develop a critical assessment of ways whereby the rhetorical normativity of ADS

⁴⁰ Ibid., 144.

functioned to negotiate moments of cultural discord and social order. To do so, the study draws upon critical and theoretical frameworks provided through the study of cultural rhetorics. Such a framework highlights the way discourse about ADS functioned to cultivate formal proprieties, enact cultural identity, and, in the face of anxiety about cultural or economic change, provide discursive space for addressing cultural improprieties with terminologies that are explicitly formal. Understanding such functions can apply to pedagogical and critical efforts by identifying rhetorical strategies for reimagining ADS as a site for cultural belonging. Since the goal of the study is to identify rhetorical tactics for creating cultural spaces of belongingness, the next section will overview rhetorical theory.

Rhetorical Theory

Rhetoric is an art of speechmaking whereby the speaker takes advantage of the available means of persuasion in order to move an audience. As Aristotle explains, rhetoric deals in the realm of probability, interacting with dialectical engagements and, therefore, producing dialectical transformations.⁴¹ The study of art mandates an examination of artistic action in order to produce concepts and tools for artistic creation. Hence, criticism functions as a means of enhancing rhetoric by adding to the “means of persuasion” available to the dialectically engaged rhetor. To contribute to inquiries highlighted above, the following dissertation situates the study of ADS by drawing upon rhetorical theory related to epideictic discourse and symbolic inducement.

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

Epideictic Discourse

Traditional descriptions of after-dinner speaking place the form within the domain of epideictic rhetoric, one of Aristotle's three branches of oratory. Whereas forensic and deliberative oratory developed specific institutional contexts within ancient Athenian society, epideictic oratory covered a range of ceremonial occasions and therefore allowed for a flexibility of form that continues to raise questions amongst rhetorical scholars today. Formally, *epideictic* is a term that identifies speeches of praise or blame delivered on matters of contemporary significance and before spectators. Alternatively, deliberation and forensic oratory are temporally oriented modes of oratory, set before adjudicators. The difference in purpose is coupled with a difference in scene as *forensic* and *deliberative* oratory named formal patterns of speech directly connected to democratic reforms and public institutions, specifically the court and legislative systems. Hence, forensic and deliberative oratory maintained relatively stable settings and traditions. In practicing deliberative oratory, a speaker engaged in policy-oriented debating about future action within a legislative body. In practicing forensic oratory, a speaker engaged in prosecution and defense by presenting arguments about issues of justice over past events in front of a courtroom jury. Whereas custom bound forensic and deliberative oratory to certain institutionalized domains, epideictic oratory was associated with occasions. While such distinctions are widely known and recognized, many scholars continue to find that, when interrogated closely, the major assumptions and contours of epideictic oratory may appear ambiguous if not illusory. In fact, Laurent Pernot has gone so far as to conclude, "[epideictic] was far less common and illustrious than the other two

categories of oratory.”⁴² According to Clark Rountree, speeches of blame are especially rare; a lack of speeches of blame that suggests epideictic rhetoric was mostly made of speeches of praise.⁴³

Perhaps such confusions relate to Aristotle’s transformative articulation, seen specifically in his creation of epideictic oratory. In Aristotle’s schema, an epideictic speaker presents to spectators, unlike the judicial audiences of forensic and deliberative rhetoric. As spectators, the audience is not concerned with the course of action proposed by the speaker but rather the audience drawn to the speaker’s strength of performance. In providing the audience with a different role, Aristotle has made a move away from direct appeals to suasion and dissuasion (competition) and toward implicit forms of identification (cooperation) by way of mimetic catharsis. Though Aristotle continues the tradition of describing rhetoric as an art of persuasion, a means of gaining advantage over an opponent, the invention of epideictic rhetoric helped to bridge Platonic philosophy to the practice of rhetoric.

Though epideictic spectators do not weigh logical appeals in the same fashion as deliberative and forensic juries, epideictic oratory nevertheless maintains the persuasive function inherent in language. Scholars have shown that suasion that occurs in epideictic moments. Chaim Pearleman and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca contend, for example, that epideictic is necessarily contingent upon argument, related to the strengthening of

⁴² Laurent Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric: Questioning the Stakes of Ancient Praise* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 2.

⁴³ Clark Rountree, “The (Almost) Blameless Genre of Classical Greek Epideictic,” *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2001), 293.

“disposition toward action by increasing adherence to the values it lauds.”⁴⁴ Similarly, Denise M. Bostdorff and Shawna H. Ferris explain, “epideictic rhetoric has the capacity to engage audience in a process of reflection and change” by way of “*lexis* or verbal style,” through which speakers can draw out the affective responses needed to establish “the groundwork for contemplation and possible deliberation.”⁴⁵

To understand the suasive qualities of epideictic, perhaps it is best to visit Aristotle’s *Poetics* where Aristotle treats the subject of admirable/inferior characters (antecedent analogues of the “praise or blame” elements of epideictic) in his discussion of the poetic categories of tragedy and comedy. For Aristotle, character (*ethos*) is a category in both rhetoric and poetics related to imitation (*mimesis*):

Those who imitate, imitate agents, and these must be either admirable or inferior. (Character almost always corresponds to just these two categories, since everyone is differentiated in character by defect or excellence.) Alternatively they must be better people than we are, or worse, or of the same sort.... The very same difference distinguishes tragedy and comedy from each other; the latter aims to imitate people worse than our contemporaries, the former better.⁴⁶

As George Thomson explains, the notion of catharsis or purge stems from ancient medical beliefs relating to the treatment of people with psychosis, epilepsy, and possession. Shamanistic treatment often consisted of a dose of a homeopathic symbolic action. The physician would perform the symptoms and thus *induce* the ecstatic state as a means of purging the victim of the humors that caused the ailment. Given the mysteries

⁴⁴ Chaïm Perelman and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 49-50.

⁴⁵ Denise M. Bostdorff and Shawna H. Ferris, “John F. Kennedy at American University: The Rhetoric of the Possible, Epideictic Progression, and the Commencement of Peace,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 4 (2014), 410.

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, Malcolm Heath, trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 5.

of possession, it is natural to assume that just as the “abnormal” wanted to be cured of abnormality, so too would the healthy desire the “wisdom” of possession, seeking out the ecstatic state as a means of gaining advantageous insights. In a sense, epideictic oratory followed suit by displaying the powerful performance as a spectacle for the entertainment and emotional experience of audiences.⁴⁷

Though theatre had, to some extent, secularized by the time of the Greek tragedies and comedies, such activities maintain the purgative function among audiences (the word “tragedy,” in fact, means “goat-song”). The logic of tragic catharsis works in the same way as the medical purge of evil spirits: in generating the ecstatic affection, or *pathos*, of psychosis through dramatic narrative and *mimesis*, the audience purged their guilt along with the purging of the tragic character. Hence, in *Poetics*, Aristotle identifies a formulaic process whereby familiarity with characters, sensibility of the plot, deservingness of the victims, severity of the purge, and spontaneity of the dramatic turn relates to the magnitude of the catharsis.⁴⁸ In bringing about a resolution that aligns with the narrative as well as the cultural expectations of the audience, a playwright will construct the “perfect” drama.

Kenneth Burke describes such action as *inducement*, an emotive function of language that construct attitudinal responses and can bend or reinforce opinion.⁴⁹ Burke

⁴⁷ George Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens: The Classic Study in the Origins of Drama*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Universal Library, 1968), 350-354.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*.

⁴⁹ Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

argues that epideictic is more aligned with *poetics* than any other oratorical genre.⁵⁰ The persuasive aspect comes about as a symbol-user draws upon formal mechanisms to merge the resolution of the dramatic action and tragic catharsis along with ideological motives, as did Aeschylus in the *Oresteia* when he solves the tragic agonism by subverting the matriarchic kinship justice system as a necessary component of democratic institution building.⁵¹ Hence, for Burke, Aristotle, and others, epideictic is among the more poetic categories of oratory, a distinction that helps explain the implicitness of its factions within the overt emotionality of its functions.

In sum, rhetorical theories of epideictic discourse use a contrasted definition to identify moments of the epideictic genre. Speeches are oriented toward the present and set before an audience of spectators rather than adjudicators. Nonetheless, epideictic functions within larger persuasive appeals through a variety of mechanisms capable of transforming the space of epideictic in ways that promote deliberative or forensic argument.

Cognitive Rhetoric and Symbolic Inducement

In approaching ADS from a rhetorical perspective, it is important to account for the cultural and cognitive contexts of audiences engaging in the social act of consumption

⁵⁰ In “Rhetoric and Poetics” Burke writes: “In extreme cases, we can distinguish between the Poetic and the Rhetorical here when we think of ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ in contrast with deliberative and forensic oratory as discussed in Aristotle, or with the third office of the orator, as discussed in Cicero.” See Kenneth Burke, “Rhetoric and Poetics,” in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*, 295-307 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 295.

⁵¹ Burke, “Rhetoric and Poetics,” 295.

and the biological state of conviviality. According to the anthropologist Alice P. Julier, “As social life and institutions change, food—its availability, its safety, its symbolism—is often a conduit for people’s attempts to ground their collective beliefs and identities.”⁵² Such was especially the case in colonial and post-Revolutionary America. Hence, Donna R. Gabaccia contends that in order to “understand changing American identities, we must explore also the symbolic power of food to reflect cultural or social affinities in moments of change or transformation.”⁵³ Dinner parties and educational society conventions, therefore, served as opportunities to create a shared identity through the collective individuation of food, a symbolically shared substance. As Kima Cargill explains, “Food and food rituals are one of the more important facets of an individual's subjective terrain and mediator of experience.”⁵⁴ Such an explanation is in line with Burke’s theory of *ritual*. For Burke, a ritual solemnizes an event; as such, rituals are a form of symbolic doubling. In essence, a ritual symbol represents a material change in a way that helps an audience to maintain cooperation in the face of change.⁵⁵ To unpack some of the theoretical framework for such an approach, I now turn to a discussion of cognitive rhetoric as a critical approach.

⁵² Alice P. Julier, *Eating Together: Food, Friendship, and Inequality*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 16.

⁵³ Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 9.

⁵⁴ Kima Cargill, “Desire, Ritual, and Cuisine,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 94, no. 2 (April 2007), 322.

⁵⁵ Kenneth Burke, “Doing and Saying: Thoughts on Myth, Cult, and Archetypes,” *Salmagundi: A Quarterly of the Humanities & Social Sciences* 15 (Winter 1971): 100-119.

Burke's discussion of the rhetorical situation begins with the principle of individuation, a basic material division between humans that occurs because of the centrality of the central nervous system. The principle of individuation suggests that each body composed of motion, materials that are the sole domain of that singular individual. Hence, when a body is malnourished, the hunger pangs belong to that solitary body alone. When the body consumes food, the nutrients of the food are only available to the body that chews and swallows. The principle of individuation also explains the communication of affective experiences of pain or joy. A dialectical realist, Burke's approach implies a natural state of division between bodies, hence the inherent alienation of language.

Alas, while a gulf separates these material bodies, the symbol-using animal efficiently evolved over the years in order to develop the material capacity for bridging the chasm by using *symbolic action*. A symbol is a material object that represents another object. Through the use and misuse of symbols, humans can transcend their division. Hence, when our protagonist stubs her toe, she can profess her pain through symbolic action. In doing so, a sympathetic audience might interpret those symbols and develop an attitude that empathizes with her pain. If our protagonist stubs her toe because of the misdeeds of her audience, she can communicate both pain and frustration, perhaps evoking both sympathy and guilt. For Burke, *attitude* is a third realm that mediates the symbolic realm of words and the material realm of bodies. Hence, through the use of symbols, our protagonist has crafted an attitudinal response of empathy in the material body of her audience, a man who would have been otherwise snickering at her foolishness had she not communicated her pain effectively.

While the material body motivates human action, language also motivates. To be sure, at the basis of symbols is material motion. A spoken word is but an utterance composed of exertion, breath, and sound. When the person recognizes that combination of noise, enacted in the context of a scene, however, the motion transforms into symbolic action. Similarly, an infant might view a lump of pulp and board as a seat or a toy or nothing at all. In time, the child learns the word “book” and transforms his ability to identify pulp and board (motion) into an object with meaning, a book (action).

The third and final locus of human motivation is the “learning of language.” With metaphor, “a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else,” a speaker brings “out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this.”⁵⁶ In using this metaphor as a *terministic screen* for the situation at hand, the rhetors highlight a perspective that both illuminates and obfuscates aspects of the situation. As Burke explains, “Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality.”⁵⁷

In his 1983 book, *Symbolic Inducement and Knowing: A Study in the Foundations of Rhetoric*, Richard Gregg builds upon Burke’s work and provides a detailed investigation into the relationship between physiological processes and the production and interpretation of symbols.⁵⁸ Specifically, Gregg draws on a range of treatments of human development from psychology, rhetoric, and anthropology and identifies

⁵⁶ See Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 503.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁸ Richard Gregg, *Symbolic Inducement and Knowing: A Study in the Foundations of Rhetoric* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984).

epistemological frameworks largely inherent within the cognition of sensory information. For example, given the ocular tendency to perceive images through a stark delineation between light and dark, human sense making maintains a bordering principle. Not only does the bordering principle identify visual frames, it also accounts for dominant metaphors of light and dark within human speech as well as bordering socialization within childhood play.

Drawing on the work of Eric Erikson, Gregg shows that children experiment with the edges of information domains through rituals of childhood play. From the cognitive rhetoric perspective, play includes the establishment of parameters of social order that emerge when children set out the rules of make believe games. In establishing rules of play, a hierarchy emerges whereby the enforcement of the rules is an expression of power justified as one of the playmates guards the boundaries of the sphere of play. In addition to hierarchy and power, playmates establish rules for negotiating boundaries and sharing responsibilities within the rules of “play,” rules that become normative among frequent playmates and siblings. As “play” occurs within domains of parental control, the act of bordering play spaces provides imaginary act of imitation for children to experiment with the thought of social behavior available to them following the dislocation from the home.⁵⁹ Given the relationship between “play” and other temporally arranged practices of home life, such as dinnertime and after-dinner entertainment, the cognitive aspects of rhetorical inducement are particularly interesting for studies of ADS.

The relationship between genre and cognitive rhetoric seems straightforward—the tropes and patterns employed within rhetorical situations carve out a groove of

⁵⁹ Gregg, *Symbolic Inducement*.

expectations and ways of knowing that prime audiences and create symbolic inducement. Moreover, according to Randy Allen Harris, investigations of “crosscultural,” rhetoric can uncover “the different instantiations the factors play in the aesthetic and suasive regimes of different languages and cultures.”⁶⁰

The framework is particularly viable for considerations of ADS because of the consumptive activities of the audiences within an after-dinner speaking situation. Insights about the rhetorical workings of banquets are available in various banqueting-related texts, although such works typically treat rhetoric peripherally (focusing instead on aspects such as style, language, courtship, or table talk). Michel Jeanneret’s investigation of table talk manuals from the Renaissance, for example, provides a stirring analysis of rhetoric by investigating the manners that bind the relationship “between the feast and the narration of the feast.”⁶¹ Through his close reading of banquets as “textual objects and verbal creations,” Jeanneret posits that feasting manners possess correspondences with linguistic appeals: “Words related to the stomach,” Jeanneret suggests, “awaken in language all sorts of dormant powers, as if convivial talk, acquiring mimetic qualities, takes on the sensuality of a good meal.”⁶²

While feasting is an explicitly social activity, dining is also an act of consumption which, when coupled with social interaction, can produce biological states across the audience providing the banquet orator with a unique set of exigencies and rhetorical

⁶⁰ Ibid, 5.

⁶¹ Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 21.

⁶² Ibid, 21.

possibilities. Marije aan het Rot, D. S. Moskowitz, Zoe Y. Hsu, and Simon N. Young build upon research identifying the ways individual eating behaviors affect relationships through mimetic conditioning among dinner partners. Specifically, past research “suggests that agency and communion during interactions that involve meals moderate how much people eat.”⁶³ Hence, using a process of “event-contingent recording” whereby they could study the interpersonal behaviors of participants engaging in interactions during and outside of meals. The researchers found that during mealtimes, participants’ reported interpersonal interactions with increased pleasantness, “greater agreeableness and less dominance and submissiveness than at other times.”⁶⁴ Being unique embodied responses to the syntactic action of the rhetorical structures of post-dinner play, the adolescent analogue of after-dinner speaking, considerations of cognitive rhetoric shape the generic understanding of constellations emerging within the formal practice of ADS.

In conclusion, the above discussions of rhetorical theory represent literature intended to identify concepts for understanding the art of rhetoric as related to the historical development of epideictic rhetorical form as well as the cognitive principles posited to explain rhetoric as an act of symbolic inducement.

⁶³ Marije aan het Rot, D.S. Moskowitz, Zoe Y. Hsu, and Simon N. Young, “Eating a Meal is Associated with Elevations in Agreeableness and Reductions in Dominance and Submissiveness,” *Physiology & Behavior* 144 (2015): 103-109, 104.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 107.

Rhetorical Criticism and Methods of Inquiry

Rhetorical criticism is an act of inquiry aiming to contribute to a longstanding discussion about the art of rhetoric and the suasive forms of symbolic action expressed within cultural contexts. In other words, rhetorical criticism is a process of interrogating symbolic action in order to understand the rhetorical function of discursive forms, cultural contexts, and persuasive appeals within discourse. Burke identifies three forms of symbolic action: scientific or informational, poetic, and rhetoric. Whereas scientific discourse aims to inform, and poetic discourse to induce emotional experiences and communicate imagery, rhetorical discourse aims to move audiences toward the opinions supported by the speaker.⁶⁵ The articulation marked a pivotal moment in rhetorical history as Burke's use of symbolic action allowed critics of speech to account for moments of communicative suasion within discursive forms outside traditional studies of compositional and oratorical selections. Additionally, Burke's conceptualization of rhetoric shifted focus toward identification, the use of symbolic action to induce cooperation within an audience, individuals addressed for creating consubstantiality. The tripartite framework, however, is not inherent within any given fragment of symbolic action. One can view a selection of poetry as an act of persuasion or a piece of information, a categorical destination decided upon through discourse among audience members.

Rhetoric is multifaceted and, as a term, can identify both persuasive speeches and the production of criticism because the term identifies symbolic action intended to

⁶⁵ See Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

facilitate the art of seeking advantage. While advantage can occur via the persuading of an audience, rhetors gain advantage by drawing upon “the available means of persuasion,” hence in critically studying rhetorical productions and constructing rhetorical criticism, the critic produces information for the purpose of rhetorical discourse.⁶⁶

Genre Criticism

In their introduction to *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson lay out the development of generic criticism, concluding with a benchmark articulation of the methodology.⁶⁷ An early genre critic is Roderick P. Hart who, in 1971, identified the ways in which “conventions, traditions, [and] prior rhetoric” functioned to “mold and constrain” an orator.⁶⁸ While early studies were insightful, they employed an inductive analysis. In doing so, they focused solely on the way a given genre would either enhance or impede audience understanding. By alternating to a deductive approach, in which one studies the generic text first, Campbell and Jamieson explain, genre critics could investigate “the ordered universe [the genre] creates.”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

⁶⁷ See Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “Introduction” in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*, K. K. Campbell and K. H. Jamieson, eds. (Speech Communication Association, 1978).

⁶⁸ Roderick P. Hart, “The Rhetoric of the True Believer,” *Speech Monographs* 38, no. 4 (1971): 249-261.

⁶⁹ Campbell and Jamieson, “Introduction,” 18.

For Lloyd Bitzer, a rhetor will draw upon analogous and comparable situations in order to generate rhetorical responses to a new situation. These emergent responses, if they in fact catch on and are cultivated within the discursive fields of the relative population, ultimately create a new rhetorical genre.⁷⁰ Jamieson adds to this contention, suggesting that responses to “an unprecedented rhetorical situation” grow from “antecedent rhetorical forms.”⁷¹ Jamieson also emphasizes the relationship between generic speeches and institutions that continually reconstitute the generic rhetorical forms. The relationship between the rhetor and the institution is dialectic as the rhetor draws upon established institutional rules, organizational structures, power relations, and cultural practices as a means of developing an orientation to the communication opportunities typical of the institution.⁷²

Though situations maintain strictures and trends over the course of time, the development of exigencies challenges the formal calcification of rhetorical norms. In other words, generic structures respond to *dynamis*, an interactive situation whereby rhetorical genres fuse with alternative generic forms. As the generic structure is remolded in response to various changes, the genre develops hybridity, fusions of various genres that are “rule governed” and therefore allow “identification of different generic elements

⁷⁰ Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 25, no. 1 (1992): 1-14.

⁷¹ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “Generic Constraints and the Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 6, no. 3 (Summer, 1973): 162-170.

⁷² *Ibid.*

and occasionally of whole genres within such acts.”⁷³ In other words, generic hybridity accounts for the presence of “unique rhetorical elements in a given rhetorical act,” and therefore better explains the ways in which the synergy between the text, the audience, and the rhetorical situation functions to appease both “the individual needs of the rhetor and the needs of the institution he or she represents.”⁷⁴ Ultimately, as Joshua Gunn explains, “Rather than existing *in texts*, genres are concrete labels for shared patterns or social forms that inhere in the popular imagination.”⁷⁵ The creation of generic forms, therefore, is dependent upon audience presuppositions and expectations, contexts that prime an audience to seek out “the repetition of an underlying social form within a rhetorical act.”⁷⁶ Locating genre, therefore, demands attention to the interaction of the underlying social pattern and the “mental *topography* within which social forms operate.”⁷⁷

In summation, when analyzing an address, the critic should seek out a deductive approach that draws upon the range of the rhetorical situation in order to locate a formal pattern undergirding the message. Upon finding this pattern, the critic will need to explain, “the *dynamis* that governs” the form. Understanding such a constitutional

⁷³ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Rhetorical Hybrids: Fusions of Generic Elements,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (May 1982): 146-158, 147.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁷⁵ Joshua Gunn, “The Rhetoric of Exorcism: George W. Bush and the Return of Political Demonology,” *Western Journal of Communication* 68, no. 1 (Winter, 2004), 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

program allows the critic to “identify those elements that can fuse with it to form a coherent whole.”⁷⁸

Procedure

The procedure conducted in this dissertation consisted of identifying relevant texts, databases, and search terms. First, in order to maintain a deductive approach, the chapters each drew upon different aspects of digital humanities in order to recover relevant texts. In chapter two, I synthesize secondary materials, a process that helped to accumulate search terms and insights for primary source searches. In chapter three, I relied upon various newspaper databases to recover stories that mentioned after-dinner speaking. I searched the following newspaper databases: Access NewspaperARCHIVE, a database including access to full-text resources of newspapers from across the globe spanning the eighteenth-century to 2006,⁷⁹ African American Newspapers, 1827-1998, a database including “full text of approximately 270 US newspapers from more than 35 states dating from 1827 to 1998 and published by African Americans,”⁸⁰ American Periodicals Series Online, a database that includes

full text of over 1,100 historic American magazines, journals, and newspapers arranged in three series that illuminate the development of American culture, politics, and society across some 150 years: 1741-1800, the period of transition from British colony to emerging nation; 1800-1850, pre-Civil War and the era of debate over slavery; and 1850-1900, Civil War and Reconstruction.

⁷⁸ Jamieson and Campbell, “Rhetorical Hybrids,” 157.

⁷⁹ Access NewspaperARCHIVE description located in the University Catalogue for BGSU Libraries at www.bgsu.edu/libraries

⁸⁰ “Description,” University Catalogue, Jerome Library, Bowling Green State University, located at: <https://maurice.bgsu.edu>

Additionally, I searched “Chronicling America,” a database with digitized newspapers from 42 states printed between 1836 and 1922. Each of the aforementioned databases was listed on the University Libraries article summon catalogue. Additionally, I drew from databases specific to one news publication. Specifically, I culled ADS related articles from the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (1872-1922), the *Detroit Free Press* (1831-1922), and the *New York Times* Historical database including articles from 1851 to 2013.

In order to locate relevant articles within the databases listed above, I restricted search terms to the following (all variant names for “after-dinner speaking”): *after-dinner speaking, after-dinner speaker, after-dinner speech, after-dinner oratory, after-dinner orator, after-dinner remarks, banquet speech, banquet speaker, banquet speaking, banquet oratory, banquet orator, postprandial address, postprandial speaking, postprandial speaker, postprandial speech, postprandial oratory, and postprandial orator*. After collecting the bulk of these articles, a review of the news was conducted in order to reduce the materials to a manageable dataset that did not exclude interesting insights. Stories including mention of ADS were divided into various categories including reviews of after-dinner events, speakers, and seasons; criticisms about the declining status of ADS; comparisons between US ADS and ADS speakers or traditions from other cultures or countries; the incorporation of new media within a given ADS event; and quick blurbs reporting a memorable joke from a previous speech.

In addition to newspaper databases, all of which were located on in the Jerome Library Catalogue, Bowling Green State University, I also drew from Google.com/books in order to obtain rhetorical treatises, oratorical handbooks, as well as collections of speeches, anecdotes, jokes, witticisms, and table-talk topics published during the

nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, limiting my search to public domain texts available for free download. For chapters four through six I followed similar procedures though given the exploratory process of seeking out case studies my search process was less ordered. I first encountered the Western Round Table on Modern Art reproductions via a longstanding Google.com/news Alert RSS feed that forwarded me news that included the name “Kenneth Burke.” That said I was unable to access the materials until the summer of 2015 when, at the Kenneth Burke Society Triennial Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, I participated in a workshop dedicated to searching for newly digitized audio and video materials including Kenneth Burke. With the exception of roughly ten newspaper articles gleaned from the Jerome Library databases mentioned above, the entirety of the archival material analyzed in the chapter on Burke came from various websites that had digitized archives from the San Francisco Art Museum.

Finally, in the remaining chapters I draw upon historiographical contexts in order to provide a rhetorical criticism of after-dinner speeches as cultural and intercultural rhetoric (chapter four) and aspects of the rhetoric of political banquets, specifically presidential rhetoric (chapter five). To acquire the presidential rhetoric documents I searched the collected Presidential Papers of the various office holders for the terms mentioned above as well as terms related to the White House Correspondents’ Dinner, the Gridiron Club Roast, and the Radio, Television News Association Correspondents’ Dinner. I also searched the digitized archives available on the websites for the various presidential libraries. Additionally, I searched for all available banquet-speaking events on Youtube.com as well as all Correspondents’ Dinner videos on the C-Span website. To provide a clear yet concise analysis, the many of documents obtained and analyzed were

excised from the final report of findings produced here. Instead of a comprehensive articulation of all that was found, I chose to showcase exemplary moments from the history of American public address that illuminated concepts of rhetoric and culture and provided materials needed to better articulate models capable as serving for future rhetorical inquiry while simultaneously answering the questions below.

Research Questions

In the remainder of the dissertation, I provide various snapshots of ADS across the twentieth-century in order to show intersections between epideictic and deliberative traditions, rhetorical display and cultural development, and rhetorical maneuvers drawing from the intersecting domains of formal propriety and the piety of character. Such a perspective aims to identify tools of critical analysis and ADS as a mechanism for cultural rhetorics, exemplified in case studies geared for answering the following questions:

- What role did ADS play in shaping the culture of rhetoric and the rhetoric of culture in twentieth-century US public discourse?
- As a longstanding species of epideictic rhetoric, how does ADS function within discourse intended to facilitate public deliberation?
- Within mainstream and vernacular discourses of the era, how did the rhetorical norms of ADS function as a topic of cultural politics?

Such questions represent overarching goals for the investigation of texts and case studies related to ADS as public discourse in twentieth-century US oratorical culture. In the next section, I overview chapters and provide a roadmap for the remainder of the dissertation.

Overview of Chapters

The answers to questions posed above emerge through a process of interrogating rhetorical and historical scholarship on public address, political banqueting, and popular culture in the United States throughout the twentieth-century. In so doing, I focus on key terms and critical procedures capable of contextualizing and illuminating the generic functions of after-dinner speaking. I begin with a historical analysis of the emergence of after-dinner speaking. Next, in chapter three, I analyze the formal components of ADS as described within rhetorical treatises, popular handbooks, and collections of public address and contextualized within rhetorical and cultural criticisms of ADS in the press. Drawing upon these historical analyses of ADS, I seek to, first, provide the contours of after-dinner speaking within this era of US history and, second, better understand how the genre functions across modalities to orient public deliberation and transform relationships between speakers and audience.

In chapter four, I examine “To Be or To Become: Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment,” a speech by Dr. Ben “Lonefeather” Reifel. Dr. Reifel was the first Lakota Sioux elected to the U. S. Congress (1960-1970), where he garnered a reputation for providing party leadership, authoring the American Indian Civil Rights Act, and leading efforts to gain bipartisan support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In “To Be or to Become,” presented during the 1958 Montana Works Conference on Indian Education, Reifel provides an after-dinner speech to an intercultural audience of American Indian and Euro-American teachers, social scientists, and locals. At the height of his pre-Congressional career, Reifel was speaking amidst an era defined by the termination legislation of the 1950s. In his speech, Reifel draws upon various cultural tropes, such as

the *heyoka* narrative, in order provide an ambiguous double-gesture through which he seeks to provide a toast toward intercultural translation and dialogue in the next day's schedule of panel discussions related to American Indian Education.

In chapter five, I undertake a close reading of a broad case study, the Western Round Table on Modern Art (WRTMA). The Round Table occurred in April of 1949 as the US cascaded into the Cold War. As fear of communism spread, the role of modern and expressionistic art within US cultural life became a point of conflict that embraced public patrons and popular audiences alike. While the nativist fears of un-Americanism began to take place, a variety of academic, governmental, and private institutions focused unprecedented attention on the study of culture and art as a means of improving international relations. Organized by the San Francisco Institute of Modern Art, the WRTMA attracted artists and critics of global notoriety to address questions of purpose in relation to the pressing criticisms of modern art within popular discourse. In this chapter, I apply a comparative analytical framework to the audio-recorded panel discussions taking place during the WRTMA in order to identify the way ADS functions implicitly within spheres of deliberative discourse.

In chapter six, I turn to the relationship between ADS and presidential rhetoric by reconstructing the arch of ADS activity within presidential politics in twentieth-century US political culture. Specifically, I draw on archival research to construct a historiography of presidential after-dinner speaking, and analyze the function of ADS within presidential rhetoric. I then use this framework to examine two key after-dinner speeches made by President Barack Obama at the 2011 and 2016 White House Correspondents' Dinners. Finally, I conclude the dissertation by answering the above

research questions, identifying limitations in the current study, and drawing critical, rhetorical, and pedagogical implications for future conversations.

CHAPTER II. THE HISTORY OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

In this chapter, I provide a history of ADS in order to identify undergirding forms and overarching transformations that culminated in the twentieth-century production of ADS as a site for public discourse. The purpose of this historical background relates directly to the opening question – What role did ADS play in shaping the culture of rhetoric and the rhetoric of culture in twentieth-century public discourse? – by providing a narrative that aims to foreclose the distance between twentieth-century ADS and antecedent traditions. After reviewing ancient traditions of ADS, I then turn to a theoretical framework for understanding the material rhetoric of culture. Articulating this framework allows the dissertation to envision the suasive qualities of twentieth-century banqueting spaces.

Fasting, Feasting, and the Ancient Tradition of After-Dinner Speaking

Etymologically, the term *after-dinner speaking* alludes to fasting and feasting rituals. As John Ayto explains, “The word [*dinner*] comes ultimately from an unrecorded Vulgar Latin verb *disjunare*, a compound formed from the prefix *dis-* ‘un-’ and *jejunos* ‘fasting, hungry.’”¹ As with most rituals, fasting has both material and symbolic components. On a material level, researchers have connected fasting with a range of health benefits such as increased cardiovascular health,² as “intermittent fasting is like

¹ John Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1980), 172.

² Tara Parker-Pope, “Regular Fasting May Boost Heart Health,” *New York Times* (April 4, 2011): <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/regular-fasting-may-boost-heart-health/>

exercise, which causes immediate stress and inflammation, but protects against chronic disease in the long run.”³ Symbolically, fasting is a form of mortification, the abeyance of personal appetites in order to fulfill the duties of group membership and, as suggested by an increasing array of social scientific research, fasting and feasting plays an important role in mediating the social processes and cultural rituals of various societies.

The counterpart of fasting is fast-breaking or feasting. While the voluptuousness of a feast is relative to the consumption norms of a given society, one can assume that the sacrifice of the fast has a positive correlation with the satiation of the feast, a ratio touched upon by Victor Turner’s work/play dichotomy.⁴ Hence, the fast (or work) precedes a stage of liminality, after which is a stage of feasting (or play). During the feast, ritual is enacted, conserved, and possibly transformed.⁵ As Kenneth Burke explains, the promise of sovereignty motivates mortification rituals.⁶ In sum, as an ascetic or mortifying ritual, fasting functions to maintain cultural and religious pieties, symbolize transformation, and adapt to social change. As ADS is a rhetorical act related to fast-breaking, one can expect the speech to explicitly or implicitly respond to the biological

³ This statement summarizes thoughts by the neuroscientist, Dr. Mark Mattson, of the National Institute on Aging. See Anahad O’Connor, “Fasting Diets Are Gaining Acceptance,” *New York Times* (March 7, 2016): http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/03/07/intermittent-fasting-diets-are-gaining-acceptance/?_r=0

⁴ Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Books, 1982).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961).

and cognitive conditions related to fasting and feasting as well as function in accordance with the germane contexts of the genre.

Sociological studies suggest fasting increases in response to societal shifts toward modernization. In his study of fasting in Javanese society, Joseph B. Tamney noted correlations between the meaning of religious fasting and the emergence of modernization. Within ancient socio-religious contexts, fasting functioned as a purification ritual enacting “symbolic death and rebirth.”⁷ In so doing, a given fast cleansed individuals of contaminants as a means of preparing to invite the manifestation of sacred powers or discover the inherent powers one already possessed. The adoption of universal religions in pre-industrial societies saw a transformation of fasting-motives as fasting became an expression of piety via self-imposed asceticism. Related to the bifurcation of body and soul, fasting functioned as a means of disciplining sinful desires of the body in order to strengthen the spiritual abilities of the soul.⁸ While previous meanings of fasting did not disappear in the face of new motives, a distinct difference was evident. Tamney points to research showing the onset of modernity within Javanese society did not diminish the act of fasting but instead “was associated with *increased* religiosity.”⁹ Hence, fasting functioned to strengthen adherence to codified tradition in the face of social change.

⁷ Joseph B. Tamney, “Fasting and Modernization,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19, no. 2 (June, 1980): 129-137, 129.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

Research on the social and cultural role of feasting spans across disciplines. For example, in his 2010 archeological study of Ancient Western Asia, Jacob L. Wright draws on archeological findings to reconstruct and interpret the structures, meanings, and purposes of ritual feasting within Ancient Mesopotamian society. For Wright, findings present a clear depiction of feasting rituals as commonplace counterparts to the competitive strife of war, providing community members with a platform for commensality, and helping to forge shared memories of past battles.¹⁰ In China, banqueting traditions also date back to ancient times when Confucian-related banqueting occasions became a highly codified part of Chinese culture, remnants of which relate to Chinese banqueting norms of modern times.¹¹

Fasting and feasting rituals were an important part of the Greco-Roman culture and society that gave birth to the Western rhetorical tradition. The classical scholar George Thomson draws upon insights related to anthropology, political economy, and philology in order to identify the connection between the primitive totemic rituals of the Attic tribes and the emergence of democratic traditions within the extant works of Aeschylus. Hence, at its root, Thomson suggests, the Western tradition emerges from an imitative fasting and feasting ritual intended to facilitate social cohesion, sustain kinship networks, and bolster the reproduction of food sources from which the tribe drew sustenance.¹² In ancient literature, the role of banqueting emphasizes ubiquitous

¹⁰ Jacob L. Wright, "Commensal Politics in Ancient Western Asia: The Background to Nehemiah's Feasting (continued, Part II)," *ZAW* 122, no. 3 (2010): 333-352.

¹¹ Linda Beamer, "Toasts: Rhetoric and Ritual in Business Negotiation in Confucian Cultures," *Business Forum* (Fall 1993), 23.

importance of fasting and feasting rituals in classical society. For example, in the *Odyssey*, Demodocus performs an after-dinner song, or *aoidos*, about the Trojan horse presented to Alcinous and other banquet guests,¹³ an example of what Edwin Du Bois Shurter called the “ancient origin” of ADS.¹⁴

Additionally, pre-Socratic fragments of elegy show that symposiasts engaged in songs that celebrated the occasion and reaffirmed the norms of dinner rituals. An anonymous elegy analyzed by Ewen L. Bowie emphasizes this point, presenting a depiction of the symposium that reflects the after-dinner speaking traditions of modern times:

When we gather, friends that we are, for an occasion like this, we should laugh and joke, doing our very best, and take pleasure in each other’s company; we should chatter to each other, and make fun of people in the way that arouses laughter. Let serious matters follow, and let us listen to people speaking each in turn. This is the best thing about a symposium.¹⁵

The most acclaimed treatise on the topic is, of course, Plato’s *Symposium*, depicting a variant of the feasting ritual during which symposiasts forgo the routine musical performances, imagine that their servants are their hosts, and engage in a roundtable of speeches on the topic of love. As a Platonic dialogue, the philosophic principle emerges,

¹² George Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens: The Classic Study in the Social Origins of Drama*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Universal Library, 1968).

¹³ Homer, *The Odyssey*, 8.536-538.

¹⁴ Edwin Du Bois Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1911): 45.

¹⁵ Quoted from anonymous elegy fragment. See, Ewen L. Bowie, “Greek Table-Talk before Plato,” *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 11, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 359.

according to Burke, in the transformative gradation of messages: from the socially forbidden act of physical love via homosexual intercourse through dialogic development and “Socratic midwifery” to the act of spiritual love via homo social intercourse.¹⁶

While philosophical symposia provide treatments of ADS, such works typically maintain an ambiguous and evasive relationship with rhetoric. For Plato, *rhetoric* is a lesser form used to make a falsehood appear true.¹⁷ Scholars such as Kenneth Burke and George A. Kennedy have argued effectively that it is a mistake to interpret the Platonic dialogues to be flatly opposed to rhetoric.¹⁸ As such, rhetorical scholars are prone to neglect the subject, despite the obvious rhetorical grounding of this oratorical genre. Nonetheless, the shadowboxing between rhetoricians and Platonists over the value of rhetoric has remained consistent and certainly affected the history of the rhetorical tradition.¹⁹ Given the important role symposiums play in the Platonic system, it is no wonder that treatments of symposiums (and, by extension, ADS) neglected explicit

¹⁶ This analysis is from Kenneth Burke. See, Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945), 420-430; Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. Christopher Gill (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).

¹⁷ See Plato, *Gorgias*.

¹⁸ George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 41-59. Burke shows the dialogues to support a transcendent view of rhetoric as a means of cooperation by way of a hierarchic ordering and Kennedy points to the many ways in which Plato’s *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, and *Apology* function ambiguously to both critique and support rhetoric. See Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 420-430.

¹⁹ See Michael Dues and Mary Brown, *Boxing Plato’s Shadow: An Introduction to the Study of Human Communication* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

theorizations of rhetoric while, simultaneously, rhetoricians neglected treatments of both symposiums and *The Symposium*.²⁰

Outside of philosophical and rhetorical studies of ADS-related activity, one can find information about ADS in studies of the formal and social constraints of theatre. For example, in a study of the banqueting imagery in Aristophanes, A. M. Bowie shows the symposium to function as a “structural and analytical” device in new comedy, marking the deviance of characters in the play based on the audience’s shared understanding of appropriate banqueting behavior.²¹ Greek theatre also emphasized food and feasting. As John Wilkins shows, food and feasting were important tenets of Greek comedy that celebrated “the good order that is achieved at the end of the play ... with the consumption of foods in a context of social or religious ritual.”²² The tradition carried on in Ancient Rome where, as Richard Saller shows, dinner-parties “employed professional storytellers (*aretalogi*) for the after-dinner entertainment...”²³ In time, such exuberant gorging also inspired great satire (a word which is related to terms such as *satur*, or “full,” as well as *satura*, or “mixed platter”).²⁴ According to Victoria Rimmell, Juvenal’s work critiques

²⁰ See Nathan Crick and John Poulakos, “Go Tell Alcibiades: Tragedy, Comedy, and Rhetoric in Plato’s *Symposium*,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 1 (February 2008), 1-2.

²¹ A. M. Bowie, “Thinking with Drinking: Wine and the Symposium in Aristophanes,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 1-21, 3.

²² John Wilkins, “Comic Cuisine: Food and Eating in the Comic Polis,” in *The City as Comedy: Society and Representation in Athenian Drama*, Gregory W. Dobrov, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 251.

²³ Richard Saller, “Anecdotes as Historical Evidence for the Principate,” *Greece & Rome* 27, no. 1 (1980), 70.

the Roman Empire by depicting satiric personas of gluttonous characters who are “perpetually dissatisfied, their bellies painfully hollow even after the feast,” a tactic intended to help “imagine the problem of what happens when a gluttonous empire has no more room to distend, in terms of a physical satiety which paradoxically registers as a hunger with nowhere to go.”²⁵

The historical considerations about classical feasting rituals and rhetorical display identified above are valuable to the study of twentieth-century ADS because such insights provide context needed for understanding the American rhetorical tradition. As subjects in colonial North America, European colonists developed rhetorical practices as a pragmatic program of self-improvement intended to enact civic virtues through educational training and public display, a formula for democratic life dating to the Greek concept of *paidea*. In the next section, I overview this history in order to provide a framework for understanding the transition between ADS in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I argue that in the nineteenth-century, ADS functioned as a personal sphere activity that coincided with a cultural program. Additionally, ADS functioned within the technical sphere (specifically, within literary societies) as a mechanism for rewarding the successful enactment of rhetorical education, showcased in a program of public displays of deliberation and platform address. In the twentieth-century, however, a unique material culture provided the spaces in which this private and technical sphere activity would

²⁴ Victoria Rimmell, “The Poor Man’s Feast: Juvenal,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*, Kirk Freudenburg, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 84.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

subsume the platform deliberation displays. Hence, ADS became an object of popular communication and a topic of public discourse.

The Oratorical Culture and Rhetorical Traditions of US Public Address

The institution of democracy in the US drew upon classical principles refurbished within European treatments of rhetorical theory in order to design cultural spaces for public discourse and a program of educational activities capable of facilitating governance in the New World. In order to frame the history of ADS in the US, this section first identifies key theoretical concepts, and second, unpacks the history of US rhetorical activity culminating in the transformation of oratorical culture in the late nineteenth century.

Material Rhetoric and the Space of Culture

In this section, I revisit the action/motion or symbolic/material dialectic in order to enunciate a framework whereby the material rhetoric of space functions to create, constrain, and correct the symbolic entelechy of culture. In his essay on the rhetorical situation, Kenneth Burke explains that he cannot “make a flat distinction . . . between the *words* one is using and the nonverbal circumstances in which one is using them.”²⁶ Hence, the “rhetorical situation” is composed of both verbal elements (rhetorical resources, names, idealistic imagery) and material elements (the human body, the material environment, technology, vestments). Material rhetoric, therefore, investigates

²⁶ Kenneth Burke, “The Rhetorical Situation,” in *Communication: Ethical and Moral Issues*, Lee Thayer, ed. (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1973), 263.

the suasive qualities of material objects. Two levels of materiality are pertinent. First, “primary materiality,” according to Richard A. Engnell, relates to the biological domain, what Burke calls “animality,”²⁷ beneath which “is sheer ‘physicality’: the animal’s nature as chemicals and such.”²⁸ Primary materiality provides humans with a range of motives: hunger, sexuality, biological and psychological predispositions, etc. Additionally, “secondary materiality” identifies the “pervasive technical/economic/political structures that govern the production and distribution of material goods in any actual human society...”²⁹ Secondary materiality orients human motives by providing avenues for satiating the needs of primary materiality. Given that symbolicity allows humans to control materiality, however, the distinctions between materiality and symbolicity can dissipate.

Culture, according to the sociologist Joseph Gusfield, involves “symbol systems with which life is organized into an understandable set of actions and events.”³⁰ While cultural symbol systems are typically associated with entelechial ideals (symbolic constructions of perfection guiding human relations to the actual world), such ideals emerge in the material realm and are shaped by the primary and secondary materiality of

²⁷ Richard A. Engnell, “Materiality, Symbolicity, and the Rhetoric of Order: ‘Dialectical Biologism’ as Motive in Burke,” *Western Journal of Communication* 62, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 1-25, 4.

²⁸ Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 27-28.

²⁹ Engnell, “Materiality, Symbolicity, and the Rhetoric of Order,” 4-5.

³⁰ Joseph Gusfield, “Passage to Play: Rituals of Drinking Time in American Society,” in *Contested Meanings: The Construction of Alcohol Problems* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996): 57-74, 60.

humans. An examination of spatialized cultural productions exemplifies the material aspects of culture. Cultural space provides a domain for engaging in communication that reiterates temporal rhythms and spatial logics as a means of informing activity. Local meanings, gleaned from exterior sources, provides the information patterned into the cultural subjectivities. As a space of belonging, cultural space provides subjects with interiority as the stability of a space allows communicants to access, understand, develop, and adjust to the exterior information that patterns behavior and metaphorically frames experience. While exterior spaces house the symbolic action from which individuals glean cultural information used to form patterns of behavior, the formation of cultural patterns depends upon spaces of interiority to allow for programmatic development. As Clifford Geertz explains, “Culture patterns ... are—‘programs’; they provide a template or blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes.”³¹

In American culture, one physical manifestation of interior space is the home. For Mary Douglas, the home functions as “an embryonic community,” and disciplines bodies in a way that provides a frame for understanding future experiences. Douglas draws upon the work of Susanne Langer to explain how the home cultivates “kinaesthesia,” an “analogic structure” that uses one set of experiences to construct a linguistic framework for understanding other experiences.³² Kinaesthesia develops from the ingrained rhythm attained through the repetition of actions in accordance with musical and spatial dimensions of time. Unlike the prescribed measures of musical time, the spatial

³¹ Clifford Geertz, qtd. in Gusfield, “Passage to Play,” 60.

³² Mary Douglas, “The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space,” *Social Research* 58, no. 1 (Spring 1991):287-307, 291.

dimensions of time rely upon the “regulation of vision and perception of distance” within domains of recurrent activity. By organizing “space over time,” the home provides a scene for experiences in relationship to familiar rhythms, structures, and objects. Hence, the home provides material for metaphorically understanding life events.³³ Moreover, the home instills in the individual an economic arrangement whereby the familial effort toward a “common objective” allows the home to discursively budget by providing “a model for kinds of distributive justice.”³⁴ Within the home, food provides an avenue for transmitting cultural information across interior and exterior spaces of culture. In “Deciphering a Meal,” Douglas analyzes food as a code, “a general set of possibilities for sending particular messages” which, upon analysis, can be discovered within “the pattern of social relations being expressed.”³⁵ Given that the consumption of a meal maintains social and biological functions, the messages encoded during mealtime concern information “about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries.”³⁶

The transmission of cultural information relies upon analogical structures symbolized by and through meals, a programmatic system of information establishing a hierarchy of cultural meaning. As Douglas explains,

The smallest, meanest meal metonymically figures the structure of the grandest, and each unit of the grand meal figures again the whole meal—or the meanest

³³ *Ibid.*, 293

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 297.

³⁵ Mary Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal,” *Daedalus* 101, no. 1 (winter, 1972): 61-81, 67.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

meal. The perspective created by these repetitive analogies invests the individual meal with additional meaning.³⁷

As meals analogically structure cultural activity, cultural agents can draw upon processes in order to manage power within the material space. Two specific agencies for cultural action include the performance of culinary arts and the function of drinks.

First, as Douglas explains, the culinary creation of a meal demarcates “order, bounds it, and separates it from disorder” and contributes to the economics of food supply and meaning structure.³⁸ In her critique of the patriarchic white male hegemony infused into the academy, Olga Davis, a communication studies scholar, draws upon the analogical cultural spaces in which enslaved African American women used culinary arts to produce agency.³⁹ In her description of the “detached kitchen,” literally separated from the typical Southern plantation house, Davis shows that such spaces provided an outlet for the rhetorical artistry, cooking, “a rhetorical act of nurturance and care, creative genius, and survival.”⁴⁰ As the metaphoric domain for transforming white supremacy within dominant institutions, Davis’s “kitchen legacy” emphasizes an understanding of home space as a “space for renewal, recovery, and redemption from racist aggression” which, when applied to the academic “home” department, provides guidance for

³⁷ Ibid, 67.

³⁸ Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal,” 70.

³⁹ Olga Davis, “In the Kitchen: Transforming the Academy through Safe Spaces of Resistance,” *Western Journal of Communication* 63, no. 3 (1999), 366-367.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 368.

emphasizing collegiality among faculty, and engaging in the dialogue needed for coalition-building.⁴¹

A second agency for cultural production includes the use of drinks, as a consumptive medium that can bridge interior and exterior cultural spaces. As Douglas explains, drinks “express by contrast only too clearly the detachment and impermanence of simpler and less intimate social bonds.”⁴² The contexts of drinking, Gusfield notes, are either interactive (based on the participants at the occasion) or historical (constructed over time).⁴³

For Douglas, such agencies reinforce cultural norms to the degree that the home provides “a tyrannous control over mind and body,” rigidly enforcing events, such as mealtimes, and censoring speech: “It has slots for different tones of voice, conversational topics, and even language,” forbidding the act of “shouting (because it dominates)” as well as “whispering (because it is secret and exclusive).”⁴⁴ The dinnertime seating arrangement and barring of dinnertime topics of discussion function as explicit and implicit manifestations of such regulations. In sum, historical investigations of material rhetoric provide a theoretical platform for investigating the way spaces function to provide an epistemic foundation for incorporating culture. The next section examines specific space, the parlor.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 375-376; 378.

⁴² Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal,” 78.

⁴³ Gusfield, “Passage to Play,” 60.

⁴⁴ Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal,” 78.

The Cultural Space of Parlor Rhetoric

The parlor was an interior space in which the family instituted rhetorical education as a means of fulfilling cultural programs. In the wake of the Revolutionary War, however, rhetorical education expanded drastically as literary societies, debating clubs, and lyceum events spread across the country. Such events helped to promote debate education, ameliorate anxieties about a democratic population some deemed unfit to maintain democratic institutions, and create a national identity within a population spread across distant rural areas at a time during which civic infrastructure and communication technologies were underdeveloped. As Richard L. Weaver II writes, “The lyceum, primarily designed to give local citizens an opportunity to speak, debate, and discuss, often provided a more eclectic experience than even those possibilities afforded” and ultimately, as lyceum organizations matured and adopted specialized foci, the lyceum movement “provided a foundation for the lecture-lyceum, the Chautauqua, and for adult education.”⁴⁵ Such materials were plentiful and impactful. As Nan Johnson explains,

...rhetoric manuals, written for the scholar as well as the “private learner” studying rhetoric in the parlor, offered to the ever greater numbers of Americans seeking entrance to public and professional life an opportunity for self-improvement and influence in daily life, which proved an enduring invitation in the decades before and after the Civil War.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Richard L. Weaver, II, “Josiah Holbrook: Feeding the Passion for Self-Help,” *Communication Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (Fall 1976): 10-18, 10. Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, *Presidential Debates: The Challenge of Creating an Informed Electorate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making the American Public After the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁴⁶ Nan Johnson, “Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric,” in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, Thomas O. Sloane, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), par. 2.

As the years progressed, participation in rhetorical activities increased AS Americans' appetite for literature expanded. As Scott E. Casper and Joan Shelley Rubin explain, by the latter half of the nineteenth-century, "Americans read in a variety of settings and for diverse purposes, connected to individual and collective identities."⁴⁷ The diversifying purpose and increased desire for reading was accommodated by the development of technological innovations (paper and print technologies that would increase the availability of books, enhanced lighting technologies such as oil lamps and electric lights) and civic institutions (libraries, public schools, normal colleges, lyceums, Chautauqua events, women's clubs, debating societies, and etc.).⁴⁸ While rhetorical displays occurred in the community, preparation occurred in the parlor. Hence, public rhetorical performance became a reflection of the personal sphere within public space.

In addition to noting significant moments of change, scholars have also deliberated over the emancipatory and bureaucratizing impact of rhetorical education during the era. According to Bettina Kaiser, the literary society movement "derived from what has been identified as a typical middle-class phenomenon, that of the professionalization and specialization of the workforce," one which "coincided with a nationwide trend towards urbanization and subsequent rural migration."⁴⁹ The elocution

⁴⁷ Scott E. Casper and Joan Shelly Rubin, "The History of the Book in America," in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, Michael F. Suarez, S. J. Woudhuysen, and H. R. Woudhuysen, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Bettina Kaiser, "Debating Societies: Constructing Conviction in Late Nineteenth-Century American Discourse," in *Ideology and Rhetoric: Constructing America*, Bozenna Chylinska, ed. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009): 318.

movement maintains much focus in scholarly debate on this topic. On one hand, scholars find that texts teaching elocution “re-inscribed a highly conservative construction of white, middle-class women as a wife and mother who needed rhetorical skills only to perform those roles to greater effect.”⁵⁰ On the other hand, elocutionary education provided events and spaces for female oratorical activity.⁵¹ Hence, while the rhetoric of parlor spaces reiterated hegemonic structures upon the embodied rhetoric of students, the parlor was also a site in which women speakers could perform without the constraints of nineteenth-century public life.

Additionally, the parlor was a site of commerce, the backdrop for framing new domestic technologies, the gendered consumer culture of women’s magazines,⁵² and the mail-order solicitation of cooking ware agencies and performances of domesticity.⁵³ Of course, the parlor was also a meeting room, what Susan S. Williams calls a

semipublic space in which middle-class families, especially women, both displayed and performed various artistic practices. The parlor was where one

⁵⁰ Nan Johnson, *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 15.

⁵¹ Carolyn Eastman, “‘A Vapour Which Appears but for a Moment’: Oratory and Elocution for Girls during the Early American Republic,” in *Rhetoric, History, and Women’s Oratorical Education: American Women Learn to Speak*, David Gold and Catherine L. Hobbs, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 38.

⁵² See, for example, Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵³ See, for example, Priscilla J. Brewer, *From Fireplace to Cookstove: Technology and the Domestic Ideal in America* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000). William E. Rickert, “Commercializing Elocution: ‘Parlor Books’ for Home Entertainments,” *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 43, no. 4 (1978): 384-394.

received guests who might participate in *tableaux vivants*, guessing or card games (including “Authors”), musical interludes, or communal readings...⁵⁴

According to Williams, the parlor maintained “centrality” with “nineteenth-century cultural life,” helping to establish women’s reading groups that were ultimately “an important aspect of women’s education as well as an impetus for communal action on behalf of, among other things, abolition, suffrage, and the women’s rights movements.”⁵⁵

As a site of rhetorical activity, the parlor also functioned rhetorically as a topic of discourse and cultural tension. According to Sally McMurry, “Between 1840 and 1900, American house designers, homeowners, interior decorators, fiction writers, and social critics engaged in a protracted debate about the character of that quintessentially Victorian domestic space, the parlor.”⁵⁶ In her study examining the ways in which the dialectic between urban and rural America played out in the public imagination and material culture of the parlor, McMurry explains, “in rural areas the conflict over the parlor produced a body of thought and vernacular design which explored alternatives to the parlor.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Susan S. Williams, *Reclaiming Authorship: Literary Women in America, 1850-1900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 40.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁶ Sally McMurry, “City Parlor, Country Sitting Room: Rural Vernacular Design and the American Parlor, 1840-1900,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 261.

⁵⁷ Sally McMurry, “City Parlor, Country Sitting Room: Rural Vernacular Design and the American Parlor, 1840-1900,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 261.

Rhetorical Education as a Cultural Program

Within nineteenth-century American culture, rhetorical eloquence signified one's level of education, socio-economic status, or potential for upward mobility. Hence, in the rhetorical readers and treatises of the early Republic, authors highlighted elaborate prescriptions for both the rules of virtuous character and the norms of courtly discourse. The rhetorical textbook, in other words, helped to institute "high culture" as means of signifying virtue, a term representing a range of disciplined qualities deemed beneficial to the social context in which the person lived (and likely coming at the expense of some immediate personal pleasure, albeit a fleeting pleasure when compared to the higher purposes of virtuous living). In this context knowledge of rhetorical proprieties functioned to signify the training of "high culture" and empower the potential for rhetorical eloquence, albeit to an exclusive section of the public.

Virtue, of course, is a dialectical term, meaningless without an antithetical treatment. Hence, students of rhetoric were also exposed to the vices of character (understood as the externalization of mind or thought) "inherently" signified through the display of rhetorical vices. Not only did such works provide lists and descriptions of the virtues/vices of character/rhetoric, handbooks coupled the prosaic information of the treatise (*i.e.*, lessons on rhetoric) with poetic materials for performance. Hence, in a rhetorical reader, such as Caleb Bingham's *The Columbia Orator*, students obtained "pieces" of literature, the oral reading of which gives voice to idealized ancestors of the virtuous American character and the cultural other, a character whose rhetoric is replete

with the vices of barbarisms.⁵⁸ As material for parlor readings, such pieces displayed a child's intellectual and rhetorical development for the family (and on special occasions, extended-family members and invited guests) through the educational and entertaining performance of literature. While the literary society library contained the same manuals and readers one might find on the family bookshelf, as the cultural space changed from the home to the literary society, the function of the performance changed from the epideictic orientation of the parlor to the deliberative orientation of the platform. In the home, what G. Thomas Goodnight identifies as the personal sphere of argumentation, interlocutors privilege interpersonal relations and expectations of familial duty over the critical standards directing argumentation within the technical and public spheres of argumentation.

Literary Societies and Oratorical Culture in the US

Literary societies mutually informed parlor activity by providing public models of deliberative display emphasizing technical sphere rhetorical excellence. In her 2009 monograph, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public after the Revolution*, the historian Carolyn Eastman argues that literary and debating societies played an integral role in the cultivation of the participatory identity and democratic institutions of the burgeoning republic. According to Eastman, "The new United States had few institutional resources to stimulate a shared national identity among the populace."⁵⁹ In

⁵⁸ Caleb Bingham, *The Columbian Orator: Containing a Variety of Original and Selected Pieces Together with Rules, Which are Calculated to Improve Youth and Others, in the Ornamental and Useful Art of Eloquence* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

addition to forming “new governments and constitutions,” the women and men of the United States “had to *learn* to be American.”⁶⁰ The exact performances and values of this emerging American identity were up for debate. Thus, contests over what it meant to be American helped to institutionalize contestation within the American identity. The creation of new democratic institutions, as explained by Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, led the women and men of the United States to turn toward debating:

Debate flourished in the early days of this country because the country had to reestablish order after overthrowing one set of institutions for another. The new institutions needed to demonstrate that they were more legitimate than those they had replaced.⁶¹

The literary and debating activities of the nineteenth-century provided the framework for the establishment of the American forensic tradition. According to Ronald Reid, the roots of US forensics education begin with the continuation of the Latin syllogistic disputation exercises practiced in medieval Europe. By the eighteenth-century, however, debates conducted in English clashed over political questions regarding contemporary issues, “especially during the Revolutionary era and the Young Republic.”⁶² In order to create educational space capable of facilitating “the public disputes of the bustling multi-racial, multi-ethnic, garrulous young United States of America,”⁶³ Americans embraced the

⁵⁹ Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers*, 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶¹ Jamieson and Birdsell, *Presidential Debates*, 11.

⁶² Ronald F. Reid, “Foreword: A Long and Proud Tradition,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 37 (Summer 2000), 5.

⁶³ G. Thomas Goodnight, “The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres: A Note on 21st Century Critical Communication Inquiry,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 48, no. 4 (2012), 258.

literary and debating society model developed in the Colonial Colleges prior to the Revolutionary War. Ultimately, the modalities provided by forensic education were “seen as a means of social advancement and a bulwark for independent thinking,” allowing members of the public to enact and legitimize the burgeoning democratic institutions.⁶⁴

As David Potter explains,

For the Madisons, Websters, Calhouns, Choates, Evarts, Stones, Wilsons, and their contemporaries, [the literary societies] furnished a climate of opinion and a format for developing talents and personalities unequaled by any other facet of college life or instruction then or now.⁶⁵

While societies were spaces for serious deliberation, such proclivities maintained propensity for comic relief. As Charles W. Lomas explains, there was a “lighter side” to the literary societies, an interpretation that would undoubtedly contradict the popular imagination that perceives their activities as overly serious and fiercely competitive in their debates about important but stodgy questions of the day.⁶⁶ The literary society’s tendency for mirth, antics, and pranks suggests that such institutions needed to maintain the kinds of enjoyable camaraderie that would help them continue to exist as a group.

Not only did the literary society help to bridge the parlor spaces of the personal sphere with the technical spheres of deliberation, from within the technical sphere literary societies used public display as a means of contributing to public deliberation. As Hugo Hellman explains, “the old fashioned literary society” was a community hub that “offered a kind of practice that was more generally effective than any other in the development of

⁶⁴ Jamieson and Birdsell, *Presidential Debates*, 17.

⁶⁵ David Potter, “College Literary Societies,” 257.

⁶⁶ Charles W. Lomas, “The Lighter Side of the Literary Societies,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39, no. 1 (February 1954), 45-48.

some of the greatest names in American oratory.”⁶⁷ Not only did literary societies provide the predominant rhetorical education for college students, such an education focused on literature and the public display of oratory, musical performance, oral interpretation, and debate. In weekly meetings, participants accomplished organizational tasks and engaged in rhetorical exercises and debates. The public display of rhetoric and deliberation came in tandem with the hosting of traveling lecturers, a service that gave rise to the emergence of the lyceum circuit, the oratorical space in which platform readers, scientific lecturers, and political oratory filled the platform of the nineteenth-century.

While literary societies were, to be sure, technical spheres of argument in which normative procedures developed, and therefore maintained barriers to entry set in relationship to performative ability or institutional commitment, the literary society maintained a public persona serving to bolster public discourse by providing rhetorical demonstrations, if not eloquence, on special occasions. In hosting a community debate or sponsoring a traveling lecturer, the literary society provided an object for the deliberative activities of the public. The impetus toward publicity pushed literary societies to expand the output of their organizing principle and, as new modalities of communication became available, various society members created avenues for expanding public discourse. Hence, in many colleges across the US, the first student newspapers (if not the first town newspapers) were produced by the literary society. The after-dinner speech functioned in relationship to the program of platform events marking the literary society calendar, at the close of the season, and before the technical sphere audience of the association. The

⁶⁷ Hugo Hellman, “The Influence of the Literary Society in the Making of American Orators,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 28, no. 1 (1942): 12-14, 12.

cost of dinner and the limited availability of indoor dining space mandated exclusivity. Outside of these material reasons for semi-publicity (after all, news of the after-dinner speech or banquet event inevitably circulated even if not detailed in the press), were functional reasons: the banquet and dinner speech served as the private reward for individuals whose technical sphere efforts were spent cultivating displays of public sphere deliberation.

The important point to recall here is that the after-dinner speech occasion was a semi-public event that functioned in tandem with a season long program of platform speaking displays. Hence, when considering the deliberative and epideictic statuses of the dinner speech or the platform address, one can identify interdependency between the functions of the discourse. While the novelty of the platform space framed oratorical activity as deliberative, individuals first obtained an orientation toward rhetoric in the personal sphere experiences of the parlor. Hence, the context of the parlor provides an undoubtedly formative image of rhetorical activity likely to promote a consistent underlining to future understandings of character and rhetoric alike, a congruency that belies a lifetime of growth and development as a symbol-using animal.

Formative material spaces are not monosemous and, in moments of social confusion, individuals can return to formative spaces reflexively in order to attain a reinterpretation of the meaning of a given rhetorical strategy or cultural program. When one's formative understanding of a social situation functions adequately as a sense-making tool, however, individuals are likely to avoid reinterpretation. Individuals do, however, experience alienation in moments when situations emerge that negate the worldview produced in the formative spaces of childhood. Without the adequate

rhetorical programming needed to adjust to such disruptions, the formative space of rhetorical education provides a destination for regression.⁶⁸ When the frameworks for understanding the world go awry, however, individuals face an exigency for which their cultural programming or knowledge of rhetoric cannot address. The situation that does not square with their understanding of how reality should unfold, and this formative space in which one first learns the rules of symbolic and social action beckons the prodigal return. As Burke explains, given the simplicity with which the child necessarily learns to experience the contours of her or his world, in moments of inescapable complexity she or he will return to the simple origins of a given worldview, interrogating previously unquestioned assumptions, a reorientation leading toward a worldview that can account for the otherwise incongruous exigencies. Hence, one reason for the epideictic tenor of twentieth-century public discourse in the United States is psychological. As the child first learned character and rhetoric in accordance with the norms of epideictic discourse, the familiarity of such forms was especially attractive to twentieth-century Americans looking to adjust to new spaces, social structures, and technological situations. Additionally, the turn toward epideictic rhetoric was a formal consequence of the dualistic persona of the technical sphere literary society that trained in the art of deliberation, in part, for public display. Identifying the shifting cultural spaces of American oratorical production helps to identify the formal transformations of ADS, from a discursive ritual of the private sphere to the central oratorical genre of public discourse in US culture.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Towards History* (New York: New Republic, 1937).

Rhetorical Culture in Twentieth-Century America

The transformations occurring over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth-century brought about paradigmatic changes in rhetoric and public address still felt today. J. Michael Sproule analyzes a wide-range of rhetorical textbooks produced in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, showing how the aggregate bibliography of rhetorical literature provided a framework for the transformation of oratorical culture. Rhetoric textbooks covered a variety of subjects such as elocution and oratorical composition and ultimately, “as authors experimentally and variously appropriated concepts and frameworks,” texts produced “a new understanding of oral rhetoric.”⁶⁹ A significant outgrowth of this transformation was, according to Thomas O. Sloane, the emergence of New Criticism that germinated from the elocution movement that, like its New Critic progeny, emphasized the interpretive investigation of texts via performative reading and an emphasis on voice.⁷⁰ In the remainder of this section, I contextualize these episodic notes on the history of rhetoric with insights about the rhetorical culture of modernity, urbanization, and speech pedagogy.

Urbanization and the Temporal Rhythms of Industrialization

In response to the industrial revolution, the human geography and social organization of the US changed significantly to adapt to the emergent social situation, Norman P. Miller and Duane M. Robinson describe as “a rapid and continuing

⁶⁹ J. Michael Sproule, “Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric—The Big Problem,” *Rhetoric & Public Address* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2014), 155.

⁷⁰ Sloane, “From Elocution to New Criticism,” 297-330.

development of large-scale production based upon power-driven machines.”⁷¹ To satisfy the need for industrial labor, large swaths of the population migrated to urban centers. The bustling and multicultural urban environment, coupled with new possibilities for class mobility and political power, necessitated a drastic reorientation to everyday life. For example, the separation of the home and work—coexistent within the agrarian model of US life—created new exigencies for the individual worker and family. Nonetheless, the formative cultural patterns of earlier times provided material for analogically adapting to the new situation and accommodating the emergent problems and possibilities inherent within the new scene.

For the sociologist Joseph Gusfield, one major change involved adaptation to a new temporal rhythm.⁷² On one hand, agrarian migrants needed to shift from a calendrical orientation to work that routinized agricultural production by institutionalizing a cycle between periods of familial labor bookended by communal acts of celebration. The dislocation of the home and work, and the relocation of the family into a new community, called for a translation of agrarian customs capable of adjusting to the new realities of city life as well as the possibility of material abundance that accompanied mass production.⁷³

As Joseph Gusfield notes, “Earlier, preindustrial, societies reckoned their time divisions by more natural rhythms prescribed by sunrise and sunset, religious calendars

⁷¹ Norman P. Miller, and Duane M. Robinson, *The Leisure Age: Its Challenge to Recreation* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1963), 71.

⁷² Gusfield, “Passage to Play,” 59.

⁷³ Miller and Robinson, *The Leisure Age*, 71.

of festival, Sabbaths, and feast days...⁷⁴ The later migration from agrarian to urban living came with shifts in temporal rhythm related to the separation of work and home. The move was from an agrarian orientation to time in which the understanding of day-to-day and month-to-month activity related to the seasonally tempered acts of farm labor as well as the celebratory activities marking the seasonal changes. In urban life, a system of time emerged that responded to the bustle of urban activity and monetized temporal orientations of factory work and organizational life. In short, “predictability and constancy came to be prized.”⁷⁵ Additionally, the bifurcation of home and work life produced a situation whereby the demands of industrial technology or modern organizational culture mechanized work life. “With the rigid time schedules of industrial organization,” Gusfield notes, “everyday life becomes as a set of impermeable membranes and the flow of time experienced as a passage from one period to another; from organization to home; from work to play.”⁷⁶ Outside of work, one encountered the possibility for “leisure,” a new temporal concept that framed human experiences under “different contexts of comportment.” Given that *work* and *leisure* “are terms [that] separate areas of self-control required at work from those expressed at play,”⁷⁷ new schemas for enacting such comportments emerged, and the worker needed to embody different temporal compartments during different parts of the day. For Gusfield, the

⁷⁴ Gusfield, “Passage to Play,” 59.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

travel between home and work provided a “spatial passage” for adjusting to the temporal rhythms of the destination.⁷⁸

Various acts of consumption paralleled the spatial passage. Hotels provided the commuting worker a place to dine during lunchtime, live during the workweek, or commune with colleagues after work.⁷⁹ Additionally, alcohol functioned as an agency helping to ease the daily enactment of different temporal rhythms. Laws and norms prohibiting drinking at work, Gusfield argues, are a product of modernization that allowed for drinking only during leisure time, a cultural norm unique to the US. Other norms in American culture “confine drinking to certain periods of the day, to certain days of the week, to certain areas of the locality.”⁸⁰ As a transitional act, alcohol signifies “a nighttime attitude,” as well as “deeper meanings” related to alcohol “as a source of conflict and ambivalence in American life.”⁸¹ Alcohol symbolizes “cultural remission,” or “the conventionalized relaxation of social controls over behavior.”⁸² Additionally, alcohol is associated with disinhibition and the setting of mood by marking the conclusion of work and the inauguration of play,⁸³ a stage of liminality:

Both the transition from work to play and from the secular to the sacred are transformations of discontinuity. They involve shifts in the styles of thought and

⁷⁸ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁹ Matthew Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar: The History of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, AFL-CIO* (New York: Random House, 1956), 1-15.

⁸⁰ Gusfield, “Passage to Play,” 62.

⁸¹ Ibid., 63.

⁸² Ibid., 63.

⁸³ Ibid., 64.

behavior that constitute contrasts with the personality and character of the work arena.⁸⁴

In light of such effects, Gusfield argues, alcohol maintains a unique function within modern US society. First, alcohol serves as a scapegoat that protects against “public judgments” providing a scapegoat (“drunkenness”), and, second, “alcohol places a frame around action which mitigates effects in other spheres of life.”⁸⁵ Additionally, alcohol is characteristically festive and prescribes a measure of “social solidarity,” one that deconstructs social hierarchy because, as an object opposed by work, alcohol “is a contrast to structure, a commitment to values of human similarity and antistructure,”⁸⁶ and a rhetorical “keying device” whereby alcohol allows individuals to shift frames and transition in moments of liminality. Alcohol frames festivity which, within organizations, allows transitioning between work and play personas cuing “nonhierarchical relations, unregulated by the structures of organization” within a protective space that allows one to reveal “self” safely to others.

The Banquet Halls and Hotels of American Modernity

The proliferation of the hotel industry in modern America provided a shift from the personal sphere of the parlor into the technical and public spheres of the banquet hall, an invention of the mid-nineteenth-century that revolutionized urban life in the United States and gave rise to a new era of ADS. In French, the word “hotel” means “town

⁸⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 64.

mansion,” a fitting description of early nineteenth-century hotels in the United States. According to Cathy K. Kaufman, early American hotels were “grand public accommodations” commonly known as “palaces of the people.” In establishments such as the Hotel Astor, dining rooms “showcased upwardly mobile, status-conscious, public leisure in a uniquely egalitarian, American context.”⁸⁷ Kaufman notes “four distinct niches” of the early hotels. First, hotels provided “the midday meal” for the emerging business class that could not commute home for lunch. Second, hotels functioned as spaces for nighttime entertainment, providing “sites for banquets and eloquent dining.”

Often staffed by European chefs and waiters, the hotels broadcast sophistication. Dinners were choreographed with military precision. A gong summoned guests for dinners at which waiters in unison removed silver domes covering the various dishes, creating a public spectacle akin to the most opulent dinners in private homes.

Third, in the years prior to 1870, when “America’s first apartments were built” hotels functioned as “long-term residences” for many. In fact, Kaufman estimates that long-term boarders “accounted for one-half of the hotel occupancy in the mid-nineteenth-century,” a group that shared family meals “in the public dining rooms.” Finally, hotels providing public dining venues for women “who were generally not welcome in restaurants, particularly unescorted, until the late nineteenth-century.” As such, hotels were progressive establishments where “etiquette and service differed from that in private homes.” In sum, the egalitarian space of the banquet hall and hotel dining room allowed the commingling of “old and new money, women, and the socially aspiring” all of whom

⁸⁷ Cathy K. Kaufman, “Hotel Dining Rooms,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, ed. Andrew F. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): par. 1.

could share space at the public table as long as they could afford “the cost of a nineteenth-century dinner.”⁸⁸

The emergence of hotel life provided a symbolic rupture in cultural standards of hospitality. Traditional notions of hospitality functioned “to incorporate outsiders into a community on a temporary basis” by way of the “host-guest relationship” in which “a community member serves as the link between the community and the outsider.”⁸⁹ With the emergence of hotels, hospitality became the domain of institutional norms instead of familial responsibilities. According to A. K. Sandoval-Strausz and Daniel Levinson Wilk, “In the nineteenth-century the rise of the hotel, with its innovative arrangement of workers and configuration of space, was accompanied by widespread unease about the transition from household to institutional hospitality.”⁹⁰ Adjustment to the new order of hospitality came, in part, because hotels provided a backdrop for “America’s cultural producers”⁹¹ In time, the public anxiety about the norms of hospitality within the hotel dissipated as the public, guided by a circuit of popular authors, politicians, and celebrities saw hotels as the backdrop to conviviality. Icons of popular culture, such as Mark Twain and William Dean Howells, circulated about hotels as after-dinner speakers and began including characters and scenes within their literary productions, fostering a new frame

⁸⁸ Kaufman, “Hotel Dining Rooms.”

⁸⁹ A. K. Sandoval-Strausz, and Daniel Levinson Wilk, “Princes and Maids of the City Hotel: The Cultural Politics of Commercial Hospitality in America,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 25 (2005): 160-185, 168.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

for the acceptance of hotels and hotel workers as “minor but inescapable partners to the nation’s urbanites.”⁹²

Within these unique spaces of social mobility that merged private sphere traditions within public sphere settings, a new form of entertainment emerged: the literary comedians, renowned for their after-dinner witticisms, and none more so than Mark Twain.⁹³ As Marlene Boyd Vallin explains, Twain’s “alternative career” of after-dinner speaking was “the turning point of his life,” sustaining “him financially, but also, more importantly, [ADS] was instrumental in the development of Mark Twain, the celebrated personality and consummate communicator.”⁹⁴

His platform career transformed this creative genius from a regional journalist-lecturer whose appeal to audiences lay in the recreating of the character of the American West of the 1860s to that of a cultivated personality who appealed to any levels of society, including the most cultured at home and abroad.”⁹⁵

Twain, of course, was the literary persona of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, a journalist from Hannibal, Missouri whose “American heartland” public persona and celebrity, according to David E. E. Sloane, “owed a serious debt to a number of writers of Literary Comedy, and especially Artemus Ward, for his style of presentation, egalitarian ethics, and his development as a platform speaker.”⁹⁶ Figures like Ward and Twain carved out

⁹² Ibid., 176.

⁹³ For collections of Mark Twain’s speeches, see Mark Twain, *Mark Twain Speaking*, Paul Fatout, ed. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1976).

⁹⁴ Marlene Boyd Vallin, “‘Manner is Everything’: The Secret to Mark Twain’s Performing Success,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 24, no. 2 (1990), 81.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁹⁶ David E. E. Sloane, “Mark Twain and Literary Comedy,” *Studies in American Humor* 3, no. 22 (2010): 7.

an avenue for the emergence of the literary comedians, a group of comic lecturers maintaining satirical personas that emphasized some exaggerated tenet of the American character.

The material availability of a public table, coupled with the rising stardom of after-dinner celebrities such as Twain, fostered a surge in US after-dinner oratory. As the popularity of ADS increased, the oratorical form became a regular focus of public celebration and scrutiny. As explained in the *New York Times* of February 20, 1898,

Although “forensic oratory” is fast becoming a tradition, although college debating at its best calls out but perfunctory interest from the body of students, although what is left of Congressional eloquence is worth, speaking comparatively, but a passing mention in the press, although the address is supplanting the oration, and is itself tolerated as a perhaps necessary bore, yet there probably never was a time when the “after-dinner orator” flourished as he does to-day.⁹⁷

Such laudations coincided with the designation of ADS as an example of American exceptionalism, a central expression of American identity. As Albert Ellery Bergh wrote in 1900, “After-dinner speaking commends itself especially to American manners and institutions, and in this line of oratory our country is unsurpassed.”⁹⁸ By 1914, the culture of ADS in New York City reached all new heights. Writers noted that as the “public dinner season” began to include more and more events, the patrons of banquet oratory began to grow weary of longwinded speeches and increasingly familiar rhetorical quips. In response to the rising surge of banquets in 1914, for example, one reporter griped about the pains associated with the fact that roughly “300,000 individuals have to

⁹⁷ “After-Dinner Oratory,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1898.

⁹⁸ Albert Ellery Bergh, “Introduction,” in *Modern Eloquence, Vol. I: After-Dinner Speeches, A-D*, Thomas B. Reed, ed. (Chicago: Geo. L. Shuman & Co., 1900), viii.

listen to 2,000 toastmasters trying to find a new variation for the phrase, ‘We have with us to-night a gentleman who needs no introduction.’”⁹⁹ After-dinner speaking had “hardened into an institution,” an assertion supported by the fact that “[t]here are even some who do it for pay and make a comfortable addition to their incomes by it, combined with what they make by organizing clubs and societies—also for pay.”¹⁰⁰ Perhaps the most celebrated after-dinner speaking occasion was the annual dinner for the ancestors of the Mayflower Pilgrims, which began in 1805 and met annually in the banquet halls of New York in order to toast and parody their founding father lineage. An 1886 article in the *New York Times* sheds light on the event, starting with a quotation from the night’s after-dinner speaker, Judge Russell:

“You have for 81 years listened to the story of your ancestors. Now I hope you are ready to give these gentlemen around me an opportunity to relieve themselves of their speeches.” Judge Russell continued by saying that it was quite natural that the New-Englanders should come to New-York after they had got all they could out of their own territory.¹⁰¹

In addition to celebrations of tradition, dinners commemorated institutional changes intended to bolster industries. Often attracting publicity, the after-dinner speech became an opportunity to attract attention to items such as “tariff-reform” and American shipping,¹⁰² the inauguration of industrial associations such as the “First Annual Dinner

⁹⁹ “After-Dinner Speaking,” *New York Times* (February 8, 1914), 14.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ “Boasting of Puritan Sires: The Proudest Festival of New-England’s Sons. A Banquet with Many Distinguished Guests and Praiseful Words from Many Well Known Men.” *New York Times*, December 23, 1886, 1.

¹⁰² See, “American Shipping Loss: Capt. Codman before the Massachusetts Tariff-Reform League.” *New York Times* (November 21, 1889), 2.

of the Manufacturers' Association,"¹⁰³ the "Single-Taxers" banquets,¹⁰⁴ as well as philanthropic ventures such as the founding of the Princeton Library.¹⁰⁵ As Daniel Wickberg asserts, during the early twentieth-century, "humor attained a status altogether different from that of the antebellum years," a new status which allowed humor and laughter to become "central features of middle-class life."¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

In this chapter, I trace the transformation of ADS across the personal, technical, and public spheres of discourse. After reviewing classical antecedents within the history of rhetoric and theatre, I next identified a lineage between the epideictic rhetoric of parlor speaking, and the epideictic-deliberative rhetoric seen in the platform oratories of US literary societies, lyceum circuits, and Chautauqua events, in order situate the twentieth-century emergence of ADS the central form of US public discourse. I argue that the urbanization and social change of the early twentieth-century led to a rhetorical transformation wherein the platform oratorical traditions (historically deliberative in tone) of the nineteenth-century were incorporated under the heading of ADS (historically

¹⁰³ "Fur Dealers at Dinner: The First Annual Dinner of the Manufacturers' Association." *New York Times* (May 1, 1887), 7.

¹⁰⁴ "Single Taxers' Banquet: Massachusetts Members Hear of the Recent Work in Delaware. William Lloyd Garrison Speaks." *New York Times* (February 23, 1896), 16.

¹⁰⁵ John Galsworthy, "'Hope of Life': The First Annual Dinner of the Friends of the Princeton Library." *The Princeton Alumni Weekly* 31, no. 28 (April 24, 1931): 697-698.

¹⁰⁶ Daniel Wickberg, *The Senses of Humor: Self and Laughter in Modern America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 127.

epideictic in tone). The reincorporation was dependent upon a variety of factors such as the emergence of hotels and banquet halls in US cities.

In the next chapter, I outline the forms of ADS as developed in public discourse about in twentieth-century America. I argue that ADS mediated cultural identification within mainstream and vernacular discourse through a variety of overt and subtle tactics. On the one hand, popular treatments of ADS frequently ridiculed cultural others. Alternatively, given the association between cultural virtue and rhetorical propriety inherent within the US rhetorical tradition, critiques of the rhetorical improprieties demonstrated within ADS functioned to advance implicit arguments about culture, gender, race, and class politics. In this regard, the hotel was especially significant as it provided a space in which both genders could socialize outside of the home. Moreover, given that the parlor was a domain with a strong emphasis on the rhetorical education of women, after-dinner speaking was a natural space in which women could begin participating in the public culture of oratory. While women delivered banquet speeches throughout the twentieth-century, however, historical record of such speeches is scarce as public discourse about ADS tended to omit women speakers from public considerations.

CHAPTER III. AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING AND CULTURAL POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FORM AND CONTENT OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING AS DESCRIBED WITHIN RHETORICAL TREATISES AND NEWSPAPER DISCOURSE

This chapter presents an analysis of twentieth-century articulations of ADS as a medium and topic for public discourse. Specifically, this chapter identifies the description of ADS within rhetorical treatises and popular handbooks, and provides an analysis of mainstream and vernacular newspaper discourse about ADS. Findings regard discursive strategies for discussing culture within public discourse. Specifically, discourse about ADS maintains a link between the proprietary adherence to rhetorical form and the pious maintenance of virtuous character. Such an assumption allows rhetors to substitute overt indictments of a person's vices of character with critiques of a person's rhetorical form in the after-dinner speaking situation. In other words, given the assumption that a person's knowledge of rhetorical norms and enactment of rhetorical propriety signifies the content of his or her character, rhetors can use substitution to focus discussion on the formal virtues and vices of ADS as a means of shifting standards of eloquence and mystifying the production of power. To illustrate this point, I cover two areas of analysis. First, I examine the prescriptions for ADS within the public speaking books and newspaper coverage of mainstream public discourse. Second, I turn to representations of ADS within vernacular discourse to illustrate the way ADS provided mainstream audiences with a site of comparative cultural rhetoric, and vernacular audiences with an avenue for subverting dominant strictures through cultural syncretism.

Rhetorical Textbooks and the Transition from Oratory to Public Speaking

In his study of rhetorical texts produced in the early modern US, communication scholar J. Michael Sproule analyses a vast array of rhetoric textbooks that, as a body of literature, articulated an “adaptive process in which elements of antecedent textbook formats, selectively recombined, produced what became American speechmaking.”¹⁰⁷ Following Sproule’s model, this chapter opens with an analysis of popular and public rhetoric textbooks published in the US between 1885 and 1930, an era during which textbooks provided “rubrics of ‘public speaking’ or ‘speech’” effectively serving to demarcate a paradigmatic shift in democratic rhetorical practice and “represent the chief vehicle by which the new parameters of spoken public address were made manifest.”¹⁰⁸

Sproule’s analysis considered over two centuries of rhetorical textbooks. In so doing, Sproule provides a cogent framework for identifying genres of rhetorical textbooks that connects the introduction and development of “public speaking” from antecedent textbooks that emphasized the rhetorical concepts of Athenian oratory, Ciceronian declamation, British New Rhetoric, and the elocutionary and compositional treatises of nineteenth-century US society. In his analysis, Sproule identifies both the nine textual genres that make up rhetoric texts published between 1890 and 1930, as well as the litany of antecedent forms from which public speaking emerged. Antecedent texts ranged across genres: *rhetorical* and *elocutionary readers* (collections of oratorical and literary works for public and private reading), the traditional grammar book, elocutionary

¹⁰⁷ Sproule, “Inventing Public Speaking,” 509.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 564.

manuals for professional or parlor reading, “the advanced rhetoric textbook,” composition books focused on oratorical composition, as well as popular texts addressing debate and extemporaneous speaking.¹⁰⁹

In sum, by the late nineteenth-century the antecedent textual genres had transformed. In the pages of textbooks from various genres, authors articulated what would become “new speechmaking.” Genres included composition texts that focused either specifically on oratory or on public speaking, “narrative guidebooks for speakers,” “the public-speaking reader,” the “new elocution” text, books emphasizing “the conversational-delivery approach,” “the comprehensive modern public speaking” book, “the speech-survey book,” and a genre of “practical speech study systems.”¹¹⁰ In the next section, I apply the generic, cognitive, and cultural frameworks to textual fragments on after-dinner speaking in order to identify common tenets.

The Rhetoric of Public Discourse

This section focuses on manuals that address the rhetoric of ADS. On one hand, texts include Henry Coppée’s *Elements of Rhetoric*, first published in 1859, and John Bascom’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, published in 1872.¹¹¹ Though neither treatise addresses ADS, these two texts provide a comparative standpoint on issues related to ADS within twentieth-century works. Alternatively, this section analyzes texts with sections dedicated

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 566.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 579.

¹¹¹ Henry Coppée, *Elements of Rhetoric: Designed as a Manual of Instruction*, 10th ed., revised (Philadelphia: J.H. Butler & Co., 1881); John Bascom, *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1888).

to ADS and published in the twentieth-century: Edwin Du Bois Shurter's (1908) *The Rhetoric of Oratory*, Paul Pearson and Philip Hicks's (1912) *Extemporaneous Speaking*, and William Allen Wood's (1914) *After-Dinner Speeches and How to Make Them*.¹¹² In my analysis, I highlight the similarities and differences within descriptions. I show that texts related to ADS emphasized the expansion of rhetoric to include the realm of public discourse demonstrated in the press. In so doing, authors provided a bridge for connecting ADS and public deliberation. The link emphasized a relationship between the formal propriety of ADS and the deliberative virtues of the orator. To illustrate this point, I first provide an overview of discourse analysis specific to institutional rhetoric. Second, I turn to the public speaking texts mentioned above, coupled with public discourse about ADS, in order to show how rhetorical normativity unfolded in twentieth-century deliberations about the formal proprieties and cultural pieties of ADS.

The Discursive Analysis of Institutional Rhetoric

Whereas rhetoric identifies one component of dialectic, discourse names a large encompassing text surrounding a given issue or agent that responds dialectically to other texts within a given timeframe. The study of discourse and rhetoric maintain differing methodological approaches, as news media and discourse scholar Teun A. van Dijk explains, discourse analysis stems from the study of rhetoric.¹¹³ While rhetorical criticism

¹¹² Edwin Du Bois Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908); Paul M. Pearson, and Philip M. Hicks, *Extemporaneous Speaking* (New York: Hinds, Noble & Eldredge, 1912), and William Allen Wood, ed. *After-Dinner Speeches and How to Make Them* (Chicago: T.H. Flood and Company Publishers, 1914).

¹¹³ Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1988).

overlaps significantly, the analysis of textual fragments published within disposable rather than canonical texts (newspapers, textbooks, gazettes, etc.) calls for dealing with data wide in scope and developed in response to institutional norms. Hence, the recognition of concepts developed specifically for the analysis of newspaper discourse is important for identifying formal qualities of news unique to the industry norms of print media. Defining *style* as “an indication or marker of social properties and of the sociocultural situation of a speech event,”¹¹⁴ van Dijk explains that newspaper discourse emphasizes a unique stylistic approach. Specifically, newspaper style reinforces an institutionalized identity of the paper, normalizes formal standards, and uses stylistic impersonality as an appeal to ethos. Such a framework addresses the audience as a formally distant body.¹¹⁵

The specific style of newspaper rhetoric relates to factors unique to the print medium such as “possible topics of news discourse” and location of a story within the publication.¹¹⁶ Moreover, in addition to emphasizing rhetorical or informational aspects of style, newspapers develop considerations for stylistic norms in accordance with the norms of efficiency in production. In other words, each story maintains a similar structure in order to allow the writer, editor, and printer to work efficiently and finish their work prior to a print deadline. Alternatively, such norms also benefit the reader as a familiarity with the formal consistency and impersonality of news stories enables the reader to parse through numerous stories in a limited amount of time.

¹¹⁴ Teun A. van Dijk, *Newspaper Discourse*, 72.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

The remainder of this chapter will seek to create a model drawing from discourse about ADS. More than providing a guide for additional research, the goal of this aspect of the investigation is to create a dynamic interchange between historical materials and the generic norms of a rhetorical form. As van Dijk explains, “The meanings of a text derive from a model, and if such models include instances of social opinion from shared attitudes, this will also show in the meanings and models conveyed in communication.”¹¹⁷ The model detailed below identifies four interrelated discursive themes: (1) the expansion of rhetorical principles to bridge oratorical and journalistic public discourse, (2) the relationship between deliberative and epideictic oratory, (3) the formal proprieties of ADS, and (4) the character of the after-dinner speaker.

Rhetoric and the Realm of Discourse

Scholars of both the earlier and later the periods emphasize discourse as the realm of rhetoric. In his 1859 treatise, *Elements of Rhetoric*, Henry Coppée writes, “Rhetoric is the art of constructing and applying *discourse*,” a term by which “is meant the invention and arrangement of thought, and its expression in language.”¹¹⁸ Coppée identifies two types of discourse, conversational and public. Public discourse, Coppée contends, consists of “what is to be delivered in oratorical form to an audience, or to be printed and read” by many.¹¹⁹ In 1859, Coppée recognized public discourse as the realm of both oral and print rhetoric, maintaining that such a sphere was inherently solemn and serious.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 108.

¹¹⁸ Henry Coppée, *Elements of Rhetoric*, 13.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 96.

Humor and witticism, therefore, were most naturally conventional within conversational discourse. They are not “excluded entirely from more public forms, but... it is mainly in colloquial discourse that they are important.”¹²⁰ Later scholars continued to emphasize discourse, attending to rhetoric as an art form that expanded into print media from spheres exclusive to oral communication. In 1908, Edwin Du Bois Shurter’s *The Rhetoric of Oratory* reiterated Coppeé’s distinction, defining discourse as “any communication of thought by words, either oral or written.”¹²¹ Pearson and Hicks’s treatise on *Extemporaneous Speaking* extends the discussion of written discourse into considerations of the relationship between speaking events and the press. The authors suggest that despite the relationship between printing and “the apparent decline of interest in the art of speech,” the printed word is “a medium for the extension of the spoken word.”¹²² This definition of discourse illustrates the expanding perspective of American rhetoric textbook authors looking to make sense of innovations in print media. As I show in the remainder of the dissertation, ADS provided discourse participants with a common material space for remediating new media technology. To illustrate this function, the next section identifies ways ADS, an epideictic form, anticipated and responded to deliberative activities.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 96.

¹²¹ Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory*, 1.

¹²² Pearson and Hicks, *Extemporaneous Speaking*, 12-13.

Deliberative and Epideictic Oratory in the American Tradition

While textbooks largely maintained the Aristotelian distinctions, authors discussed deliberative and epideictic oratory within the contexts of the US rhetorical tradition. Shurter began the discussion by distinguishing between oratory and public speaking. Oratory, Shurter wrote, was “*that branch of public speaking which appeals to the emotions. An oration is a formally prepared and relatively elaborate discourse, wherein persuasion is the ultimate object and effect.*”¹²³ Shurter distinguishes oratory from public speaking, suggesting that oratory “belongs in the realm of the passions” and orators “must please and move, as well as inform and convince.”¹²⁴ For Shurter, the multifaceted demand of oratory provides the distinction between oratory and public speaking. Whereas oratory emphasized pathos and a commitment to suasive appeals, Shurter framed public speaking as a modality in which passion was inappropriate. Hence, public speaking called for a disengaged performance, focused on informing rather than moving the audience.¹²⁵ Public speaking, therefore, was a technical iteration of rhetorical address, one markedly different from the platform oratorical events common in US oratorical culture. Upon making such a distinction, Shurter then addresses deliberative and epideictic oratory, emphasizing the relationship between public address, civic duty, and national character.

¹²³ Ibid, 5. Italics his.

¹²⁴ Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory*, 4.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

First, deliberative was an important part of the American democratic tradition. “While forensic and pulpit oratory belong to members of a particular profession,” Shurter explains, “and the demand for demonstrative oratory is occasional.” Deliberative oratory “has widespread involvement as every American citizen is likely to be called upon at some time to express his views before a conference, a convention, or a public meeting called for a given purpose.”¹²⁶ Here an important distinction arises. In antiquity, society provided institutional and professional space for deliberative and forensic oratory, and only occasional space for epideictic oratory. In Ancient Athens, of course, citizens could expect to cycle into deliberative institutions. While epideictic oratory maintained ritual functions, rhetorical training for performance within clerical institutions was a much later development. By the early twentieth-century, however, pulpit oratory was an institutionally supported oratorical form and an important component of American life. Hence, whereas the idealized Greco-Roman tradition commonly depicted in the Western rhetorical tradition imagines deliberative oratory as institutionally oriented and epideictic as occasional address, in the US this association reversed: epideictic was an institutionalized profession and deliberative occasional duty.

Second, while Shurter recognized deliberative oratory as an inevitable duty for all participants in US democracy, he recognized the national shift toward secular epideictic oratory as the dominant form of US oratory. Shurter defines epideictic (or demonstrative) as “the oratory of the special occasion,”¹²⁷ a category in which he placed both traditional and non-traditional modes of epideictic oratory. While Shurter includes activities

¹²⁶ Ibid, 21-22.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 16.

traditionally identified as epideictic within the Western rhetorical tradition (the eulogy, the after-dinner oratory, the commencement address), alongside such events he includes activities traditionally associated with deliberative speaking (the platform address and the political campaign speech).¹²⁸ For Shurter, the political and public nature of twentieth-century US epideictic is unmistakable (the pinnacle epideictic form, in fact, being the Independence Day oration). As Shurter writes,

In America demonstrative oratory has been cultivated more than in any other country and put to more varied uses. Its literature is almost boundless; for, unlike many speeches in other departments of oratory, which have perished with the occasion, the orations delivered in this field have usually been carefully prepared, and by themselves constitute a valuable oratorical literature. Almost infinite, too, are the occasions for demonstrative oratory in America.¹²⁹

Though Shurter's framework is by no means the dominant articulation in textbooks of the period, his arrangement of the generic forms identifies a unique difference from the Aristotelian depiction of oratorical genres. In his description of the oratorical landscape of the early twentieth-century, Shurter recognizes the major shift from deliberative to epideictic oratory. The overlap between epideictic and deliberative events, coupled with the recognition of newspaper discourse as an arena of rhetoric helps to explain the transformation of ADS from a private sphere epideictic display to a deliberative modality of public discourse. Having identified the major epistemic shift framing ADS, the next section describes the formal components of ADS and the specific advice for students preparing to become an after-dinner speaker.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

Formal Considerations for After-Dinner Speaking

In response to his reading of books on ADS available to the college student of 1940, R. D. Mahaffey explains, “some of these books have simply redigested, very poorly, stories which are stale to a second grader. On the whole, though, material, eagerly sought seems to be very hard to find.”¹³⁰ In the early twentieth-century, however, ADS in the United States was achieving unprecedented levels of popularity. In fact, one could expect to find ADS “at almost every dinner having the slightest semblance of formality...”¹³¹ Though appreciation of ADS was not ubiquitous, the magnitude of participation in ADS “demand[ed] an attempt to determine its requirements.”¹³² This section, I show how those formal requirements emerged in both rhetorical textbooks and mainstream public discourse about ADS.

Throughout the variety of rhetorical textbooks from the early twentieth-century, suggestions for preparing ADS regard adherence to normative formal structures and the development of virtuous character. First, formal considerations begin with the exigencies of consumption and conviviality enacted upon the audience. Unlike other formats, ADS mandated considering the postprandial state of the audience. Likely to be lethargic, an ADS needed to be brief, understandable, and “interesting.” To meet such needs, authors prescribe the use of anecdotal humorous and jokes. While one can evoke interest without humor, Shurter explains, among “the average man ... the typical after-dinner speech is

¹³⁰ Mahaffey, “After-Dinner Speaking,” 10.

¹³¹ Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory*, 45.

¹³² *Ibid.*

associated with humorous stories, graceful rhetoric, quaint conceits, and a genius for manipulating and alternating in a brief compass the lighter and graver shades of thought.”

Humor and Deliberation

While humor and joking was an integral part of ADS by the twentieth-century, the practice was discouraged within some circles of high culture. In the 1892 book, *The Ladies' and Gentlemen's Etiquette*, for example, Eliza Bisbee Duffey writes,

We are glad to say that the English habit of gentlemen remaining at the table, after the ladies have retired, to indulge in wine, coarse conversation and obscene jokes, has never been received into popular favor in this country. The very words “after-dinner jokes” suggest something indecent. We take our manners from Paris instead of London....¹³³

Despite the unsavory reputation of jokes within nineteenth-century high culture, by the twentieth century a new market of books filled with after-dinner stories and jokes emerged. In collections such as *After Dinner Stories*, authors represented the anecdotes and jokes of famous after-dinner orators. Interestingly, the form and content of stories and jokes parallels the dominant categories used in rhetorical handbooks by stressing virtue of character and familiarity of form. For example, in E. C. Lewis's 1905 collection, *After Dinner Stories*, the opening anecdote is attributed to Mark Twain, entitled “Mark Twain's Lawn Mower.” The story opens with Twain recalling an incident in which he asked his neighbor “if he might read a set of his books.”

The neighbor replied ungraciously that he was welcome to read them in his library, but he had a rule never to let a book leave the house. Some weeks later the same neighbor sent over to ask for the loan of [Twain's] lawn mower. “I shall be

¹³³ Eliza Bisbee Duffey, *The Ladies' and Gentlemen's Etiquette: A Complete Manual of the Manners and Dress of American Society* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1877), 73.

very glad to loan you my lawn mower,” said Mark Twain, “but since I make it a rule to never let it leave my lawn you will be obliged to use it there.”¹³⁴

The structure of the joke first identifies a social impropriety committed by a stock character. The setup of the joke extends beyond direct retribution (which would have occurred if Twain had simply said, no, you cannot use my lawnmower) and instead showcases the speaker's ironic wit. Other joke books are divided into sections based on subjects. Again, though, a familiar pattern of virtuous character and formal witticism remains. Within such collections, the cultural and racial Other is a consistent target, and often jokes stress an aspect of vernacular difference.¹³⁵ In Paul Emilius Lowe's 1916 collection, *After-Dinner Stories*, categories include: ambition, Chinamen, drinkers and drunkards, matrimony, negroes, politeness and patience, public men, servants, and tramps and beggars.

The emphasis on humor highlights the deliberative function of ADS. As contemporary rhetorical scholars show, within public discourse, humor and comedy maintain function to rhetorically coordinate deliberative activity and ease the stresses of critical rational debate. According to Maurice Charland, comedy maintains a possibility “for the continuation of civic life in the face of the tragic worldly order of necessity.”¹³⁶ Whereas critical rational debate, as prescribed by Habermas's public sphere theory, “might well be an ideal form of government for pluralistic modern societies, the demand

¹³⁴ E. C. Lewis, ed. *After Dinner Stories* (New York and Boston: H. M. Caldwell Co. Publishers, 1905), 7.

¹³⁵ See, for example, Paul Emilius Lowe, *After-dinner Stories* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1916).

¹³⁶ Maurice Charland, “Norms and Laughter in Rhetorical Culture,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80, no. 3 (August 1994): 339-342, 340.

it places upon audiences is at times unrealistic.”¹³⁷ Hence, comedy and humor allow rational-critical debate to relieve tension related to the inability to maintain virtuous activity at all times. As Hugh D. Duncan writes,

We learn in comedy that the virtues of superiors are not so great after all, the humility and loyalty of inferiors are not without limits, and that friends and peers sometimes deceive us. But guilt lightens in laughter as I admit that if they are rascals, so too am I. We begin by laughing at others only to end by laughing at ourselves. The strain of rigid conventions, of majestic ideals, of deep loyalties, is lessened, for now they are open to examination. They can be questioned, their absurdities can be made plain. Now that we can openly express our vices, there is hope for correction.¹³⁸

For Robert Hariman, parody is the “core modality” of political humor, an “essential corrective to ‘inelasticity.’”¹³⁹ Parodic speech inspires laughter, a pleasurable affect for audiences. Additionally, Hariman argues, “Parody is like its natal genre of epideictic speech: the public formalization of language beside itself puts social conventions on display for collective reflection.”¹⁴⁰

For ADS, such assumptions provided audiences with an interpretive mechanism. Irony was certainly a standard for formal delivery and audience interpretation, alluded to, in stories about an outrageous claim made by an after-dinner speaker. For example, in 1906, *The New York Times* provided the following headline: “M’Carren, on Wealth, is for Distribution. He is thinking of distributing His, but Only Thinking. Its Unpopular to be

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Hugh D. Duncan, *Communication and Social Order* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1962), 402-403.

¹³⁹ Robert Hariman, “Political Parody and Public Culture,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 3 (August 2008): 247-272, 250.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 251.

Rich and He Tells Commercial Travelers He Wants to be Popular---‘Twas an After-Dinner Speech.’”¹⁴¹ In sum, the humorous emphasis of ADS allowed speakers a space for violating norms of public discourse that functioned enthymematically to reinforce such standards outside of the banquet setting. While audiences tolerated the violation of certain virtuous standards for the sake of parody and deliberative maintenance, authors stress the need to adhere to formal proprieties, specifically: the need for brevity, the reiteration of structure, ample preparation and extemporaneous delivery, and the domain of topic selection.

Brevity, Arrangement, and Invention

First, above all, Shurter stresses brevity. “If a speech is brief,” he argues, “the hearers will excuse dullness---and even erudition,” a warning against prolixity echoed by many in critical discourse about ADS.¹⁴² For example, in his 1923 article, “The Art of After-Dinner Oratory,” Frank J. Wilstack challenges the advice of Arthur Brisbane who demanded after-dinner speakers to “Be brilliant! Be brilliant!” The need for brilliance was not as important for Wilstack who retorted, “Be brief! Be brief!”¹⁴³ Brevity was not an inherent virtue. The annals of ADS news, in fact, identify a variety of moments when a speaker’s extreme brevity was either humorous or irksome. For example, on April 30,

¹⁴¹ “M’Carren, on Wealth, is for Distribution. He is thinking of distributing His, but Only Thinking. Its Unpopular to be Rich and He Tells Commercial Travelers He Wants to be Popular---‘Twas an After-Dinner Speech,” *New York Times* (December, 28, 1906).

¹⁴² Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory*, 47.

¹⁴³ Frank J. Wilstack, “The Art of After-Dinner Oratory,” *New York Times* (January 7, 1923), SM11.

1938, Henry Ford delivered an after-dinner speech to the American Newspaper Publishers Association and a discussion of brevity framed the review:

An extensive exposition, in a formal speech, of his attitude toward public questions had been anticipated. That Mr. Ford should have limited his Waldorf-Astoria remarks to a brief assurance that “We are all on the spot,” and that if his listeners would “stick to their guns” he would help them all he could, may have been due to aversion to publically discussing topics which might have been uppermost at the White House luncheon.¹⁴⁴

Condemnations over “dullness and prosiness” within ADS signified the need for increased brevity.¹⁴⁵ As reported in *The New York Times* of February 8, 1914, “Speeches should be shorter, and more carefully prepared....” In adhering to the formal proprieties of ADS, banquets will dissuade “the seekers for mere conviviality from attending banquets,” ensuring that “there will be fewer public dinners as well as better ones.”¹⁴⁶ Additionally, the principle of brevity shaped the invention and arrangement of ADS insights. According to Daniel Dougherty, ADS “should always be brief,” and one should not “exceed ten minutes in length.” Such a rule limits the inventive possibilities of ADS.

It should begin with light brevity and end with sentiment.... Don’t hesitate and fish around for more ideas or reproduce the old ones. If you do you will spoil the ease of manner, and manner matters a great deal in after-dinner speaking.¹⁴⁷

For Mahaffey, ADS should be brief “both in style of sentence structure and in organization of material.” Second, orators should strive to be original and resist the urge to recycle anecdotes. Third, the speaker should maintain “geniality, the feeling of a happy

¹⁴⁴ “After-Dinner Speaking,” *New York Times* (April 30, 1938), 14.

¹⁴⁵ “After-Dinner Speaking,” *New York Times* (December 26, 1879), 4.

¹⁴⁶ “After-Dinner Speaking,” *New York Times* (February 8, 1914), 14.

¹⁴⁷ “After-Dinner Oratory,” *Troy Daily Times* [Troy, New York], July 14, 1890), n.p.

spirit.”¹⁴⁸ To fulfill this schema, Mahaffey provides a formulaic acronym, I.G.A. standing for illustration, generalization, and application.

Authors discuss the selection of subjects suitable for after-dinner speaking, though many are quick to note that after-dinner subject matter is occasion-dependent. Pearson and Hicks warn against topics about which the student is either ignorant or disinterested.¹⁴⁹ For Shurter, speakers should remain within the standard meaning of the maxim, reverting to a platitude if needed.¹⁵⁰ While public discourse widely encouraged the presentation of platitudes, some authors pushed back against this trend, calling for speakers to invent substantive meaning. As written in *The New York Times* of March 26, 1893,

People actually expect new ideas, or a fresh and forcible expression of old ones.... They feel that they are wasting time, even if the cigars are reasonably good, if they are forced to listen to opinions that are more clearly and more briefly expressed in their morning newspaper.¹⁵¹

By 1922, the demand for invention faced off against the realization that speakers reused jokes, or purchased jokes from joke writers, an act akin to serving “canned” dinners. In time, the use of “canned jokes” became a formal taboo, though news reports of “joke syndicates” also showed the practice to be a boon for small town speakers hoping to regurgitate the best jokes of New York.¹⁵² The borrowing of jokes transgressed the same

¹⁴⁸ Mahaffey, “After-Dinner Speaking,” 12.

¹⁴⁹ Pearson and Hicks, *Extemporaneous Speaking*, 12.

¹⁵⁰ Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory*.

¹⁵¹ “The After-Dinner Speaker,” *The New York Times* (March 26, 1893), 4.

¹⁵² “Jokes for After-Dinner Speakers,” *New York Times* (January 8, 1922), 84.

regulation against the use of ghostwriters in ADS, accusations of which were reportable affairs.¹⁵³

Preparation and Extemporaneous Delivery

Discussions of delivery largely focus on the aesthetics of prepared spontaneity. For example, after describing the formal components of conclusions, Pearson and Hicks advise that the extemporaneous conclusion “should be carefully phrased in advance and in some cases even committed to memory.”¹⁵⁴ Extemporaneous speaking is central to the ADS method of the canonical speakers, people such as Mark Twain whose approach garnered critical attention in public discourse. Twain, one author writes,

never prepares a speech in any way. He says that he has lived so long, and had so many varied experiences, that no man can talk for five minutes without suggesting to him a train of thought and a consequent number of pertinent anecdotes and important points.¹⁵⁵

Other authors suggested that extemporaneous presentation was a rehearsed display. For Ed Ford, delivery relies on “making a carefully rehearsed talk sound spontaneous---as if it had been thought of on the spur of the moment and would never be done again.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ “Mr. Ducros, M.P., Sued,” *New York Times* (March 15, 1908).

¹⁵⁴ Pearson and Hicks, *Extemporaneous Speaking*, 36.

¹⁵⁵ “After-Dinner Speakers Tell How They Do It,” *New York Times* (March 1, 1908), SM6.

¹⁵⁶ “Ed Ford, “Being Funny Isn’t Much Fun,” *New York Times* (June 25, 1944), SM14.

The Character of After-Dinner Speaking

Second, considerations of form couple with notes on character. For Pearson and Hicks, personality is an important focus demanding the cultivation of personality for individuals “less fortunately gifted...” who can nonetheless observe good character of others and engage in self-criticism. Pearson and Hicks identify characteristics for the after-dinner speaker capable of producing a “Winning Personality.” Such character traits include: geniality, an “overflowing of good nature and good humor” calling for the speaker to like and desire friendship from his audience; dignity, a characteristic diminished by “cheapness, vulgarity, or servility”; and earnestness, comprised of “equal parts of sincerity and enthusiasm” while avoiding flippant and superficial characteristics during serious occasions.¹⁵⁷ Violations of form and virtue lead to moments of revolt against ADS on the grounds of impiety. On January 1, 1910, *The New York Times* suggested such a pairing in a headline that read: “The ‘After Dinner’ Orator and His Ways. An Analysis of His Virtues and Foibles that Suggest the Need of a Suppression Society.”¹⁵⁸

In response to critiques, public discourse appealed to audiences by reminding the public of the golden age of ADS, a nostalgic comparison highlighting the vices marking ADS of the present. Some articles coupled such arguments with the reprinting of speeches from such an era. For example, in 1900, *The New York Times* published “After-

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 43-44.

¹⁵⁸ “The ‘After Dinner’ Orator and His Ways. An Analysis of His Virtues and Foibles that Suggest the Need of a Suppression Society,” *The New York Times* (January 16, 1910), SM9.

Dinner Literature,” an article arguing to reverse the troublesome trend in ADS by revisiting an after-dinner speech by Ralf Waldo Emerson.¹⁵⁹ In harkening to the golden age, authors reminded readers of the central role ADS played in American traditions and culture. As one author wrote in 1879,

What would become of the annual New England-Society’s banquet, for example, if there were no speakers thereafter? To be sure, the sons of the pilgrims would continue to celebrate the austere virtues of their forefathers.... But these material joys would soon pall if the goodly array of orators waiting for their hour of sacrifice with the enforced calmness of “old stagers.”¹⁶⁰

Over the years, recollections of the golden age aimed to provide a solution to the declining value of the oratorical tradition. The solutions varied but tended to emphasize the imbalance between the declining efforts of speakers and the gluttonous feasting that marked the banquet season. For example, in the passage above, the author suggested that ADS was declining because the popularity of ADS was exhausting the availability of qualified speakers. To solve the problem of the “over-employment of the best speakers,” the public needed to practice austerity, “to have fewer dinners and anniversaries.”¹⁶¹ The value of returning to the golden age was up for debate. As written in *The New York Times* on February 8, 1914, “Many of us had been thinking a long while that public dinners were getting tedious, that after-dinner speaking had lost much of its ancient charm...” While overeating was, the author agreed, rampant on the after-dinner circuit, and remarks “should be shorter,” the longstanding practice of ADS “will not go until some other

¹⁵⁹ “After-Dinner Literature,” (March 10, 1900), BR8.

¹⁶⁰ “After-Dinner Speaking,” *New York Times* (December 26, 1879), 4.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

desirable form of mutual felicitation and entertainment has been invented to supersede it.”¹⁶²

In mainstream public discourse, ADS maintained two functions: First, ADS was an epideictic activity for facilitating deliberation. Second, the formal norms of ADS provided public discourse an avenue for deliberating the character of a speaker, event, or organization. Throughout deliberation, criticism of ADS focused on the increased standardization of form. As written in *The New York Times* of August 19th, 1934, “Post-prandial oratory in New York has for years been subject to a standardizing process. Where it is nowadays tolerated at all festive gatherings, it is apt to be placed on the programs by way of concessions to the serious concerns of life.”¹⁶³

After-Dinner Speaking and Discourse about Culture

The discussion of virtue and vice has a long precedent within codified rhetorical systems. Hence, unsurprisingly, the textbooks analyzed for this study continued the tradition. Virtues and vices ranged across the canon, located within discussions of invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory. In style, for example, virtues included “purity” or word usage that aligned with the stylistic and grammatical norms of the society. In deviating, a speaker committed a vice. A *barbarism* was one such vice, signifying a mistaken approach reflective of the absence of high culture. Such a distinction illustrates how rhetorical form functions to reinforce cultural hierarchy. Whereas the previous section investigated the relationship between mainstream discourse

¹⁶² “After-Dinner Speaking,” *New York Times* (February 8, 1914), 14.

¹⁶³ “After-Dinner Wits,” *New York Times* (August 8, 1934), E4.

and high culture, this section examines the rhetorical culture of ADS with an eye toward vernacular discourse.

Vernacular Discourse

In their call for critical studies of vernacular discourse, Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop encourage scholars to seek out discursive texts produced by rhetors from minority cultures often isolated from mainstream discourse. The critical process of analysis calls for applying a critical framework to the vernacular text by paying attention to *cultural syncretism* and considering *pastiche* formations. Drawing on the work of Todd Boyd, Ono and Sloop define *cultural syncretism* a discursive act in which vernacular rhetors affirm the cultural traditions that sustain and reproduce valued cultural traditions while simultaneously articulating positions against the ideological repression expressed in dominant society.¹⁶⁴ Alternatively, *pastiche* is an act of imitative reinvention in which the speaker draws on mainstream symbolic action not simply to produce identical formations and achieve identification with dominant society but rather to implement more strategic purposes.

In his study of communication among Latino disc jockeys at WMEX, a Mexican-American radio station in Northwest, Ohio, Alberto González identifies a process of cultural adaptation whereby disc jockeys would condemn the irresponsible behavior and disruptive acts of coworkers by labeling such activities derogatorily as “Mexican.” For European-Americans unexposed to Mexican-American vernacular discourse, such

¹⁶⁴ Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, The Critique of “Vernacular Discourse,” *Communication Monographs* 62, no. 1 (1995): 19-46, 22.

condemnation may appear unsettlingly incongruent, a crass imitation of the racist othering inherent in mainstream White society. Within the organizational culture of WMEX, however, the denunciation of irresponsible actions and crude behaviors with the English term, “Mexican,” functioned to identify the imitation of unsavory aspects specific to White American culture. Alternatively, WMEX employees used the Spanish term, *Mexicano*, to self-identify and reaffirm tradition values.¹⁶⁵ Hence, the practice of *cultural syncretism* draws upon imitation as a means of shielding vernacular discourse likely to enunciate a nuanced and resistant disposition from the purview of dominant society. Rather than a direct appropriation of mainstream idioms, *cultural syncretism* is a procedural form of borrowing that uses the shared expectations inherent within the cultural orientation of a vernacular community as inventive and organizational resources for constructing a reconfigured iteration of popular discourse.¹⁶⁶

For this section, the accumulation of vernacular texts involved identifying newspaper articles published by the African American press during the later nineteenth and twentieth-centuries that focused on “after-dinner speaking” in some form. Such materials were analyzed only after initially searching a variety of databases for ADS-related articles within the mainstream press from the same period. In historical research, the comparative approach functions to identify suasive discourses of mainstream presses as a means of identifying degrees of overt appropriation and implicit subversion within vernacular texts.

¹⁶⁵ Alberto Gonzalez, “Participation’ at WMEX-FM: Interventional Rhetoric of Ohio Mexican Americans,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 53 (1989), 398.

¹⁶⁶ Ono and Sloop, “Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” 23-24.

After-Dinner Speaking and American Culture

Early discourse about ADS functioned to distinguish US oratorical culture from European colonial antecedents. Here, cultural character is of principle concern as ADS identifies an approach to identity construction. In his 1905 assessment of US ADS, Daniel Crilly, a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party serving in the Parliament, called the American tradition unique: a “festival of merriment” that “commends itself especially to American manners and institutions.”¹⁶⁷ Not all commentators agreed with Crilly.¹⁶⁸ Harry Furnis, writing from London in 1902, found that while “stock toasts national subjects, are dealt with on both sides of the Atlantic by outpourings of platitudes, and seldom with a grain of sincerity,” the English “have a higher motive, and ... therefore have better speeches.”¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, a popular celebration of American rhetorical identity, ADS helped to foster the rhetorical identification of popular American celebrities such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Mark Twain, James Russell Lowell, and Chauncey M. Depew, all of whom were widely heralded for traversals on the after-dinner circuit. Not only did the Euroamerican ADS audience achieve notoriety by recreating a cherished rhetorical form acknowledged as exceptional on both sides of the Atlantic, but so too did ADS function to introduce American audiences to the cultural practices of people across the world. Specifically, ADS became an object for comparative rhetoric in

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Crilly, “The After-Dinner Oratory of America,” *The Living Age* 245 (June 17, 1905), 716.

¹⁶⁸ See, Ex-Attache, “After-Dinner Oratory,” *Washington Post* (May 28, 1905), 25.

¹⁶⁹ Harry Furniss, “English and American After-Dinner Speakers,” *Public Opinion* (October 23, 1902), 535.

response to visiting dignitaries (typically tasked with delivering after-dinner speeches) and experienced by world travelers who returned to the US speakers' podium with reports of dinner rituals from abroad.

Within the vernacular press, similar examples of stories comparing ADS across cultures emerged. For example, an August 25, 1900 edition of *Colored American*, published in Washington, D.C., reported on a dinner in Paris for African Americans living abroad.

The affair was quite unique, in that it produced a reunion and most cordial congeniality among colored people, more or less strangers to each other and meeting for the first time under the hospitable roof of the United States Building in a foreign land, but under the Stars and Stripes.¹⁷⁰

Vernacular press coverage highlighted cultural comparisons, often alluding to a proprietary norm of ADS, such as the origins of the word “toast” in medieval Europe.¹⁷¹ Stories also inquired into the rhetorical practices of European and Asian cultures. In a January 3, 1890 issue of the *Detroit Plaindealer*, for example, an author wrote: “The German Emperor’s style of after-dinner oratory is precisely modeled on that of a commander in the field.”¹⁷² Additionally, the June 4, 1898 issue of the Salt Lake City *Broad Axe*, provided a story about the municipal council in Etampes, France that purchased a phonograph to record council meetings. “Some of the members of the council objected to the innovation on account of the too great faithfulness of the

¹⁷⁰ “Colored Americans Dine,” *Colored American* [Washington, D.C.] (August 25, 1900), 3.

¹⁷¹ “The Word ‘Toast,’” *The Freeman* [Indianapolis, IN] (December 11, 1897), 4.

¹⁷² “Superficial Survey,” *Detroit Plaindealer* (January 3, 1890), 7.

apparatus in reproducing defective pronunciation and errors of speech...¹⁷³ Finally, in 1900, the after-dinner speaking tour of Wu Ting Fang, the Chinese Minister to the United States, attracted widespread commentary in the *African American Press*.¹⁷⁴

After-Dinner Speaking and Cultural Criticism

In 1910, a controversy erupted after a public speaking course at Columbia University provided lessons on after-dinner speaking to an interracial and coeducational roster of students. As reported by an anonymous “eye-witness,” the eagerness with which female students sought to learn ADS signaled “a suffragist plot”:

Nobody who reads the newspapers can be ignorant of the part played by after-dinner speaking in the fortunes of politicians.... The suffragette ... is logically an after-dinner speaker. The plot is manifest.¹⁷⁵

As the article argued, ADS was “almost the last prerogative of mere man” and offering after-dinner education to an interracial class of women could only be explained as a move guided by “insurrectionary or suffragette theory.”¹⁷⁶ Such a controversy illuminates the

¹⁷³ “Phonograph in the Council Chamber,” *Broad Ax* [Salt Lake City, UT] (June 4, 1898), 3.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, *Iowa State Bystander* [Des Moines, IA] (March 30, 1900), 2.

¹⁷⁵ The *New York Times* coverage of this situation is unique as it covers the proclamations of this anonymous “visitor,” maintaining distance from the opinions expressed, but nonetheless headlining the report quite provocatively. See, “Banquet Oratory Now College Course: Visitor to Columbia University Finds Women Eager Students of After-Dinner Speaking. Suspect Suffragette Plot. Class in Platform Speaking Includes a Sedate Negro Woman and Two Japanese—Has No Platform.” *New York Times*, August 14, 1910, p. 6

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

tensions stemming from the popularity of after-dinner speaking among groups striving for political power.

Whereas mainstream texts utilized cultural others to identify vices of rhetoric and character, the vernacular press provided alternative punchlines that highlighted strategies for challenging racism. The use of wit was one such strategy directly challenging racial jokes in ADS. For example, the March 29th, 1890 issue of *New York Age* provided an anecdote about an

after dinner orator [who] was untangling the intricacies of the irrepressible race problem and proceeded to illustrate his point with the following comparison. “Let us suppose that there were eight millions of people in this country with red hair and that all their descendants were endowed by nature with red hair...

Before the speaker could finish his comparison, someone interrupted with a “wicked” witticism: “Couldn’t that be properly termed a case of hair-redity?” Such a punchline provided immediate laughter for the speaker’s audience as well as a resonate lesson for the paper’s readership. Specifically, the joke provided a model whereby the use of wit redresses the after-dinner speaker for rehashing racist remarks. The story concluded: “And the outburst of laughter that followed quite took the wind out of the orator’s sails.”¹⁷⁷ In another strategy, jokes reevaluated ADS through critique of the practice.

Criticisms focused on the baseness of ADS. The *Portland New Age* of November 3, 1900 provides a fitting example: “The empty after-dinner speech is another thing which cannot be suppressed by the voters.”¹⁷⁸ As noted in the *Cleveland Gazetted* of November 23, 1889, “The after-dinner speaker is sometimes in demand. So is the undertaker.”¹⁷⁹ In

¹⁷⁷ “A Case of Heredity,” *New York Age* (March 29, 1890), 4.

¹⁷⁸ *Portland New Age* (November 3, 1900), 2.

sum, whereas vernacular discourse maintained adherence to the formal propriety of ADS through educational and comparative articles, the African American Press also used ADS as an opportunity to suggest strategies for critiquing power and creating alternative spaces in which ADS could facilitate rhetorical access to more equitable discursive culture.

¹⁷⁹ *Cleveland Gazette* (November 23, 1889), 4.

CHAPTER IV. BANQUET ORATORY AND THE INTERCULTURAL RHETORIC OF BEN REIFEL

This chapter analyzes an after-dinner speech by Ben Reifel, the former US Congressman and an important figure in Native American history, and for American history in general, as a case study of intercultural rhetoric. Specifically, I focus on “To Be or to Become?: Cultural Factors in the Social Adjustment of Indians,” an after-dinner speech presented by Reifel in 1956 to Native American educators and social scientists who, like Reifel, were invested in a project aimed at improving Native American welfare through educative, social, and economic integration. Using the speech as a representative anecdote, I argue that Reifel utilized narratives regarding his family and bicultural identity in order to translate the symbolic divide between Euramerican and Native American cultures. In doing so, Reifel (1) created intercultural space within seemingly homogenous Western rhetorical platforms, (2) utilized the *heyoka* persona in order to legitimize his “trickster” approach to Euramerican administrative rhetoric, and (3) drew upon *symbolic resurgence* in order to transform interpretations of *administrative entelechy*.

Introduction

By the middle of the 1950s, the US Federal Government was reaching the apex of a series of repressive policies aimed at terminating the progressive-era political gains earned by Native Americans during past administrations. According to Peter Iverson, during the “era of termination,” a period of time stretching from the end of World War II to the early 1960s, “many members of Congress and the Truman and Eisenhower

administrations made sporadic but persistent efforts to reduce or eliminate federal services and protection for American Indians.”¹⁸⁰ Framed as an attempt to integrate Native Americans into “American” society, termination legislation sought to implement a wide-range of political changes, now widely seen as disastrous. Most notably, termination legislation repealed tribal sovereignty, subjected Native Americans to state and federal taxation laws, and, in some cases, terminated the existence of Indian reservations. As this deregulatory backlash against the Indian New Deal intensified, a political climate emerged in which it was undoubtedly difficult to garner Native American support for integration.

Such discord provided the backdrop for Dr. Benjamin “Lone Feather” Reifel’s November 27, 1956 address, “To Be or To Become? Cultural Factors in the Social Adjustment of Indians,” delivered to Native American educators and social scientists attending the Northern Montana Work Conference on Indian Education and intended to bolster the educative efforts toward social and economic integration.¹⁸¹ Reifel’s speech is significant for a variety of reasons. First, at the time of the address Reifel, a Native Sioux of bicultural heritage who earned his doctorate in Agricultural Economics from Harvard University, was serving as the Area Director for the Aberdeen Reservation, located in the state of South Dakota. The speech marked an important moment in Reifel’s career

¹⁸⁰ Peter Iverson, “Building Toward Self-Determination in the 1940s and 1950s,” in *Major Problems in American Indian History*, 2nd ed., Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds. (Boston: Houston Mifflin, 2001), 444.

¹⁸¹ Benjamin Reifel, “To Be or to Become?” Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment of Indians,” Reprint of Address given to the Northern Montana Work Conference on Indian Education on November 27, 1956, held at the Library and Archives Canada, University of Alberta, and University of British Columbia University.

because, less than a year after delivering the address, Reifel would play a key role in negotiating a last-minute compromise that would effectively end state and federal efforts to pass additional termination legislation in South Dakota. Subsequently, his prominence grew and in 1959, after retiring from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Reifel became “the first person with significant ties to Indian country to be elected to the US House of Representatives,”¹⁸² a significant landmark in US history. As a member of the House of Representatives, Reifel ultimately served five terms in office, authored “a number of important bills including the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968,”¹⁸³ and regularly worked to enhance the educational opportunities for Native Americans. Given that “Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment” occurred during a pivotal moment in Reifel’s career, I argue that this speech can serve as a representative anecdote for better understanding Reifel’s intercultural approach to rhetoric.

Not only did “To Be or To Become” mark Reifel’s rising political voice, the speech is also unique in its own right. In fact, even a *prima facie* assessment illuminates Reifel’s tremendous foresight, as the rhetor critiques the cultural hegemony inscribed within traditional Euramerican perspectives of Native American history by presenting a cogent, tactful, and scientifically informed articulation of the cultural misunderstandings inhibiting economic development in Native American society. Today, one can see this now quinquagenarian address as, if nothing else, ahead of its time. By peering below the surface, however, one can identify an even more nuanced and sophisticated approach to

¹⁸² Mark Trahan, “American Indians Seek to Increase Their Influence in Congress,” *Salt Lake Tribune* (July 7, 1996).

¹⁸³ Mark Trahan, “Seeking Representation: Native Electoral Strategies in the U.S.,” *Native Americas* (September 30, 1996), 30.

intercultural rhetoric in which Reifel draws upon a constellation of intersecting rhetorical traditions to craft a narrative that tactfully injects a Native American orientation into an ongoing discussion about governmental programming that maintained an integrative mission about which many in his audience were undoubtedly skeptical.

The potential insight available from the text coupled with an unfortunate absence of rhetorical scholarship investigating the public address of this important historical figure, justifies further investigation of Reifel's approach to intercultural rhetoric. Specifically, I aim to answer the following question: how does Ben Reifel draw upon the familial entelechy of his cultural identity development in order to design an approach to intercultural rhetoric? To answer this question, I first provide a biographical contextualization of Reifel's rhetorical legacy and the exigencies addressed in Reifel's pivotal speech. Second, I draw upon intersecting Native American and Euramerican rhetorical traditions in order to construct a theoretical framework. Third, I apply the framework to "To Be or To Become" in order to understand Reifel's approach as a model for intercultural rhetoric and ultimately draw implications regarding the rhetorical potency of *family*.

The Rhetorical Legacy of Ben Reifel

Ben Reifel, a member of the Brule Sioux, was born in 1906 to William and Lucy Burning Breast Reifel. Ben's father William was a first generation German-American who came to the Rosebud Reservation by way of Indiana in order to work as a schoolteacher. On the Reservation, William met and married Reifel's mother, Lucy Burning Breast, a native Sioux. As a biracial German-Sioux American, Reifel and his five brothers had a unique upbringing on the Rosebud Reservation. After finishing high

school, Ben Reifel benefited from New Deal legislation that provided him one of the first college loans granted to a college-bound Native American. As an undergraduate student at South Dakota State University, Reifel excelled, becoming President of the Student Government and graduating with a degree in agriculture.

After graduation, Reifel returned to the Pine Ridge Reservation where he went to work for the BIA as a Farm Agent. As Reifel later recalled, the previous Farm Agent, Jake White Cow Killer, had graduated from the Carlisle School. As a “member of the village in that area,” he had the advantage of being able to speak “Sioux and Lakota in all of his communications with these people.” The precedent was set and, in seeking his replacement, the BIA identified Reifel as desirable because of his bilingual abilities.¹⁸⁴ Shortly after taking the job, Reifel had the opportunity to cultivate support for the Indian Reorganization Act. In his efforts to lobby members of the Reservation to vote in support of legislation that would reorganize Reservation governance. Specifically, the Indian New Deal aimed to replace traditional structures of Native American governance with a western model of representative democracy, Reifel developed a set of visual aids that translated the legalistic terminology of the English-language legislation into Lakota, forms that the Sioux people could understand and appreciate. Reifel quickly gained notoriety for his unique ability to translate New Deal legislation into the Lakota language. Such abilities, according to Jerry D. Stubben, were “extraordinarily successful in winning

¹⁸⁴ Ben Reifel, “The Indian New Deal,” in *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan*, Kenneth R. Philp, ed. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995), 54.

support for the Reorganization Act, first at Pine Ridge and later on other reservations across South Dakota.”¹⁸⁵

After serving in World War II, Reifel earned both a master’s degree in public administration and a doctorate in agricultural economics from Harvard, and worked his way up the ranks of the BIA. In 1956, as he prepared to present a keynote address on “Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment,” Reifel was serving as the Area Director of the Aberdeen Reservation and would, as stated above, serve in the US House of Representatives from 1959 to 1969. Reifel’s congressional legacy was unique in a variety of ways. Though several individuals with Native American ancestry served in the House and Senate prior to Reifel’s election, much of the American public was failed to recognize such a fact. As such, at the time of Reifel’s election, newspapers declared Reifel to be the first Native American to serve in Congress. He was the first member of the Sioux Nation to serve in Congress and was the only Native American to serve in either the House or Senate throughout the 1960s. As suggested by Reifel’s contemporaries from both sides of the political aisle, Reifel’s legislative persona privileged collegiality, friendship, and bipartisan cooperation.¹⁸⁶ Such success demanded navigating many complexities and paradoxes. As a conservative Republican who helped to organize for the Goldwater Presidential campaign in 1964,¹⁸⁷ Reifel was able to court

¹⁸⁵ Jerry D. Stubben, *Native Americans and Political Participation* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 172.

¹⁸⁶ For an example of a time in which Reifel’s friendship crossed party lines, see, John Kenneth Galbraith, *A Life in Our Times* (New York: Houton Mifflin, 1981), 169-170.

¹⁸⁷ Stubben, *Native Americans and Political Representation*, 175.

Native American and Euramerican votes alike.¹⁸⁸ While his political allegiances were astute, Reifel was nonetheless “instrumental in securing passage of legislation that created the National Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities,” and also cast votes in favor of several progressive issues such as the Civil Rights Act of 1966.¹⁸⁹ A staunch advocate of Native American issues, as Stubben explains, Reifel “believed that the key plight of Indian people lay in educational programs enrolling Indian and non-Indian students together in modern progressive facilities.”¹⁹⁰ Such a record is especially significant when contextualized by the actions of the Republican Party of the 1960s, a time during which, according to Gerald Alexander, conservatives courted support from white voters “by resisting school desegregation and busing, and then crafting an agenda of ostensibly race-neutral but in fact substantially racialized issues such as law and order, welfare reform, tax limitation, and, more recently, opposition to immigration.”¹⁹¹ That Reifel could maintain a relatively progressive voting record amid such an atmosphere suggests a high degree of political sophistication and competency as an intercultural rhetorician.

In sum, Reifel’s rhetorical legacy is marked by his unheralded trajectory throughout the administrative channels of the US Federal Government. Growing up as the local schoolteacher’s son, Reifel was one of the few Native Americans to earn a

¹⁸⁸ Trahant, “Seeking Representation,” 30.

¹⁸⁹ Stubben, *Native Americans and Political Representation*, 174.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Gerald Alexander, “The Fog of Political War: Predicting the Future Course of Conservatism,” *Journal of Policy History* 26, no. 1 (2014), 121.

college degree, and operated as a trusted and effective liaison between the BIA and the Lakota people. As a member of the Armed Services, Reifel climbed the ranks after gaining recognition for his service in France and Germany and, upon returning to the US, Reifel earned the scholarship support needed to hone his skills as a social scientist, and return to the BIA with a doctorate from Harvard. Such a unique pathway was trekked in accordance with his rhetorical prowess, specifically his keen ability to translate messages across linguistic, cultural, and political barriers. Such agency allowed for the kind of ethos that could cultivate and maintain intercultural friendships that transcended ideological difference. While some of his career had not yet taken form as Reifel stepped to the podium in 1956, it was nonetheless in germ. With this in mind, I now turn to the nexus of theoretical underpinnings that I argue are germane to Reifel's excellence as an intercultural rhetor.

Theories of Intercultural Rhetoric

In simple terms, *intercultural rhetoric* regards the symbolic inducement of cooperation amongst potentially discordant, but not inherently oppositional, cultural groups. From a more Aristotelian perspective, one in which *rhetoric* is enacted by utilizing *the available means of persuasion*, intercultural rhetoric can be interpreted as a practice in which a rhetor uses persuasive appeals to facilitate communication amongst different cultural groups. While a wide-range of definitions for *culture* exists, in this analysis I would like to draw on definitions highlighting topographical aspects of culture, definitions describing culture as spatially oriented because such understandings illuminate intercultural communication as something one must enter. Such a definition

coheres with insights from scholars of “rhetorical culture,” most notably Thomas Farrell for whom “culture offers to those who live in it symbols and families of practices that permit ongoing performances of meaning and value.”¹⁹² While cultural spaces are always becoming and evolving to meet the exigencies of a given situation, culture provides the ratios needed to maintain consistency and function according to normative mores. Hence, though cultural space is stabilizing, such stability provides the consistency and comfort needed to heighten one’s inventive capabilities. Alternatively, the cultural domain of spaces deemed “foreign” are marked as inherently incongruent and therefore potentially uncomfortable, a discombobulating framework that can effectively stymie rhetorical prowess. Such a ratio makes intercultural competency across cultural spaces difficult to develop.

The difficulty of engaging in the cultural spaces of others is not lost on Aimee Carrillo Rowe, an intercultural communication scholar who calls for the creation of a third space in which both cultures can prosper via a “full-bodied immersion into the space of the inter.”¹⁹³ To elaborate on Rowe’s paradigm, I now outline two rhetorical approaches for “entering ‘the inter.’” First, rhetors can draw upon the ideographic strength afforded to notions of *family* in order to provide a narrative regarding the cultural entelechy of the other.¹⁹⁴ Second, rhetors can negotiate a constellation of factors at work

¹⁹² Thomas B. Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 277.

¹⁹³ Aimee Carrillo Rowe, “Entering the Inter: Power Lines in Intercultural Communication,” In *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, Thomas K. Nakayama and R. T. Halualani, eds. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 14.

¹⁹⁴ Tina M. Harris and Alberto González, “Introduction,” in *Mediating Cultures: Parenting in Intercultural Contexts* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 38.

within traditional rhetorical genres in order to locate and expand the implicit intercultural spaces.

First, the term *family*, according to Tina M. Harris and Alberto González, is “a word that is invested with profound social meaning,” rhetorical power capable of shaping both “ordinary conversations about our closest relationships” as well as “public policy and political deliberations.”¹⁹⁵ One source of the power invoked and evoked by notions of family relates to the family’s important role in *cultural identity development*. This term, when understood in relationship to the rhetorical strength of *family*, identifies a process whereby family members, especially parents, coach their children’s behavior “through the ever-growing blend of cultural meanings and practices.”¹⁹⁶ As a form of cultural conditioning, the familial coaching of cultural identity provides individuals with a formative experience that helps them to transition from adolescence into adulthood. Undergirding this transition is the transformation of an individual’s relationship to his or her parents as symbols of authority to an individual’s relationship to social symbols of authority. Ultimately, as Harris and González contend, throughout one’s adult life, their childhood experiences function as important loci of identity development because childhood is a time in which “identities transition from being fluid to static more so than their parents’, as they evolve as individuals functioning both within the family unit and in society.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 38.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 27.

In Aristotelian parlance, a family provides an *entelechy*, a formal understanding of the acts embodied in a term. The entelechy of a term provides a framework for classifying activity, an image of perfection that goads future behavior. As Kenneth Burke explains, entelechy “is the title for the fact that the seed ‘implicitly contains’ a future conforming to its nature, if the external conditions necessary to such unfolding and fulfillment occur in the right order.”¹⁹⁸ As the child’s earliest authority-symbols, parents shape the child’s imagistic understanding of symbolic action, creating a symbolic framework for understanding relationships between different people. There is, however, one caveat: “The child necessarily develops without much awareness” of the complexities of socialization.¹⁹⁹ Such understanding emerges later in life as the individual, facing a moment in which she or he must adjust his or her *entelechi*al frame in order to account for inconsistencies between the prescribed approach toward cultural “perfection,” and the inevitably imperfect results.

Second, rhetors can use culture to negotiate the formal expectations audiences have for a specific genre of public address. Given the likelihood that Reifel’s address, “To Be or to Become,” functioned as a banquet speech for the audience, it is important to begin by noting the implicit intercultural norms associated with after-dinner speaking. Historically situated, after-dinner speaking, according to Bower Aly, has long been included within the American rhetorical tradition.²⁰⁰ While traditional histories of the

¹⁹⁸ Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 246.

¹⁹⁹ Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 255.

²⁰⁰ Aly, “The History of American Public Address as a Research Field,” 310.

American oratorical tradition may incline toward culturally homogenous depictions of rhetoric in the United States, upon closer inspection, opportunity for intercultural communication appears implicitly interwoven within the fabric of US oratory and after-dinner speaking. Following the Revolutionary War, the US was in dire need of a democratic identity.²⁰¹ Situated in tandem with the creation of literary and debating societies, after-dinner speaking (ADS), or banquet oratory, became a celebratory ritual intended to provide a comic posture of cooperation to a potentially tragic engagement in competitive debate. Such a posture enabled parodic rhetoric. As Robert Hariman explains, parody is a key to allowing political discourse to function because parody provides a “public formalization of language beside itself puts social conventions on display for collective reflection.”²⁰²

In addition to the hosting of critically parodic forms, ADS also maintained the intercultural spaces afforded to dinner rituals in the colonial period. According to Donna R. Gabaccia, “Colonial America provides an excellent starting place for a study of multi-ethnic American eating and its relationship to commerce and identity.”²⁰³ The exportation of “the curious plants of the Americas—potatoes, corn, tomatoes, peppers, and peanuts—to Europe, Africa, and Asia” was central to the economic livelihood driving the experience of people in the New World and fostered “an era of rapid dietary change.”²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers*, 1.

²⁰² Hariman, “Political Parody and Public Culture,” 252.

²⁰³ Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 12.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

Coupled with the intercultural realities of available foodways is the psychological importance of cuisine within the development of intercultural subjectivities. As Kima Cargill suggests, “Cuisine, in its true sense, is a set of foods eaten by a group of people who care about it, have opinions of it, have common social roots, and comprise a community.”²⁰⁵ Such experiences are rooted in childhood when “family time and object-relatedness largely occur over the dinner table. Relationships with more distant family members usually take place over holidays, reunions, and family gatherings, all of which center around the table.”²⁰⁶ Such experiences shape identity and culture amidst the expressions of food as a maker of ritual.

As the comic rejoinder within the food ritual, ADS was a uniquely intercultural space for American orators. Even if such aspects were unacknowledged, ADS provided speakers an opportunity to access the subjective experiences individuals attained during childhood via “multi-ethnic American eating,”²⁰⁷ and ultimately, after-dinner speaking follows in step with the traditions occurring after a season of deliberative discourse within “the bustling multi-racial, multi-ethnic, garrulous young United States of America.”²⁰⁸

In sum, barriers to intercultural communication can arise when individuals are dislocated from material and symbolic frameworks identifying familiar cultural spaces. In

²⁰⁵ Kima Cargill, “Desire, Ritual, Cuisine,” *Psychoanalytic Review* 94, no. 2 (April 2007), 319.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 344.

²⁰⁷ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 12.

²⁰⁸ Goodnight, “The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres” 258.

order to “cross power lines” and “enter ‘the inter’” of intercultural communication, two rhetorical approaches drawing upon the ideographic power of “family” and the use of culture to negotiate traditional genres of rhetoric can function to create moments of togetherness and cooperation in the face of obverse expectations from audience members. Speeches connected to the consumption of food, in particular, allow rhetors to engage within cultural spaces associated with “the more important facets of an individual's subjective terrain and mediator of experience.”²⁰⁹ Hence, within the banqueting tradition of US oratorical culture exists the possibility for intercultural rhetorical activity. In the next section, I develop a model for engaging in such activity by providing a close reading of Reifel’s address, “To Be or To Become?”

“To Be or To Become?: Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment”

The Hamletic allusion entitled in Ben Reifel’s address on “Cultural Factors in Social Adjustment” is telling, as is the opening question that frames the entire discourse: “Why is it that many Indian Americans are not fitting into the life of this country?” Such a question is baffling for Reifel because he, like everyone in the room, knows of people “who have come to this country from foreign lands with little if any formal education, often without friends or even acquaintances, and who ‘make good.’” Frustrated by missed opportunities, Reifel argues that the best approach to solving the problem is by way of thoughtful and methodological inquiry via the social sciences. Through such methods, Reifel concludes, the problem can be seen as one related to Native Americans’ inability to acculturate in accordance with American standards of time, work, and saving. While

²⁰⁹ Cargill, “Desire, Ritual, Cuisine,” 322.

Reifel's posing of questions that identify problems within American society is likely to challenge the veil of invisibility toward such problems inherent in Euramerican ideology, he nonetheless opens with a framework for understanding such problems that emphasizes the cultural deficiency of the Other and champions the tools of social sciences. In so doing, Reifel alleviates the general anxieties of the question by privileging an orientation to the problem and solution capable of bolstering specific ideological adherences held by audience members whose presence within the cultural space of the conference promotes a coherent identity.

While the opening content and framing of the problem provided specific forms likely to appeal to potentially apprehensive Euramerican audience members, appeals toward American Indian audience members demanded the observation of general forms connecting opening and closing remarks. Formally, the speech is repetitive in accordance with the macro-tropic approach of word bundling, a Native American rhetorical form in which points are reiterated with slight variances each time marking some transformation. According to Mareike Neuhaus, there is a "trickster" element to the approach as the "relational word bundle is an either/and, a structure that only superficially points to a binary (creating meaning vs. displacing meaning), thus putting the emphasis not on what is signified but how."²¹⁰ Reifel bundles two sets of words explicitly: the identity of "time, work, and savings" as well as the research question, "why?" In describing each of the "failures" to adhere to standards of time, work, or savings culminate in the conclusion that such standards are inferior to the historic ways of the Native American world prior to

²¹⁰ Mareike Neuhaus, "Indigenous Rhetorics and Kinship: Toward a Rhetoric of Relational Word Bundles," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 33, no. 1 (2013), 134.

the emergence of Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrims. For example, being future-oriented and time-conscious, Reifel explains, is a byproduct of the standardization of labor, a strategy intended to coordinate a massive approach to production, one that is only now necessary since North America has grown to an unsustainable population level. Moreover, “hard work” as a Euramerican value is, in the final analysis, interpreted as a holdover from medieval feudalism in western Europe, hardly the badge of prestige suggested in the opening description.

In line with the trickster word bundle, Reifel identifies comparisons that provide an incongruity that increasingly represents the opposite realizations presented in the initial iteration. For example, Reifel seems to open by indicting Native Americans as deficient. By the end of the speech however, he shifts the nature of the question: “when one sits down and analyzes the situation, as I have attempted to do, the wonder of our time is not that social adjustment of Indian Americans have been slow but that so many have found it possible to fit into the American social system in so short a time?”

The use of humor and comedy help Reifel to implement such a peripety. As explained by Hariman, the parodic forms of rhetoric serve to facilitate a critical doubling of a serious political ritual. Such a doubling provides the distance needed to engage with this assumed depiction of normative discursive behavior and therefore can invite symbolic adjustments and mediations.²¹¹ Such a strategy helps provide Reifel with moments in which he can transform some of the word bundles that he returns to during each transitional moment in the speech. For example, after presenting the introduction of

²¹¹ Hariman, “Political Parody and Public Culture,” 251-260.

the address, Reifel brings up the historical legacy of the Pilgrims who, in 1620, ushered in a new relationship between the Native Americans and the western world.

I refer to that date as a benchmark for social change because about that time there were initiated important parts of American way of life; incidentally some punster remarked that the Pilgrims on reaching the shores of this country fell first upon their knees and then upon the aborigines.

Later in the speech, Reifel refers to the future-orientation of attitudes toward time in a way that suggests that acculturated Native Americans such as he were in fact so misaligned by the future-oriented perspective that they were looking at their “watches, not to see what time it is, but to check to see what time it isn’t yet!” Such a phenomena was made all the more worse by the increasing mechanization of time via new technology. “And in our atomic age,” Reifel concluded, “we find that even the segmentation of this phenomenon we call time in this degree is not small enough.”

Hence, in a recent development atomic scientists, he read, had recently begun using the term *jiffy*:

a jiffy being the length of time it takes an object moving at the speed of light to travel a distance of one centimeter! When we think of light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second and a centimeter as being a little less than one-half of an inch, we can get some slight hint of the refinement of time in our life today.

In sum, via the process of parodic word doubling, Reifel was able to use this word-bundle approach to challenge the norms of culture while nonetheless suggesting the need for social adjustment to the Native American audience of educators. Such a practice was long embraced by Native Americans via trickster storytelling as well as Euramericans via after-dinner speaking. One of the notable aspects of Reifel’s approach was that he managed to cultivate intercultural rhetoric by combining the two areas, embracing the

implicitly intercultural nature of a form explicitly embedded in the American rhetorical tradition.

Third, the negotiation of identity occurs in relationship to reflections on family. In attempting to change the perspective of a given audience, a rhetor is in effect attempting to encourage a ritual rebirth. Like other rituals, this process provides a solemnizing of a given change. The banquet speech seems to be a particularly fecund format for such change because of its affective nature as a vehicle for generating the kind of affective responses of laughter that can create enhanced consubstantiation amongst the audience. Such consummatory workings are no doubt beneficial for an individual attempting to coalesce communal cooperation around a given topic, such as ideas about time. According to Kenneth Burke, the process of ritual rebirth demands (1) the frustration of present modes of behavior, (2) symbolic resurgence, and (3) ritual rebirth.²¹²

First, returning to Reifel's address, it is easy to see the suggestion of frustration associated with modern understandings of the Native American situation. The repeated question asking "why" occurs over and over: "Why can't more of the first Americans do the same thing," Reifel begins only to repeat shortly after, "Why must this be so? 'Why?' one keeps asking himself." Such struggling to find a new perspective suggests that the speaker has obtained a level of dissonance regarding the status quo. While Reifel continually reassures his audience that "With persons of Indian descent this problem is not one they have to face," the mere suggestion of a rule instigates audience members to consider moments during which they broke from the ideal form and acted in accordance with the opposite of the rule. In cultivating a sense of anxiety regarding the need to

²¹² Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 317-318.

transform cultural expectations, Reifel has begun the process of inducing a need for a new perspective, a need for rebirth.

Second, Reifel distinctly draws upon his own intercultural family in order to illuminate his point. He suggests that his mother was habituated to the practices of hard work and gentleness in a way which were exploited by his hard-working father.

My mother was a full-blood Sioux. She spoke very little English. Her formal schooling, as far as the three R's go, was equal to about the first grade. My father was first-generation German. Mother, like all Indian women of the time, was reared to be gentle, to be content with tedious tasks, to do with little in the way of physical comforts, and to suffer long periods of isolation when required. She made an ideal mate for my hard-working father.

If we recall that in preceding paragraphs, Reifel suggests that “Habituation to hard work, include[ed] drudgery for over a period of years,” one can begin to see a dichotomy emerge in which the Native American failure to acquiesce to Euramerican culture is represented by Reifel’s mother while the first-generation American success in attaining the American dream (as mentioned in the opening paragraph) represents his “hard-working father.” With this understanding of Reifel’s family at the fore, the audience can see a variety of Reifel’s references in a new light. For example, Reifel provides a number of implicit references to his parents found throughout the speech as he compares the success of first-generation immigrants to Native Americans. While Native Americans have been held back, “we know persons who have come to this country from foreign lands with little if any formal education, often without friends or even acquaintances, and who ‘make good.’” Such success came to his “first-generation German” father whose habituation to hard work, Reifel implied, was inherited “during the period of serfdom, when whole families for generations toiled at hard, tedious, backbreaking tasks in the manors of the lords during the Middle Ages.” While his father’s ancestry was forced into

slavery, his mother's ancestors resisted slavery because the men of the tribe protected the women in the tribe in lieu of engaging in the hard work performed by Native American women. As Reifel explains, Native American men, alternatively, were habituated in a way that forbid "the luxury of doing these jobs that came to be regarded as 'women's work'" because Native American men

had an equally important role to perform. They had to keep themselves ever ready to guard their camps against the possible attack of enemy tribes and be prepared to yield up their lives if that supreme sacrifice was necessary to the accomplishment of the job. Theirs was the more rigorous task of hunting so that the people would have food, clothing, and shelter. If the men did otherwise, their people would either become slaves or perish.

In the final analysis, suggests that while habituating to Euramerican ideas of time, work, and savings may be tedious, such actions are necessary for the defense of Native American culture and harmony in (mother) nature, rather than dominance over (mother) nature. In the traditional Native American approach, "Nature's bounty did not require *her* modification for survival for this handful of humans. However, if this same area is to continue to support 200 million people at the highest level of living known to man, the society that populates it has to conquer nature." Hence, through a process of word bundling and references to his bicultural familial development, Reifel translates the Native American situation as dichotomous with that of the European immigrant. This process of symbolic resurgence allows the audience to understand Reifel's ultimate call: to habituate to Euramerican notions of time, work, and savings which, while they may be tedious, ultimately provide a defense of Native American "mother" against the European immigrant "father" or, as Reifel puts it, in defense of the Native American tradition of "harmony in [mother] nature," rather than the American way of "dominance over [mother] nature." In the traditional Native American approach, "Nature's bounty did not

require *her* modification for survival for this handful of humans. However, if this same area is to continue to support 200 million people at the highest level of living known to man, the society that populates it has to conquer nature.”

Finally, Reifel provides an image in which Native American men are habituated to time, work, and savings as a means of embracing and maintaining their mythical role of protecting Native American women. The allusions to his mother are clearest at this point of the speech. Though he does not say the name of his mother (Lucy Burning Breast), in the speech directly, he does bring in her name at a crucial turning point in which he suggests that Native Americans can, through hard work, replace the increasingly pacified first or second-generation American and regenerate the way of life in America by infusing it with “[a] deep inner spirituality that has come across the ages still burns in his breast, but dimly.” The spirit of Reifel’s mother, the woman whose Native American traditions made her the “ideal mate for my hard-working father,” a “first-generation German” whose habituation to hard work, Reifel implied, was inherited “during the period of serfdom, when whole families for generations toiled at hard, tedious, backbreaking tasks in the manors of the lords during the Middle Ages.” Fittingly, before Reifel provides his conclusion, he once again reiterates the idea that “we are not talking about the many Indian Americans who are governed by time schedules, habits of work, and saving. I don’t think we need to worry about any such type of person even though he or she may have less than a first-grade level of formal schooling.”

Conclusion

In this paper, I investigated the intercultural rhetoric of Ben Reifel, a Brule Sioux Native American who served as a South Dakota Representative in the United States Congress throughout the 1960s. While Reifel's historical legacy alone warrants investigation, in this essay I focused my attention on his rhetorical legacy as demonstrated within the speech, "To Be or To Become." As a case study, Reifel's address provides a model for approaching ADS as a means of engaging in crosscultural or intercultural rhetoric by illuminating responses to the research questions orienting this study. First, the dissertation asks: Within mainstream and vernacular discourses of the era, how did the rhetorical norms of ADS function as a topic of cultural politics?

In the banquet address, Reifel introduces a controversial proposition before an intercultural audience interested in both Euroamerican and American Indian perspectives. Reifel's opening remarks signal an allegiance to the Euroamerican perspective by ambiguously focusing blame on American Indians for their present troubles (employing a "cultural deficiency" framework). Reifel organizes such points in accordance with the formal proprieties of ADS and, along with other factors such as Reifel's bicultural heritage and institutional ethos as an expert in the social sciences, he immediately appeals to the Euroamerican audience. For audience members who associate the formal qualities of "traditional ADS" with Euroamerican ideology, Reifel's ADS functioned as *pastiche* because Reifel overtly imitated the dominant rhetorical practice as a means of implicitly subverting systems of dominance. While Reifel's formal adherence meets the standards of ADS, Reifel's meaning expands beyond what audience members might have expected from traditional ADS.

In order to maintain his ethos with Native American audience members, Reifel signified a *trickster* persona, thereby summoning audience members familiar with the cultural rhetorics of the *heyoka* to watch for nuance beneath the surface of his message. In order to develop an understanding of the problems facing American Indian society, Reifel starts with a “cultural deficiency” model and then unpacks the situation through a series of “word bundles,” a traditional Native American schema for arrangement that continually circles back to a starting point unveiling new perspectives each time. As Reifel returns to the American Indian situation with new insights, he alleviates Euroamerican anxieties by reiterating the generic structure of ADS. Specifically, Reifel employs humor in order to pair foreign ideas with familiar forms. Humor has the added benefit of affective resolution, inevitably helping audience members to digest new insights and identify with the speaker.

As the speech continues, the contradictions between the opening orientation and the realizations discovered along the way mount. At the climax of the speech, Reifel returns to the opening word bundle and, instead of alleviating the contradiction through humor, Reifel regresses to a familial anecdote. Following this example, Reifel invokes a *peripety*, or reversal of his main idea. Using the methods of social science and providing a translation across cultural difference allows Reifel to display a realization about the Native American situation. Such a reversal functions as *cultural syncretism*, a subversive repositioning of dominant rhetoric in order to create space for belonging accessible to intercultural groups. In sum, as Reifel traverses through the ADS he dialectically expands upon his opening position, using the tools of “social science” to translate American

Indian culture and relying on humor as a mechanism for allowing the audience to digest new revelations about the realities facing Native Americans.

Such findings contribute to the literature in two ways. First, beginning with Randall A. Lake, communication scholars have continually worked to provide insight regarding Native American rhetoric as oriented by a consummatory *telos*. Like many Native American protest rhetors, Reifel also strived for economic self-determination and cultural survival. Moreover, as seen in the speech above, Reifel sought to disrupt the dominant narratives regarding Native American as related to Christopher Columbus and the Mayflower Pilgrims. While Reifel's rhetorical prowess was undoubtedly administratively oriented, he nonetheless provided alternative routes for improving the lives of Native Americans. Such observations are not meant to enshrine Reifel or place his rhetorical strategies above the strategies employed by members of the American Indian Movement (the focus of Lake's investigation). Findings do, however, reaffirm Gerard Hauser's suggestion that the thin vernacular discourse of human rights rhetoric (the administrative rhetoric of institutional voices forced to negotiate a win-win situation with individuals and institutions violating human rights) works in tandem with thick moral vernacular discourse of human rights rhetoric (engaged in by the sufferers of human rights abuses for consummatory purposes).²¹³ While negotiation is an ideal approach to avoiding zero-sum conflict, it is nonetheless a strategy that privileges those with power. Such relationships are embedded in the character of Reifel, a person known for maintaining intercultural camaraderie amongst his diversely-committed Native

²¹³ Gerard A. Hauser, "The Moral Vernacular of Human Rights Discourse," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 41, no. 4 (2008): 440-466.

American constituents, as well as his colleagues on Capitol Hill who could be found on both sides of the aisle. By maintaining intercultural friendships and cultivating collegiality across institutional and cultural borders, Reifel was able to utilize the consummatory power generated through thick moral vernacular discourse and translate such energy into negotiations for Native American education, agriculture, and economic self-dependence.

Second, this research contributes to studies of public address and theories of intercultural identity development. In Reifel's case, his unique positionality provided him with the possibility to realign audience presuppositions. Throughout his speech to the North Dakota educator's convention, Reifel peeled back the dominant frame of his pretext by delving into his historical narrative and reimagining moments in which his success was the product of his own bicultural socialization. While he reminds his audience that he could just as easily be seen as "second generation German American," Reifel embraces this alternate identity, not as innately ideal, but rather as the byproduct of an ironic fortune that stems from the work ethic ingrained in the ancestry of Europeans once confined to the serfdom inherent within the medieval feudal system. Ordained with the trickster persona, such Reifel pondered upon such recollections innocently as if ignorant of the implications, a strategy for gaining pliancy. While entelechial rituals in which the speaker engages in symbolic resurgence certainly demand a light touch, they should not be utilized lightly. Within a given ritual, a speaker such as Reifel will only be able to attain mutual transformation to the extent that he himself is prepared to reconfigure the autistic understandings of his childhood in concordance with the audience's own providential subjectivities. If we can believe the wide-array of laudations

provided to Reifel within the annals of history, then perhaps it is best to surmise that Reifel's cultivation of ethos and goodwill, coupled with his uncanny knack for reflexivity, enabled him to broach the rhetoric of translation with eloquence.

Though Reifel provides different routes for reaching identification with his Euroamerican and American Indian audience members, in achieving identification he provides material for bridging the ideological divides among his audience: no matter how they differ with each other, they consubstantial in that they all identify with Reifel. As such, Reifel provides a model for crosscultural and intercultural rhetoric, one that locates implicit intercultural spaces within traditional discursive forms. Reifel coupled traditional Native American strategies, such as the use of trickster word groupings, with a symbolically regressive framing of his bicultural identity development. In doing so, Reifel reached various audience members by appealing to different interests throughout different moments in the speech, relying on cultural expectations and orientations to oratory to facilitate a message about the self-determinative solution to the problems of American Indian communities.

CHAPTER V. THE WESTERN ROUND TABLE ON MODERN ART

Chapters two and three show ADS as an overtly epideictic genre that, during the early twentieth-century, functioned as an object of public discourse, ultimately generating cultural rhetorics about the social norms of US public address. Chapter four shifted to a case study of a bicultural speaker who coupled the traditional norms of ADS with the vernacular appeals of American Indian trickster rhetoric in order to create intercultural spaces in which audience members of Euroamerican and Native American descent could find common ground and deliberate the future of Native American education. Though differently approached, each of the preceding chapters focuses on rhetorical artifacts or texts explicitly (re)presenting after-dinner speeches. While such speeches adhere to the generic formalities of epideictic oratory, ADS nonetheless fosters deliberation through the vernacular manipulation of epideictic form (*e.g.*, Ben Reifel’s “To Be or To Become”) or through the cultural rhetorics employed within public discourse and standardized by the cultural and formal proprieties of ADS. This chapter shifts to an analysis of the way ADS functions implicitly within acts of deliberative rhetoric. Specifically, I analyze the Western Round Table on Modern Art in order to understand how the expectations for ADS nuanced a heated deliberation about art and criticism in productive and disruptive ways.

While the WRTMA contains a wealth of insight, this chapter focuses on the cleavage between artist and critic discussed throughout the series of round table discussions. Within this controversy, interlocutors from different cultures, disciplines, and professions (both artists and critics) successfully propounded complex and insightful commentary, but nonetheless failed in two ways. First, in responding to public

deliberation on the topic, the WRTMA attempted to generate unifying principles upon which artists and critics alike could agree. By the end of the round table, however, interlocutors failed to reach such conclusions. Second, when before a public audience of art patrons, or reviewed within public discourse, the WRTMA provided a deliberative display that lurched between discordance and dullness and seemingly failed to win the favor of audiences. Such failures, I argue, stemmed from an incongruence between the formal expectations of the audience (cued by the historical tradition of ADS to expect an epideictic conclusion to the controversy) and the deliberative goals of the interlocutors. Through a close reading of the discussions and the contextualizing discourse, I highlight this incongruence and identify ways in which the interlocutors drew upon the generic hybridity of ADS as a means of bridging perspectives.

Introduction

In post-War America, public discourse maintained a heated deliberation about modern art, a catchall term for various shades of abstract expressionistic artwork. A pivotal year for the debate was 1948, and the attack came from institutional and popular voices alike. In response to an atmosphere that saw the Boston Institute of Modern Art “denounc[e] ‘modern art’ as synonymous with unintelligibility, exploitation, double-talk and chicanery,”²¹⁴ public voices weighed in on the debate. As Aline B. Louchheim (Saarinen), associate art critic for the *New York Times*, noted, it was “the year of sharp

²¹⁴ The Institute changed from the Boston Institute of Modern Art to the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art. See, Louchheim, “Modern Art: Attack and Defense,” 12.; “Modern Art Loses Face in Boston as Institute Changes Its Name,” *New York Times* (February 17, 1948): 23.

controversy and loud argument about modern art,” an agon in which “the attackers far outnumbered the defenders.”²¹⁵ Critical assessments of modern art gained traction in public discourse. For example, in the proceedings of a lengthy exposé in *Life Magazine*, the results of a Round Table on modern art displayed the widespread disagreement critical experts faced. The standards of appreciation and criticism were obscure to many and frustration erupted. As 1948 ended, the season for debating modern art continued and, in the face of roaring discussion, interlocutors hoped that “[m]aybe in 1949 detached theory and noisy argument will resolve into investigations and clarification and specific discussion.”²¹⁶

In 1949, the San Francisco Art Association, along with Douglas MacAgy, the Director of the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), responded to the call by organizing the Western Round Table on Modern Art (WRTMA). Held in early April, the three-day symposium brought together a range of critics and artists for a series of round table discussions about issues regarding modern art. *Look Magazine* reported on the proceedings, and the SFAI recorded the round table sessions for later publication. As MacAgy wrote, “The object of the Round Table was to bring a representation of the best informed opinion of the time to bear on questions about art today.”²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Aline B. Louchheim, “‘Modern Art’: Attack and Defense,” *New York Times* (December 26, 1948), 12.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

²¹⁷ Douglas MacAgy, “Introduction,” in *Abstract of Proceedings: The Western Round Table of Modern Art*, D. MacAgy, ed., par. 1 (San Francisco: San Francisco Art Association, 1949): <http://www.ubu.com/historical/wrtma/>

To meet such an objective, MacAgy invited globally renowned experts from across the US and Europe. George Boas (1891-1980) moderated the proceedings. A philosopher and historian from Johns Hopkins University, Boas also served to identify modern art confiscated by Nazi Germany during World War II, and subsequently wrote extensively on the history of art.²¹⁸ The Round Table arranged participants into two camps, the artist and the critic. Artists included the French Dadaist, Marcel Duchamp (1867-1968), the American cubist painter Mark Tobey (1890-1976), the French composer Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), and the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). With the exception of Gregory Bateson (1908-1973), the British anthropologist, then well known for his investigations of artistic rituals in the tribal societies of New Guinea and Bali, the critics were all American. The critics included at the round table arrived from popular and academic spheres. Critics included Andrew C. Ritchie (1907-1978), an art historian and Director of the Painting and Sculpture Department at the Museum of Modern Art, Robert Goldwater (1908-1973), an art critic known for having authored the first dissertation on the subject of modern art, Alfred Frankenstein (1906-1981), the music critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and Kenneth Burke (1897-1993), the American literary critic then perhaps best known for his highly acclaimed book, *A Grammar of Motives*.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ At the time of the Round Table, Boas was on sabbatical from Johns Hopkins University. For a review of Boas's career, see, Victor Lowe, Maurice Mandelbaum, and Kingsley Price, "C. Memorial Minutes, George Boas," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 53, no. 5 (May 1980): 581-582.

²¹⁹ For more on participants, see David R. Beasley, *Douglas MacAgy and the Foundations of Modern Art Curatorship* (Buffalo: Davus Publishing, 1998): 36; Noel G. Charlton, *Understanding Gregory Bateson: Mind, Beauty, and the Sacred Earth* (New York: SUNY Press, 2008): 85; John Rockwell, "Alfred Frankenstein, Longtime Music

In the following chapter, I analyze the WRTMA in search of the implicit function of after-dinner speaking by paying close attention to the rhetorical discourse of one participant, Kenneth Burke. To accomplish this goal, I open with a contextual analysis of the controversy and a review of Burke's position on modern art. Second, I outline a critical framework and provide a contextualized close reading of the WRTMA. Third, I draw upon theoretical works related to Burke's performativity and rhetorical form in order to articulate the conclusions about the deliberative rhetorical strategies employed by Burke throughout the course of the Round Table. Specifically, I argue that ADS performs a unifying function that can both promote and disrupt the aims of the deliberative body. On one hand, the formal expectations of ADS (such as the expectation for public brevity, the use of humor to disavow claims or pacify opposition, and propensity for othering through humor) each function as a vehicle for deliberative estrangement. On the other hand, the basic functions of ADS can also provide inroads toward overcoming the volatile tendencies of discordant deliberation over matters of culture.

Kenneth Burke, Communication, and the Rhetoric of Art

In the spirit of keeping everything "in movement, in development;" and using everything "for all it's worth, and sometimes maybe more,"²²⁰ Burkean scholars have

Critic and Authority on Art," *New York Times* (June 24, 1981): B4; David L. Shirey, "Robert Goldwater, Critic, Dies; Led Museum of Primitive Art," *New York Times* (March 27, 1973); Richard H. Thames, "Nature's Physician: The Metabiology of Kenneth Burke," in *Kenneth Burke and the 21st Century*, Bernard L. Brock, ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999): 19-34.

²²⁰ This is a description provided by Kenneth Burke's friend, the literary critic and poet, Howard Nemerov. See Howard Nemerov, "Everything, Preferably All at Once:

developed an impressive historiographical rendering and critical analysis of the political situations and deliberative contexts informing the works of Kenneth Burke.²²¹ The tradition of historically contextualizing Burke's Dramatism is well founded.²²² As such, examining extra textual documents and situated deliberations helps scholars to understand the rhetorical theory Burke articulates while simultaneously reanimating discussions of the performativity and rhetorical form Burke enacted.²²³ As Hayden White suggests, Burke's work maintains an intimately autobiographical slant,²²⁴ a

Coming to Terms with Kenneth Burke," in *A Howard Nemerov Reader* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 245.

²²¹ See, for example, M. Elizabeth Weiser, *Burke, War, Words: Rhetoricizing Dramatism* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008). The range and advantages of a slant that Barry Brummett and Anna M. Young call "the Extra-Textual Burke" is addressed by numerous scholars. For example, recent monographs include Bryan Crable, *Ralph Ellison and Kenneth Burke: At the Roots of the Racial Divide* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012); Debra Hawhee, *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009); Weiser, *Burke, War, Words*; Jack Selzer and Robert Wess, eds. *Kenneth Burke and His Circles* (South Bend: Parlor Press, 2008); Ann George and Jack Selzer, *Kenneth Burke in the 1930s* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). See also Barry Brummett and Anna M. Young, "Some Uses of Burke in Communication Studies," *KB Journal* 2, no. 2 (2006): <http://kbjournal.org/communication>

²²² In addition to his prolific correspondence, Burke himself included autobiographical anecdotes, what he once called "a hypothetical case history, built approximately, or roughly, around my own experience through several decades." See, Kenneth Burke, "Art – and the First Rough Draft of Living," *Modern Age* 8, no. 2 (1964), 155.

²²³ See, for example, Andrew King, "Kenneth Burke as Teacher: Pedagogy, Materialism, and Power," in Peter M. Smudde, ed. *Humanistic Critique of Education: Teaching and Learning as Symbolic Action* (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2010), 43-45; Barton R. Horvath, "The Burke I Knew," *KB Journal* 7, no. 2 (2011): <http://kbjournal.org/Horvath>; Richard B. Gregg, "Kenneth Burke's Prolegomena to the Study of the Rhetoric of Form," *Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (Fall 1978), 3-13.

²²⁴ Hayden V. White, "Preface," in Hayden V. White and Margaret Brose, eds., *Representing Kenneth Burke* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), i-vii.

perspective capable of inviting readers into the parlor of characters, circumstances, and commonplaces animating Burke's corpus of theoretical, critical, and poetic writings. In this section, I start by contextualizing the deliberation and unfold Burke's position on modern art as related to the discourse of the time. Finally, I provide a dramatic framework for analyzing Burke's role in the WRTMA.

US Art Patronage and Public Deliberation

During the 1940s, the US reputation for visual arts growing, rising to surpass the statuses of European nations such as France. While the level of US art patronage was high, as was the market for artistic productions in the US, the sophistication of consumers lagged behind that of international audiences and, in general, the US public struggled with the popularity of abstract expressionism. As a variety of art historians argue, the growth of art appreciation and patronage within the US relied, in part, on governmental support for the arts. Specifically, in the US, the public culture of art patronage emerged amidst Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal efforts to provide work to a multitude of artists, writers, photographers, and dramatists. Such support was not without tension and, even during the Great Depression, the governmental support of art faced political challenges. For individuals such as Clifton Woodrum, the Virginia Representative who chaired the House Appropriations Committee, the government needed to leave "the theater business."²²⁵ In time, New Deal art programs scaled back, though a healthy foundation

²²⁵ Quoted in Michael Kammen, "Culture and the State in America," *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 3 (December 1996): 791-814, 800.

for robust discourse on art continued. In addition to political ruptures, the burgeoning US artistic patrons struggled with the alienating sophistication of abstract expressionism.

At the close of World War II, and the emergence of the Cold War, the discussion of art again became a critical topic within US public discourse. The precipice of such a response was, perhaps, the reception of European art within US art museums immediately following the War, lent to traveling exhibits as an act of gratitude for US wartime sacrifices. According to Judith Huggins Balfe, post-War attendance at US art museums audiences doubled as audiences flocked to experience the “traveling exhibitions of European Old Masters” from “Holland, England, France, and specifically Berlin and Vienna for the safe return of their treasures from their wartime hiding places.”²²⁶ Modern art, however, was increasingly discomfoting to public audiences unable to grasp standards of judgment. As the US entered the Cold War various voices in the public decried abstractionism as a threat to American values.

While modern art had detractors, it also had supporters. In 1946, for example, the US State Department sponsored “Advancing American Art,” an exhibition associated with the recently established Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs.²²⁷ Rather than sponsoring art as a means of relieving domestic economic struggles, art became a vehicle for enhancing international relations. In sending art collections across Europe and Latin America, the State Department aimed to gain international favor.²²⁸

²²⁶ Judith Huggins Balfe, “Artworks as Symbols in International Politics,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 1, no. 2 (Winter, 1987): 195-217, 198.

²²⁷ Louis Menand, “Unpopular Front: American Art and the Cold War,” *The New Yorker* (October 17, 2005), par. 3.

Critics such as Clement Greenberg, a well-known champion of abstract expressionism, celebrated such efforts calling for the show's moral to "be taken to heart by those who control the public destiny in our country."²²⁹ Other voices in the public were critical, as was exemplified in a *Look Magazine* article titled "Your Money Bought These Paintings."²³⁰ Abstract expressionism and surrealist art were different, alienating, and unexplainable. During the Cold War such estrangement was suspicious, and possibly Un-American. As Congressman George Dondero of Michigan said in a 1949 speech,

Cubism aims to destroy by designed disorder.
 Futurism aims to destroy by the machine myth....
 Dadaism aims to destroy by ridicule.
 Expressionism aims to destroy by aping the primitive and inane....
 Abstractionism aims to destroy by the creation of brainstorm.
 Surrealism aims to destroy by the denial of reason.²³¹

In short, the protection of US cultural values was at stake and a vocal opposition condemned the program and deemed modern art "anti-American and even Communist (as, indeed, some of the artists had been in the 30's)."²³² Ironically, Baliffe points out, the reason the State Department selected "these works was to demonstrate that freedom of expression was fostered by American capitalism."²³³ Nonetheless, the patrons of the arts

²²⁸ Balife, "Artworks as Symbols in International Politics," 200-201.

²²⁹ Quoted in Menand, "Unpopular Front," par. 3.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, par. 4.

²³¹ *Ibid*, par. 3.

²³² Balife, "Artworks as Symbols in International Politics," 201.

²³³ *Ibid*, 201.

faced public disturbance threatening the value of modern art, curatorship, and criticism within US public discourse.

A Life Round Table on Modern Art

The argumentative context of the WRTMA cannot be understood without a review of the *Life Round Table on Modern Art*. Set in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the *Life Round Table* featured “experts from both Europe and America.” As explained by Russell W. Davenport, the moderator of the Round Table who also authored the piece for *Life Magazine*, the experts convened in order to confront problems arising from an increased estrangement between the public and the technical experts of modern art. For the common consumer, modern art appears, according to Davenport,

as strange distortions of reality, private nightmares, depictions of “ugly” things, human figures and objects that “look wrong,” cubes and geometrical patterns that accord with nothing recognizable in nature.²³⁴

Hence, the “laymen” draws two conclusions: modern art is “*difficult to understand* and is not concerned “with the ‘beautiful’ but with the ‘*ugly*’ or *the strange*.”²³⁵ In contemplation of these ruptures between the public audience and the technical class of artists and critics, fifteen critics convened to consider the following questions: “*Is modern art, considered as a whole, a good or bad development? That is to say, is it something*

²³⁴ Russell W. Davenport, “A Life Round Table on Modern Art: Fifteen Distinguished Critics and Connoisseurs Undertake to Clarify the Strange Art of Today,” *Life Magazine* (October 1948), 56.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

*that responsible people can support, or may they neglect it as a minor and impermanent phase of culture?”*²³⁶

Differentia and discord marked the tenor of the *Life Round Table*, a quality Davenport found fitting given that the “essence of the modern movement is variety.”²³⁷ While interlocutors failed to reach agreement on issues such as “the esthetic experience,”²³⁸ “the abuse of symbols,”²³⁹ and “the spirit of the times,”²⁴⁰ one issue did manage to attain concordance:

on one point the Table was unanimous. It did not accept—indeed it denounced—the easy generalization that the layman is inclined to make, that anything exhibiting the characteristics already mentioned, unrecognizability and strangeness, is to be dismissed out of hand.²⁴¹

The expression of such a view took on a variety of forms. On one hand, knowledge of artistic meaning demanded experiential expertise. For Clement Greenberg, “Painting cannot be learned from a textbook or from anyone else’s words but only through experience. The layman has to learn to look not for ideas but for experience first, in any picture.” Additionally, as Aldous Huxley said, experience begins “with a direct sensuous pleasure,” a feeling of pleasure derived from artistic harmony demands the spectator detach from normal frames of understanding and look for an incongruous meaning.²⁴² As

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid, 70.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 76.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 65.

Davenport concluded, unless the auditor can be open to “understanding the esthetic experience,” he or she “is sure to look for the wrong things in a work of art.”²⁴³

While the *Life* Round Table was ostensibly focused on modern art, the review framed the divide as one between the common consumer and the critic (no artists were on the panel). In one particularly uncomfortable moment a critic squared off against the owner of a work, declaring in no uncertain terms that the work in question was inexplicably boring. In sum, while the debate was focused on art, one can easily see how the self-identified “layman” reading *Life* might develop unkind responses about criticism. The Round Table concluded with four points of advice for the “layman.” First, “The layman should guard against his own natural inclination to condemn a picture just because he is unable to identify its subject matter in his ordinary experience.” Second, while she or he should strive to appreciate the strange, the layperson should also “be equally on guard against the assumption that a painting that is recognizable in ordinary experience is no good.” Third, the layperson

should look devotedly at the picture, rather than at himself, or at any aspect of his environment. The picture must speak. If it conveys nothing to him, then he should remember that the fault may be in him, not in the artist.

Finally, if the layperson is ultimately disturbed or displeased by the “nonrepresentational painting, this open-minded attitude will very much increase the layman’s enjoyment of artistic works, ancient or modern.”²⁴⁴

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 68.

Kenneth Burke and Art Criticism

In response to debates held by *Life Magazine* and others, the San Francisco Arts Institute hosted the Western Round Table on Modern Art. While the proceedings were initially cast aside as dull and confusing, scholars have recently returned to the WRTMA identifying the event as pivotal in the lives of individual participants, and important to the development of artistic theory.²⁴⁵ For Robert Genter, elitist paternalism dominated discourse at the WRTMA, especially among the modern artists of the discussion who felt that “because of the nature of mass society and mass culture, the goal of the modern artist was to carve out a realm to safeguard the work of art from the distorting hands of an ungrateful public.”²⁴⁶ For Genter, however, one member of the group, Kenneth Burke, provided an alternative perspective as he “grumbled numerous complaints against this consensus” and “wondered aloud if his fellow discussants had not in fact distorted the project of art in general.”²⁴⁷ Lane Brad Relyea similarly applauds Burke’s participation, noting Burke’s awareness to “the tension inherent to modernism between fragmentation and integration, a tension that conspired to further drive apart poetics and rhetoric and undermine the possibility of metaphoric communication.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ See Lane Brad Relyea, “Model Citizens and Perfect Strangers: American Paintings and Its Different Modes of Address, 1958-1965,” Unpublished Dissertation (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 2004; and Robert Genter, *Late Modernism: Art, Culture, and Politics in Cold War America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008): 1-4.

²⁴⁶ Genter, *Late Modernism*, 2.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ Relyea, “Model Citizens and Perfect Strangers,” 69.

Though Kenneth Burke was, primarily, a literary critic, he nonetheless played an active role in critical debates about modern art throughout his career. In a 1922 essay in *Vanity Fair*, Burke addressed the dislocation of formal criticism in his analysis of *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* by Van Wyck Brooks. Brooks analyzes Samuel Clemens's turn to the humorous persona of Mark Twain, providing a psychoanalytic explanation of the reasons for such a turn. For Burke, the application of psychoanalysis to works of art emphasizes expression related to a historical period at the expense of considerations of artistic form relevant to the "status quo," that is, the immediate audience with whom the work generates meaning. In his 1931 book of literary criticism, *Counter-Statement*, Burke elaborates on the need to maintain an audience-centered conception of form which, in literature, functions as "an arousing and fulfilling of desires" through which "one part... leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence."²⁴⁹

Burke critiques the implications of the avant-garde suggesting that destructive self-expression as valued because it is representative of status quo could produce the opposite: instance of boring art because society is boring. Though such methods are valued, especially for the analysis of the acts of people like Carrie Nation or the Sunday sermon, without the formal consideration of an object, a shift from criticism to interpretation allows for artistic production that slights craft and skill to enhance an accurate depiction of "self-expression," uninhibited. Regulated inhibition, however, contributes to the development of art, as exemplified by the difference between the early letters of Samuel Clemens and later writings of Mark Twain. While self-expression and

²⁴⁹ Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 124.

emotional experience is the starting point of art, Burke argues, this starting point is capable of bridging artist and public but it is through craft that an artist produces a sense making object that is an imaginative “substitute for living,” or “a sickly wish-fulfillment, a species of day dream.”²⁵⁰

Such troubles are avoided, in Burke’s schema, by shifting toward a division between technical and emotional considerations of formal appeal. As Burke writes in *Counter-Statement*,

If the artist were to externalize his mood of horror by imagining the facts of a murder, he would still have to externalize his sense of crescendo by the arrangement of these facts. In the former case he is individuating an “emotional form,” in the latter a “technical form.” And if the emotion makes for the consistency of his details, by determining their selection, technique makes for the vigor, or saliency, or power of the art-work by determining its arrangement.²⁵¹

Whereas expression of angst allows the artists to identify with the similar emotional expressions of the audience, the use of technical form functions as the mark of artistry about which the critic deliberates. As David K. Rod explains, for Burke, audience is the central consideration when creating forms of art. Rod argues that the artist’s conception of audience, however, takes on two dialectically related forms.²⁵² First, one finds the immediate audience witnessing the performance or observing the piece of art. This audience is unique because of the rhetorical culture associated with the local appeal. Second, one finds the ideal audience, orienting the mind of the artist in creation of the art.

²⁵⁰ Kenneth Burke, “Art and the Hope Chest: In Which a Protest is Filed Against Certain Freudian Critical Limitations,” *Vanity Fair* (December 1922): 59; 102, 102.

²⁵¹ Burke, *Counter-Statement*, 51.

²⁵² David K. Rod, “Kenneth Burke and Susanne K. Langer on Drama and Its Audience,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (1986)306-317, 309.

The ideal audience is created through critical deliberation among a technical and public series of discursive interlocutors.²⁵³

In sum, the Cold War provided an atmosphere in which popular audiences became skeptical of the complexities of modern art. In response, criticism defended modern art by identifying critiques against it as mistaken or unenlightened. Such a response was antithetical to the position staked out by Kenneth Burke who made an early shift from emotional expression to communication as the landscape for critical evaluation.

As the association between modern art and the destruction of American culture solidified, public institutions looked to ameliorate, or at least explore, criticisms of modern art by hosting round table discussions. The *Life Round Table* upheld the value of modern art by shifting blame for confusion to the art going public, unable to understand and articulate critical standards of judgment that justified the appeal of works. Alternatively, Kenneth Burke maintained that while artistic expression was the common ground upon which the expert artist and the public audience could meet, the artist needed to maintain a formal expertise, an artistry that channeled experience in unique ways to the public. In denouncing such criteria, Burke argued, surrealist art signified a weak public sphere.²⁵⁴ In the next section, I provide an analysis of the WRTMA in order to identify the formal qualities of the round table format as related to the expectations of after-dinner speaking.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Kenneth Burke, "Surrealism," in *Surrealism: Pro and Con*, James Laughlin, ed. (New York: Gotham Book Mart & Gallery, 1973): 61-77.

Analysis of the Western Round Table on Modern Art

The itinerary for the WRTMA included three discussions. On Friday, August 8, the artists' voices were privileged during a closed-session discussion on the general topic of modern art. After recessing for drinks, the group reconvened later that night at the San Francisco Institute of Modern Art where, amidst a gallery of the paintings being discussed and before a public audience of roughly 100 spectators,²⁵⁵ members of the Round Table discussed criticism, inquiring about the role of the critic. Though the public discussion opened with the prepared statements of critics, the reported lull of the audience was, undoubtedly, revitalized by the onerous interjections by the artists. The next morning, Saturday, the group met for a third time in order to discuss the display of modern art in public museums and, in general, produce conclusions about the series of discussions. After the close of the Saturday discussion, however, questions lingered. Hence, MacAgy decided to extend the symposium for an extra day and, on Sunday, a truncated version of the original group of panelists convened to identify general conclusions largely regarding the relationship between the artist and the critic.

Did the Round Table manage to transcend the “detached theory and noisy argument” that marked debates about modern art in 1948?²⁵⁶ Immediate reactions suggest it did not. For example, Clyfford Still, the abstract expressionist, was an audience member during the second session. After observing the public portion of the deliberation Still reviewed the proceedings in a correspondence with the artist Mark Rothko:

²⁵⁵ See George Boas's rebuttal to Frank Lloyd Wright on April 7, 1949.

²⁵⁶ Louchheim, ““Modern Art’: Attack and Defense,” 12.

Never did I believe that such hatred of art and artists would be so publicly stated by the people who live on it. And the lame defenses and ambiguous trivia offered by the artists did little to focus pertinent issues.²⁵⁷

Press reports of the event ranged between suggestive condemnation and lethargic applause. According to the *Oakland Tribune*, “The round table went around and around during the arguments advanced by artists and architects. ... No conclusions were reached concerning art.”²⁵⁸ Even the participants acknowledged the tedious mess presented in the discourse. In his introduction to the abstracted proceedings, MacAgy cited the subsequent reflections of an unnamed participant:

There in that room, were a bunch of guys trying to think. ... Still more difficult, we were trying to think aloud and trying to communicate with each other—trying to get things clear that have never been gotten clear.²⁵⁹

Perhaps the immediate treatment of the event is best depicted in coverage from *Look Magazine*. In an article titled “Modern Art Argument,” the magazine reprinted excerpts of discussion and photographs from throughout the Round Table. The article noted that “[t]he experts had gone on record as men willing to be rambling and discursive in seeking out their own minds,” and after images of the renowned artists and critics asservating over famous works of art, the article concluded with a final picture of a reporter dozing off in his chair.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Clyfford Still, *Clyfford Still*, John Philip O’Neil, ed. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 26-27.

²⁵⁸ “Local Artists Find Selves in Limelight,” *Oakland [California] Tribune Progress Edition* (January 30, 1950), Y31.

²⁵⁹ Douglas MacAgy, “Introduction,” in *Abstract of Proceedings: The Western Round Table of Modern Art*, Douglas MacAgy, ed. (San Francisco: San Francisco Art Association, 1949): <http://www.ubu.com/historical/wrtma/>

²⁶⁰ “Modern Art: *Argument*,” *Look Magazine* (November 8, 1949), 80-83.

There were, of course, audience members who appreciated the discourse,²⁶¹ and with the publication of the abstracted proceedings came a new audience of commentators whose entrance into the discussion was guided first through MacAgy's opening assertion:

A set of neat conclusions, as to the outcome of the conference, was neither expected nor desired. Rather, it was hoped that progress would be made in the exposure of hidden assumptions, in the uprooting of obsolete ideas, and in the framing of new questions.²⁶²

Though the WRTMA has yet to take center stage in academic research, scholars have returned to the event in scholarship investigating the participants, especially Bateson and Duchamp. Additional research has focused on the WRTMA as a means of discussing the use of rhetorical concepts in art criticism, and on the cultural politics of art during the Cold War. Though scholarship is increasingly providing an appreciative glance at the WRTMA, such insights are generally reliant on the abstracted proceedings published in 1949, not the recorded audio files housed in the SFAI archives and later digitized. Given the fragmented and truncated nature of the abstracted proceedings, previous studies were privy to the general themes of the discussion and the content of specific arguments, yet nonetheless unable to gain the more macroscopic and linear perspective available through the recordings.

²⁶¹ See comments by George Boas during the third session.

²⁶² Douglas MacAgy, "Introduction," in *Abstract of Proceedings: The Western Round Table of Modern Art*, Douglas MacAgy, ed., (San Francisco: San Francisco Art Association, 1949): <http://www.ubu.com/historical/wrtma/>

The Artists versus the Critics

In this section I overview the main arguments, discrepancies between interlocutors, and sources of evidentiary proof shows up throughout the text. Specifically, I identify one recurrent struggle—an inability to distinguish spaces of overlap between the artistic and critical functions of art—that carries throughout the discussion. As the group circles around and back to the topic, frustrations emerge and the quality of discourse varies. Nonetheless, in striving to achieve various deliberative ends, and when faced with constrictions related to the modality of discussion, members of the group contribute a plethora of insights through a varied use of deliberative forms.

In the opening session, Boas explains that modern artists are facing “an attack” from powerful forces in society because of the allegation that modern artists “express the structure of a decadent situation” and are “deliberately trying to confuse the public because we are confused ourselves.”²⁶³ Upon this framework, the discussion highlights the insights of the artists. In his opening statement, Marcel Duchamp introduces the idea that art cannot be adequately defined because it is impossible to adequately represent the emotional experience of art, what Duchamp calls the “aesthetic echo.” Gregory Bateson, the anthropologist, expands upon Duchamp’s concept by relating the “aesthetic echo” to the art produced by the people of Bali. The Bali artist, Bateson explains, produce a truth that is shared among a culture. Duchamp’s “aesthetic echo” can be shared across a large amount of people, Bateson argues, but the process of modernization leads to the

²⁶³ George Boas, Friday Afternoon Session (April 8, 1949), p. 1.

disturbances in modern art. Hence, the artist is responding to the crises of the time, to “a changing world, very often the aesthesia of nostalgia for an unchanging world ...”

Roughly fifteen minutes into the opening discussion, Boas calls on Kenneth Burke who explains the nature of the problem as expressed in an analogy about bridge building.

Well, I, feel that the real problem there that there really isn't any complete solution for. That is that you do have in this society, a specialized culture and, uh, a specialized culture has this peculiar quality about it that regards problems of communication. And that is if you take a, let's say a bridge builder who knows all about building bridges and nobody else who uses that bridge knows anything about building bridges, nevertheless, he can communicate it if he makes a bridge that you can walk across. That is, in other words, you get a communication among all the scientific specialists, among all the professions, by actually carrying out, the mere carrying out of the special act. Then you have in the field of art this special problem of communication over and above that. That the artist, too, is a specialist. He has his special knowledge. And insofar as, uh, the public doesn't understand his special language I think you do have an extra problem there which is not really completely solvable in our society. In other words, it is going to be a continued give-and-pull, back and forth, continually there, toward the specialization on one side, and, uh, the general appeal on the other where you'll find that even an artist of great specialized appeal will, every once in a while, run across a happy accident where his work at the same time does seem to gain a wider appeal.

In sum, Kenneth Burke introduced the idea that modern art frustrated public audiences because audiences were alienated from the specialized terminologies that explained how art fostered an emotional experience in audiences. In so doing, he provided a bridge building analogy. Whereas select members of the technical class can appreciate a bridge as a technical masterpiece, the public can nonetheless appreciate the construction as a public utility that bridges spaces. In other words, members of the populous who do not understand bridge making can still appreciate an artistic structure for its utility. Art, however, does not have the explicit utilitarian function and, therefore, if the public is

alienated as to the logics undergirding artistic creation they are likely to be “outraged” rather than interested.

In the second session, before a public audience, Alfred Frankenstein opens by making a distinction between types of criticism, camps striving to identify the eternal principles of art, an ideal that modernity negated by showing them to be functions of psychology and biology. Alternatively, Frankenstein suggests, modern criticism has a goal for the “general agreement of informed or intelligent people ... on the basis of its own values, premises.” Criticism should “close the gap between the creative artist and the public.” While criticism has an important role to play, Frankenstein nonetheless contends, “criticism is not a substitution of art.”

In the next speech, Burke calls for peace between the artist and the critic by identifying a “second level” on which common ground exists by way of “systems of symbols, some of them are scientists, some of them are artists, some of them are critics.” By expanding one’s frame of reference to understand artistic and critical expressions as acts using symbol systems, the artist and the critic can be identified as individuals from different species (thus having different roles) but nonetheless of the same genus (both using the same tools of symbolic action). In making this speech, Burke is attempting to expand the domain in which critics, artists, and public audiences can come together and coordinate discourse about an artistic creation.

Deliberative Strategies

With an understanding of the discursive content of the Round Table, I now turn to strategies for drawing out dialogue in discussions of art, culture, and politics. I

specifically focus on rhetorical concepts capable of identifying the implicit epideictic concepts within the deliberation. The first strategy to examine regards maneuvers by participants to establish and develop ethos among other members of the round table. More important than wide-ranging reverence from one's peers is one's ability to attain an ethos in which fellow-interlocutors acknowledge one's insights as unique to a given domain and therefore a contribution to the group that does not necessarily challenge the authority of alternative perspectives. Hence, one qualifies one's remarks as related to the domain of expertise within one's field and inquires about the ability for such insights to be translated into the fields of others' expertise. The logics of fasting and feasting relate to ethos as one's input relates to their contribution to the conversation.

While one might interpret unacknowledged ethos as a slight, such acknowledgment would violate the cooperative norms of deliberative discourse. Throughout the round table, in fact, various participants interrupt and speak over each other. Often, however, direct slights occur as the actual audience of interlocutors differs from the ideal audience addressed by the speaker. A rather humorous example emerges when Frank Lloyd Wright refers to the modern museum as a "morgue." At first, the statement is made off-handedly but given the profession of others at the round table, discord emerges. "As a museum man" Ritchie deals with the public as an intermediary, finding that the public "is not always capable of appreciating Michelangelo," suggesting that while the art is "established" and accepted as "beyond criticism," the layman has uncritically accepted the established piece. In response, Wright defends the idea, providing an argument Ritchie challenges by asking Wright about the museum he is designing in New York.

One could alternatively understand unrecognized ethos as a resource for fulfilling the deliberative task of consubstantiality. Consubstantiality is the ideal framework for understanding the ends of rhetoric. By making the audience and speaker “consubstantial,” the rhetoric bridges divides and creates a discursive body that is “of one substance.”²⁶⁴ Hence, while Burke’s early insistence of maintaining a division between artistic and scientific truth is thwarted by an insistence that “you can’t bifurcate truth,” by the conclusion of the round table the suggestion that such a divide exists but can be merged via the appreciation of symbolic action provides a route toward concordance. Doing so demands that one maintain an accurate if not undervalued evaluation of one’s own contributory worth, and also be able to demonstrate self-value rather than claim self-value in pursuit of common goals. In so doing, the realization of ethos will cause interlocutors to reinterpret contributions in a new light, a process of revisitation and restatement that inherently adds value to the contribution.

Additionally, the use of listening as a means of demonstrating the proprietary character of round table discussion demonstrated commitment to the goals of the group. On one hand, listening functions as a rhetoric of silence that enunciates a subjectivity of subjugation to the insights of deliberative partners and projects a tenor of engagement. Listening provides an appreciation of the immediate audience within the moment of *Kairos*, a term identifying the temporal domain of an established event. The listening interlocutor can create the experiences needed to apply former moments of conversation to kairotic thought, a formal device that functions along the same lines as the repeated punchline. The value of listening, however, is lost if the articulation of ideas is either

²⁶⁴ See Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*.

absent altogether, or void of the kind of considerations needed to identify information capable of bridging divides in the critical discussions underway. In other words, the value of such knowledge is determined by the audience's understanding of its commonality. Hence, the overt display of commonplace knowledge tends to have diminishing results for ethos and appeal in general. A frugal use of commonplace knowledge, however, is particularly effective in such events because it avoids such diminution, demonstrates one's willingness to subject individual gains for the procurement of group goals, and maintains the value of commonplace knowledge as potentially boundless.

The Display of Opinion and the Incorporation of the Insights of Others

Drawing upon the ethos of courtesy, a speaker need not employ the useful yet belittling strategies of cookery when presenting his or her contribution, a profuse provision of discursive opinion for the feasting of interlocutors. Given the formal reluctance, a collection of intellectuals will likely have toward the expression of confusion or the request for explanation, such a presentation will likely be ignored as other grandiose opinions are consumed. In other words, while interlocutors may dismiss comments broaching an out-of-reach consideration, throughout the course of discussion, the development of new frameworks allows interlocutors to return to and reevaluate the once-dismissed comment.

In maintaining a bland disposition toward the rejection one's opinions received, the speaker can engage in feasting in a way whereby one demonstrates the degree of personal fasting by engaged listening that uses previous offering as a screen for identifying unique value in the tastes expressed by others. In other words, Burke

reiterates the same point but in an expanded form to incorporate the views of fellow interlocutors. For example, throughout the round table Burke identifies symbolic action as the medium through which artistic expression formalizes and communicates to an audience. Bateson maintains reservations, however, returning to Duchamp's "aesthetic echo" concept as a means of showing that art primarily is evocative, a cultural expression of meaning. In the third round table discussion, Burke returns to his point about symbolic action with a caveat: the artist uses a wide-variety of materials to symbolically construct art, and the evocative element of Bateson's provides the impetus for articulating emotional expression artistically. Additionally, one adheres to the norms of social feasting by expressing pleasure of feasting in ways that adhere to the formal expectations of the event, the development of ideas and the creation of consubstantiality.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the dissertation then transitions from Ben Reifel's overt ADS set right before a deliberative setting, to the implicit ADS of the Western Round Table on Modern Art, seemingly set at the end of a deliberative setting. In post-War America, the controversy about modern art was immense as public patrons became alienated by the unexplainable vogue of varying degrees of abstract expressionistic art. In 1948, *Life Magazine* – the publication that popularized printed photographs in the 1930s and functioned as a hub for art appreciation by the common American consumer – published excised components of a round table on modern art, the write-up of which left little clarity about the subject. All points brought up were seemingly contested save for one:

the common consumer who is frustrated with modern art should seek more education and continue to trust the critical expertise of the artists and public voices.

In response to the backlash against modern art—seen in *Life Magazine* and elsewhere—the San Francisco Art Institute held the WRTMA. Whereas the Life debate pitted critic against common consumer, the WRTMA pitted artist versus critic. In this analysis, focus is paid specifically to the deliberative strategies employed by Kenneth Burke within the round table. Burke's main position is cooperation between all parties, a feat reached by elevating discussion to a higher level: symbolic action, a consideration that connects artistic expression and critical analysis. Cooperation for Burke is a rhetorical strategy and in preparing for the defense, a line in Burke's poem, "Eye-Crossing," came out: in the line, Burke tells the story of someone standing on a crowded train looking for a seat: "Sing out your national anthem" Burke recommends, "and when in deference to the tune, you simply take whatever seat seems safest." The analysis attempts to show a deliberative strategy for maintaining cooperation by resisting the convivial urges to accept differences within Burke's rhetoric. Though Burke's writings are critical of psychoanalytic criticism as expressionistic and abstract expressionism as devaluing of critical standards, he nonetheless provides a bridge upon which audiences of all sorts can critically appreciate artistic expression.

CHAPTER VI. AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING AS PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC

In contemporary society ADS continues to function as a topic of public discourse. Such is perhaps best seen in the increased attention garnered by the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner (WHCD), an event that has featured after-dinner speaking since 1920.²⁶⁵ In 2015, some treated the event as a celebrity spectacle,²⁶⁶ one that included both news of “the Funniest Jokes” of the night,²⁶⁷ as well as social commentary on the 2015 host, Cecily Strong, the fourth female to ever host the WHCD.²⁶⁸ Not all commentators appreciated the spectacle, of course. Eric Thurm of *Rolling Stone Magazine*, for example, recognized a bevy of complaints that the WHCD has become “a long, self-congratulatory celebration of how awesome everyone in attendance is...” and noted “an uncomfortable closeness between journalists and the politicians they are, in theory, supposed to be

²⁶⁵ For more on the WHCD, see Don Waisanen, “Comedian-in-Chief: Presidential Jokes as Enthymematic Crisis Rhetoric,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (June 2015): 335-360.

²⁶⁶ For example, this year the *Washington Post* provided “complete coverage,” including “the red carpet, pre-parties, speeches and the after-parties.” See, Emily Yahr et al., “Complete Coverage of the 2015 White House Correspondents' Dinner,” Weblog post, *Washington Post* (April 25, 2015), retrieved from proquest.com

²⁶⁷ Albeit, such attention is not solely related to the nostalgic allure of ADS. Due in large part, to the rising popularity of political comedy shows such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report*, the uncanny comic abilities of President Barack Obama, as well as the allure of clickbait-news articles with titles like “8 Obama Jokes That Stood Out From The White House Correspondents Dinner.” For laudatory reviews of the most recent WHCD, Charlotte Alter, “Watch the Funniest Jokes From the White House Correspondents' Dinner,” *Time* (April 25, 2015); and, Domenico Montanaro, “8 Obama Jokes That Stood Out From The White House Correspondents Dinner,” *NPR.org* (April 26, 2015): www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics

²⁶⁸ This year, the WHCD was hosted by Cecily Strong, “the 4th female comedian at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.” See, WITW Staff, “Nerd Prom: Cecily Strong to be the 4th Female Comedian at the White House Correspondents' Dinner,” *New York Times* (April 25, 2015).

capable of criticizing.”²⁶⁹ The attention afforded the WHCD in 2015 demonstrates the continued relevance of ADS, discourse about which functions as a window into the behind-the-scenes conviviality and decorum of the political and social elites.

While presidential rhetoric is a vibrant topic in communication studies, little research about the WHCD exists. Don Waisanen’s study is one notable exception. Waisanen examines every publically available WHCD speech text and provides an analysis of presidential jokes as enthymematic rhetoric for addressing crises. He argues “the elastic and inventive nature of enthymematic speech offers a space within which presidents can speak indirectly when facing crises, inviting audiences to sanitize unstated, shared commitments and move pressing issues outside immediate lines of criticism.”²⁷⁰ Within such a space, the president shows a tendency for “likeable reflexivity,”²⁷¹ and hence the WHCD speech provides “immense opportunities.”²⁷² Such opportunities are constrained by the trenchant formal expectations of the audience. According to Gary Alan Fine and Christine Simonian Bean, “Banquets are spaces of performance in which the attitudes of the audience are known by the speaker and not to be challenged with

²⁶⁹ Eric Thurm, “5 Things We Learned From 2015 White House Correspondents’ Dinner,” *Rolling Stone Magazine* (April 26, 2015). Other criticisms include the absence of attention given to college students awarded scholarships from fundraising at the event, which is apparently the topic of an upcoming documentary, “Nerd Prom: Inside Washington’s Wildest Week” by Patrick Gavin. See, Julia Craven, “If You Don’t Already Hate Washington, You Will After Watching This Clip,” *The Huffington Post* (April 18, 2015), accessed from www.huffingtonpost.com.

²⁷⁰ Waisanen, “Comedian-in-Chief,” 337.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 339.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 347.

contrary perspectives...”²⁷³ In this chapter, I examine the WHCD as a unique space on the rhetorical landscape of presidential public address. Drawing on theories of the public sphere and public screen, I inquire into possibilities for presidential wit to allow democratic and civic engagement. Additionally, in light of the role played by new media in the access and understanding of ADS, I ask about the possibilities of re-imagining ADS in a digital age.

A focused exploration of ADS as constituted within the American political tradition is warranted for three reasons. First, for critical rhetoricians, ADS provides artifacts that expose the relationship between corporeal impulses and ideological apparatuses. As a longstanding genre that has, in a variety of historical moments, functioned to both mediate and maintain dominant structures, such artifacts should provide ample ground for engendering the *telos* of critical rhetoric: to expose ideology in order to enhance the power of liberation and subvert dominance.²⁷⁴ Second, given that ADS is closely associated with the growth and decay of various institutions and institutional actors,²⁷⁵ a better understanding of ADS can provide insight into the structural discourse of institutional rhetoric. Third, the close inspection of ADS should allow a variety of communication scholars to locate implicit appetites for forms of ADS

²⁷³ Gary Alan Fine, and Christine Simonian Bean, “Dining with Joe McCarthy: Performing Partisanship at American Political Banquets,” in *Politische Mahlzeiten: Political Meals*, Regina F. Bendix and Michaela Fenske, eds. (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2014):155-163, 157.

²⁷⁴ Raymie E. Mckerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis,” *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 91-111.

²⁷⁵ See, Aly, “History of American Public Address as a Research Field,” 308-315.

within other rhetorical situations, a residual impact of the hybridity and intertextuality inherent within American rhetorical culture. Scholars of public address have long recognized the imprint ADS has made upon a variety of rhetorical forms. In the words of E. L. Godkin, “the style acquired for success in after-dinner oratory is accordingly carried into all oratory.”²⁷⁶ With that in mind, it is important to answer the following question: what role (if any) do the cultural rhetorics of after-dinner speaking function to build capacities for greater civic engagement and social awareness? To answer this question, I open with a theoretical framework for viewing ADS as civic engagement drawing upon technology to reach eloquence within the cultural space of political banquets. Next, I review public discourse about presidential ADS in order to identify moments contributing to the history of the form. Finally, I turn to an analysis of humor within the cultural rhetoric of President Barack Obama.

Technology, the Public Sphere, and Presidential Rhetoric

In his groundbreaking work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Jürgen Habermas provides a significant contribution to the study of democracy and media. Specifically, Habermas uses historiographical insights to focus attention on the *public sphere*, described as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed.”²⁷⁷ Within this realm, “the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private

²⁷⁶ E. L. Godkin, “Great Speeches,” *The Nation* (April 14, 1887), 311.

²⁷⁷ Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 136.

individuals assemble to form a public body.”²⁷⁸ For Habermas, *Structural Transformation* is a project aiming to perfect the efforts called for during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The rise of a merchant class within the monarchic and feudal systems gave way to a “bourgeois liberal constitutional order” in which pre-industrial capitalist life was oriented toward two powerful institutions: the church and the state. With the advent of literary spheres came the enlightenment, and, eventually, civil society.

Whereas Ancient Greeks cared little about private sphere citizenry, focusing instead upon public sphere expression and debate, Enlightenment thinkers congregated in coffee houses and solons to discuss literature and debate politics that questioned the authoritarian state. Hence, there was a transformation—which Habermas locates in the year of 1649, in England—whereby the private sphere that was dislocated from the family, state, and church, and used to cultivate the publicity that formed public opinion. By meeting in private, Enlightenment thinkers worked to foster a private sphere identity intended to cultivate public sphere opinion through participation in the literary debates that occurred in the coffee houses and solons of the time.

Whereas Habermas contributes economic motives to the transformation of the public sphere, Marshall McLuhan’s work would point toward more technologically determined motives. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, for example, McLuhan argues that the widespread adoption of the printing press as a communicative technology changed the ways in which humans cognitively developed and, in turn, worked to change the development of society:

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 136.

The visual (the perceptual mode of the reader) makes for the explicit, the uniform, and the sequential in painting, in poetry, in logic, history. The non-literate modes are implicit, simultaneous, and discontinuous, whether in the primitive past or the electronic present.²⁷⁹

Simply put, the emergence of a dominant media teaches humans to behave in accordance with that media creating cognitive transformations that determine the society's structure and culture. "If a new technology extends on or more of our senses outside us into the social world," McLuhan contends, "then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture."²⁸⁰ At play during the enlightenment were the implications of the Gutenberg press, which McLuhan argues shifted society from "aural/oral" into "visual," ultimately contributing to the establishment of Protestantism, individualism, democracy, nationalism, and capitalism.²⁸¹ Just as McLuhan is invested in the relationship between mediated communication and the forming of society, so too is Habermas keeping an eye toward the emergence of technologies that allow viewers access to the public sphere, specifically print and electronic media. In sum, the concept of the public sphere is central to the theorization of democratic activity. The concept depicts the intermediary role of civil society tasked with counterbalancing state control through the production of critical judgement by way of rational-critical debate.²⁸² The emphasis on "embodied" and "face-to-face" deliberation is a definitional characteristic of Habermas's public sphere, a

²⁷⁹ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 41.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁸² Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Thomas Burger, trans. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

depiction that necessarily provides a contrastive view of mass-mediated society as a domain for spectatorship rather than critical judgment. For Habermas, such a transformation is lamentable.²⁸³

The Public Screen

Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples challenge Habermas's framework. As DeLuca and Peeples argue, the public sphere remediates the Athenian imagery of the ancient agora, a cultural space allowing for banter amongst interlocutors engaged in deliberation. Another space, the Pynx, maintained an alternative architecture, a raised stage around which popular audiences congregated. For DeLuca and Peeples, both the deliberative judgement of the agora and the epideictic spectacle of the theatrically staged popular forum produced an embodied rhetoric, voices sharing time and space.²⁸⁴ The image of the ideal public sphere matters as it shapes the historical imagination of the public and orients social organization. The "authentic" image of the Athenian public sphere idealized as embodied and immediately present in space and time shared by speaker and auditor alike is problematic in the current media environment because

the dream of the public sphere as the engagement of embodied voices, democracy via dialogue, cloisters us, for perforce its vision compels us to see the contemporary landscape of mass communication as a nightmare.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ See Kevin Michael DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the 'Violence' of Seattle," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002): 125-151, 128.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 130.

DeLuca and Peeples therefore follow a shift enunciated by John Durham Peters and others whereby the starting place of communication is dissemination, not dialogue.²⁸⁶ A consideration of dissemination allows theorists to understand the public sphere as possible in contemporary society, inevitably respondent to “the social and technological transformations of the 20th century that have constructed an altogether different cultural context, a techno-epistemic break.”²⁸⁷ In other words, dissemination can account for technological changes through which individuals could communicate across time and space, advancements shaping human behavior and perception.²⁸⁸

To understand the way technologically mediated public communication can foster the deliberative activities of the public sphere, DeLuca and Peeples provide the concept of the *public screen*, “a metaphor for thinking about the places of politics and the possibilities of citizenship in our present moment.”²⁸⁹ In articulating the public screen, DeLuca and Peeples reflect on *remediation* and *hypermediation*. Crafted by the media critics J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, remediation and hypermediacy investigate the transformation of digital media technologies.²⁹⁰ First, remediation describes the process whereby new media emerges on the cultural ground provided by old media and therefore maintains the formal imagery of old media. As DeLuca and Peeples point out, the

²⁸⁶ Ibid. See also John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

²⁸⁷ DeLuca and Peeples, “From Public Sphere to Public Screen,” 131.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 131.

²⁹⁰ J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

influence is synecdochic as old media also transforms to remediate new media forms.²⁹¹ Hypermediacy identifies the “heterogeneous space” illuminated by the depiction of experience and culture as grounded on or produced by mediated forms.²⁹² The public screen, therefore, highlights the way new media frame the distribution of information and dialectically remediates the public sphere.²⁹³ The shift from the deliberative public sphere to the distributive public screen does not excise dialogue from public engagement. Rather, dissemination, albeit potentially wasteful, can lead communicators toward “the stuff from which, on rare, splendid occasions, dialogue may arise.”²⁹⁴ In other words, the spectacle of image events articulated to the public through the public screen allow for publicity that fosters and shapes public opinion: “Critique through spectacle, not critique versus spectacle.”²⁹⁵

Presidential Dinners

The White House dinner table is an important political and cultural artifact in the United States. Much like the parlors of earlier times, the White House functions as a sphere that mediates personal and public life. Hence, the food rituals of Presidents and first families are important. For some, the White House dining hall has functioned to make political statements. During the Presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881),

²⁹¹ Deluca and Peeples, “From Public Sphere to Public Screen,” 132.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid, 132.

²⁹⁴ Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 62.

²⁹⁵ Deluca and Peeples, “From Public Sphere to Public Screen,” 134.

for example, alcohol was banished from the White House partly as a means of appeasing the temperance movement. Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) broke racial barriers when he famously invited Booker T. Washington to dine with him at the White House,²⁹⁶ and more recently, President Barack Obama invited Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Sgt. James Crowley to the White House to have a beer and mediate racial tensions. As Cathy Kaufman notes,

From the Founding Fathers' continental tables through the gargantuan meals of the larger-than-life Ulysses S. Grant and William H. Taft to Dwight Eisenhower's common man TV tray dinners and Richard Nixon's spartan cottage cheese and ketchup, the First Table reflects both presidential personality and political exigencies.²⁹⁷

Clearly, the food rituals of the presidency are salient sites of communication, powerful symbols because, in part, the dining room of the White House mediates the private and public life of the President.

Not only is food important, so too is the propensity to employ humor and comedy as devices of Presidential rhetoric.²⁹⁸ The development of humor as a part of middle class

²⁹⁶ Deborah Davis, *Guest of Honor: Booker T. Washington and Theodore Roosevelt—the White House Dinner That Shocked a Nation* (New York: Atria Books, 2012).

²⁹⁷ Cathy K. Kaufman, "White House," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, ed. Andrew F. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁹⁸ See, for example, Waisanen, "Comedian-in-Chief," 335-360; John C. Meyer, "Ronald Reagan and Humor: A Politician's Velvet Weapon," *Communication Studies* 41, no. 1 (1990): 76-88; Marvin Alisky, "White House Wit: Presidential Humor to Sustain Policies, from Lincoln to Reagan," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1990): 373-381; David M. Rhea, "There They Go Again: The Use of Humor in Presidential Debates 1960-2008," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 49, no. 2 (2012): 115-131; Christian Smith and Ben Voth, "The Role of Humor in Political Argument: How 'Strategy' and 'Lockboxes' Changed a Political Campaign," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 39, no. 2 (2002): 110-129; Arthur A. Sloane, *Humor in the White House: The Wit of Five American Presidents* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001); Peter M. Robinson, *The Dance*

political culture, Daniel Wickberg maintains, had a significant impact on political life in the US. Until World War I, Wickberg contends, the political sphere maintained a “Victorian creed” whereby “political life was not a subject of jest and laughter.”²⁹⁹ While politicians such as Lincoln “developed reputations for humor,” as Wickberg points out, “political action and issues were conceived of as fundamentally serious, requiring dignity and solemnity of judgment, and that strong strictures were raised against the use of humor by political leaders.”³⁰⁰ After the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1914, another major change occurred in Presidential rhetoric. As Robert Alexander Kraig suggests, the oratorical diplomacy exhibited by Woodrow Wilson was thwarted after an alumni event at his alma mater, Princeton University, when the audience was far more enthralled with Chauncey Depew, a Twain-esque after-dinner speaker who, in upstaging Wilson, left a lasting impact on the tenor of Presidential rhetoric.³⁰¹ Today, humor is both accepted and demanded of political leaders: “Political campaigns hire professional joke writers and humorists such as Robert Oren, who became head of Gerald Ford’s speechwriting staff,” and each “president since Franklin Roosevelt has had his collection of humorous anecdotes and pithy sayings published as an illustration of his genial sense of humor.”³⁰²

of the Comedians: The People, the President, and the Performance of Political Standup Comedy in America (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).

²⁹⁹ Wickberg, *Sense of Humor*, 196.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 197.

³⁰¹ Robert Alexander Kraig, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost World of the Oratorical Statesman* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2004).

³⁰² Wickberg, *Sense of Humor*, 197.

Political Banquets and Presidential Criticism

As technology provides a screen into the public culture otherwise inaccessible to various publics, the political banquet can function as a magnet for media attention. By the early twentieth-century, banqueting was an institution within US political culture. The emergence of banquets in the political season became a regular occasion for political parties. By the late nineteenth-century, the Republican Party hosted Lincoln Day banquets across the country, attracting international recognition. In 1901, for example, the *Wichita Searchlight* noted the speech of the Chinese Minister, Wu Ting Fang, said of Lincoln: “I do not look on Lincoln as belonging to America alone. The world claims him as a benefactor of mankind and his noble deed as the achievements of the human race.”³⁰³ In 1899, at the Jefferson-Chicago-Platform Dinner, 3,000 individuals attended including “four Japanese and three Chinese present, but the Chinese were merely spectators, and sat up in the second gallery.” While such a banquet was in celebration of Jefferson’s birthday, at the “one-dollar Jefferson dinner,” the purpose was related to the cost of a banquet, but rather “by the sentiments which are woven into the post-prandial oratory.”³⁰⁴ Within reporting of such events, commentary applauded speeches and provided reminders of the general purpose of ADS. As the *Savannah Tribune* concluded in response to the aforementioned Jefferson Dinner:

A party is an association of the people for the purpose of giving force and elect to political opinions held in common. They talked to us about harmony! The only

³⁰³ “Lincoln Day Everywhere,” *Wichita Searchlight* (February 16, 1901), 3.

³⁰⁴ “The One-Dollar Jefferson-Chicago-Platform Dinner: Five Thousand People in New York Entertained by Col. Bryan in a banquet Speech,” *Savannah Tribune* (April 22, 1899), 1.

kind of harmony that is possible is harmony between those who think and act together to give force to their common opinions.³⁰⁵

As Fine and Bean note, within a political season such events are of great importance because “political banquets can provide a platform from which public discourse changes, although often those remarks that are proclaimed are the standard and well-rehearsed tropes of common belief.”³⁰⁶ While the political exposure of banquets, as Fine and Bean explain, is “limited,” banquets nonetheless provide an opening for the subsequent reproduction or rebroadcast, potentially producing “different consequences than initially intended.”³⁰⁷ As semi-private functions, political banquets provide attendees with an experience in which claims can “galvanize and energize a core group of motivated people.”³⁰⁸

As Marvin Alisky suggests, in presidential rhetoric, humor functions “to reduce or negate attacks of those opposing their policies or who vie with them for public office,” as well as to “build support for their goals and compliance with their administered programs.”³⁰⁹ Given the familiarity public audiences had with ADS as a discursive event, it is little surprise that political candidates and officers used the occasion to critique and avoid criticism. The most blatant avoidance of criticism came with the suggestion of

³⁰⁵ “The One-Dollar Jefferson-Chicago-Platform Dinner,” 1.

³⁰⁶ Gary Alan Fine, and Christine Simonian Bean, “Dining with Joe McCarthy: Performing Partisanship at American Political Banquets,” in *Politische Mahlzeiten: Political Meals*, Regina F. Bendix and Michaela Fenske, eds. (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2014):155-163, 157.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁰⁹ Alisky, “White House Wit,” 373.

unrecognized but implied satire facing anyone who condemned a postprandial speaker for impious speech. At times, however, even those familiar with the form would condemn the political messages if overtly presented amidst banquet speaking. In 1892, for example, when William McKinley was Governor of Ohio, the would-be President delivered an after-dinner speech in which he framed the past administration's fiscal policy as demanding a "tariff against wages." In response the *Detroit Free Press* offered a refutation that (1) identified the satirical form of ADS, "proverbial for its richness in fancy rather than in fact," a quality the institution attributed to

something, apparently, in the atmosphere or surroundings—or possibly in the character of the fluids absorbed—that predisposes the average after-dinner orator to the roseate view; and it may well be that the consciousness that he is talking to those who are not likely under any provocation to "talk back" encourages him to greater looseness in respect to solid truth than he might otherwise permit himself.³¹⁰

Though the form was not critiqued, the informal remarks were, though such a setting allowed McKinley's audiences to be "mellow enough to be uncritical it may be seriously questioned if he would have the hardihood to make some of the statements which fell so glibly from his lips." At this point, rhetorical questions about proof came into the critique, albeit quite humorously: "It may well be doubted, for instance, whether he would have dared to say in sober debate what he did about a revenue tariff never having built a factory in the United States, or built a fire in a furnace." Such a lead in focused to frame a critique against McKinley's attack on the past administration's "tariff against

³¹⁰ "After-Dinner McKinleyism," *Detroit Free Press* (February 24, 1892).

wages,” to provide an evidenced refutation, and then to turn to another example which, on the second time around, is identified as an “after-dinner McKinleyism.”³¹¹

The banquet rhetorical tradition also helped candidates evade critique. For Grover Cleveland, for example, the after-dinner speech was a space in which the topic of politics could be declared off-limits, a private space of disclosure that, in turn, allowed him to maintain silence about private matters in public. Specifically, as Susan Bauer explains, days after being nominated as the Democratic candidate for president, Cleveland faced accusations that he “had seduced a helpless woman, made her pregnant, and forced her to put the baby into an orphanage,”³¹² a story first published in the *Buffalo Evening Telegraph*, a tabloid, and later the *Boston Journal*. As the story circulated the country, Cleveland’s reputation as “a plaindealer and man of transparent honesty,” a frame he promoted as governor with “the passage of anti-corruption measures,” was threatened.³¹³ Faced with taunts from the Republican opposition – “Ma, Ma, where’s my Pa?” – the candidacy and ethos of the candidate formerly nicknamed “Grover the Good” suffered. Nonetheless, Cleveland “refused to speak of the matter at all.” Ultimately he overcame opposition and was elected president.³¹⁴

How did Cleveland win the election without demands for public confession? For Bauer, Cleveland’s success can be understood for multiple reasons. On one hand, Cleveland’s “moral sin” was committed “in an era when confession was still practiced

³¹¹ “After-Dinner McKinleyism,” *Detroit Free Press* (February 24, 1892).

³¹² Susan Bauer, *The Art of the Public Grovel: Sexual Sin and Public Confession in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11.

³¹³ *Ibid*, 12.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 13;12.

within sacred spaces,” and therefore accusations of such misconduct within public discourse were taboo.³¹⁵ Additionally, Cleveland’s anti-corruption posture provided popular identification, especially against his Republican opponent, Senator James G. Blaine who faced accusations of providing undue favoritism in “granting railroad rights”³¹⁶ and was considered “a ‘political aristocrat,’ [an] enemy of the common man.” Such a perception was exemplified by a cartoon in the *New York World* commenting on Blaine’s attendance at “a ‘prosperity dinner’ in his honor,” where Blaine dined “with two hundred of the richest men in America.”³¹⁷

Additionally, Cleveland responded to the accusations by maintaining adherence to form within banquet discourse, procuring an appeal to character. Hence, Cleveland maintained silence within spaces of public discourse, though allowed surrogates to report “on his willingness to accept financial responsibility for his alleged child.” Cleveland coupled silence about allegations with a refusal to discuss similar “sexual indiscretions” allegedly committed by Blaine.³¹⁸ In so doing, the all-male electorate’s comparative evaluation of Blaine and Cleveland was more forgiving of Cleveland and, hence, “Cleveland’s sexual misdeeds played more as a joke than as a disqualification for public office.”³¹⁹

³¹⁵ Ibid, 14.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 15.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 16. See also, “The Royal Feast of Belshazzar Blain and the Money Kings,” *New York World* 25, no. 8472 (October 30, 1884), 1.

³¹⁸ Bauer, *The Art of Public Grovel*, 18.

³¹⁹ Ibid, 19.

Given Cleveland's proclivity for ADS, however, one might also point to ways whereby refusal to acknowledge misconduct in private affairs was respected amongst the all-male electorate as a means of protecting the proprietary boundaries between semi-public spaces of the banquet hall whereby private matters might be available as possible topics but nonetheless remain outside of the realm of public discourse. Hence, in 1903, after learning of reports that suggested he would discuss politics at an upcoming speech to the Commercial Club in Chicago, Cleveland emphatically renounced the possibility of including political discussion in his ADS: "I wonder whether it cannot in some way be given out emphatically that in what I say at the club's dinner, not a single word of politics will cross my lips and that my so-called address will be simply an after-dinner talk of probably a half hour."³²⁰

New Media and the Remediation of Political After-Dinner Speaking

In the face of rapid technological change, the publicity of ADS increased and, over time, presidents could no longer deny the political power of the medium. News about technological innovation frequently highlights the relationship between a given form of new media and new access to banquet speaking. In an October 9, 1890 *New York Times* article, "Music Over the Wires," the readership is invited to

Imagine such a condition of things that, at the time for the great inauguration ball, simultaneous balls would be held in Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Buffalo, Baltimore, and Chicago, each ballroom being filled with the enticing strains of a Strauss orchestra stationed at a telephone station in New York. Think of Chauncey M. Depew making an after-dinner speech or delivering

³²⁰ Ibid, 2.

a political oration to the guests at banquets or to immense party gatherings in all the important cities east of the Mississippi.³²¹

As the dominant form of popular entertainment prior to the radio, ADS provided a platform on which politicians and technology wonks could inaugurate new media. Analysis of discourse shows key aspects of insight regarding presidential banquets also included a large emphasis on technology. Momentous changes occurred at several intervals. At first, the emergence of the phonograph and the telephone vied for most popular ADS innovation. The ADS delivered via phonograph picked up banquet-related nomenclature as such speeches were deemed “canned.” Though initially a laudatory name (*i.e.*, “Phonograph Talks for Amherst Alumni: ‘Canned’ Speeches by Dean Hitchcock and Congressman Rainey Entertain Diners”³²²), in time the term became pejorative, spoofed in the press by magazines such as *Punch*, which depicted an after-dinner speaking machine with a phonograph for a head delivering a speech to bewildered banqueters.

After the phonograph, the next major development for ADS was the telephone. In 1912, President William Howard Taft spoke to the packed Waldorf-Astoria ballroom in New York City from a residence in Boston. The long-distance ADS was thanks to

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, who was at the guest table last night, the President was able to make use of the long-distance telephone, two wires of which had been set up specially between the Waldorf and the Arena in Boston—one to carry the President’s voice to a telephone receiver at the elbow of

³²¹ “Music Over the Wires; Present and Coming Wonders of Electricity,” *New York Times* (October 9, 1890): 3.

³²² “Phonograph Talks for Amherst Alumni: ‘Canned’ Speeches by Dean Hitchcock and Congressman Rainey Entertain Diners,” *New York Times* (February 20, 1909): 2.

each of the 500 diners, and another, equipped with a telephonic magnifier in the balcony of the banquet hall, to carry back their applause to him.

Early on the accomplishment was heralded since “[n]ever before had the President spoken quite so directly to the men of the press, for he confided his speech directly into the private ear of each and every one of them, even though he, physically, was not present at the dinner at all. Physically President Taft was in Boston.”³²³

In time, the luster of the telephone would dissipate and the suggestion that a politician “phoned-it-in” became a slogan for lackluster efforts. Nonetheless, after-dinner speaking continued to facilitate the remediation of new media by incorporating the technology in order to provide audiences with a window into banquet oratory.

Technology shaped both rhetorical delivery and invention as the politician inaugurating a new media inevitably weighed in on the advancement. In 1929, President Herbert Hoover delivered the first transcontinental presidential ADS speaking in Washington D.C. via radio and cable to a trade conference in Berlin. In the speech, Hoover extolled the virtues and identified the paradoxes of new media:

Communication is but a form of transportation, the transportation of ideals, of thought, rendering possible almost instantly today the contact of the most remote peoples with another. . . . It is a benevolent paradox that to destroy the distance between peoples is to construct friendship between them.³²⁴

The paradoxical impact of technology continued as the application of new media to ADS responded to longstanding public criticisms of the genre. For example, in December

³²³ “Taft ‘Phones Speech Here from Boston,” *New York Times* (March 26, 1912): 13.

³²⁴ “Secretary Lamont Sees Export Rise: He Tells Foreign Trade Council Peace Will Assure Growth of Our Commerce Abroad. Hoover Sends Greetings. American in Berlin, Speaking Over the Radio Phone, Proposes Toasts. *New York Times* (April 18, 1929), 45.

1929, the *New York Times* headline read “Movie Film Gives Speeches at Dinner,” a technological breakthrough capable of correcting the impieties of long-winded ADS.

The sonorous voice of the movie-tone produced the doom of the non-stop after-dinner speaker last night in the dining hall of the Hotel Ambassador, where sixty representative citizens of New York paid honor to Winfield Sheehan, former political reporter, now general manager of the Fox Film Corporation.

After lighting the postprandial cigars, esteemed guests such as Al Smith, the Governor of New York who ran for President as the Democratic Nominee (losing to Herbert Hoover) the year prior, James John Walker, the Mayor of New York City, the famed newspaper editor, Arthur Brisbane, and others watched as a series of after-dinner speeches “flickered into life.” Upon watching the “movie apparition,” Brisbane “predicted ... that the end of the inexhaustible after-dinner spellbinder was not far off,” and that the “Movietone” would work well “as an aid to education.”³²⁵

Technological advantages also had drawbacks. In 1934, Governor Joseph Ely of Massachusetts addressed an audience 200 miles away via “the Marconi miracle” that speakers soon recognized as “a time and labor saver for busy men invited to speak at a dinner but pinned by duty to stay on the job.” As Orrin E. Dunlap Jr. of the *New York Times* noted, speakers can no longer escape dinner invitations as “[s]cience stretches the speakers’ table to international lengths.” In a comparison of dinner speeches made in 1920 with speeches in 1934, Dunlap found that because of technologies like the microphone and radio “there are fewer speeches, and they are under a stop-watch as much as a football game or a 100-yard dash.” The quality of speeches has changed as

³²⁵ “Movie Film Gives Speeches at Dinner: Smith, Walker and Curry Sit in Silence Listening to Their Own Voices. Honors Political Writer. Fete to Winfield Sheehan Marks End of “Non-Stop” Oratory, Screen Images Assert,” *New York Times* (December 20, 1929): 5.

well as the previous tradition in which speakers “were invited and given a slice of the inner’s radio time because of their wit,” were trumped by “men or women whose words are important and of interest to listeners as well as to diners.” Efficiency allowed politicians to save precious time.

A radio announcer calls at the Governor’s office, gives him the cue, and he speaks to an unseen assemblage beyond his horizon. . . . And when his last words are electrified and radiofied he is applauded as if seen in person. . . . No time is lost; no train trip ahead in the night; no cause for indigestion.

Such events include physically present speakers spliced between those speaking by way of radio. The technology transforms the banquet, however, coupling together two audiences, “the guests attired in formal evening clothes” and the “countless ‘uninvited’ guests, listening in all sorts of garb, probably coatless, with collar and tie missing, in overalls or in pajamas ready to retire as soon as they hear what the President or the Governor had to say.”³²⁶

In time, the new media advantages of ADS sparked debate about the change in ADS form. Inventions such as the radio had stretched “the speakers’ table to international lengths,” transforming the tenor of the occasion as soon as the microphone turned on, claimed Orrin E. Dunlap, Jr. in an essay pointing out that since radio considerations overtook the considerations of guests a disconnect occurred and since then,

There are fewer speeches, and they are under a stop-watch as much as a football game or a 100-yard dash. Then, too, the caliber of speakers has changed. Once they were invited and given a slice of the dinner’s radio time because of their wit, they were entertaining. Now they are generally men or women whose words are important and of interest to listeners as well as to the diners.

³²⁶ Orrin E. Dunlap, Jr. “The Speakers May Be Absent: Pressure of Business is No Longer Excuse for Not Delivering an After-Dinner Speech, the Art of Which Has Changed,” *New York Times* (October 7, 1934), XX10.

Interestingly, technological change instituted to compensate for the longstanding criticisms of ADS would, in time, motivate a reversal in public discourse. For example, after decades of railing against longwinded speakers and crying for brevity, commentators such as Dunlap lament the realization that “[r]adio insists on brevity.” Hence, in conforming to the broadcast schedule, the speakers have “no time for opening jokes.”³²⁷

Additionally, while ADS was formerly a semi-private domain in which speakers could transgress the limits of taste, when situated on a live broadcast, the extemporaneous after-dinner orator’s freedom of expression was notably curtailed. As speeches became more professional and focused on the public good, so too were speeches more likely to face censorship. In a 1935 article for the *New York Times*, Sheila Hibben weighed in on the “Future of the Banquet” as “in the Balance” for several potential reasons:

Perhaps radio and the newsreel have had a hand in the general decline of banqueting; certainly the type of speech has necessarily changed since the speaker has had to remember that, although he rises to look at shirtfronts and cigars, he is being listened to in Syracuse by an elderly lady with her knitting.³²⁸

Interestingly notable moments of the broadcast censorship of ADS resulted from political transgressions rather than inappropriate humor. On May 3, 1927, Mary Hanford Ford, the famed suffragette, was delivering a farewell after-dinner speech for Millie Gade Corson, the swimmer preparing to leave for England to train for crossing the English Channel. During the speech, which was broadcast on the radio, Ford “suddenly launched into a pacifist plea, using as her approach the fact that Denmark, Mrs. Corson’s native country,

³²⁷ Orrin E. Dunlap, Jr. “The Speakers May Be Absent: Pressure of Business is No Longer Excuse for Not Delivering an After-Dinner Speech, the Art of Which Has Changed,” *New York Times* (October 7, 1934), XX10.

³²⁸ Sheila Hibben, “Future of the Banquet,” *New York Times* (1935), SM17.

had been pacifistic during the war.” In 1937 the actor and “professional imitator,” Arthur Boran, was cut from the air after mimicking President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As explained by WMCA, presidential mimicry was banned because “too many in the unseen audience might think it was actually Mr. Roosevelt, whether the mimic delivers a serious speech or mere nonsense. . . . Frequently during amateur hours contestants approach the microphone to burlesque the President, and we stop them.” The tradition of presidential imitation was initiated during the Coolidge Administration with a memorable impersonation by the famed humorist Will Rogers. While Coolidge, reportedly, “enjoyed the ‘joke,’” radio broadcasters did not appreciate the idea of burlesquing the Commander in Chief. Hence, in addition to WMCA, the ban on presidential impersonation was maintained by both NBC and CBS. The ban on presidential imitation, the *Times* explained, was not outlawed by the Federal Communications Act but was requested by the Roosevelt Administration. If President Roosevelt was a curmudgeon about ADS, he nonetheless knew how to take advantage of the publicity of ADS. In 1940, in fact, he introduced “a new designation for an after-dinner speech” referring to “his good-humored talk at the \$100-a-plate Jackson Day dinner as a ‘plate-side chat.’”³²⁹

In sum, the elite opportunity to dine with the president has long captured the imagination of the American public. Hence, the dining hall space, when used as the setting for political banquets, provides a material background to an occasion that is of pivotal importance for the expression and criticism of presidential rhetoric. As demonstrated in the case of Grover Cleveland, the banqueting space maintained a degree

³²⁹ “Mr. Roosevelt Coins ‘Plate-Side Chat’ for Broadcasts from Dinner Table,” *New York Times* (January 14, 1940), X12.

of anonymity in regards to political discussion. The political anonymity, however, was short lived. As a sign of technological remediation, ADS allowed newest technologies to demonstrate appeal in expanding access to the semi-private affair. Remediation impacts technologies both new and old and, in time, ADS was undeniably a powerful feature within the mass media landscape. Eventually presidential rhetoric abandoned the apolitical ideal of ADS.

Barrack Obama and After-Dinner Speaking

As President Barrack Obama nears the end of his final term in office, critics are sure to point to the President's propensity for humor as part of his rhetorical legacy.³³⁰ While comedians such as Jerry Seinfeld have applauded the President for his White House Correspondents' Dinner comedy chops, and others have applauded his diverse array of appearances on comedy programs that span across various media platforms, rhetorical scholars have yet to delve deeply into President Obama's use of rhetorical use of humor. In an effort to build upon the analysis posited thus far, this section presents an examination of President Obama's use of humor within two WHCD speeches. Drawing upon the historical trajectory outlined above, I argue that presidential comedy is dependent upon cultural spaces, the invitational exclusivity of which allows the President to draw upon a humorous epideictic persona while maintaining the proprieties of presidential character, a mandate of deliberative decorum.

³³⁰ Emily Heil, "Barack Obama, the First Alt-Comedy President," *The Washington Post* (April 25, 2016): <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/reliable-source/wp/2016/04/25/barack-obama-the-first-alt-comedy-president/>

In approaching the comic presidency, President Obama maintains a distinction between the presidential character of official activities performed within the traditional spaces of the Executive Branch and the humorous character of comic performances within the after-dinner spaces of special occasions. Hence, one can expect interdependency between proprietary adherence of presidential display and the humorous canter of special occasion comedy.

The tenor of oppositional politics marking President Obama's administrative tenure provided the conditions of comedy. For example, shortly after taking office President Obama faced "the birther movement," a campaign to delegitimize his presidency on the alleged ground that President Obama was not born in the US. Often opposed in ways that violated political proprieties, such as the lack of decorum within normative ceremonial events, President Obama gained the leeway needed to pervert presidential character in the spaces where such activity is normal and expected.

In 2011, President Obama released his birth certificate prior to the WHCD, setting the stage for a momentous lampooning of efforts to delegitimize his presidency. President Obama, along with the comedian Seth Myers who delivered the keynote remarks, specifically took aim at Donald Trump, then a candidate in the 2011-2012 Republican primary race for the presidential nomination. As Michael Barbaro wrote, Donald Trump reacted "in character" after being "savagely mocked" and "belittled as a political charlatan with an unchecked ego and a dead fox plastered on his head." After the dinner, however, "Trump was not laughing."³³¹ Like with most WHCD occasions, news of the

³³¹ Michael Barbaro, "After Roasting, Trump Reacts in Character," *New York Times* (May 2, 2011): A17.

2011 speech was, initially, ephemeral and fleeting. In time, the news cycle moved on to more important issues. In 2016, however, Trump became the presumptive nominee of the Republican Party and commentators began to revisit the 2011 WHCD as a pivotal moment. According to Adam Gopnik,

It was already easy to sense at the time that something very strange had happened – that the usual American ritual of the “roast” and the roasted had been weirdly and uniquely disrupted. But the consequences were hard to imagine.³³²

Writing in *The New York Times*, Maggie Haberman and Alexander Burns argue, “That evening of public abasement, rather than sending Mr. Trump away, accelerated his ferocious efforts to gain stature in the political world.”³³³

In the speech, President Obama enters the stage to a video montage of “I Am a Real American,” complete with pictures of Hulk Hogan, the Karate Kid, and his “official long-form birth certificate.” His opening line: “My *fellow* Americans.” Obama carries the bit further, explaining that to further appease skeptics, he is going to show his official birth video. A clip from Disney’s *The Lion King*, in which Simba, the cub heir, is blessed and held above the animal kingdom, columns of zebras and giraffes that in turn bow to the cub. Obama’s birthdate, “04 Aug. 1961,” is superimposed to appear as if the clip is a home video. Obama then clarifies to Fox News that the video was a joke.

After lampooning his opposition over their support of the now-debunked birther movement conspiracy theory, President Obama shifts his tone and addresses the audience

³³² Adam Gopnik, “Trump and Obama: A Night to Remember,” *The New Yorker* (September 12, 2015): <http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/trump-and-obama-a-night-to-remember>

³³³ Maggie Haberman and Alexander Burns, “Donald Trump’s Presidential Run Began in an Effort to Gain Stature,” *New York Times* (March 12, 2016): http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/13/us/politics/donald-trump-campaign.html?_r=1

at large as friends. Upon doing so, his humor shifts toward comic jousting of a self-deprecatory nature.

Anyway, it's good to be back with so many esteemed guests. Celebrities. Senators. Journalists. Essential government employees. (Laughter.) Non-essential government employees. (Laughter.) You know who you are.

He says that he is “looking forward to hearing Seth Meyers tonight. (Applause.) He's a young, fresh face who can do no wrong in the eyes of his fans. Seth, enjoy it while it lasts.” Obama then uses irony to explain that “when it comes to my presidency, the honeymoon is over.” In response to claims that he is “too professorial,” Obama calls for assigned reading that could help the audience “draw [their] own conclusions.” In response to claims that he is “arrogant,” Obama makes an arrogant remark: “I've found a really great self-help tool for this: my poll numbers.” Though ironically self-deprecating, the reference to “poll numbers” concludes this segment on a defensive note that leads into the image of a specific detractor: Matt Damon.

I've even let down my key core constituency: movie stars. Just the other day, Matt Damon – I love Matt Damon, love the guy – Matt Damon said he was disappointed in my performance. Well, Matt, I just saw “The Adjustment Bureau,” so—(laughter)—right back atcha, buddy. (Laughter and applause.)

Obama then moves from friends to family as he addresses the First Lady, “his wonderful wife Michelle,” who was a terrific partner “at the Easter Egg Roll this week. I'd give out bags of candy to the kids, and she'd snatch them right back out of their little hands.” Here the President wisely chooses a punchline that evokes laughter over his wife's stern allegiance to fitness campaigns for children. Hence, unlike his derision of political opponents for transgressing political proprieties by attempting to delegitimize his presidency, the President chides Michelle Obama for transgressing celebratory norms in order to uphold political proprieties.

The next segment of the speech represents a shift back to political opponents. The President addresses the audience:

And where is the National Public Radio table? (Cheering.) You guys are still here? (Laughter.) That's good. I couldn't remember where we landed on that. (Laughter.) Now, I know you were a little tense when the GOP tried to cut your funding, but personally I was looking forward to new programming like "No Things Considered" – (laughter) – or "Wait, Wait...Don't Fund Me." (Laughter.)

In such a joke, the president critiques a challenge to public journalism before an audience celebrating the journalistic profession, the punchline of which draws on the absurdity of silencing the news. The President then identifies specific opponents such as Congressman Paul Ryan. Ryan was absent from the dinner because "[h]is budget has no room for laughter." Whereas Obama parodies Ryan for violating the epideictic conviviality of the banquet, Obama's next subject—Congresswoman Michelle Bachman—is ridiculed for her violation of the deliberative proprieties of political discourse (as related to the birther movement).

Michele Bachmann is here, though, I understand, and she is thinking about running for President, which is weird because I hear she was born in Canada. (Laughter.) Yes, Michele, this is how it starts. (Laughter.)

The scheme of this joke continues with Tim Pawlenty, whose "real middle name" is "Hosini," Jon Huntsman, the ambassador who "didn't learn to speak Chinese to go there" but rather "learned English to come here," and, finally, Mitt Romney who, Obama says, "passed universal health care when he was governor of Massachusetts."

The culmination of this scheme lands on Donald Trump, a loud voice in the birther movement who, Obama suggests, is proud "to put this birth certificate matter to rest" so that "he can finally get back to focusing on the issues that matter – like, did we fake the moon landing? (Laughter.) What really happened in Roswell? (Laughter.) And

Where are Biggie and Tupac? (Laughter and applause.)” The ridiculous suggestion that Trump believes in conspiracy theories is then paralleled with a description of Trump’s real performance on the reality-television show, *Celebrity Apprentice*:

But all kidding aside, obviously, we all know about your credentials and breadth of experience. (Laughter.) For example – no, seriously, just recently, in an episode of *Celebrity Apprentice* – (laughter) – at the steakhouse, the men’s cooking team did not impress the judges from Omaha Steaks. And there was a lot of blame to go around. But you, Mr. Trump, recognized that the real problem was a lack of leadership. And so ultimately, you didn’t blame Lil’ Jon or Meatloaf. (Laughter.) You fired Gary Busey. (Laughter.) And these are the kind of decision that would keep me up at night. (Laughter and applause). Well handled, sir. (Laughter.) Well handled.

After satirically appreciating the leadership decisions Trump made as a reality-television star, Obama then provides a ridiculous image of how Trump would transform the White House, showing an image of the “Trump White House Resort and Casino.” The segment concludes with the third video segment of the address: “The President’s Speech,” a satirical movie trailer in which the President loses his teleprompter, splicing together footage of the President’s outtakes coupled with various gaffes by Vice President Joe Biden. In this segment of the speech, President Obama uses incongruences to merger of media and politics, emphasizing his own inability to enact celebrity and his celebrity opposition’s inability to enact politics.

The parallel fits the overall structure of the speech. In the opening segment combined self-deprecatory jokes about the difficulty of upholding political propriety with remarks about political allies (celebrities such as Matt Damon who critiqued Obama’s politics). In the second segment, the same format is applied to Obama’s political opposition. Political adversaries are lampooned for evading deliberative responsibilities in order to bolster the appeal of spectacle. This line of rhetoric is reversed, however,

when Obama lands upon the candidacy of Donald Trump, a celebrity who has broached into the domain of politics. As the focal point sitting atop the culmination of the President's comic routine, Donald Trump provides the bulk of the laughter.

In 2016, the President's WHCD speech provides various contrasts that emphasize the role of cultural space within banqueting rhetoric. Owing to seriousness of the Executive Office, President Obama's comic persona is limited to spaces of Presidential otherness in which audiences tolerate violations of presidential decorum. Such spaces include television programs and events occurring later in the evening, such as the *Late Show*, *Daily Show*, and *Colbert Report*. In the 2016 WHCD, such space is emphasized. First, the deliberative spirit of President Obama's final White House Correspondents' Dinner Speech was noted in the opening walk to the podium. The song lyrics, "You're going to miss me when I'm gone," from "When I'm Gone" by Anna Kendrick, provided the soundtrack to Obama's entrance and he therefore opened with a shrugged statement: "You can't say it, but you know its true." Noting the censure associated with appreciating the president, here, is a means of identifying deliberative proprieties among cooperative adversaries. Following the opening joke, the President apologized for being late, a mistake he attributed to "CPT." The acronym, "CPT," implies a vernacular meaning. In the next line, President Obama alludes to the rules of vernacular participation by members of the dominant group, stating that CPT stands for "Jokes White People Should Not Make."

Similar to the range of ADS discourse, self-reflexive commentary on the taxing nature of delivering an after-dinner speech, the struggles of newspapers and the goals of the political and journalistic institutions related to searching for truth and maintaining a

free press. For Obama, appreciating such values was not the domain of his presidential character, but rather the character of his civic persona. In honor of the sacrifices of journalists “at home and abroad” who are “holding leaders accountable,” the President applauds the many “pushing against those trends,” a task for which he is grateful “as a *citizen* of this great democracy...”³³⁴ President Obama’s rhetoric in the WHCD speeches shows a keen ability to enact cultural syncretism, the imitation of a proprietary set of norms in order to create new space for transgressing boundaries. In doing so, President Obama utilizes wit to subvert opposition that transgresses the bounds of normative deliberation, thus showing how ADS functions as an epideictic approach to democratic and civic engagement. Moreover, his speeches highlight ways in which traditional forms of ADS incorporate new technology through remediation, and provides examples for understanding how to re-imagine ADS in the digital age.

Conclusion

In the final case study of the dissertation, I investigated ADS within presidential rhetoric and opened with the question: how do the cultural rhetorics of after-dinner speaking function to build capacities for greater civic engagement and social awareness? Cultural rhetorics function to maintain spaces of humorous activity for presidents by normalizing an alternative set of standards for presidential propriety. Whereas earlier-twentieth-century candidates such as Grover Cleveland distanced the banquet hall from political speech, focusing instead on alternative topics and demonstrations such as the

³³⁴ President Obama’s Remarks at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner, delivered May 1st, 2016. Transcripts available at whitehouse.gov.

introduction of a new technology, humor typically functions to either assuage the difficulties of a given moment or frame situations. For President Obama, a variety of uses of humor emerged as the President marked off new ground in social media to present humorous frames for social programming and political events. In so doing, the President provided insights on his character that undergirded his political performances in the White House.

“As part of a politicized performance,” Fine and Bean contend, “each action present at a political banquet has the potential to carry ideological content to the attending audience, and the wider public encountering the event through media.”³³⁵ In the final chapter, therefore, the dissertation aims to bridge the historical analysis of the early twentieth-century after-dinner speaking norms with the critical analysis of case studies by showing Presidential ADS as a site of cultural space that allows presidents to engage in discourse that violates the norms of presidentiality necessary for maintaining public relations. In order to highlight this transition, the chapter focuses on a comparison between figures such as Grover Cleveland with two speeches delivered by Barack Obama. Cleveland faced a unique challenge in his presidential campaign owing to rumor of sexual impropriety. Not only did Cleveland maintain silence about this topic within public discourse, he maintained silence about politics within after-dinner speeches. Hence, Cleveland reserved the sphere as a site for identifying with audiences on a level that transcends politics.

The rise of technological change made such avoidance impossible as the popularity of ADS increased to such a degree that it was increasingly hard for a political

³³⁵ Fine and Bean, “Political Banquets,” 162.

figure to argue that a speech broadcast to a mass audience was not political. Coupled with the transformed deliberative nature of the ADS genre, modern politicians could no longer maintain ADS as a site of apolitical space. The space became hybrid, infusing together the public deliberation of political culture with the epideictic spectacle of popular communication. In 2011, Donald Trump found himself at the pinnacle of this nexus, a position that some argue fueled his political ambitions. In the analysis of President Obama's final speech at the WHCD, this chapter shows that while Obama and Cleveland maintained different proprieties for the discussion of politics in ADS, both identified the banquet speech as a cultural space outside of the normative behavior of the presidency. Hence, Obama could portray his presidential character in a way where he appreciated the critical exposure of journalism, he could appreciate the work of the White House Correspondents, but he did so as a citizen, albeit a citizen normally presiding as the President of the United States.

CHAPTER VII. CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I provide a perspective of ADS at the turn of the century in order to better understand the development of the generic form of ADS, and identify cultural and formal appeals utilized within episodes of public discourse. The vantage point depicts the reinvention of ADS as a medium and topic of public discourse in the twentieth-century, a status marking a shift away from the personal sphere tenor of ADS from earlier times toward ADS as a platform for displaying deliberation. Drawing on cultural theory and material histories about the discursive landscape and cultural spaces of the era, I argue that ADS functioned to subsume various oratorical occasions and activities popular in the nineteenth-century. As a cultural space for adjusting to the emerging rhetorical and technical landscapes of the twentieth-century, ADS became a hub for social transformation, discovery, and reinvention. Ironically, as the term widened in scope, controversy about ADS emerged in relation to issues regarding proprietary rhetorical form and cultural politics.

Research Questions and Answers

Initially, in the study above I examined historically contextualized case studies by noting both fragments of public discourse and reading closely the formal qualities of a given text. In so doing, I aimed to articulate answers to research questions related to the study of communication, rhetoric, and culture as displayed within public discourse about ADS. Specifically, I opened this research project with the following questions: “What role did ADS play in shaping the culture of rhetoric and the rhetoric of culture in twentieth-century US public discourse,” “As a longstanding species of epideictic

rhetoric, how does ADS function within discourse intended to facilitate public deliberation,” and “Within mainstream and vernacular discourses of the era, what was the relationship how did the rhetorical norms of ADS function as a topic of cultural politics?” In this chapter, I initially identify conclusions of each chapter in order to answer the research questions.

First, ADS provided a site of integration for the culture of rhetoric in the US at the turn-of-the-century. In doing so, a season of banqueting events displayed high culture by creating distance that separated banquet attendees and cultures relegated outside of the banquet. In this way, ADS shaped the rhetoric of culture. Such a maneuver depended on material changes. As platform oratory declined at the end of the nineteenth-century, the emergence of banquet halls and hotel culture provided a new space for incorporating a variety of events and ceremonial addresses. The convergence of various forms took on many of the banqueting rhetoric norms long associated with ADS, but with one difference being the publicity provided through public discourse about ADS in print journalism. As platform oratory was long a source of national identity development, the platform-like banqueting of ADS also provided an array of identifications for those participating in US democracy and the culture of deliberation.

Second, the deliberative role of epideictic speech is part of the more generalized function of both discursive forms. Just as early literary societies provided public displays for exhibiting public speaking, so too can the after-dinner speech represent deliberative aims. To do so, however, the rhetor draws upon a range of proprietary norms (e.g., no political speech during banquets), alternative cultural spaces, and alternative appeals to ethos as a means of diminishing overt deliberative rhetorical aims that will likely

deteriorate her or his efforts to reach ultimate goals of entertainment. Finally, within mainstream and vernacular discourses, the approach to considerations about ADS maintained a distinction between considerations of form and the presentation of cultural norms. While the connection between cultural considerations and formal criticisms were not overtly addressed, the tendency to equate formal impropriety with the cultural Other was exhibited in various forms of discourse.

Implications for Rhetorical and Cultural Praxis

Having answered the questions above, I now turn to a discussion of critical, rhetorical, and pedagogical implications for rhetorical and cultural praxis. Initially, in this section, I discuss critical implications as a means of identifying approaches to criticism that can be better understood through the work demonstrated here. If one understands rhetoric as an art, a practice of speech intent upon crafting a message for practical ends by drawing from available tools with which one can build an argument, induce an attitude, or invite a conversation, then criticism functions within the domain of rhetorical activity in two ways.

First, criticism is rhetorical in that the critic is using symbolic action in order to portray information that inherently reduces situations and reproduces a given perspective for an audience. Being in the technical sphere of deliberation, the rhetorical critic aims for enhancing efficiency within critical discourse about a given topic. Hence, in some ways the critic is merely arguing that her or his insight is valuable to the institution or audience for which she or he is making arguments. Second, criticism builds a storehouse of tools for approaching exigent situations and, as such, the building of literature for

critical discussions allows rhetors to identify concepts for articulating frameworks and models for engaging in rhetorical action. In the research established here, concepts of use for rhetorical activity are placed within the context of twentieth-century models of historical action. The direct appropriation of strategies, such as Ben Reifel's formal approach to word bundling may inform alternative views on rhetoric given the accuracy of the analysis and the coherency of the case for which the audience reapplies the framework and model.

Given this critical approach established by rhetorical critics throughout the history of the discipline, critical implications can be drawn for rhetorical historiography as a practice that mutually informs both the contextualized analysis of historical forms as well as the formal analysis of historical contexts. The critical-historical methodology for studying a rhetorical genre of speech, the aforementioned study contributes to aspects of historiography. In considering the role of language and narrative as a means of investigating and articulating historical information, discord emerged within the discipline of history related to the methods of discovery and the subjectivities of truth within historical research. Though the above research is by no means a conclusive example for weighing in on the deliberations about method held within the discipline of history, the mixed approach of rhetorical historiography whereby the searching of historically contextualized rhetorical fragments is coupled with the close-reading of a specific text allows researchers a method for testing the viability of assumptions through the analysis of a coherent text. In other words, by showing how rhetoric functioned within the enclosed details of a given text, researchers can simultaneously provide

legitimacy for the contextualized details existent outside of the text but contained within an unruly array of public discourse and historical material.

Next, the revisiting of historically congealed rhetorical practices is useful for the crafting of rhetorical messages capable of drawing upon cultural identification. Given the aforementioned reductionism inherent within the perspectives shared through symbolic action, one can investigate any literary production or piece of technical communication and “out” biases or strategies for ideological dominance, a worthy activity especially for disrupting structures that perpetuate such linguistic violence. Through the study of discourse about ADS, however, alternative approaches to the critical investigation of blindness within historically developed practices can emerge. Hence, in ADS, the semi-publicity and invited nature of the audience provides an impetus for comic engagements stressing identification capable of perpetuating othering and establishing an Orientalist perspective, a term describing how the West sees the East as a space of discovery but also a place of difference and inferiority. The strident reinforcement of Orientalism gives way to Occidentalism, a term describing how the East sees the West see the East. To the extent that comic bits and jokes allow the rhetor play on forms recognized by an intercultural audience as part of an Orientalist program, a series of frustrations and anxieties are produced, the dominant group likely being concerned about mixed company whereas the subjugated audience members anxious regarding the impending punch line. In the research conducted here, an occasional trend was noticed whereby neither group’s appetites were fully satiated as the joke took on a different punch line while maintaining the formal qualities expected by the group. In this instance, a form of cultural rhetoric emerged whereby laughter alleviated various audience members anxieties--vary

differently located anxieties—and together the group shared in affective responses capable of inducing consubstantiality within an intercultural audience.

Finally, pedagogically, the research here supports the arguments of Lawless and Sharples in various ways. First, in Lawless's critical review of research about ADS, she argues that ADS should function as a site of *conscientization* about problems and causes facing the student in relationship to the cultural exigencies of her or his historical moment. In contemplating case studies about ADS as public discourse, the connection between the speech act and the discussion of issues within deliberative bodies becomes increasingly clear, giving weight to Lawless's assertion and promise to the potential for ADS to function as a pedagogical tool of social change by way of praxis. Second, by locating ADS within the lexicon provided by the disciplinary study of the Western rhetorical tradition, the above study provides support for Sharples's call to infuse the practice of ADS with theoretical findings from studies of humor within contemporary and classical literature. In the course of this investigation, treatments of ADS and concepts related to humor, wit, comedy, laughter, argumentation, and epideictic speaking were both plentiful and informative. While in-depth analyses of ADS are no longer a major feature of the given public speaking handbook, the availability of communication research of the classical and early-twentieth-century caste is nonetheless within reach for the interested student of the generic form. That said, given the prolixity of treatises available within the digitized public domain, pursuing research on humor and public address should likely begin with an engagement of contemporary research about the "public analogues" of ADS in contemporary society, *e.g.*, stand-up comedy or the humorous remarks delivered at political banquets.

Limitations

The goal of this study called for a qualitative approach to inquiry as a means of exploring and critically analyzing texts related to the formal proprieties of ADS. While such an approach was fruitful, in pursuing further investigations of ADS, researchers would likely benefit from quantitative analyzes limited to particular themes within discourse about ADS. The dearth of analysis on the topic inevitably provides constraints to the rhetor and, undoubtedly, more efficient methods of investigation would be appreciated for future inquiry into the subject matter.

Additionally, the above study aims to show ADS as a site of rhetorical incorporation that shifted to a more deliberative orientation and crafted cultural identification while engaging in cultural othering. Perhaps a full grasp of such a complex array of factors is beyond the possibilities of a study limited by the need to analyze rhetoric in a way that formally corresponds to the discursive norms analyzed. In short, perhaps it is best to follow the sage advice of Edwin Du Bois Shurter, a founding member of the NCA, who concluded his chapter on ADS with the following note: “Only one or two ideas are necessary—or desirable. These should be fresh and striking, if possible; platitudes, if need be. The point of the speech may then be reinforced by an appropriate quotation. And then—stop.”³³⁶

³³⁶ Shurter, *The Rhetoric of Oratory*, 46.

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