"Voice" and "Address" in Literary Theory

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One of Walter Ong's major interests has been the history of the rhetorical tradition in the West and its impact on literary forms. In recent years that interest has faced a powerful challenge from the theoretical advances of deconstruction. On the face of it, no approach to rhetoric or literature could be more different from Walter Ong's than that of deconstruction. In juxtaposing these contrary approaches, I wish to look at both from within, to examine their concerns, to understand their usefulness. Jacques Derrida describes the deconstructive approach as one that is free from method: "The first gesture of this departure and this deconstruction, although subject to a certain historical necessity, cannot be given methodological or logical intraorbitary assurances" (Derrida 1976:162). Deconstruction nonetheless partakes of method and systematic discovery. In the words of one of its foremost literary theorists, Paul de Man, it teaches that "truth is the recognition of the systematic character of a certain kind of error" (1979:17). Walter Ong's own studies have focused on methods and systems of thought, and many have explored the particular rhetorical system of Petrus Ramus and his followers. In this essay I will argue that the rhetorical assumptions of deconstruction share one of the central weaknesses of Ramus' system. The weakness is to reduce the rhetorical presence of voice and address to an emotional affect, to subordinate it to the suppositious materiality of a figure or trope.

Contrary to the allegations of many literary critics hostile to deconstruction, the latter's chief problem is not that it finds no meaning in human discourse, for often its highly resourceful, deeply pressured readings find more meaning than a given text might seem to bear. Its chief problem is that it locates all meaning in reified textuality, in the material substratum of language and

discourse, especially their written forms, at the significant expense of voice and address. The materiality of the word implies its rootedness in time and space with the concomitant notions of presence and absence. One major difference between the approaches of Ong and deconstruction stems from an opposition between presence and absence in the concept of the verbal signifier.

For Walter Ong, presence entails a "double and interlocking dialectic": "A word can live only while actually issuing from the interior, physical and psychic, of the living individual. As soon as it has passed to the exterior, it perishes. . . . On the other hand, in so far as words are found within us, they are destined for exteriorization. . . . In so far as we speak to ourselves in any way, others are capable of sharing our thoughts" (1962:50). For Ong and for most of Western philosophy, presence requires an admission of the otherness of others, a confirmation of their difference from the self. Presence acquires meaning by situating two separate entities in relation to each other. For deconstruction, however, presence entails a suppression of difference, or, to use Derrida's word, *différance*, a participial noun that subsumes differing and deferring, division and displacement, distance and delay. "That *phenomenon*, that presumed suppression of différance, that lived reduction of the opacity of the signifier, are the origin of what is called presence. That which is not subjected to the process of différance is *present"* (Derrida 1976:166). Writing, not speaking, affords the best model for the working of language, because in writing both the speaker and the referent are absent. Deconstruction explores absence as the condition of language. It explores the void that separates words from things, meaning from reference, speakers from audiences, all at the possible expense of rhetorical address to effect shared communication.

It is important to qualify this expense as "possible" because Derrida himself denies usurping rhetorical voice and address or privileging writing and absence over speech and presence: "It has never been a question of opposing a graphocentrism to a logocentrism, nor, in general, any center to any other center" (Derrida 1981b:12). Nonetheless, the effect on voice and address is the same. Deconstruction ignores, often at its own peril, the power of the subtext to center voice and address. The concept of the subtext, at least in modern usage, owes much to the dynamics of live theater. "Subtext" is Stanislavski's term for any gestures, sounds, inner or outer movements, auditory or tactile sensations

that lie behind and beneath the words of a text: "It is the manifest, the inwardly felt expression of a human being in a part, which flows uninterruptedly beneath the words of the text, giving them life and a basis for existing. . . . The words come from the author, the subtext from the actor" (Stanislavski 1949:108-9). In rhetoric, and certainly in rhetoric as the Western tradition has understood it from antiquity through the Renaissance, various subtextual strategies of voice and address enforce a centering role in spoken and written discourse.

Though sometimes riddled with inconsistency, these terms "voice" and "address" offer important resources for rhetorical criticism and literary theory (see Kennedy 1978). They designate a frame of reference that emphasizes some dimensions of rhetorical meaning and suppresses others. In literary texts this frame acts on local figures and tropes to generate new levels of meaning. It can transpose the medium of discourse—language—so that its semantic stability depends upon a bond between speaker and audience. A historical awareness of concepts associated with voice and address may help to unravel some misunderstandings.

In English the term "voice" enters rhetorical theory circuitously. Its primary reference to vocal sound as the vehicle of human utterance dates to at least the fourteenth century. Modern rhetoricians, however, use the term in a highly metonymic sense that attributes the quality or tone of a speaking voice to the character or *ethos* of its individual speaker. This metonymic meaning derives from classical rhetoric with its technical treatment of *vox* or *pronuntiatio* (delivery) as a separate act of composition. Here classical theory sometimes urges the speaker to impersonate several voices mimetically.

Greek rhetoricians, for example, designate *prosopopoeia* (= Latin *fictio personae*, the impersonation of a fictive voice) and *ethopoie* (= Latin *notatio*, the impersonation of another's voice) as forms of direct quotation. Latin rhetoricians subsume these forms in the concept of *sermocinatio*, a figure that attempts to render mimetic dialogue or monologue. Quintilian, for example, lists such *figurae orationis* as *simulatio, exclamatio*, and *libera vox* (*licentia*) to fashion a distinctive voice for free and open discourse (Butler 1920-22:9.2.26).

The history of the term "address" is more complicated. The word enters English as a substantive only after long use as a verb. In the fourteenth century it means "to straighten" or "to direct";

hence in the fifteenth century Caxton employs it in the transitive sense of directing one's speech to another. In the eighteenth century Pope uses it in the intransitive sense of speaking directly to another. A more restricted usage occurs in George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), where the noun "address" implies a command of one's attention. Thus Campbell speaks of rhetoric as a discourse affecting the faculties of understanding, imagination, passion, and will. Each faculty requires a particular "kind of address' that formal rhetoric proposes to study (1963:2).

This interest in voice and address originates in classical theory. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, for example, Socrates privileges the rhetorical role of address when he asserts the importance of knowing one's audience: "Since it is the function of speech to lead souls by persuasion, he who is to be a rhetorician must know the various forms of soul" (Hamilton and Cairns 1961:271d). In "Plato's Pharmacy," an essay on this dialogue in *Dissemination*, Jacques Derrida traces Plato's association of writing with the word *pharmakon* that ambivalently signifies both "medicine' and "poison." Derrida concludes that "if *logos* is already a penetrating supplement, then isn't Socrates, 'he who does not write,' also a master of the *pharmakon*?" (1981a:117). As Derrida shows, "the nakedness of the *pharmakon*, the blunt bare voice (*psilos logos*), carries with it a certain mastery in the dialogue' (1981a:120). Contrary to Derrida's understanding, however, Plato shows over and over that speakers listen to their own voices while their audiences speak to their own selves, so that even in written dialogue mastery does not flow in a one-way direction. Derrida suspends that situation.

Aristotle recognized a dialectical interaction of voice and address between speakers and audiences in his *Rhetoric*. There he associates the role of voice with the act of address when he directs both toward the audience as the end of discourse: "That which is persuasive is persuasive in reference to some one" (Freese 1926:1356.b.11). The character of the audience determines what voice the speaker appropriates: "All men are willing to listen to speeches which harmonize with their own character" (1390.a.16). Later rhetoricians describe many techniques that enforce this dialectic between voice and address. The pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (84 BC) designates figures of thought like *effictio* (character portrayal) and *sermocinatio* (direct speech) (Caplan 1954:4.63-65) as stylistic means towards the creation of

voice, and figures of diction like *apostrophe* and *interrogatio* (4.22) as stylistic varieties of address. Quintilian expands the list in his *Institutio oratoria* (AD 94). He considers *ironia*, which the audience understands by reference to the speaker's voice (Butler 1920-22:8.6.54), and adds *exclamatio, prosopopoeia*, and "all those expressions that are especially striking and most effective in stirring the emotions of the audience" (9.2.24-29).

From the beginning rhetorical theory interacts with literary theory. In *The Republic*, for example, Socrates distinguishes among literary genres by voice: "There is one kind of poetry and taletelling which works wholly through imitation [in several voices], tragedy and comedy, and another which employs the recital of the poet himself [in one voice], best exemplified in the dithyramb, and there is again that which employs both, in epic poetry and in many other places" (Hamilton and Cairns 1961:394c). Aristotle echoes Plato when he discusses genre in his *Poetics* (Fyfe 1927:1448.a.2). Drama entails the mimetic creation of different voices for each character without the intrusion of the author's voice. Narrative (*apaggellonta*), on the other hand allows several options: to speak in one's own voice, or in an assumed fictive voice or mixture of voices that imitate the speech of various characters. The second of these options—to speak in an assumed fictive voice—subtly modifies the notion of genres other than drama or narrative. For the lyric it allows the poetic speaker to relinquish his or her own voice altogether and to speak in an imaginative, fictively dramatized voice not his or her own. From this assumption proceeds the idea of a fictive persona in lyric poetry and dramatic monologue, and it has a long history. Often the fictive persona addresses an equally fictive audience. Longinus, for example, illuminates this function of voice and address in his *On Literary Excellence* (AD 80). Figures like apostrophe, adjuration, anticipation and concealment, questions and answers, and asyndeton (chs. 16-19) provoke a kind of address. By deviating from the conventional grammatical order, they challenge the audience to work towards a fuller, richer understanding of meaning. Special *polyptota* include hortatory appeals to the reader in direct address (ch. 26) and dramatic changes in the speaker's voice (ch. 27). They enable poets in all genres to achieve strikingly distinctive styles.

For many moderns all poetic voices are fictive. Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, anticipates Derrida by insisting upon the

facticity of the speaking "I," "the only truly existent and eternal self resting at the basis of things" (1967:50). Nietzsche wholly dissociates the speaking "I" from the subjective voice of the poet: "Throughout the entire range of art we demand first of all the conquest of the subjective, redemption from the 'ego,' and the silencing of the individual will and desire; indeed, we find it impossible to believe in any truly artistic production, however insignificant, if it is without objectivity, without pure contemplation devoid of interest" (1967:48). For Nietzsche the means of objectifying the "I" is to fictionalize it, to divorce it entirely from the author's identity, to fashion it as a fictive voice. In that sense, then, all poetic voices are or should be factitious verbal structures free from merely contingent associations with individual beings.

The historical path from Nietzsche's formulation to post-structuralist theory that explodes the stability of the speaking "I" is complex. It is sufficient to indicate two quite different approaches that both anticipate some of deconstruction's claims and attempt to refute them. One is Benedetto Croce's complaint in his *Aesthetics* that modern rhetoric has degenerated into mere taxonomic refinement, a theory of elocution and beautiful speech that accumulates insights without system in a play of empty forms. Croce complains that this dessicated rhetoric reflects a mechanistic "prejudice that the reality of language lies in isolated and combinable words, not in living discourse, in expressive organisms rationally indivisible" (1909:151). The impoverished rhetoric that Croce describes prophetically suggests the structuralist taxonomies of figures and tropes that deconstruction proposes to overgo. Croce, however, argues that no rhetoric can move ahead by reifying language as deconstruction does.

An alternative approach pursues the claims of the Russian linguist V. N. Vološinov (or, as some scholars claim, Mikhail Bakhtin) about the social nature of language. In every text an implied listener functions "as an immanent participant in the aesthetic event," determining the form of the text from within as a participant who "exists in the poet's voice as the basic tone and intonation of that voice whether the poet himself intends this or not" (Vološinov 1976:114). Like Croce, Vološinov validates the roles of voice and address in a broadly social context. Unlike structuralists and deconstructionists, however, he refuses to enter the devocalized, silent field of mental space cultivated by many

systems of thought since the sixteenth century. Vološinov's dialogic imagination construes all discourse as a living exchange of voice and address.

Prospect might profit from retrospect, and retrospect shows that Renaissance rhetoric plays a crucial role in shaping modern sensibility. On the one hand, it increasingly construes figures, tropes, and other elocutionary devices as deviations from ordinary meaning rather than as intensifiers of deeper meaning. On the other, it pays decreasing attention to voice and address as frames for discourse. Renaissance rhetoric redistributes the classical emphasis on voice and address. George of Trebizond (1395-1472), for example, celebrates the intensifying functions of voice and address in his *Rhetoricorum libri V* (Venice, 1434), the first complete rhetorical treatise of the Renaissance. There George treats rhetoric as an enactment of dialogue, "a civil science in which, with as much agreement of the audience as possible, we speak on civic questions" (1538:5). He devotes three books to topics of *inventio* and a fourth book to their *dispositio*, where the *exordium* "prepares the audience for listening" (9) and the *peroratio* allows the speaker "to stir the audience's emotions as much as possible" (18). In the fifth book he discusses *elocutio* partly as a matter of figures and tropes but mostly as a matter of stylistic qualities or "ideas" like magnitude, vehemence, and gravity. These "ideas" that George appropriates from Hermogenes enhance the fabrications of a projected voice that moves audiences.

As Walter Ong has shown (1958), conceptions about rhetoric change profoundly as print technology overtakes the sixteenth century. Rhetoric shifts its attention from oral-aural performance towards the apprehension of thought in spatial, diagrammatic, or otherwise visual analogues. In his *De inventione dialectica* (1479, published 1515), Rudolph Agricola (1444-85) compares the speaker or rhetorician to an artist: he works "like a painter who shows how something swollen or hollow is expressed with drawn lines, or what color renders shade or light" (159). Just as figures or shapes and colors or shades constitute a painter's vocabulary, so material figures of speech and colors of expression constitute a rhetorician's vocabulary: "A picture is a silent poem, a poem is a talking picture" (166). Like George of Trebizond, Agricola designates the exordium and peroration for direct appeals to the audience, but he warns that such appeals must observe the laws of decorum. He derives these laws from Horatian literary theory and its concept of

decorum: "From ignorance of this principle one errs not only in life but often in poetry and speeches as well" (*idem*). The speaker must hold in check the resources of voice and address, subdue their emotive force, restrain their free play of idea and feeling.

Just as decorum in Agricola tends towards a flattening of style, so the rhetorical reform instituted in the *Dialecticae institutiones* (1543) of Petrus Ramus (1515-72) flattens the structure of composition. Like our deconstructionists, Ramus privileges writing over speech as an effective form of communication. The priority of writing to speech becomes a key issue. For modern deconstructionists writing is "prior" to speaking in a paradigmatic metaphysical sense. Writing typifies the lag inherent in any signifying act, and thus in all language, through its absence of a signatory and a referent. "Writing is the name of these two absences" (Derrida 1976:41). As a model of différance, writing provides a model for language in general. "Language is a possibility founded on the general possibility of writing" (Derrida 1976:52). For Ramus, writing is "prior" to speech—and privileged over it—in both a temporal and a pragmatic sense: "The practice of writing occurs prior to speech in nature and time" (1543:521). With this claim Ramus offers standard advice about writing an argument before delivering it as a speech. The reason is that a writer has more latitude than a speaker to dispose an argument, to select and heighten its best parts. Certainly Ramus' claim that writing is "prior. . . in time" argues for conventional rhetorical practice. The claim that it is "prior. . . in nature," however, argues for a new logical method.

Logic and rhetoric merge in rhetorical *inventio*. Among techniques for invention that Ramus proposes is *imitatio*, the technique of imitating earlier texts: "The first and easiest method of writing is imitation that prudently selects what it wishes to imitate" (*idem*). So far Ramus is asserting the classical and Renaissance practice of *copia* that Erasmus explains so well: "Who could speak more tersely than he who has ready at hand an extensive array of words and figures from which he can immediately select what is most suitable for conciseness?" (King and Rix 1963:15). With Ramus, however, the imitative copy entails endless repetitions in a vast intertextual space where echoes bounce impersonally off each other. As Walter Ong states the case, "At the heart of the Ramist enterprise is the drive to tie down words themselves, rather than other representations, in simple

geometrical patterns. Words are believed to be recalcitrant insofar as they derive from a world of sound, voices, cries; the Ramist ambition is to neutralize this connection by processing what is of itself nonspatial in order to reduce it to space in the starkest way possible" (1958:89). This reduction throws into bold relief the material substratum of language.

Ramus' idea of imitation also points toward the material substratum. Imitation entails surrendering one's own personal voice and sense of an audience, at least until one finds an authentic voice. Ramus defines the problem by (ironically enough) echoing Cicero's *topos* of influence as a sunburn: "When we feel ourselves colored by the virtues of others (as it happens to those who walk in the sun), then writing and speech depart from imitation and struggle with themselves" (1964:53R). Unlike earlier Renaissance humanists—notably Poliziano, Ermolaio Barbaro, and Erasmus, all of whom construe imitation as a point of departure for original composition—Ramus confines the writer within the materiality of the imitative frame. He offers no practical advice to distinguish between heuristic imitation and slavish copy. He can embrace only an intertextual world of depersonalized models that have lost their own subtextual powers of voice and address.

Post-structuralist theory oddly recalls some of these issues in our own time. True, Ramus is referring to the practical teaching of composition while post-structuralist theory is usually responding to a second order of thought about philosophical problems. Among literary critics, however, Paul de Man has written extensively about rhetorical theory and practice, and for other critics he has set an influential example of neutralizing voice by locating it in the material ground of metaphor: "The term *voice*, even when used in a grammatical terminology as when we speak of the passive or interrogative voice, is, of course, a metaphor inferring by analogy the intent of the subject from the structure of the predicate. . . . And this subject-metaphor is, in its turn, open to the kind of deconstruction to the second degree, the rhetorical deconstruction of psycholinguistics" (1979:18-19). The philosophical warrant for this position substantiates the power of rhetoric while it puts into question the stability of intentional acts. Jacques Derrida, for example, brackets conscious intentionality when he discusses the phenomenological assumption of being as present in signs that stand for being. He insists that he is challenging only a philosophical assumption about conscious intention: "In this

typology, the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from this place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and the entire system of utterances" (1982:326). One gain is that this position enables deconstruction to analyze unconscious motivation as a basis for some speech acts. For the specter of intention, however, deconstruction substitutes the material power of rhetorical figures and tropes. *Logos* dominates and even subverts *ethos* and *pathos*. *Elocutio* becomes the focus of rhetoric. Its differing, deferring, and dispersive character finally displaces the functions of voice and address.

In its historical development Renaisssance rhetoric similarly narrows its focus to *elocutio*, the search for figures and tropes in verbal expression. *Inventio* and *dispositio* become adjuncts of logic and dialectic whose proper function is to formulate ideas. Rhetoric attends wholly to verbal style. It schematizes figures and tropes, the devices of style that supplement thought rather than serve as a medium through which thought lives. Ramistic studies of rhetoric offer long inventories of elocutionary devices, figures of words and of thought that enhance style. Attention to voice and address disappears, all the more so since their uses, unlike those of schemes and tropes, admit of no logical limit. Major examples of Ramist rhetoric that have served literary criticism since the Renaissance include Abraham France's *Arcadian Rhetoric* (1588), Du Marsais' *Des Tropes* (1730), and Pierre Fontanier's *Manuel classique* (1818).

The twentieth-century counterpart of rhetorical taxonomies is Groupe μ's *Rhétorique générale*, the most ambitious structuralist rhetoric of our time. Groupe μ seeks to free our understanding of rhetoric from contingent contexts by distinguishing among universal types of schemes and tropes, finally relegating voice and address to the behavioral inflections of a pre-determined code. Deconstruction reacts against such a code by bracketing its assumptions about voice and address.

Jacques Derrida argues specifically against them when he criticizes Husserl's search for the metaphysical foundations of knowledge. Derrida begins by questioning Husserl's intuition about the presence of voice to itself: "Consciousness owes its privileged status. . . to the possibility of a living vocal medium [*la vive voix*]" (1973:15). He asserts that traditional philosophy has used a metaphor of "the unity of thought and voice in logos" (74) to confirm its principles of self-identity and continuity. This use, "taking auto-affection as the exercise of the voice" (82), entails a

metaphysical assumption that begs the question of presence and its privileged status. To overcome this assumption, Derrida disrupts it: "Shall we say that the auto-affection we have been talking about up until now concerns only the operation of the voice? . . . This pure spontaneity is [only] an impression" (83-84).

Clearly Derrida is subverting only the philosophical identity of voice with thought and presence, yet he subverts it with important consequences for rhetoric and literary theory. By calling all these terms into question, Derrida undermines their usefulness in his broader critical vocabulary. Even though he repeatedly reclaims them for rhetorical and literary analyses, he nonetheless discloses their theoretical complicity with other ungrounded metaphysical assumptions. More specifically, he accords a newly privileged status to their opposites, silence and absence. His critique of Husserl comes full circle. Derrida himself makes an ungrounded metaphysical assumption in according absence equal status with presence, silence with voice. By denying one's privilege over the other, he in fact begs the question of absence, of non-identity, and of discontinuity. When he designates iterability as the structure of communication, he makes the absence of intention a necessary entailment: "Given this structure of iteration, the intention which animates utterance will never be completely present in itself and its content" (1982:326). In this context there is simply no philosophical means of denying or affirming metaphysical assumptions about presence or absence. Nor are there any rhetorical means.

Traditional rhetoric, however, assumes neither presence nor absence in voice and address. It instead construes them as heuristic devices. Rhetorical voice may resemble the living human voice, but it nowhere presumes to supplant the latter. Its function is wholly mediatory: it lends form to the speaker's discourse. Likewise rhetorical address need not presume a living audience present in time and space. By heuristically construing a fictive audience, it indeed assumes the opposite. It assumes that audiences can suspend their limitations in time and space in order to interact with the text. As rhetorical terms, voice and address privilege neither presence nor absence because they freely admit both when they fulfill their heuristic function. As Paul Ricoeur has shown, they provide frames for the focus of discourse (1977:83-90).

Though discourse takes many forms, Derrida seeks to valorize

one form of it as irreducible. For that form he designates writing as the becoming absent and unconscious of its subject and referent (1976:69). Writing reifies absence by effacing both author and reference, and it displaces signs across time and space in ways that correspond to the original condition of the sign. In his philosophy Derrida seeks to clarify the logical limits of the relationship between signifiers and signifieds. He begins with Saussure's concept of the sign. According to Saussure, each sign acquires meaning only through its difference from other signs: "In language there are only differences" (1966:120). Derrida carries this principle a step further by postulating that as part of the sign a signifier acquires its meaning only through difference from its signified, "the thesis of *difference* as the source of linguistic value" (1976:52). This postulate entails a logical fallacy, however, since within the sign system signifiers and signifieds belong to mutually exclusive orders of meaning. Signifiers certainly differ from other signifiers: one phoneme differs from another and one morpheme differs from another; but the signifieds of various signs do not necessarily differ from each other. Two unlike signifiers may in fact point to the same signified, as happens in synonymy and circumlocution. Signifiers operate on an entirely separate level from their signifieds.

Derrida tries to overcome the breach by asserting that the signifier's difference from the signified constitutes a necessary condition of its meaning: "Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only everywhere differences and traces of traces" (1981b:26). No real connection prevails between signifiers and what they refer to. All words are buried metaphors. They relate neither to reality nor to a personal understanding of reality, but rather to a series of displaced meanings. They are common coin, public property that belong alike to all and cannot be appropriated by any single person or voice.

If Derrida's displacement of voice and address evokes Ramus' reduction of rhetoric to *elocutio*, there is a good reason why it does. Both operationally distrust the dynamics of a subtext, Ramus because print technology occludes it, Derrida because the text is so full that there is nothing outside the text. Both also distrust metaphor, yet both conceive of it as a rhetorical necessity because for each rhetoric is primarily a system of figures and tropes. As pure supplement it adds itself to already significant language and defers it in a necessarily indefinite process (Derrida

1976:141, 275). Yet the rhetorical construction always comes to obliterate itself, endlessly affording grounds for its own deconstruction. It represents a moment of detour in which truth can be lost the very instant it is gained (Derrida 1982:241).

The result is an endorsement of interminable rhetorical analysis, a *déformation professionnelle* that appeals to literary theorists of various stripes and has certainly gained much ground in the 1970s and 1980s. At the root of this interminability, however, is a faulty definition of metaphor as a deviation from literal meaning. As Paul Ricoeur has shown, metaphor is not a negative deviation from meaning, but rather a positive interaction and fulfillment of many richly textured meanings. The startling effect of a momentary deviation gives way to fuller significance. The referent emerges on a higher level of meaning (Ricoeur 1977:147-56). Derrida nonetheless privileges a negative metaphorics of deviation. Metaphor "risks disrupting the semantic plenitude to which it should belong. Marking the moment of the turn or of the detour [*du tour ou du détour*] during which meaning might seem to venture forth alone, unloosed from the very thing it aims at however, from the truth which attunes it to its referent, metaphor also opens the wandering of the semantic" (1982:241). He then announces a deconstruction that replaces the binary simplicities of Ramistic analysis with the opaque antinomies of an unsettled, forever self-questioning analysis. Literary theory that adopts this approach pursues an enormously subtle and often productive program for rhetorical analysis, but it also surrenders its commitment to rhetoric as an instrument of insight or discovery. In deconstructive theory each gain bows to a succeeding one that inevitably contradicts it.

As literary theorists ought to recognize, language is not just extensional, referring to something outside itself. It is also intentional, stemming from a consciousness that knows and wills. In a philosophical study that has important implications for rhetoric and literary theory, John Searle shows that intention constitutes a state of mind or attitude rather than a conscious act, thereby accommodating both conscious and unconscious intentions: "One can represent something as being the case even when one believes that it isn't the case (a lie); even when one believes that it is the case, but it isn't (a mistake); and even if one is not interested in convincing anybody that it is the case" (1983:169). If it were otherwise, the rhetorical or literary critic might be able to

deny material intentionality in a text by arguing that the author never declared such a conscious intention. Instead, because it is a state of mind or attitude, one must take account of its relational properties. These properties derive from the circumstances of the utterance. They involve the character of the speaker, the nature of his or her knowledge and will, the composition of the audience, and the speaker's interaction with the audience registered in various forms of voice and address. Voice and address convey these intentional properties, and they constitute a frame that powerfully modifies both the speaker's and the audience's focus on language and meaning.

We might conclude with Nietzsche. Deconstructive theorists have referred with great enthusiasm to his fragmentary and until recently unpublished "Notes for a Course on Rhetoric." There Nietzsche asserts that all language is inherently figurative: "Tropes do not supervene upon words but are rather their proper nature: one cannot speak absolutely of a proper signification" (1971:113). Deconstructive theory stops with that formulation. Paul de Man, for example, concludes his discussion of Nietzsche by asserting that "rhetoric is a *text* in that it allows for two incompatible, mutually self-destructive points of view, and therefore puts an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any reading or understanding" (1979:131). Nietzsche, however, continues with a clear endorsement of voice and address as mutually interfacing components of a dialogue. The speaker projects his or her voice through a poetic persona: "His art is one of imitation: he speaks as an actor speaks for another person or cause that is outside himself" (1971:117). Speech implies not only the existence of another to whom the speech is addressed, but also that the speaker has a kind of otherness within himself or herself. The speaker's voice is always a fiction that allows the speaker to address another in the sympathetic awareness of what it means to be an other.

As with the speaker's voice, so with the audience that the speaker addresses. Speakers and audiences together enter the discursive field as makers, shapers, formers, and transformers of meaning. Walter Ong has memorably shown that "the writer's audience is always a fiction" (1977:53-81). To designate both speaker and audience as fictive, however, does not deny their concrete existential reality, nor does it abrogate the intentionality of the producing speaker or writer. On the contrary, it reinforces their reality as particular components of rhetorical expression while

it confirms the intentionality of the producing agent. In writing as in speech the audience participates in a rhetorical contest with the producing agent. The latter's chief advantage is his or her rhetorical mode of voice and address. Only at their own peril do rhetorical criticism and literary theory ignore them.

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