

By the same author

- Rhetoric of Fiction*, 1961
Don't Try to Reason with ME: Essays and Ironies for a Credulous Age, 1970
Rhetoric of Irony, 1974
Learn Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent, 1974
Practical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism, 1979
Vocation of a Teacher, 1988
Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction, 1988
Harper and Row Rhetoric: Writing as Thinking, Thinking as Writing (with Marshall Gregory), 1987; 2nd ed., 1991
Art of Growing Older, 1992
Craft of Research (with Joseph Williams and Gregory Colomb), 1995; 2nd ed., 2003
The Love of It: Amateuring and Its Rivals, 1999

Books edited

- Knowledge Most Worth Having*, 1967
Harper and Row Reader (with Marshall Gregory), 1984

The Rhetoric of RHETORIC

*The Quest for Effective
Communication*

Wayne C. Booth

 **Blackwell
Publishing**

© 2004 by Wayne C. Booth

BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

The right of Wayne C. Booth to be identified as the Author of this Work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

First published 2004 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

5 2008

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Booth, Wayne C.

The rhetoric of rhetoric: the quest for effective communication / Wayne C. Booth.
p. cm. – (Blackwell manifestos)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Rhetoric. I. Title. II. Series.

P301.B594 2004
808–dc22

2004003097

ISBN 978-1-4051-1236-9 (hardcover: alk. paper) – ISBN 978-1-4051-1237-6 (pbk.: alk. paper)

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 11.5 on 13.5 pt Bembo
by Kolam Information Services Pvt. Ltd, Pondicherry, India

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

For further information on
Blackwell Publishing, visit our website:
www.blackwellpublishing.com

For my wife, Phyllis, thanking her for six decades of criticism
of my frequent failure to practice
listening-rhetoric

Part II

The Need for Rhetorical Studies Today

Our choice of language is a matter of truth or error, of right or wrong – of life or death.

Michael Polanyi

All life therefore comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other; for all life comes back to the question of our relations with one another.

Henry James, *The Question of Our Speech*

Since rhetoric, good and bad, makes a great part of our reality, and since at its best it is the art of removing misunderstanding, there is no corner of our lives that would not deserve a full book about the dangers of neglecting its careful study. My choice of three of the largest of those corners – education, politics, and the media – has not been easy. Surely I should include a long section on the rhetoric and rhetrickery of lawyers; of psychologists, including Freudians and their enemies; of self-help books, from destructive to profound; of gerontologists, ecologists, Marxists, postmodernist art critics, and so on. Why not a full chapter on the neglect by economists, celebrating Deirdre McCloskey's two fine books that attempt to awaken fellow economists to their inevitable reliance on rhetoric? Why not a chapter on the appalling rhetrickery by the managers of huge corporations?

The Need for Rhetorical Studies Today

The universality of rhetoric and its problems should not surprise anyone who thinks a bit about our beginning as human beings, whether traced biologically or as religious myth. Whoever wrote the first draft of Genesis had to decide what rhetorical exchanges to report. "Should I have Satan trick those two new creatures by saying 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil'? Should I have Cain shout up 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Shouldn't I make it more interesting by having Adam argue more effectively against God's decision to punish?" The whole of Genesis might well have been revised further and entitled "the rhetoric of creation problems." Even literalists who believe that God was responsible for the narration should face the fact that God had to make rhetorical decisions, if His story was to work well.

But long before Genesis was written and revised again and again, "we" all faced the challenge of how to talk effectively with one another, in this complex, not to say messy, not to say shit-bound world. Consciously or unconsciously, from "the beginning," one or another of us paused for a moment, in the relentless hunt for food or sex – the struggle to be "the fittest" – and for the first time took a serious look at a fellow human being, as yet unnamed. Some man or woman experienced not just sexual desire for some available creature but actually *attended to* and then fell in love with an *Other* – a fellow creature who deserved not just to be screwed but to be listened to. At about the same time some father or mother suddenly recognized that a child was more than just the only automatic way to continue the species.¹ The infant finally was seen as a fellow communicator, a partner in dialogue. As neurobiologist Daniel Siegel puts it, they discovered, as all effective parents continue to discover, "contingent communication." Here's a rough summary of some of his points about that discovery of "attachment":

Children are born with an innate need to be attached to their care-takers. Effective parents perceive and respond to the child's signals, making sense of them in terms of what they mean for the child. They

The Need for Rhetorical Studies Today

achieve a form of joining, of communion: patterns of communication promoting emotional well-being and a positive sense of self.²

At some such moment, our ancestors realized that "we" were not just an isolated "I" but an "I" needing to join a "we," with something superior to mere physical strokes: rhetoric! From that "moment" onward – it was of course innumerable moments preceding the first recorded history – "we" knew, consciously or unconsciously, that we were in constant need to find effective ways of communicating with other "I"s. And we all thus discovered (most often unconsciously, of course) just how rhetoric of the wrong kind lands us in disaster.³

- 6 Every administrator in any university or college or high school – even if a top celebrity – is required to teach a first-year rhetoric course every year.
- 7 Every department in every university and college must require a “capstone course,” preceding graduation, in the special rhetorics of that discipline: The Rhetoric of Economics, The Rhetoric of Philosophy, The Rhetoric of Mathematics. None is allowed to call it merely a “Writing” or “Composition” course.
- 8 Whenever any journalist or politician uses the word “rhetoric” in a way that reduces it to rhetrickery, he or she is instantaneously transferred to some job requiring no use of words whatever. This law has been one of the most troublesome, because it has proved so difficult to find any job that does not depend on successful use of rhetoric, and the law thus seems hopelessly elitist. But a large part of the Welfare Relief Fund is allocated to feeding hungry journalists through a two-year program in rhetorical training.

Well, as I returned from those three days I turned on my old TV and stumbled on a bit of the program *Crossfire*. Feeling cross, I “fired” by punching to Public Television and there was the *McLaughlin Hour*, with almost equally deaf shouting. I flipped again and there was the *Washington Gang* on CNN. Horrors. In Rhetopia, not a single one of those quarrelers now being paid fortunes for never listening would even exist.

Obviously nothing remotely like Rhetopia will ever be realized. Who would want to live in a country with so many laws violating our freedom to choose our own form of miseducation? So the point is not just to wake up a few professors in every field to see rhetoric’s relevance to what *they* do; it should be clear that if my broadened definition of rhetoric has any validity, then this celebration (or jeremiad: take your choice) is addressed to all readers who care about misunderstanding and the skills required to achieve understanding. The only possible listeners for whom my point would be irrelevant – those who want to learn rhetrickery skills in order to win by doing harm in the world – have of course long since cast this book into the garbage.

6

The Threats of Political Rhetrickery

What shall we do with powers, which we are so rapidly developing, and what will happen to us if we cannot learn to guide them in time?

I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*

In the counsels of government we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

President Dwight Eisenhower, Farewell Address, January 17, 1961

It's not negotiable, and I don't want to debate it.

President George W. Bush, in response to a journalist's question about Iraq policy

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India . . . [and] the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness.

George Orwell, *A Collection of Essays* (1970)

The clearest examples of how rhetoric makes (and destroys) our realities are found in politics, where Aristotle’s “deliberative rhetoric” reigns. Changing the present in order to change the future

is everyone's political goal. Everybody knows that political argument changes our world day by day, often causing disasters and only sometimes preventing them. Especially in wartime, our lives are flooded with political rhetoric, defensible and indefensible (what I'll label P-Rhet).¹

Whenever we try to discuss any small stream of such floods, we face three major problems:

- the banality both of the subject itself and of the most dramatic examples of the good and bad kinds. "You deplore our floods of rhetrickery? What's new about political 'spinning' and aggressive lying?" "You praise Churchill's 'blood, sweat, and tears' speech? Surprise!" "You consider it scandalous when President Bush lies about statistics as he pushes his grotesque tax cut plans? What a revelation!" "You think Saddam Hussein was actually lying day in, day out? Just plain boring!"
- the bias of any critic who pronounces P-Rhet "defensible" or "indefensible." No critic of rhetoric can escape bias. Am I among those who are appalled by most of President Bush's self-serving policies and self-touting speeches? Obviously I am. So why should any reader trust my claims that much of his rhetoric is rhetrickery?
- the fantastic complexity of problems, motives, and audiences faced by every sincere political rhetor. Even the most honest among them must do some accommodation to the special interests and emotional commitments of particular audiences.

Feeling threatened by those problems, I wonder how many readers here have been as obsessed as I have been, through many decades, with abominable P-Rhet. In 1963, after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, I attempted a little book, perhaps to be called "Evil Communication," loaded with lamentations like this:

Whatever the truth about the Kennedy assassination [charges were leveled in every direction, including the claim that Lyndon Johnson

engineered it], the truth about its aftermath is that Americans are unable to discuss such matters productively. It may be too strong to say, as some have, that the debate about the assassination is a greater national disgrace than the assassination itself, but no one can read more than a few pages of what has passed for debate to see that there is simply no rational limit on what some Americans will believe. There are no effective limits to what will be said, and no standards for how it will be said. A shout is worth as much as the most carefully reasoned argument.

As I expand that lament here, the center will be the rhetoric of our leaders, with only a short section toward the end about the rhetoric of protesters. Because I am writing and revising throughout 2003 and 2004, and because I was personally appalled when the US invasion of Iraq was first threatened and then carried out (with consequences that, though increasingly troublesome, are still highly unpredictable), many of my examples are by now – whenever "now" is – not just outdated but obviously biased. We can be sure, though, that the cheating and distorting I report, by both leaders and protesters, will go on occurring in future events. Just translate my outdated examples into your current scene. The problems of P-Rhet, and the need for citizens to be alerted to the problem, will never go away.²

In chapter 7 I will deal briefly with how our media reinforce political rhetrickery: passionate "proofs" for this or that false belief, left and right, can be found in every morning paper, in every weekly magazine, on every news channel – to say nothing of conversations over dinner. Deceptive P-Rhet is found even in ostensibly objective political science journals. A few of the better journals, like the *Boston Review*, aim for an airing of all sides in a particular quarrel, but even in these one finds the effects of bias in the editing. Thus we need deeper rhetorical education, not just about the media but about political practice.

The Good and the Bad of It

Putting aside judgments of accommodation skills when addressing particular audiences (what some might simply label "technique," the

The Need for Rhetorical Studies Today

choice of *this* metaphor or cliché or synonym rather than *that* one), what are the differences between justifiable P-Rhet and the stuff we should publicly condemn – or at least personally resist?

The most obvious standard we all apply is that of success. If a speaker wins strong support for a cause that we embrace, we celebrate the rhetoric, even if we spot technical flaws. But if she drives the audience away, we tend to proclaim the speech or article a failure, regardless of the skill exhibited. For many rhetoricians throughout history, this has been the sole, comfortable criterion, especially in time of war. Though P-Rhet that leads to successful diplomacy rather than war is frequently praised – at least when the enemy is not a real threat – most efforts are judged according to their success in uniting those potentially on one side or the other.³ A leader seeking support for defense feels no impulse to demonstrate that he has really listened to the enemy and is trying to get the enemy to listen – except of course to hear the threat and retreat. Standards of judgments are thus localized: did the speech prove successful in addressing *this* audience, on *this* occasion? Judged by this standard, Edmund Burke's amazing effort to achieve conciliation was poor rhetoric (see pp. 52–4).

Throughout the ages, the most passionate – and thus the most questionable – rhetoric has been about war, from leaders and followers on both sides. Some war-rhetoric can be judged as remarkably skillful, as are most of Shakespeare's inventions of speeches by war leaders. Can we really question the excellence of Henry V's skill in winning his audience, into battle?

But this lies all within the will of God,
To whom I do appeal, and in whose name
Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on
To venge me as I may, and to put forth
My rightful hand in a well-hallowed cause. (I, ii. 289–93).

Such speeches are thrilling – to the right local audience: *my country, right or wrong*. Just as Hitler's wild speeches thrilled millions of Germans, war speeches by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill

The Threats of Political Rhetrickery

thrilled me, and President George W. Bush's and Prime Minister Tony Blair's celebration of the Iraq attack have apparently thrilled a majority of Americans (while alienating most of the rest of the world). The very thought of patriotic war violence somehow ignites passionate agreement, often including the belief that God is Himself speaking.⁴

Such stuff works – on those who are ready to receive it and thus already inclined to “join up.” Shakespeare knew that Henry V's audience was already on the king's side: he could portray his hero as knowing that the enemy would probably never hear his words; he had no need to think about how those words might inflame his enemies or even attract larger numbers to the enemy's cause. Those on his side would find the passionate rhetoric justifiable, while to me now, considering it “internationally,” it seems a dangerous model, one that, like thousands of war songs and memorized war speeches, has “educated” all of us to celebrate the glories of war.

Two Modern Revolutions

Too many political leaders these days seem unaware that rhetorical corners like Henry V's are by now extremely rare. They speak as if oblivious of two major “revolutions” that have complicated every moment of P-Rhet. Everyone is at least dimly aware of these two transformations. Why they are so frequently ignored is a mystery.

(1) The media have by now produced an inescapable expansion and multiplicity of audiences. What a rhetor says to Congress or Parliament will be heard and judged or misjudged not just by those present, or by those in other countries. The words and images will be heard and viewed all over the world, on TV and radio and even on newspaper front pages. What would Shakespeare have had Henry V say if he were writing today, knowing that not only the French but potential friends or enemies in other nations would hear his words?

A major result is that accommodation to specific audiences now becomes much more dangerous than it used to be. Any speaker's

enemies can easily check on what was said last week to a different audience, and then declare the speaker dishonest. Democrats have been catching President Bush in these conflicts again and again, and now (revising in March 2004), Republicans are catching probable-candidate Senator John Kerry embracing one position this week to this specific audience, and saying the opposite next week to that specific audience.⁵ Thus accommodation to any specific audience, even one as large as "patriotic American" or "anti-Republican," is now easily exposed. A recently released documentary traces how President Bush "accommodated" his claims about weapons of mass destruction (WMD), as his American audience became more and more aware of the shakiness of the evidence for them. At first he was "absolutely certain" that Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction," ready to be released any day now. But by June of 2003 his phrase was "programs of mass destruction." And by the time of his State of the Union address in 2004, the phrasing was "weapons of mass destruction-related program activities."

(2) As a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction, and thus the threat of mutual annihilation, war is no longer merely local, promising a clear victory to one "side" or the other. When Henry V attacked France, no other nations bothered much about it. When he spoke about the plan of attack, no leader in Asia or the Near East would have responded, even if they heard his speeches; none of his weapons threatened them. "The world" went its own manifold ways; soldiers fought only other soldiers, with no available planes or rockets to spread the attacks on to civilians.

When President Bush declared war on an "axis of evil" – Iraq, Iran, and North Korea – and then led a preemptive war on Iraq, his words and the technologically advanced attack they supported were overheard – though probably not really *listened* to – by the whole world. Considered militarily, this revolution in what "war" means has been acknowledged in almost everything that leaders like Bush and Blair have said: the "war" on terrorism is a worldwide war, and weapons of mass destruction are a rising threat everywhere. Considered rhetorically, however, their speeches have still been

mainly aimed locally, at those already fired up in support of a war. President Bush has occasionally attempted to avert full hatred of all Muslims, as if working to achieve worldwide peace and full democracy everywhere. But most of his words referring to those "out there," the opponents and potential opponents, have been words of threat or hate, employing the military revolution as if the media revolution had not occurred. Whatever the conscious goal inspiring the rhetoric might have been, the effect was generally to increase rather than diminish the number of enemies. When asked about the rise in protest bombings in Iraq, his response was "Bring 'em on."

It is not that the importance of friendly rhetoric has been ignored. When Secretary of State Colin Powell appointed Charlotte Beers as the State Department's undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, the proclaimed goal was to convince the Arab world that we were not what they thought we were: the enemy of Allah and all Arabs. She was to redefine "who America is, not only for ourselves under this kind of attack [September 11], but also for the outside world." Huge sums were spent trying to capture a sympathetic Arab audience, by getting us "branded" as standing for real freedom. But, as Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber put it, in *Weapons of Mass Deception* (2003), "Bombardments of rhetoric can annoy and offend their targets."

The effort had no success: "Attempts to market the United States as 'brand freedom' came into conflict with a U.S. tendency to talk rather than listen" (pp. 11–12). The frightening fact still remains that even if Beers, or the Office of Global Communications (OGC), had been more skillful in their mission of "supervision of America's image abroad," it is extremely unlikely that the targets addressed would have been willing to engage in a discussion based on *listening*.

Thus the two revolutions – they could be dubbed awkwardly as "media globalization" and "globalization of weaponry" – have transformed the narrow audience of classical wartalk into a multiplicity of audiences.⁶ By now, some audiences who are not listened to by the speaker will respond as did leaders in North Korea, back in April 2002 after President Bush declared them part of the "axis of evil" and

thus implied that they must be destroyed. Under the headline “EMBRACING THE RHETORIC OF ARMAGEDDON,” one newspaper reported leaders in North Korea as responding: “We will resolutely wipe out the aggressors and reduce them to a forlorn wandering spirit. . . . [We will] turn the stronghold of the enemy into a sea of fire” and “take 1,000-fold revenge.”⁷ Such respondents have been part of Bush’s unlistened-to audience, and they answer his careless metaphors with open threats, as frightening as those on our side. As the occupation continues (March 2004), the rhetoric of the Iraqis and other Muslim nations has become increasingly vitriolic against the United States. Would they be talking and acting as they are if President Bush had thought a bit harder about the wide range and deep convictions of his real audience?

In sum, the task of judging P-Rhet, both ethically and technically, has been expanded by the two revolutions to include our having to face not just the effects on any local audience but also the effects on the future of the entire world. If leaders win massive local support, using Henry V’s kind of rhetoric, and simultaneously increase enemies around the world, have they truly succeeded? They cannot win the new wars unless their words and images portray effective thinking about how they will be heard globally and how they imply some chance of improving *the world’s* future. Only if they have *listened* to the international audience, thinking hard about both the local welfare and the welfare of the world, can their words be judged as not only successful but totally justifiable.

When Prime Minister Blair, for example, addressed the US House of Representatives on July 17, 2003, he revealed a splendid ability to employ arguments and flourishes that would appeal to the strongly pro-war majority – and impress even those of us Americans who oppose his views. He had in effect listened to many Americans, his “local” audience, in advance. Even while opposing his views, I found his talk far superior to anything Bush has said, and must judge it “high-quality win-rhetoric – of the narrow kind.” But he had apparently failed to think hard about his British audience, most of whom would hate – or so my guess is – his pandering to US power.

(He did incorporate several deep criticisms of Bush’s unilateral policies, but so subtly that most of the media didn’t even mention them the following morning.) Was Blair not concerned about how America’s critics in the UK would respond to his hyped-up praise of the United States as Britain’s best friend? Obviously success with the House of Representatives was his primary goal – and he won, in that narrow sense.⁸

Similarly, when President Bush was feeling challenged, in mid-July 2003, about the evidence for WMD in Iraq, his answer was, “*There is no doubt in my mind* that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the world’s peace. And *there’s no doubt in my mind* that the United States did the right thing in removing him from power” (my italics). In other words, “I don’t need to listen to any dissent. You should just listen to me. I will not consider the evidence that may have produced doubt in *your* mind, since there is no doubt in *mine*. And I assume that you’ll take my own certainty as hard evidence.” When he addressed the UN on September 23, 2002, what was heard was all self-confidence about what would hook Americans; but only a fraction of the media made the point that his words “were aimed more at a domestic audience than the world community” (*New York Times*).

Such examples of non-listening appall me, as does the fact that very little of what we protesters have said has shown any signs of LR. Leaders and protesters on all “sides” are employing mere win-rhetoric, often of the worst kinds.

What the two revolutions require, then, in the face of such P-Rhet, is that we must rethink all of our ideas about accommodation to audiences. Every important bit of P-Rhet is intentionally or unintentionally addressed now to a *worldwide* audience. And our future depends on politicians who can find ways of addressing that larger audience, instead of talking only of “crusades” against “evil” adversaries.

In short, we can no longer depend on clever *localized* P-Rhet. Our leaders must learn to listen to, or imagine, the arguments of all “sides,” actually considering global welfare as finally determining the welfare of the speaker and the localized audience.

The consequences of failures to listen are so obvious as hardly to deserve listing. By now (spring 2004) we are already seeing the current consequences of strongly localized P-Rhet, whether from leaders, followers, or protesters. They fall into four main kinds:

- Opponents of even the noblest cause can too often find examples of rhetrickery defending that cause, thus “proving” that the “enemy” is contemptible. “If my enemy’s cause is supported by that kind of blind irrationality or immoral accommodation to audience prejudice, what further proof do I need that the cause is both stupid and cruel?” When a protest poster calls President Bush an “asshole” or “evil,” all hawks feel confirmed in their support: those doves are blind, cruel idiots. When a leader’s defender condemns all critics as “unpatriotic,” or even labels them as “traitors,” the leader’s critics rightly feel that they have strong evidence that their opposition is justified.⁹
- Partisans on all sides become unjustifiably skeptical of *everything* said on the other side. Instead of *listening* and making critical distinctions, everything said is reduced to deception. For many doves, absolutely nothing said by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld or President Bush can be trusted. The same is true for most non-Americans. A reporter in London’s *Financial Times* wrote: “Mr. Rumsfeld is the shock jock of diplomacy, the Howard Stern of American Policy. It is a disgraceful indictment of the Bush administration that this man has become the most identifiable spokesman for the U.S. foreign policy.” But that extreme claim is mistaken: even a Rumsfeld should be *listened* to, distinguishing the sound cases from the faked. Meanwhile, in the same way, hawks judge every protest statement as dogmatic, blind anti-patriotism that does not deserve to be listened to. Thus all chances of dialogue are destroyed.
- The mistrust on both sides gets absurdly exaggerated: Instead of merely suspecting some lying or fudging or mild suppression of evidence, the suspicion is extended to charges of criminality. When President Bush rejected Inspector Blix’s further pursuit

of whether Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (April 23, 2003), thousands of his opponents, in the United States and abroad, assumed that his motive was simply to be able to *plant* those weapons secretly and then tell the world, “At last we’ve found the evidence proving that we were right in our preemptive strike.” None of us who mistrust him has any evidence that he would ever go that far to deceive us, but his less serious deceptions implanted the stronger (and probably absurd) suspicion. When he went on month after month, saying things like “Yes, we have now found the weapons of mass destruction,” and, on May 1, 2003, that “In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed,” while “still having work to do in Iraq,” more and more “listeners” decided that *nothing* he said could be thoroughly trusted. Many extend the charge to “it’s all deliberate lying,” overlooking the likelihood that he often believes what he says, only later discovering how he has himself been deceived. So the total suspicion can be misleading and destructive. We thus all risk falling into mistrust of some statement that is actually both true and important. Writing in spring 2004, how can I predict what our future judgment of all this P-Rhet will be?

- Suspicion about deception has always increased in wartime, because wars *require* increased deception. But this time the effect has been one of the strongest ever, as journalists find their own lives depending on victory and their own professional status depending on reports favorable to the White House. As David Bauder put it, on April 22, 2003, “With the reporters quite literally depending on the military for their lives, there was the real possibility it could cost them their objectivity.”¹⁰ And some have implicitly followed Rush Limbaugh’s open declaration (as reported, reliably?), “objectivity be damned.” One congressman has explicitly criticized the US administration for not adequately *censoring* what journalists report from the war. And journalist’s spontaneous self-censorship is magnified. The result has been a grotesque increase in mistrust of all media reports, as we’ll see in the next chapter.

After the dramatic scene of Saddam Hussein's statue crashing down, treated by US media as an unquestionable sign of victory, Hussein or his minions sent out a flood of images and claims that his side was still winning – passionately declaring that Bush, the “sick dog,” was talking “garbage” and was losing. The lies issued by Hussein's defender, Mohammed Diab Ahmed, became – understandably – a prominent farcical target for many American journalists, convinced of US victory. US spokesmen exaggerated every such seeming triumph and played down every anxiety in ways that all of our enemies – along with all of us protesters – saw as equally absurd. And at every moment the media were profiting from the daily explosion of vitriolic extremes on all sides and Orwellian double-speak by this or that moderate.

So as the troubles in Iraq mount, rhetoric from the left is full of the word “quagmire,” while those on the right claim that using that term proves lack of patriotism. And now that the administrators have been caught in unquestionably dishonest rhetrickery about evidence for weapons of mass destruction, everyone on all sides is heating up and shallowing down the talk about it. We doves are feeling that there is no point in trying to listen to an administration that itself does not listen; all we can do is shout. And the pro-war crowd feels certain that whatever we say is stupid or downright evil. That's what war does to our rhetoric.

As Gunter Grass says, summarizing that degradation: “The rhetoric of the aggressor increasingly resembles that of his enemy. Religious fundamentalism leads both sides to abuse what belongs to all religions, taking the notion of God hostage in accordance with their own fanatical understanding.”¹¹

What all of this dramatizes are the complex, paradoxical problems faced by any critic attempting to appraise the rhetoric of any intense conflict, any “war” – whether literal or figurative. On the one hand, violence and the threat of violence corrupt rhetoric, producing an explosion of rhetrickery; almost everything anybody says becomes contemptible. On the other hand, critics encounter an increase in their own bias, as violence threatens.

All of this is intended to underline the fact that the only real alternative to violence is LR of various kinds, including bargain-rhetoric.¹² We have to choose, when conflict heightens, either to argue or fight. At a given tragic moment, LR disappears, violence takes over, and rhetrickery casts off all thought, on all “sides”: except about how to win.

Why Many Judgments Against “Dishonest” P-Rhet are Unfair

What I have said so far underplays the plain fact that leaders on all sides are surely justified in inventing the best possible strokes for defending any cause they consider genuinely noble. In wartime especially, that the cause is just is tacitly “demonstrated” by the “fact” that “our” “noble” lives are being lost to “evil” enemies. And how can anyone say that it is wrong to employ lies, some addressed to the enemy, some to our own side, if those lies will finally save the lives not just of soldiers but of us at home? Lying effectively becomes an honorable weapon of war, rivaling in importance even our military strength. If I can save the world by lying effectively, is not the lie more honorable than truth-telling that leads to massive disaster?

That question leads us to really deep problems in any appraisal of P-Rhet. It is not only that you cannot issue judgments about P-Rhet without employing your own rhetoric, which in turn hints at your own political biases. The deeper problem is found in the very nature of political leadership – a problem that has always been with us but that has been heightened by the multiplication of audiences produced in the media and weaponry revolutions that I have mentioned. The troublesome fact is – to repeat what for many is too obvious to need mentioning – that even the most sincere politician faces daily choices among conflicting “goods,” choices that require sacrificing or betraying one good on behalf of another. And often that becomes a clear choice between two obvious evils.

Such conflicts have faced all leaders from the beginning – always earning them a bad reputation among moralists. All politicians, whether hoping to be sincere or not, find it necessary to hedge, waffle, dodge, mask, as they practice what we all practice as we choose among rival goods and evils.

As Aristotle put it, we all face the necessity of practicing *phronesis* (practical wisdom): learning how to balance this good against that good and come to some sort of Golden Mean. Such balancing often requires deliberate deception. For Machiavelli, such justified deception is a *virtù* in itself, even when it requires violation of other virtues.¹³ What the Jesuits originally labeled *casuistry* – they tend to avoid the term these days – is the balancing of virtues according to the conflicts in a given *case*. Every morning paper reveals moments when politicians and other leaders cannot escape casuistry: Catholic bishops confess their tough choices between protecting children from abuse and protecting the Church from scandal; an American officer openly regrets the choice about whether to release portraits of his ordered killing of two of Saddam Hussein's sons: releasing the photos (which he finally decided to do) will seem like American gloating, yet releasing them might reduce Iraqi fears.

Such practice of "situation ethics" – what T. S. Eliot called a "balance of contrarities" – is required of us daily, quite aside from politics. I must decide, for example, whether or not to lie to avoid depressing my suffering friend ("You're looking much better this morning") or instead to abide by truth ("I'm sorry, Sam, but you look much worse this morning than you did yesterday"). I often face such hard choices here: surely I should give an honest report of my anger about that cruelly deceptive, already-famous speech given by a leader yesterday, yet surely I must work to create an implied author who meets my own high standards, one who really listens objectively to all sides.

Many modern philosophers have followed earlier efforts to rescue us from guilt over such choices "of the lesser evil." Isaiah Berlin often argued that accepting flatly contradictory "goods" need not lead to relativism: even as the goods conflict, they can both be real, and we

must embrace a pluralism that accepts them while living with their regular conflict. Citing Giambattista Vico's *La Scienza Nuova* and Johann Gottfried Herder's works, Berlin says, "there are many different ends that men may seek and still be fully rational, fully men, capable of understanding each other and sympathizing and deriving light from each other."¹⁴

Aside from such theoretical defenses, actual choices between two or more conflicting "genuine goods," when either choice inflicts harm, are always hard to defend. Like each of us, politicians can never claim (though they often pretend to) that no harm was done by the necessary choice between "evils." The only real defense they can offer is that they have faced the nasty choices by engaging in *genuine listening*, fully honest consideration of the arguments for the conflicting "cases." (I have to confess that I'd hate to be a political leader these days, attempting such honest listening, when we have the multiplication of audiences produced by revolution no. 1, and when the evidence is strong that too many on the other side will never listen.)

Many thinkers in most fields would support the deep-listening alternative as the only protection against the excesses of inescapable deception. A recent book, *Crucial Conversations*,¹⁵ summarizes quite well my argument for LR: "Find a shared goal and you have both a good reason and a healthy climate for talking." If you listen to the targets' words so closely that you discover what they are arguing for, and why, you might then discover a good and a truth superior to the one you felt you possessed when beginning. The "good of the nation" you *thought* you were honestly defending gets transformed. At the same time, by practicing some skillful accommodation to a variety of audiences, you can get them to listen rather than simply increasing their hatred for you.

It should not be overlooked, however, that one form of careful listening can produce one of the worst forms of deception. Really skillful rhetors can invent language that is intended to mean one thing to "insiders" while appeasing "outsiders." As Umberto Eco puts it, the speaker, by speaking in ambiguous terms,

is actually sending a message in code that emanates from one power group and [yet] is destined for another. The two [secret] groups, sender and receiver, understand one another perfectly well. . . . It is clear, moreover, that in order for communication between power groups to carry on undisturbed it must go over the heads of the public, just like the coded message passing between two armed camps in a war situation. . . . The fact of its not being understood by others is the indispensable condition for the maintenance of private relationships between power groups. . . . Political discourse in this vein, whatever the aims of the government in question, is anti-democratic because it leapfrogs the citizen and denies him any room to agree or disagree. It is an authoritarian discourse. Unmasking it is the only political activity that is worthwhile. . . . the only real way to exercise rhetoric so as to create convictions rather than to induce subjugation.¹⁶

So the point of my lament about bad P-Rhet is not that our politicians hardly ever speak the plain truth: they wouldn't be where they are, and we would suffer bad consequences, if they were always "sincere." The welfare of any country requires leaders skillful in casuistry. The point is that too often these days P-Rhet is not conducted with a balance of rival *public* goods but simply with a pursuit of this or that personal profit or benefit for some corner of "the world," while harming the larger world: let's have personal triumph, even at the expense of public widespread harm. And – to underline the point of chapter 5 – too few of us have been educated to spot *that* kind of deception in the service of distorted "goods."

What we need most are (1) leaders who can avoid stupidly offending potential enemies, like calling the response to terrorism a "crusade" or labeling those Europeans against us as "old" and weak and those who are for us as "new"; (2) leaders who can balance local triumphs today – such as winning the next election – against the welfare of the world tomorrow; and (3) citizens who can detect the differences between LR and rhetrickery, and conduct their supporting and protesting with rhetoric that can possibly be actually listened to.

How Protesters Violate LR

Saving for the next chapter a look at the motives that corrupt rhetoric, can this protester claim that the rhetoric on his side is less corrupted than that of the leaders? I wish it were so. The future of all nations, and thus of the world, depends very much on the rhetoric of opposition movements, especially as they get strong enough to influence elections. Yet we protesters are, as I have already illustrated, often as guilty of non-listening as our leaders. We forget that democratic resolution of conflict depends not on shouting down those who have the military power but on building up majorities of those who oppose the use of force and, by really listening to our potential friends or "enemies," whether powerful leaders or mere "citizens," finding ways to entice them into hearing our case.

Any careful look at past governmental changes in any nation reveals that when protests reach a certain level – a level considered really dangerous by the leaders – policies do often get changed for the better (though sometimes tyrants take over and destroy the protesters). And many wars have been lost by those who had the military power to win easily, but quickly found that power ineffective in dealing with popular response to the "victory." While it is true that the most powerful military force usually wins, temporarily, history is full of cases in which seeming victory has been turned into defeat not just by guerrilla warfare but by the power of protesters' P-Rhet. Especially since the two revolutions I traced above, preemptive exercise of unquestionable military superiority has become increasingly questionable. Superiority over *what*? More and more military confrontations have turned into what Jonathan Schell labels "People's War" – encounters where democratic protest leads to the triumph of political rather than violent solutions.¹⁷

As you read here now – no matter when "now" is – massive marches and strikes and email campaigns are occurring around the world, some violent, some not, some successful, some not. Quite often it can be argued that the defeats are caused by the clumsy

rhetoric of the protesters, often by misguided violence that alienates those who might have voted for them if they had practiced LR. If the protesters had really listened to their enemies, and modified their own words and actions to meet what they heard, they might have succeeded. Sometimes mass democratic protests, as in the American Revolution, finally work – in a way. The Colonies didn't win through overpowering military victory; they won because of steadily increasing mass democratic support of their cause.

Unfortunately what we usually celebrate about the American Revolution are the *military* triumphs, leading many to see the founding fathers as succeeding only because we fought so well. And this has produced a nation far too often inclined to see violence as the solution to all problems. As we sing "Battle Hymn of the Republic" or even our National Anthem, we are teaching ourselves and our children that engaging in "noble" warfare is the only way to be saved.

It is impossible to demonstrate the implied claim that America and "the world" would be in better shape if America and Britain had sought and found a productive compromise two centuries ago. But the P-Rhet on both sides for the most part simply denied that possibility. While our founders actually practiced some of the best rhetoric ever in winning the support of the people and thus driving the British away, what our textbooks mistakenly teach everyone today is that our tough, courageous fighting was what won. To fight back rather than argue thus became a national standard as the noblest way to go.

Whatever the historical causes, the United States now practices more violence per day, domestically, than most other nations, and some of our leaders talk as if we can finally establish a world in which our military power suppresses all others. It is thus hardly surprising that as we are trained to believe in violence on behalf of noble causes, we protesters too often put our points in terms that threaten blind violence or other forms of irrational excess. Assuming, sometimes justifiably, that the leaders will not listen to any responsible argument about their misdeeds or mistake, and thus that only violent threats

will yield change, protesters tend to employ only threats: *without change you will be hurt or killed.*

Fortunately in any democracy, or half-democracy like ours, the threat need not be physical violence but simply lack of votes. As Schell traces so rigorously, open battles have often been averted by the mere accumulation of overwhelming voices in opposition. And that is where *defensible* P-Rhet by protesters comes in. The future of every nation depends absolutely on the quality of argument practiced by those who desire change.

Most of our protests are full of two kinds of shoddy P-Rhet. On the one hand too many who are appalled by leaders' policies simply disguise their true opinions and side with whatever will sell their case and protect them from power punishment, while trying to sneak in some slight objections. On the other hand, many protesters blurt out their protest with no thought about how to earn full attention. Ignoring the arguments and convictions on the other side, and thus with no visible respect for the opponent and with little attention to broadening the grounds for protest, they simply demonize the enemy, thus guaranteeing that no dialogue will ensue. Even when the case is actually, "You must listen to us, because in fact we are far more numerous and powerful than you have recognized," the claims are too often put in terms that seem contemptible to the other side. When anyone, not just a hawk, sees a poster saying "Bush is Satan," is his mind going to be changed? Of course not.

A clear example of risking excess is the movement, begun back in February of 2003 by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, to lead Congress to impeach President Bush for his Iraq policies. Though many of Clark's claims of constitutional violations seem to me valid, it should have occurred to him that any move of that kind might simply serve to confirm our leaders' view that their opponents are dogmatic, cruel extremists: traitors. I'm fairly sure that it will produce in too many who hear it – not just the hawks – either self-righteous anger or hilarious mockery: it is surely seen as evidence *for* President Bush, not against him.

In short, whether protesters are on the left, as is mainly true these days, or on the right, as most of them were when President Clinton was threatened with impeachment, they too often reveal the same flaws as we've seen in leadership rhetoric. I could cite scores of attacks worded in such a way as to ensure non-listening:

- Molly Ivins's column, "Call Me a Bush Hater."¹⁸ No potential critic of Bush will read that column or have her mind changed by it. It's a stupid rhetorical error to head a column with that, when in fact Ivins actually says such things as "It is not necessary to hate George W. Bush to think he's a bad President."
- Gore Vidal's overloaded, shrill attack on Bush's policies, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: How We Got to Be So Hated* (2002). I accept most of Vidal's fundamental points, but too often he falls into a clever rhetrickery that actually provides evidence for the other side. If I were pro-Bush, I would conclude: "lefties don't think, they just shout."¹⁹

To make my case for a P-Rhet based on real listening would require a long, detailed analysis of at least one major speech – perhaps one of Nelson Mandela's speeches that saved South Africa from civil war. Unfortunately such defensible P-Rhet is so rare these days that it can produce the gloomy response of a media analyst like Eric Alterman. Reporting former Czech President Havel's speech to a joint session of Congress, in February 1990, he writes:

Havel entered the hall to a thunderous standing ovation. It was quite a moment, and even the tough guys in the press gallery were fighting back tears. This modest, diminutive playwright, fresh from facing down the guns of the Soviet empire and leading his country in a democratic revolution, had been invited to share his wisdom in the hall that sits at the rhetorical center of what was now, undisputedly, the most powerful nation in the history of the world. Never in my adult life had I witnessed so unambiguous a victory for the forces of sweetness and light. . . . He explored many of the great themes of

personal and political responsibility with uncommon wit and originality. . . . I was being addressed by a political leader who felt no compulsion to speak down to his audience, to insult its intellect with empty-headed rhetoric and pander to its egocentricity with kitschy encomiums.

Putting aside Alterman's confession of how depressed he felt when he started thinking about the rarity of such rhetoric on our scene, consider Havel's own lamentation about the decline of P-Rhet. Toward the end of his presidency of the Czech Republic in the fall of 2002, he discussed (without using rhetorical terms) what he sees as the decline of the good kinds. Expressing his hope for a return to the right kind, he "heralds" a hope for "a more humane world, one in which poets might have as powerful a voice as bankers."²⁰

What are the possible cures for our massive practice of and surrendering to political rhetrickery, by both leaders and protesters? While admitting that nothing will ever fully clean up the mess, I can hope that more of us will pursue the following two points summarizing this chapter, this book, and the ideals I wish I myself obeyed more rigorously:

- 1 We must train ourselves to judge P-Rhet fairly, by really listening to the enemy and imagining ourselves into the enemy's true motives. We must judge no piece of P-Rhet according to whether the judge and rhetor share the same "side" or whether a given audience was won over. Always include the question, "Did the rhetor LISTEN to all the audiences crucial to the case?" Like a genuinely admirable legal judge, the critic should consider the "evidence for *and* against the case," not whether the judgment will yield personal profit or confirm personal prejudice or get a narrow audience to shout "Bravo!"
- 2 We must train ourselves to practice P-Rhet fairly, rhetoric that invites serious LR from our opponents. Instead of threats that

increase their hatred or mistrust, we must learn how to offer evidence that we are sure deserves to be listened to.

Obviously the rhetoric of the political world, more complex than ever before, cannot be fully cleansed, no matter how many of us pursue those two "commandments." Conflicts will never be totally escaped. Even threats of violent alternatives to LR will perhaps never disappear, *Homo sapiens* being what you and I are. For all we know, the horrors of World War III *will* arrive.

What is clear is that our future depends on victories of LR over violence. We are threatened with expanded warfare (probably leading to the catastrophic use of WMD). Now that we live with "media globalization" and "globalization of weaponry" (not to mention current "warfare" about commercial globalization), our very survival, whether as democracies or tyrannies, depends on just how many citizens of the world – leaders or protesters – are trained to be skillful in their listening, and thus more skillful and ethical in their responses.

7

Media Rhetrickery

How is the world ruled and led to war? Diplomats lie to journalists and believe these lies when they see them in print.

Karl Kraus

If you tell a lie often enough, the public will come to believe it.

Paul Josef Goebbels

As the Steady-Camera followed Bush's triumphant walk . . . at the end of his speech, changing angles and aspects, making larger than life the handshakes and smiles and pats on the back, I couldn't help thinking of how much Riefenstahl [who chronicled the rise of the Third Reich] taught us about how powerful a political tool the moving image can be.

Journalist who has asked not to be identified

I'm tempted to begin again with a bit of rhetrickery of my own: "Our totally commercialized media, satanic slaves of commerce, are irredeemably seducing us downward 'even to the edge of doom.'" Doesn't that sound a lot like what we meet every day, especially in television talk shows? "Totally?" "Satanic?" Absurd. "Irredeemably?" Who knows? "Edge of doom?" Where's that? And why engage in literary quoting, when you're talking about politics?

I do fear that the picture is getting worse by the day, but media-rhetoric (here MR) varies so much from country to country and medium to medium and day to day that no full claim about decline could ever be demonstrated.

- 11 Gerald Graff, *Clueless in Academe: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind*, 2003.
- 12 Public miseducation can of course be found in all countries, whether democratic or totalitarian. An amazing example is the bestsellerdom in France of a book “proving” that the September 11 terrorist attacks were engineered by the US administration. See “French Follies: A 9/11 Conspiracy Theory Turns Out to Be an *Appalling Deception*,” a review of Thierry Meyssan’s *L’Effroyable Imposture*, by Kirk Hagen, *Skeptic* 9, 4 (2000), pp. 8–13.
- 13 In a recent talk about his reform plans, Vallas did honorably face the issue of poverty directly: “The insides of public schools are filthy and the outsides look like trash bins,” he complained to unionized custodians and maintenance engineers. “Some buildings are sweatboxes. Others are enough to ‘scare the living daylight’ out of teachers.”
- 14 Dale L. Sullivan, “A Closer Look at Education as Epideictic Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 23, 3–4 (Summer/Fall 1993), pp. 71–89.
- 15 For more hints about teaching methods, see Graff, *Clueless in Academe*, esp. pp. 209–75, and Peter Elbow’s exchange with me, forthcoming in *College English*.
- 16 There are by now scores of books and articles reporting on commercial inroads on “pure” research – especially in medical matters. Drug companies “hire” researchers, in more or less subtle ways, with the result that research for shared knowledge that is important as knowledge gets lost. See, for example, *The Big Fix: How the Pharmaceutical Industry Rips Off American Customers*, by Katherine Greider, 2003.

6 The Threats of Political Rhetrickery

- 1 It’s not surprising that from earliest times arguments about political choice have outweighed all other discussions of rhetoric. For a first-class treatment of political rhetoric, see Umberto Eco’s “Political Language: The Use and Abuse of Rhetoric,” in his *Apocalypse Postponed*, ed. Robert Lumley, 1994. For the best journal specializing in political rhetoric, see *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. Every journal dealing with rhetorical matters is almost dominated by political concerns.
- 2 For a useful anthology of diverse probings of public rhetoric, especially from politicians, see *Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Judith Rodin and Stephen P. Steinberg, 2003.
- 3 The chief rival would be conflicts among religions – which too often lead to literal warfare. Our current international mess is at least partly inspired by the

- conflict in millions of minds between Christianity and Islam, with the long history of military conflict in the memories of many. And now that the US occupation in Iraq is prolonged, open violence, and perhaps open warfare, between Shiites and Sunnis seems more and more likely. For evidence of how frighteningly close we are moving to religious rather than merely political warfare, see the media coverage of US Lt. Gen. William G. Boykin’s speeches claiming that Muslims hate Americans because “we’re a Christian nation,” that they worship an “idol,” and that our “enemy is a guy named Satan.” For a penetrating effort to *listen* to the realities of Christianity and Islam, seeking the common ground they share, see Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11*, 2003.
- 4 For a clever, brief analysis of presidential rhetoric, especially when it makes use of religious traditions and rituals, see linguist Michael Silverstein’s *Talking Politics: The Substance of Style from Abe [Lincoln] to “W” [Bush]*, 2003.
- 5 See *New York Times*, March 6, 2004, pp. 1ff.
- 6 Each of the “revolutions” might be said to have begun long ago: with the invention of printing, followed by radio, and then TV; and with the invention of the first explosives capable of killing off those not engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Most sensitive leaders have been aware of the revolutions, inventing terms like President Eisenhower’s “military-industrial complex.”
- 7 *Chicago Tribune*, January 19, 2003, Section 2, p. 1.
- 8 For a close analysis of Blair’s rhetorical skills, before the Iraq disasters, see Peter Bull’s “New Labour, New Rhetoric? An Analysis of the Rhetoric of Tony Blair,” in *Beyond Public Speech and Symbols: Explorations in the Rhetoric of Politicians and the Media*, ed. Christ’l De Landtsheer and Ofer Feldman, 2000. The essay hails Blair as a master of what some call “equivocation,” others “the rhetoric of modernization”: “the intentional use of imprecise language” in order to “avoid conflicts.” The book is an excellent anthology of essays appraising political rhetoric throughout the world, including Japan, the Near East, and the United States.
- 9 Nobody escapes this problem. When I recently read a charge that all critics of President Bush’s war push are “naive idealists,” my immediate response was something like, “Now we have further evidence for my anti-war case: Yep, all the supporters are extremists.” Only a bit later did I rebuke myself for biased overreaction.
- 10 *Chicago Tribune*, April 22, 2003, Tempo section, p. 1.
- 11 *International Herald Tribune*, April 10, 2003.
- 12 On how wars lead everyone to engage in the “rhetoric of fear,” see Rampton and Stauber, “The Uses of Fear,” in *Weapons of Mass Deception*, 2003.
- 13 For fine discussions of political casuistry see Eugene Garver’s *Machiavelli and the History of Prudence*, 1987, and Aristotle’s *Rhetoric: An Art of Character*, 1994. For a

Notes to pages 121–143

- broader probing of casuistry, see Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning*, 1988.
- 14 Isaiah Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal," in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 1990, p. 17.
 - 15 Kerry Patterson et al., *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*, 2003.
 - 16 Eco, "Political Language," p. 85.
 - 17 See Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People*, 2003.
 - 18 *Progressive*, November 2003, p. 46.
 - 19 In a longer draft, I dwelt on his mistake in beginning with what sounds like a defense of Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber, and his frequent self-centered complaints about journals turning down his articles.
 - 20 "A Farewell to Politics," *New York Review of Books*, October 24, 2002, p. 4.

7 Media Rhetrickery

- 1 For a careful survey of media-rhetoric in Europe, see Deirdre Kevin's *Europe in the Media: A Comparison of Reporting, Representation, and RHETORIC in National Media Systems in Europe*, 2002. (As I don't have to tell you, the caps on RHETORIC are mine, not hers.)
- 2 J. Linn Allen, "The Media Inspire Distrust," *Chicago Tribune*, May 25, 2003, Section 2, p. 4.
- 3 Jack Fuller, *News Values: Ideas for an Information Age*, 1996, p. 221.
- 4 *New York Times*, January 20, 2003, p. A23.
- 5 Ignatieff quoted in Jeremy Jennings, "Deaths of the Intellectual: A Comparative Autopsy," in *The Public Intellectual*, ed. Helen Small, 2002, p. 111.
- 6 *New York Times*, March 11, 2004, pp. E1, 7.
- 7 See Andrew Gimson, cover story of the *Spectator*, September 13, 2003.
- 8 James Ledbetter, "The Boys in the Bubble," *New York Times*, January 2, 2003, p. A29.
- 9 Quoted from a review by Alexander Still of *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists and the Stories that Shape the Political World*, 2003, in the *New York Times*, January 8, 2003, p. B11.
- 10 *The Times*, November 27, 2003, T2, p. 3.
- 11 Eric Alterman, *Sound and Fury: The Making of the Punditocracy*, 1992; paperback 1999, pp. 274–5.
- 12 *ibid.*, p. 2.

Notes to pages 144–155

- 13 For example, *Big Lies: The Right Wing Propaganda Machine and How it Distorts the Truth*, by Joe Conason, 2003. One major problem with such attacks is that they tend to reduce all distortions to "lying," thus ignoring the fact that the "lies" are often, like President Bush much of the time, absolutely convinced that their erroneous claims are true (or so I speculate). Dogmatists tend to believe the "lies" they tell. The only recent publication I could find in the UK is *Tell Me Lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq*, ed. David Miller, 2003.
- 14 Since my writing of the above, Goldberg has published another book, containing a grossly biased attack on Alterman: *Arrogance: Rescuing America from the Media Elite*, 2003. If one adopts my broadened definition of "media," including books about the media, Goldberg's works point up our need for rescuers.

Part III Reducing Rhetorical Warfare

- 1 Eight months later, in another argument about why the attacks against our troops are increasing, he flatly denied ever having said what I have reported. But I have a record of it in my journal.

8 Can Rhetorology Yield More Than a Mere Truce, in Any of Our "Wars"?

- 1 This chapter borrows some from my essay in a volume honoring David Tracy: *Radical Pluralism and Truth*, ed. Werner G. Jeanrond and Jennifer L. Duke, 1991, pp. 62–80. I also quote from various published versions of an essay on the rhetorics of science and religion.
- 2 Thomas M. Lessl, "Gnostic Scientism and the Prohibition of Questions," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5, 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 133–58. See critical response: "Lessl on Gnostic Scientism: Four Responses," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5, 4 (Winter 2002), pp. 709–40.
- 3 I don't like that word religionist, but it's hard to find a better one. Call them the believers? Well, scientists are believers too. The faithful? Well, scientists are pursuing their faith. The devout? Sounds pejorative. The theologians? Sounds too exclusive. So it will have to be religionists – even though one of my dictionaries says that that word sometimes means simply "bigots."
- 4 One of the best treatments of rhetoric in scientific study is Alan G. Gross's *The Rhetoric of Science*, 1990; 2nd ed., 1996. By "going a bit too far" in introducing