ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
RHETORIC

Thomas O. Sloane

Editor in Chief
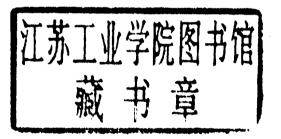
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Preface

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TEACHERS IN ANCIENT TIMES INSISTED THAT RHETORIC—ITS IDENTITY AS WELL as its nature—is best learned through practice, not through reading about it. Such doctrines, of course, keep teachers in business. Nonetheless, theories and manuals of rhetoric demonstrably fall short of the mark, and have done so for twenty-five hundred years. "For all a rhetorician's rules," wrote Samuel Butler in 1663, "[t]each nothing but to name his tools." Often called the world's second-oldest profession, the teaching of rhetoric has probably derived as little benefit from books as has the world's oldest profession. Readers, therefore, should not expect to find a "compleat rhetoric" within these covers. Rhetoric is a storehouse of communicative tactics: some are hoary and stale (e.g., "unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," which was identified in antiquity and preserved as a figure of speech); some are too new to be codified (like "emoticons" in e-mails); most are time-bound, dependent upon audience and occasion.

Given its great antiquity as well as the capriciousness of intellectual fashion, it is little wonder that our subject has been variously defined through the centuries: sophistry, queen of the liberal arts, oldest of the humanities, style, deception, specious reasoning, practical logic, loaded language, purple prose, what my opponent speaks, ad infinitum. Lately, rhetoric has been called "purposive communication"—a stunning neutrality. Our readers, we assume, will have at least some acquaintance with our subject's scarlet past, and will be neither astounded nor dismayed to discover that they have actually used its tactics from time to time. Indeed, our putative readers will in fact have moved beyond curiosity about such matters as a "simile" (which is nonetheless defined herein) to wondering what on earth a *hendiadys* might be, or how to conceive of a "virtual audience" or a "hypertext." Given the readers we have in mind, all recognizable words from antiquity have been left intact and more or less in their original Latin or Greek: *eloquentia*, for example, or *mythoi*; or for that matter *encyclopedia* and *rhetoric*.

The Synoptic Outline of Contents at the end of the book offers a quick and easy overview. Because the purpose of that outline was to help us plan this book and keep its parts from becoming disparate, it might prove useful to anyone wondering how some entry (e.g., "Questioning") fits in or if there is any coherence in a work like this, or in a subject like rhetoric. Obviously, as a glance at the outline will show, we treat our subject as something anchored in the past. At the same time, however, we treat it as something that has a place in the present and is not exactly limited to this or that culture. The history of the art from its origins in ancient Greece is recounted in these pages, in our longest single entry ("Classical rhetoric"). But we attempt also to track that history up to a possible postmodern era—when rhetoric's media extend from oratory to the Internet, its "commonplaces" encompass data storage and retrieval systems, and its *memoria* conceptualizes "space" on a "hard disk." Included too is recent work in comparative rhetoric, research into cultures that have not fully experienced the ef-

fects of our classical Western heritage. However pandemic rhetoric itself might prove to be, our subject nonetheless remains deeply ingrained within the academic worlds of Europe, England, and North America, where for centuries it has received its most explicit treatment—and where, moreover, scholarly interest in the subject has recently gained momentum and become a fully international enterprise. In North America, research in rhetoric is now bolstered by five journals, and well over a thousand students are enrolled in graduate programs in the subject. It is noteworthy, however, that our major entry on style and all the entries on figures of speech were composed by non-native speakers of English.

More than three-quarters of our 120 contributors are from the United States. Other contributors—who wrote almost half the articles—come from Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hong Kong, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. Their departmental affiliations are primarily communications and secondarily English; classics is third; rhetoric is fourth, just ahead of philosophy. Other departments and disciplines include French, German, law, comparative literature, music, philology, theology, and sociology.

There are approximately two hundred entries in this volume, ranging in size from very short (about 100 words) for certain figures of speech to our longest entry (16,000 words) on classical rhetoric. Almost every entry emphasizes our common rhetorical tradition, partly as a result of the way this volume was planned. The three modes of proof, the five offices (or arts, or more loftily "canons") of rhetoric, and the traditional ends of eloquence and persuasion—these were the infrastructure of our project, the antique starting points of our Synoptic Outline, and in the editors' minds, the very requisites of rhetoric. Most of these matters move in directions unforeseen by our progenitors—eloquence and persuasion, for example. The former has to do with the beauty of an utterance, something that to modern readers might seem either quaint or much more at home in poetry than in rhetoric and something that in these pages just barely escapes its classical foundations. Persuasion, on the other hand, quickly flees those foundations and rushes headlong into the waiting arms of modern social scientists.

Too, in view of the experiential nature of rhetoric, the reader will find much overlapping between these entries. Plato seemed to think that the best rhetoric is a kind of love. Aristotle defined it as a kind of ability. In neither conception is the art itself clearly formulable, nor has it become so, and thus, virtually every entry offers a passage into a complex whole. One will find, for instance, that the entry on eloquence includes a discussion of *inventio*. Turning to the entry on invention, one finds a capsule history of classical rhetoric, where of course, everything seems either to belong or to have gotten started. The entry on persuasion, the other traditional end of rhetoric, leads one through an audience's emotions, a rhetor's credibility, and "message characteristics" at least part of the way back to traditional modes of proof, though with little dimming of persuasion's modernist sheen. The figures of speech, in the eyes of some the very essence of rhetoric, are treated in a long entry by that name; then again in the entry on style; once more in the entry on poetry; and then most are given individual treatment. Nor does the matter stop there: References to the figures, either collectively or individually, are sprinkled throughout this work, indicating their importance certainly, but also indicating the interlocking nature of rhetoric's pieces. Every entry, in short, could

cross-reference every other entry, including our most defiantly modernist ones. When we came to consider "related subjects" (see the Synoptic Outline), we tried to keep from considering them simply as a miscellany, a nod in the direction of political correctness, or a scholarly appendix. But in order to keep the section from expanding exponentially, we selected subjects that seemed to have at least an indirect bearing on the identity of rhetoric—and wherein there are potential contributors whom we might recruit.

Long—for two and one-half millennia—considered the exclusive pursuit of white, classically-trained males preparing for careers in law, politics, or teaching, rhetoric once formed the very core of the educational curriculum, where it was linked closely with logic and grammar. The link with logic yet stands, but grammar seems to have bowed out in favor of linguistics, a discipline that pervades and gives a certain air to many definitions in this encyclopedia, particularly in that area mentioned earlier, the figures of speech, which rhetoric once shared with grammar. Old-school rhetoricians will surely be flabbergasted to read, for example, that *prolēpsis* is a "permutative metataxeme." At the same time, however, those same rhetoricians may be gratified to note that, given the many references throughout our entries to Plato's *Phaedrus*, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Cicero's *De oratore*, and Erasmus's *De copia*, there yet seems to be a rhetorical canon— perhaps made inescapable, like our tradition itself, by the way we planned this volume. Nonetheless, if the wisdom of that canon is attended to in all its impulses toward openness and experience, rhetoricians—old-school or otherwise—will welcome its inevitable expansion to include, say, the contributions from studies in African-American, communicationist, comparative, feminist, and queer rhetoric, all of which are already integral to our subject in a way that the word *related* in our Synoptic Outline might seem merely to patronize. Within this book, however, their contributions are encountered in alphabetical order as matters that seem to have an equally-significant bearing on the whole. The ostensible hierarchies of the Synoptic Outline merely locate what we take to be our foundations.

Those who believe they already know the subject sufficiently well may wonder why an encyclopedia about it has been published. These readers will, we hope, browse this work and find the answer the editors themselves found to their own similar inquiry. There are entries herein that might never have been written, or might not have been so succinctly put forth, without the prompting of a project like this. If some essays are reliquaries, others clearly move our subject toward its fourth millenium, in which it appears that rhetoric will continue to be as useful for analysis as for genesis; that is, as useful for the interpretation of discourse and phenomena as it is for their composition. Finally, although rhetoric is often thought of as a blend of literary and political interests, the subject itself is too seldom viewed discretely, as something that just might possibly stand alone. The "old rhetoric," one commentator observed, "has been spread over a multiplicity of disciplines"—but not, we believe, to such an airy thinness that something of its integrity cannot be restored.

There are other peculiarities, of course, one in particular: Although rhetoric is a people art, not one person is listed among the entries of this encyclopedia—not even Aristotle, not even Nietzsche. That decision was based on our effort to abstract rhetoric as far as we could, not only from this or that discipline but also from this or that theorist, time, place, culture, and to endeavor to search for its principles. We recognize the paradox, in view of what we take rhetoric to be. It is nearly impossible either to abstract

a temporal cause from its effects or to look anew at a subject anchored in but not confined to an ancient tradition. But the attempt to do so, we believe, sets this work apart from other recent publications as the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* edited by Theresa Enos (1996) or Heinrich Lausberg's magisterial *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (1960).

There are oversights, no doubt, omissions and errors. But we have done what we could in chasing this Proteus, with more than a little help from Christopher Collins, Merilee Johnson, and Mark Mones at Oxford University Press, who were always ready with logistical support and advice. Oxford, moreover, was the "onlie begetter" of this work, though encouraged from the outset by scholars in the field. Those of us who were drawn to it, however reluctantly at first, gradually became enthusiastic participants, an attitude we hope we demonstrate.

Kenneth Burke dedicates his *Grammar of Motives* (1945) "To Elizabeth / Without Whom Not." I shall follow the example of this master rhetorician and offer similar praise of my colleagues on the editorial board—Shadi Bartsch, Tom Farrell, Heinrich Plett—and of our distinguished contributors. They are truly, in the language of Cicero, the *litterati sine quibus non* of this endeavor.

—THOMAS O. SLOANE
Berkeley, California
October 2000

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RHETORIC

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A–B

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ABOLITIONIST RHETORIC. *See* African-American rhetoric, *article on* Abolitionist rhetoric.

AD HOMINEM ARGUMENT. *Argumentum ad hominem* refers to a kind of argument in which the person is the focus of the argument, as opposed to objective evidence on which the argument may be based. *Argumentum ad hominem* has been prominently treated as a fallacy, in the logical tradition; however, recent work has shown that this type of argument is not always fallacious and that there is pervasive ambiguity in how it has been defined and what it has been taken to represent. [*See* Fallacies.]

The expression *argumentum ad hominem* is ambiguous. The main meaning it has in popular speech, as well as in the traditions of logic and rhetoric, is the use of personal attack as a way of refuting an argument. In its simplest form, this argument has the following schema : so-and-so is a person of bad (defective) character, therefore his argument should not be accepted. This simple form of argument is properly called *ad hominem*. It is also often called the "abusive" *ad hominem* argument in many modern logic textbooks. It could perhaps even be called the personal attack or character attack type of argument. However, not all attacks on character are *ad hominem* arguments. In order to be an *ad hominem* argument in the proper sense, the following conditions must be met. There must be two parties involved in disputation. The first party must have put a particular argument forward. The second party must then cite the bad character of the first party as a reason for concluding that the argument is no good. For a contrasting example, in a famous biography of the singer Frank Sinatra, the writer alleged that Sinatra was a person of bad character. But since no particular argument attributed to Sinatra was being attacked, the argumentation in the book would not properly be said to be *ad hom-*

inem in the main sense appropriate for logic and rhetoric.

There is also another meaning of the expression *argumentum ad hominem* that has a place in traditional logic and rhetoric, as well as in everyday speech. This secondary meaning is not so dominant as the main meaning, but it is a fairly common usage in philosophical speech. According to this meaning, an argument is *ad hominem* if it is based on the other party's position in a dispute. For example, suppose that prolife Bob and prochoice Wilma are engaged in a dispute on the issue of abortion and that Wilma puts forward an argument based on the premise that human life is sacred. Let us say that she does not accept this premise, but she uses it to try to convince Bob to accept a conclusion because she knows that Bob accepts the premise. This form of argument is called "argument from commitment" in modern argumentation theory (Walton, 1996). Traditionally, it was called the *ex concessis* argument. But traditionally as well, in philosophy, it has often been called the *argumentum ad hominem*. However, the two kinds are distinct. Not all arguments from commitment (*ex concessis* arguments) are personal-attack arguments. And not all *ad hominem* arguments in the personal-attack sense are arguments from commitment (although many of them are, as will be shown below). How then, one might well wonder, did this ambiguity of terminology arise?

The answer, as Nuchelmans (1993) has shown, is that there are two separate lines of historical development of the phrase *argumentum ad hominem,* each having roots in the writings of Aristotle (384–322 BCE). The two kinds of argument not only share common features, but they are often referred to by similar or identical expressions. One root, coming from *On Sophistical Refutations* (165a37) and *Topics* (101a25), has been taken to refer to "arguments that are based on propositions which have been conceded by the adver-

sary" (Nuchelmans, 1993, p. 38). In other words, the one meaning that was taken from Aristotle and given the designation of *argumentum ad hominem* is that of the argument from commitment or *ex concessis* argument. This meaning was called *disputatio temptiva* by Boethius (480–524 CE). The other meaning is close to that of the personal attack type of argument described above. It was picked up by Aquinas (1225–1274) from passages in Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* (1005b35, 1062a2), where Aristotle distinguishes between proof in an absolute sense and proof relative to a particular person (Nuchelmans, 1993, p. 39). This meaning occurs in the works of Galileo (1564–1642) in several places (Finochiarro, 1980) and also in a well-known place in Locke's *Essay* (1690), as Hamblin (1970, p. 160) shows. This meaning also stems from ancient teachers of rhetoric, who distinguished between the substantive issues in a debate and the personal aspects that can also be involved. The two traditions of the meaning of *argumentum ad hominem* remained separate for a long time, but according to Nuchelemans (p. 44) they became intertwined in Rudolphus Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* (1479). It then became very tempting to treat the two different meanings of *ad hominem* as referring to essentially the same kind of argument. This temptation was made just too hard to resist any longer when Locke treated the *ad hominem* alongside other fallacies like the *ad verecundiam* and *ad ignorantiam,* but used the expression *argumentum ad hominem* in the argument from commitment sense.

The best solution to this confusing terminological problem is to use the expression *argumentum ad hominem* as a technical term of logic and rhetoric: it should refer to the personal attack kind of *ad hominem* argument. The other kind of argument should be called *ex concessis,* argument from commitment, to have an even better term for it.

Is *Ad Hominem* Fallacious? Traditionally in logic, *argumentum ad hominem* has been listed as a fallacy, but it has recently been acknowledged more and more that this type of argument (in either of its two meanings) can be reasonable in many instances (Walton, 1998). For example, in legal argumentation, it is recognized that attacking the character of a witness in court, called "im-

peachment of the witness," is sometimes quite a reasonable form of argument. Nonetheless, character attack is usually regarded as a dangerous form of argument in law, and attacks on the character of a defendant, a witness, or an attorney are sharply limited in trials by rules of evidence. The legitimacy of the character attack, the main meaning of *ad hominem,* has also been widely recognized in rhetoric, where *ēthos* or persuading an audience using argumentation based on the perceived character (good or bad) of a speaker, can be an acceptable form of argument. In political debate, for example, character is a relevant issue in a democratic system where voters cannot reasonably be expected to know all the facts on all issues, and will often vote on the basis of their perception of a candidate's character. [*See* Ēthos.]

On the other hand, *ad hominem* is an extremely powerful and slippery tactic of persuasion that often has a devastating effect in argumentation, especially when based on very little evidence, or on innuendo and no real evidence at all. Therefore, in some instances of its use, it is quite right to judge the argument to be fallacious. The fallacious cases tend to be the ones where the *ad hominem* argument is quite weak (from a logical point of view), or even irrelevant to the issue being discussed, but nevertheless works by a process of "where there's smoke there must be fire" to make the accused party seem guilty, and thus somehow in the wrong. Precisely because such arguments are based on suggestion and innuendo, it can be extremely difficult to reply to them successfully. The job of distinguishing between the reasonable and fallacious cases is further expedited by being aware of the various subtypes of the argument.

Subtypes of *Ad Hominem* Argument. The various subtypes of *ad hominem* argument have been classified in Walton (1998, pp. 248–263). In addition to the main meaning, defined above, three subtypes are especially common and important: circumstantial, bias, and poisoning the well. In the circumstantial *ad hominem,* the first party attacks the second party by alleging a practical inconsistency—claiming that she does not practice what she preaches—and then using this alleged contradiction to suggest that the second party is hypocritical, dishonest, confused, or oth-

erwise has bad character and is therefore not a credible arguer. For example, a politician who argued long and hard that the opposition were wasteful spenders, may be attacked by alleging that he himself is acting like a "potentate" by flying around to exotic places with a huge staff of assistants, spending millions of dollars on excessive parties. In the bias type of *ad hominem* argument, the first party attacks the second party by alleging that the second party has some sort of personal interest that throws her credibility into doubt. For example, when the second party gives a speech claiming that environmentalists have exaggerated the problem of acid rain, the first party may reveal that the second party has a financial interest in a coal company. Again, such an allegation of bias, like any *ad hominem* argument, works by casting doubt on the credibility of an arguer. The attack is relevant, and can be especially powerful, in cases where the argument in question does depend for part of its support on the personal credibility of the arguer. For example, in witness testimony in a trial, it may be impossible to verify the facts directly, and therefore the testimony as evidence may depend very much on the credibility of the witness.

The final important subtype is poisoning the well. In this type of *ad hominem* argument, which may be seen as an extension of the bias subtype, the arguer is said to be so biased that he is permanently closed to any real, balanced consideration of the truth of a matter. The classic case is that of Cardinal Newman (1801–1890), who was attacked in the political arena on the grounds that, as a Catholic, he would always revert to the Catholic view, instead of really looking at both sides of any issue. Newman replied that this "poisoning of the well" prevented him from having any political voice that was not already discounted before he even said anything.

Are All Philosophical Arguments *Ad Hominem*? The weight of presumption in philosophy has generally been to consider *ad hominem* arguments as inherently fallacious, and to feature dramatic cases of their abuse in the logic textbooks. But very little serious attention was ever given to the possibility that these arguments could often be reasonable, as commonly used in everyday practices of argumentation. An exception to this

neglect of taking a closer look at the *ad hominem* was the account given by Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., who combines an interest in logic with an interest in rhetoric. Johnstone (1978, p. 9) considered ordinary cases of the *ad hominem* argument, like the one cited by Schopenhauer (1788–1860). In this case, one man says, "Berlin is such a dreary place," and the other replies, "Why don't you leave then?" Johnstone compared everyday uses of the *ad hominem* argument like this one to cases of its use in philosophical controversies. In dispute between philosophers, this form of argumentation, where one arguer takes what she presumes to be the stated or implied positions of the other party, and then draws inferences from them, raising critical questions about the conclusions drawn, can be shown to be quite common. By studying cases of passages from philosophical writings, Johnstone shows that such *ad hominem* arguments are in fact typical of much philosophical argumentation. Thus, Johnstone posed an acute and provocative problem that woke philosophers out of their dogmatic slumbers on the subject of *ad hominem* arguments.

It would appear that what Johnstone primarily had in mind was the argument from commitment or *ex concessis*. If so, he was certainly right that this form of argument is not only quite often reasonable (nonfallacious), but is also very commonly found in historical and current texts of discourse of philosophical argumentation. Typically, for example, in the Platonic dialogues, the argumentation of Socrates is based on the expressed and implied positions of his interlocutors. Johnstone's view of such philosophical argumentation as commitment-based leads naturally to a certain metaphilosophy, or philosophy of philosophy. According to this view, philosophical arguments are different in nature from scientific or empirical arguments that are based on external and objective evidence. Instead, they represent a kind of rational persuasion that is based on premises that are the expressed or implied commitments of a party with whom one is engaged in a dialogue. By questioning and answering, the dialogue sharpens and refines these commitments, often in a critical way that probes into the reasons supporting them. So conceived, philosophical argumentation is based on the person of the arguer

it is designed rationally to persuade. Philosophical argumentation, in this way of looking at it, does have an *ad hominem* aspect that makes it different from other kinds of argumentation with which it can easily be confused.

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— DOUGLAS WALTON

AESTHETICS. *See* Eloquence; *and* Style.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN RHETORIC. [*This entry comprises four articles:*

An overview
Abolitionist rhetoric
Double-consciousness
Black Nationalism

The first article provides a brief overview of the problems black American speakers have faced in establishing an African-American rhetorical tradition. The second article describes the contribution of black abolitionists to abolitionist rhetoric. The third article explores the history and various uses of the term double-consciousness. *The fourth article addresses the evolving aims and strategies of black nationalism, as reflected in the rhetoric of various African-American leaders.*]

An overview

To speak of an African-American rhetorical tradition is at once to speak about the problems of speaking. Historically, black orators have instructed black folk about *how* to speak when one is not *supposed* to speak. Hence, African-American rhetoric has been engaged in a struggle with a profound paradox. In order to become a tradition, African-American rhetoric has had to overcome violent racist muting forces. It has filled an American silence regarding the immorality of slavery. And it has self-consciously constituted an African-American *ēthos.* When one thinks about black public speech, one must consider a cultural history wherein the very act of black speaking (and writing) was subject to severe censure. Attempting to keep black folks in their place, the institution of slavery was erected and sustained by strict regulations against the kinds of public rituals and practices that make an African-American rhetorical tradition possible. In the antebellum South, the very idea of an African-American "public" was a virtual oxymoron. In the North, African-American orators were often beaten and killed for attempting to exercise the liberty of free speech. Thus, to conceive of African-American rhetoric is to think first of all the ways that an American public tried to quash it.

In a similar fashion, a consideration of an African-American rhetorical tradition entails an exploration of a peculiarly American silence regarding the ills of slavery. The history of American slavery represents a moral crisis so acute that it still provokes inquiry. For black scholars like Alexander Crummell and W. E. B. Du Bois, the long-time enslavement of the African in America was empirical evidence of the moral failing of Victorian virtue (Zamir, 1995). The inability of America to suppress the slave trade, for example, represented for Du Bois a corruption that runs to the very heart of Anglo-European civilization. Moreover, this failing has not been spoken of directly in dominant American discourse. Rather, talk of abstract principles of "equality" (Condit and Loucaites, 1993) and references to dense legalese inscribed in "states' rights" conceal the error. Therefore, not only were black spokespersons consistently gagged by mob rule and the deformed rule of law, this particular failing of the civic good was exacerbated by a refusal to acknowledge it as such. In other words, this essential moral failing was prolonged by an American silence enveloping it.

But these silences beckon always for public speech, precisely because they call into question

the capacity for public speech to provide for moral agency and social justice. Black public speech, therefore, always already asks and answers such a query. The story of an African-American rhetorical tradition not only depicts the transmutation and enactment of African styles, religions, and practices in America (Asante, 1987), but it specifies an American moral lack. Houston Baker Jr. (1987) refers to an African-American discursive "sounding" that ingenuously calls attention to such silences through an elaborate play of indirection and guile. By signifying (Gates, 1988) moral dramas for community contemplation, African-American rhetoric has advanced, in part, as a fulfillment of what Emmanuel Levinas refers to as a "call of conscience" (Hyde and Rufo, 2000). Marjorie Pryse (1985) has suggested that the activity of bringing voice out of an American abyss symbolizes a kind of black magic, hoodoo, or "conjure." As an act of resistance to racism through community renewal, African-American rhetoric can be thought of as a "conjuring" voice from within American spaces of negation and neglect. To conceive of African-American rhetoric as a "conjuring" voice constitutive of a "call" to America's conscience is to highlight its capacity for rhetorical invention and ethical action. This perspective makes salient the fact that African-American rhetoric must be understood as a transformative phenomenon in America.

Anthologies of African-American oratory capture the sense in which black public speech has sought to transform American racist and sexist practices, but also how black speech has been self-consciously reflexive. As a vital dimension of abolitionist discourse, for example, black speakers advanced the antislavery cause while providing through the sheer act of public speaking the warrant *for* black public speaking. Spokespersons like Cyrus Bustill, Richard Allen, William Hamilton, Maria Stewart, Charles Lenox Remond, Henry Highland Garnet, William Wells Brown, and Frederick Douglass take as one of their rhetorical objects the paradoxical activity of black speech itself. African-American eloquence is provocative and problematic in this regard. In the mid-nineteenth century, Douglass's power as a public speaker caused many northern white audiences to question his slave history (authenticity). Indeed, African-American eloquence has often been seen as a sign of the orator's (mimicked) "whiteness."

Historically, speaking on behalf of African-American freedom and dignity directly invoked this paradox. If black speakers were viewed as masterful orators, their artistry was often explained by referencing their perceived proximity to white culture. In this cultural dissociation, "blackness" is negated and made silent. The ground for establishing an African-American rhetorical tradition as such is denied. The abolition, women's suffrage, labor, and temperance movements were each infected by this form of racism. White movement organizers grudgingly allowed black speakers at civil rights and women's rights conventions, believing that for the most part white lecturers could better voice movement concerns. Thus, black speakers needed to negotiate this rhetorical dilemma—to provide powerful argument for movement issues and articulate moral critiques of the movements themselves (Foner and Branham, 1998).

Taken in full, African-American rhetoric is a brilliant and imaginative adaptation to a confluence of dynamic and shifting exigencies. The Reconstruction era in the United States, for instance, ushered in unprecedented black representation in the South, as well as a strident debate about what to do with all the freed slaves. Kirt H. Wilson (1998) has argued that the civil rights debate of 1874 to 1875 characterizes opposing notions of how race should matter in American politics. Analyses such as his also point out that American muting forces were constantly on the move against a "conjuring" African-American voice. Opponents of racial desegregation sought to arrest the debate by denying the harsh reality of racism. Thus, black speakers were challenged to fill in this void by supplying stark narratives about their daily lives.

The efficaciousness of African-American narrative is uncontested today. In a special sense, however, it took the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s to introduce black folk sensibility to American literati. Also known as the "New Negro Movement," this post–World War I artistic explosion should be understood, in part, as a civil

rights campaign designed to demonstrate a "modern" black subjectivity and constitute an African-American nationality. Although there has been much scholarly disagreement regarding the diverse influences sparking this Renaissance and about whether the character of the artistry warrants the term *Renaissance,* one interested in surveying the field of African-American rhetoric should be attentive to how black writing argued. That is, how black folk like James Weldon Johnson, Alain LeRoy Locke, Jesse Fauset, and W. E. B. Du Bois (to name a few) carefully managed the cultural resources of the "movement" so as to cultivate Harlem as a "race capital" and a resource for African-American rhetorical invention.

Central to this rhetorical inventive task was the negotiation and reinterpretation of "American" and "Negro." Harlem seemed to capture a rising black militancy, black pride, and the hopes that America would soon live up to its deferred promises of equality under the law. Housing the densest black population in the North, Harlem came geographically and emotionally to represent the "nation within a nation" that Martin Robinson Delany and Booker T. Washington characterized years earlier in quite different discourse and under different situations. On the one hand, the "race capital" signified a form of nationalism most clearly represented by Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. On the other hand, Alain LeRoy Locke's "New Negro" referred to a complex ideology and rhetorical strategy that transfigured both "race" and "American" identity. Public argument over how black art mediated these sorts of tensions are rich resources for appreciating the historical role that African-American cultural performance has always played in voicing a moral challenge to the ongoing constitution of America.

Almost as soon as the Harlem Renaissance was widely recognized, the Great Depression (1929–1941) diverted white America's gazing on the pages of blackness to green paper money and a "red menace." Concerns over the economic crisis, World War II, and communism had a divergent impact on African-American rhetors for decades. Artists, intellectuals, and activists, such as Marcus Garvey, A. Philip Randolph, W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, and Paul Robeson, delivered potent addresses regarding the relation of race

to labor, the role that black folk ought to play during the war, and how global imperialism warps Africa.

Specifically, after World War II, African Americans sought jobs and a greater freedom of movement across U.S. communities and across the nation. The doctrine of separate but equal was perceived to stand in the way of African-American economic and social progress. In a lecture at Dillard University in New Orleans on the night before his victory over Topeka, Kansas, in the famous desegregation case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Thurgood Marshall asserted that segregation laws like the Black Codes of the Post-Reconstruction era concealed in legal garb the moral bankruptcy of a nation. Once again, African-American rhetoric voiced an ethical challenge to a peculiar American silence. This kind of rhetorical performance goes beyond the explication of bad law. By reinventing discrimination as a plague visited upon every American community, it issues a "call" to the transhistorical conscience of America.

Without a doubt, this African-American "call of conscience" has taken many forms over the generations; it has been sounded from the stages of convention platforms, and church pulpits, and it has reverberated off the pages of the black press. Du Bois posited it in spiritual terms in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and Ralph Ellison transmuted it, ironically, into a faceless figure in *Invisible Man* (1952). During the turbulent 1960s, however, the "call" was registered in intense, explicit, moral, and confrontational tones (Scott and Smith, 1969). [*See* Social Movements.] When the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott was sparked by Rosa Parks's refusal to continue to be displaced and unheard, the ugly face of Southern hate filled America's television screens. Bull Connor's attack dogs, fire hoses, and billy clubs served as rhetorical resources and as amplifiers for the voices of the civil rights movement. Malcolm X turned the "call" into an ultimatum in the fiery "Ballot or the Bullet." Stokely Carmichael jolted America with a raised fist and his "Black Power" mantra. And Martin Luther King, Jr., orchestrated a national prayer for every American soul in magnificent utterances, such as "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream."

The 1960s were a costly decade. Violence has

historically been a function of African-American rhetoric: to speak is to risk one's life. The paradox emerged here again because, as Audre Lorde has poignantly put it, silence is also a form of death. So, as Malcolm X, Medger Evers, and Martin Luther King, Jr., became black martyrs, cities burned. A rhetoric of rage and separation seemed to supplant a rhetoric of unification and transcendence. Black Panthers defended themselves against "whitey," and some members succumbed to brutal police tactics and hails of bullets. American moral silence was loudly punctuated by African-American rhetorical acts that literally cost (and saved) black life.

If it is reasonable to say that the twentieth century bore witness to African-American prophesy and sacrifice, then one might expect the twenty-first century to bring to fruition some of those prophetic fragments (West, 1999). This work is already underway, for example, in how Minister Louis Farrakhan's oratory not only forces African Americans to reconsider historic relations with Anglos and Jews but also compels some observers to reflect more fully on the black community's own complicity in the rhetoric of racism (McPhail, 1994). It also can be seen and heard in the cadence of the Rev. Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign rhetoric and in his delicate and skillful foreign diplomatic efforts. The pace and tone of African-American discursive soundings become frenetic and postindustrial if one listens to the "noises" of "hip-hop America" (George, 1998; Rose, 1994; Watts, 1997). These rhetorical forms vary widely, to be sure, but as "calls" to America's conscience, they are vital.

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— Eric King Watts

Abolitionist rhetoric

In the introduction to Abolitionism (Boston, 1989), Herbert Aptheker declares that black abolitionists "were the first and most lasting Abolitionists." Rarely have historians granted the black community such authority, although some of its leaders, like Frederick Douglass, have received considerable attention since the revisionist histories of the 1960s. For scholars of rhetoric and U.S. history, the contribution of black abolitionists is profound. In fact, their rhetoric comprised the center of the U.S. antislavery struggle. They were the first to articulate the hypocrisy of early American "liberty." They persuaded white abolitionists to abandon gradualism and colonization. They helped abolitionism transform itself into a social movement, adopting the roles of advocate and internal critic. They insisted that freedom was not merely the absence of slavery but the af-