In this issue, Public Address Division members Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray discuss their study of an eight-page letter by Eliza Bancroft Davis (1791–1872) of Worcester, Massachusetts, written to her husband, John Davis, a U.S. Senator, on 18 June 1840. The original letter is in Box 1 (“Family Correspondence”), Folder 7 (“1840”), in the John Davis Papers at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. The Zborays’ transcription of the letter appears below as Appendix 1, and a facsimile of the original letter accompanies this conversation on the Public Address Division’s Web site. The transcription and facsimile of the original appear by courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

We located this letter by Eliza Davis, the wife of a Whig U.S. Senator, in 1994 while researching a book about nineteenth-century reading practices. All about politics, the letter said nothing about reading. But it stuck with us, and it inspired our 2010 book, Voices without Votes. According to the

“Judge if you can what I felt; but strange as it may seem, after the first five minutes I forgot myself entirely; and received it [the cheers of the Whig delegations] only as a part of the enthusiasm of the day in which, such is the power of sympathy, I fully participated.”

Eliza Bancroft Davis, 1840
“woman’s sphere” paradigm, women of the antebellum era were not supposed to voice partisan allegiances. To be sure, a few pioneering activists spoke out for women’s rights, the abolition of slavery, and other moral reforms. But hard-core electoral party politics? That was thought to be in the sphere of men. Eliza Davis showed us otherwise. As we contextualized the letter with newspaper reports, we learned that the partisan press and some speakers used it as 1840 campaign propaganda. Truly, we concluded, such personal letters can be the stuff of public address.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

The artifact captures a crucial moment in the birth of American mass politics, with all the hoopla that Robert Gray Gunderson sketched in his Log-Cabin Campaign (1957) on the 1840 election. Whigs, more so than Democrats, recruited nonvoters, including women, for campaigning. Yet would they be anything more than faces in the crowd? This letter, a self-revelation of the partisan activities of one disfranchised woman, portrays Eliza Davis as she steps from her private world into the political limelight. The document can be read as a testament of women’s fluency in the new argot of mainstream party politics and as an argument that they could and should be part of it.

Davis wrote from her home in Worcester to her husband John, the day after the Massachusetts Whig nominating convention, with its 30,000 attendees, was held there on 17 June 1840. She was heavily involved because John was to be nominated for governor of Massachusetts, at the same time that presidential nominee William Henry Harrison’s state electors were to be selected. She knew her letter’s importance to her husband. Being in Washington, he relied upon her overall persuasive effectiveness in responding to the situations that she faced. As she explains, her rhetorical activities involved meeting with convention committee members, accepting calls from Whig movers and shakers in town, and, ultimately, standing up before a parade of 10,000 to acknowledge cheers to “the Lady of John Davis.” One line about her publicity in this parade reveals her transition to self-conscious partisan efficacy: “[A]fter the first five minutes I forgot myself entirely; and received it only as a part of the enthusiasm of the day in which, such is the power of sympathy, I fully participated.” She had become part of the machinery of political persuasion.
Davis, like many political wives, was “on” all the time, and she had to strategize rhetorically before the public. For example, she was challenged to a verbal duel before a delegation of 150–200 Whigs. When its leader supposed that she would forget them, she admitted, “my memory was poor for names,” and quickly added, “but at such a time the name of Whig was enough.” Her adversary retorted that the opposition candidate, Martin Van Buren, “never forgets any one,” to which she parried, “I hope . . . I am as unlike Van Buren in every thing else as that.” The delegates applauded her. It was a verbal performance not unlike stump speaking, where the ability to respond extemporaneously to challenges from the crowd demonstrated character and tested one’s mettle. We would not have known about this unpublished, yet public rhetoric if we did not peer into “private” letters.

After being moved to tears by her letter, John Davis gave it to renowned Senate orator Daniel Webster, who deemed it the best letter he had ever read. It reached William Halstead, a New Jersey Congressman, who used it in a speech at a Whig rally in New Brunswick. Replete with misquotes about unexpected delegates who devoured her food, the speech also fabricated Webster’s tears. After excerpts appeared in the papers, Democrats had a field day. The Ohio Statesman proclaimed on 23 September: “The Great Whig Boobies, Daniel Webster and John Davis, crying!” due to “the guzzling propensities of a band of two hundred hungry Federals.” Other newspapers attributed Webster’s tears to envy of Eliza’s superlative rhetoric.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

This letter’s public afterlife shows that a critical reading of such rhetorical artifacts is contingent upon the context of their creation, as well as their dissemination and reception. If we had stopped at the text of the letter, we could not have known just how much Davis addressed the public from the confines of her home.

Woman’s sphere scholarship dating from the 1970s had left the impression that women’s partisanship was so proscribed that our finding of even a few nineteenth-century women writing such “personal” material in a partisan register was significant. That women could be political transformed our
understanding of woman’s sphere from a discourse constitutive of women’s “experience” to an admonitory and contingent rhetoric. It also altered our critical approach to interpreting women’s letters and diaries: we adopted a hermeneutic that assumed that their partisanship would manifest itself under close textual reading and contextual research.

Through this interpretive practice, supported by chasing down (through online newspapers and other resources) unidentified politicians and events tossed into letters, we have constructed a sense of a vernacular of partisan awareness and activity that can apply to other marginalized groups engaged in their own forms of public address beyond the podium and pulpit. At least for the women we have studied, the vernacular rhetoric of partisanship turned out to be not just possible, but quite prevalent, sustained, and often eloquently expressed.

Such partisanship on the margins prompts a reimagining of what being marginalized means from a civic perspective. Is it a way of countering exclusion—by resisting civic alienation through thinking, expressing, and acting oneself into a sense of inclusion—or is it playing the hand one is dealt as best as one can? Or both?

Using a different lens, we wonder to what degree and under what conditions dominant groups recognized the vernacular political culture of the disfranchised. When interpreting speeches by privileged nineteenth-century white politicians, for example, should modern critics pause and consider that these speakers may have been addressing women as well as men?

How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?

We believe that historical manuscript letters and diaries have special pedagogical value in classes on the history of American public address, women’s rhetoric, and political communication. They show how vibrant political life was among groups whose members could not vote or easily obtain access to the podium. Granted, such materials by

“I replied that my memory was poor for names, but at such a time the name of Whig was enough.”

Eliza Bancroft Davis, 1840
white, lower- to upper-middle-class women are easier to find than, say, those of African Americans or working-class people. But digging in archives can prove beneficial. Many letters appear in digital collections such as the North American Women’s Letters and Diaries database, North American Immigrant Letters and Diaries, and American Civil War Letters and Diaries. Several archives post facsimiles or transcripts of manuscript letters and diaries (e.g., Historical Journals and Diaries Online).

For this artifact specifically, one classroom activity might involve dividing the class into six groups, all of which read the Davis letter but in conjunction with a different piece of scholarship on women’s public address. Questions for discussion could be: What light does the scholarship throw upon the Davis letter and vice versa? In what types of political rhetorical activity did nineteenth-century American women engage, as seen in the scholarship and the letter? How did their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers shape their rhetoric? What kind of roles can private letters play in the study of American public address?

Where can interested readers find additional information?

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Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
Worcester July 18-1840 —
[in pencil] June

Dear "Honest John"—

The seventeenth has come and gone, and has left impressions, never to be effaced. I had feared before hand that the ludicrous would predominate; for it seemed as if it might look boyish for to see grown men, ^to bearing banners and badges to denote they were true patriots—but it was not so. There was almost sublimity in the view we had of the procession as it came with stately tread, phalanx after phalanx through the street, as if the community were actuated by one spirit,—filled with one soul. I can only compare my emotions at the sight, to what I feel when I think of the deep and endless flow of the Mississippi, or the resistless cataract of the Niagara. It is too much for pen to describe. It must be seen and felt to be realized. But to go back to the commencement, of the matter, for I forget I have written nothing about that or any thing else since Sunday. The Committee having enquired how much I could aid them, I offered nine beds, large one, enough for two good natured people ^each —they might send me nine or eighteen as they chose, but let me know what number—by three o clock on Tuesday they ^company began to come in—and by five my beds were all taken up, and the brother of Georges wife, Mr Thomas Davis, of the Boston delegation besides. Before nine I had five more, and [illegible]

to bring up the rear a Delegate from Essex North District walked in, claimed relationship, and said he would sleep on the sofa rather than not stay. Here we were, with twenty five good & true whigs, and zeal enough to save the country any day. I shall enclose a list of such as I know; though I must confess, I fear I shall never remember more than a quarter of them if we meet again. During our preparations on Tuesday Mr Bliss drove up to tell me that the Barre delegation proposed to dine with me; very well said I—tell them they shall have a welcome as cordial as they can wish; and a log Cabin dinner. I can only give to any one a cold collation, with the appropriate additions of cracker[,] cider[,] and cheese "with which Bliss said they would be satisfied with this anticipation I added, "immediately to my tongue & hams, and sat down to talk with my guests. We had so good a time, that my favorite guest, an old man from Great Barrington took quite a fancy to me, and when he went to bed with his brother delegates "Boys, says he, you shan[']t sleep in that bed to night if you dont promise to do your best to make Ms Davis a Governor’s Lady.” We met in the morning with equal good humor, and after an early breakfast my twenty odd marched over to the Cabin. Then came the tug of war for us at home. We flew round cleared up the rooms. Set dinner tables in every one but the front parlor; a long one in the front entry—sliced up our meats, arranged the cake, put lots of wine to cool—dressed ourselves, locked the house up from garret to cellar, and away we went at half past nine to see the shew—
and what a shew! Never, never shall I forget the deep and solemn feelings that agitated me as I beheld this magnificent spectacle! Madame Salisbury had invited us to be there to view, and we accepted the invitation in preference to others, we had received, because we could view it at once the whole distance through the main Street; and you can conceive how much superior this view was. It was late before it came, but when the procession did come, with its banners,—its music, the greetings & huzzas that resound on every side, one felt there was power for good or for evil in such a living mass. God grant it may be for good, and that his blessing[s] rest on their exertions for their country's welfare. But I was not long allowed to indulge myself in visions. Mr Newton, who was with us there, stepped out as they were drawing near the court end; and made known to some one that I was there. “Three cheers for the Lady of John Davis,” was the cry—I retreated from the window, abashed and overwhelmed. Not so, says M' Newton. You must show yourself. So he led me back, and by, (I am sure) an awkward show & wave of my handkerchief, I acknowledged the honor. This was the Suffolk Delegation I should think. Each in turn, cheered for you or me or both, and at last I got quite used to it. In one platoon I recognized one of my guests, and as they cheered I kissed my hand to him; “Again,” the whole troop cried out, and I curtsied—“Once more” cried they and we had three times three. Sometimes they would make a sort of pause, and turn to the window, to see & be seen

face to face. Judge if you can what I felt; but strange as it may seem, after the first five minutes I forgot myself entirely; and received it only as a part of the enthusiasm of the day in which, such is the power of sympathy, I fully participated. The last banner having past I hastened home to prepare for my company, for I knew not at what hour they might appear, and to find the house locked upon them would be too bad. I had not put off my cape before the sound of music greeted my ear and on looking out, behold! my Barre Delegation drew near, mustering from a hundred and fifty, to two hundred strong, with banners, drums and trumpets. My heart sank within me—how on Earth should I feed them?—however, I put on a courageous air[, ] bade them welcome[, ] told them to arrange themselves around the tables & we went to work to supply them with refreshments. Dish after dish of ham tongue & crackers disappeared[, ] bread butter & cheese seemed to have wings, cold veal & alamode beef were exterminated, while the rivers of beer, cider, wine & water, might have turned a cotton mill, and as for cake the way it went was a caution. At last[, ] however[, ] their appetite like all earthly things came to an end & fortunately before the provision did. The leader of the band of Barre Lords told me he supposed I could not know the names of all my guests and intimated that as they were numerous an introduction to each was superfluous,—for probably I should not remember so many. I replied that my memory was poor for names, but at such a time the name of Whig was enough[.] The only thing I like Van Buren for said he, is his memory of names—he never forgets any one. I hope replied I, I am as unlike Van Buren in every thing else as that. For which I got a capital clapping. That M' Van Buren M' Leader or Capt. then requested me to come to the door with the family when he had arranged his party in a line. So we paraded ourselves in full view and the band struck up Hail Columbia. After which the head man, made a profound obeisance—and a regular speech, setting forth his gratitude for the hospitable entertainment, his sense of your exalted merit, and his
wishes that success might attend us always. To which I had half a mind to speak in reply, but my regular company had in the mean time arrived and one of them cried out, “Three cheers for M’rs Davis”—& when their echo had ceased, three more for Gov. John Davis[.] and In the midst of the hurrah I retreated and, the band playing a quick march, they went off in a stile [sic] that did Barre honor. I enquired of some body what put it into their heads to come here, and was told it was you. They say some one of them saw you in Washington & that you desired it. Now it is very agreeable [sic] to see ones

friends but when they come by hundreds, I like a little more time for preparation. We got along charmingly though, and the novelty of the thing amused the regular visitors so much that they did not mind eating the fragments. M’ Davis of Boston said he would not have lost it for a thousand dollars. One after another of my guests dropped in and snatched a mouthful before going to the cars, but it was near six before they all got through. Those who had staid the night before were nearly gone, but I had a recruit before bed time, and mustered fine at breakfast this morning. Through the day I have had a few calls. M’ Ridell of N. Bedford has left a bottle of choice snuff and his respects. When my Berkshire party went off they all shook me cordially by the hand, and made me promise to visit them. They gave me a note of thanks, signed by each one, which I shall keep as a sort of certificate that I did my duty. It is as follows. The subscribers respectfully and cordially present their thanks to Mrs Davis for her kindness and hospitality in the reception of a part of the Berkshire delegation on the day of the State Convention. May God bless you and your family &

save our common Country from misrule and anarchy —

signed by thirteen delegates

I have not said a word after all about the convention ^& nomination but my heart has been full to overflowing. Such evidence of the most entire, unbounded confidence and affection and ^as was manifested towards you is enough to melt a heart of stone. I shall be a lover of the people—shall ever believe and trust them—of the public doings you get a better account than I could give. I thought you might like to know how I got along.

I have a thousand things to say but strange as it may seem to append such a sentence to so long a letter, I write in a hurry. It is nearly dark and I want to call and thank Mrs Salisbury for her politeness. Our day has been a very very busy one—but I could not think of waiting another mail.

Affectionately

ED

John Davis.
U. S. Senate.
Washington.
D.C.
In this issue, Public Address Division member Jiyeon Kang discusses her study of South Korea’s candlelight vigils, which began as an Internet-born protest against the deaths of two thirteen-year-old South Korean girls, Shim Mison and Shin Hyosoon, who were accidentally struck by a U.S. military vehicle in 2002.

Initiated by South Korean youths born after the 1980s, who were also the demonstrations’ primary participants, the candlelight vigils became a repertoire for protest, as seen in the recurring vigils of 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2010.

What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

The 2002 vigils revealed the conjunction of seemingly incommensurable factors: national dissemination of the vigils without a leader, coexistence of tropes from the 1980s democratization movement (i.e., anti-Americanism) and the 2002 World Cup soccer tournament (i.e., mass gathering and festivity), the significant political impact of a depoliticized younger generation, and the temporary upsurge but fast downturn of anti-American sentiment.
These characteristics raised the research question of how the Internet can function as a locus for civic discourse. Impassioned Internet discussion (combined with parodies, memes, and images), fast-paced circulation, and affirmation of shared emotion fashioned a collective agency unique to online politics. Although these features defy the model of deliberation among informed citizens derived from the work of Jürgen Habermas, we can nonetheless see a public sphere that is anti-elitist and vibrant, wherein citizens engage in conversation through what rhetorical scholars call vernacular discourse.

Another point of theoretical interest lies in the role of corporeal memory in reshaping the social movement repertoire and subjectivity of participants. In South Korea, memories from the Cold War era (violent clashes with the police, and anti-communism) function as palpable barriers to protest or criticism of the United States, South Korea’s ally against communism. In 2002, the corporeal and affective memories from the recent World Cup street celebrations made “taking it to the street” a natural event, and so allayed the fears associated with public protest in the 2002 vigils and those of subsequent years.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

The uneven ending of the Cold War and changing social imaginaries in South Korea are particularly relevant to understanding the vigils. Because of the ongoing war with North Korea, the U.S. military presence, and compulsory military service, the Cold War mindset persisted in South Korea nearly two decades after the fall of the communist bloc. The youth participants of the vigils—born after 1980—were South Korea’s first generation to be exempt from direct contestation between authoritarianism (coupled with anti-communism) and radical social movement (inspired by anti-Americanism). The weakening of ideology-driven politics is related to the emergence of collective action based on shared grievances, identification, and emotion.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

Critical textual analysis is a fundamental and useful tool for analyzing online discourse. In undertaking such an analysis, I am informed by Actor-Network Theory. ANT explicitly distances the
actor from a human intentional individual, and considers that an actant can be anything, provided it is the source of an action. The internal and external structures of a website directly shape discourse and can therefore function as an actant. For example, word limits for a posting induce expressive messages over deliberative ones, and an open (accessible to anyone) online community invites dissenters and gives rise to clashes of opinions.

In my research I also conduct focus-group interviews. Through the retrospective narratives of vigil participants, I can understand how their experiences at the vigils shape their identities as citizens and political actors. Even though many of my interviewees did not attend the protests with well-defined motivations and a vision for change, they nonetheless often speak about having become different people as a result of their corporeal experiences. Interviewing helps me to investigate the question of how corporeal and collective memories shape the subjectivity of individual participants.

How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?

For a class on social movement, the vigils offer a compelling case study of “vernacular rhetoric/discourses,” as discussed notably in the scholarship of Gerard Hauser, Kent Ono and John Sloop, and Robert Glenn Howard. Such discourse creates a space for collective identity and alternative politics. The vigils also offer a discursive approach that links well with the scholarship of sociologist Charles Tilly on “social-movement repertoire.”

For a class on social media or the public sphere, online discourse from the vigils can accompany the Habermasian model of deliberation or community, in order to examine new forms of older democratic practices.

In a graduate seminar on rhetorical theory, my research can be used to pose questions about rhetorical agency, specifically about individual agent/collective agency, intentional agent/nonhuman agency, and corporeal agency.

“Girls . . . / You were close friends growing up together. / You were best friends. / Holding hands, what did you say to each other? / . . . / What could you have become?”
—From an anonymous Korean poem, first posted online on 23 November 2002; translated by Jiyeon Kang
Where can interested readers find additional information?


Contributor: Jiyeon Kang is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Iowa. Her research interests include social movements, civic use of social media, South Korean politics, youth culture, and globalization. She is currently working on a book manuscript, entitled Volatile Netizenship, Cautious Citizens: Youth, the Internet, and Post–Cold War South Korea. Her scholarship has also appeared in Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs, the Journal of Korean Studies, and the Quarterly Journal of Speech.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
Revisiting the Clinton and Bush press conferences offered the chance to intercept and analyze the growth of public intransigence and uncompromising self-justification as habits of argument (rather than occasional occurrences).

A Conversation with Kathryn M. Olson


What do you find especially compelling about these artifacts?

These two news conferences both stunned me when they initially occurred. The sheer number and range of tortured interpretations and questionable argumentative moves emanating from the White House briefing room in
these single appearances seemed remarkable. These were moves that a decent student taking a basic argumentation class should be able to recognize and refute easily. Further, the brazenness of a leader who was not only denying any problem with his position—in the face of such substantial public displays of constituent disapproval or solid counterevidence—but also insisting that the only choice was between his policy and disaster seemed absurd on its face.

The fact that today similar intransigence and self-justification seem almost the default at all levels of government encouraged me to take a fresh look at these texts. Together they provide a compendium of recurring argument patterns that make constructive criticism and democratic deliberation very difficult. They thus indicate and contribute to a rhetorical climate that undercuts the main strength of democracy, as David Zarefsky noted in 2008: its compatibility with human fallibility and the possibility of deliberative correction.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of these artifacts?

Understanding these press conferences’ immediate contexts is indispensable, but their significance for my purposes is how they cultivate, model, and index the development of a rhetorical climate in which a democracy’s leaders respond to criticism even from friendly quarters (e.g., constituents or support agencies) with intransigence and self-justification.

For the first two years of his presidency, Clinton had the advantage of both a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate. Yet Clinton’s major policy initiatives, most notably universal health care and welfare reform, foundered in deal-making or proved unpopular. The 1994 midterms gave the Republicans an overwhelming victory that most observers saw more as a repudiation of the Democrats than as an endorsement of the Republicans. When Clinton approached the podium for his press conference the day after the election, he had some accounting to do to his constituents on whether he had received their rebuke and how he planned to rechart his course. Instead, Clinton insisted that the election results meant that voters wanted more of his agenda enacted faster, and he held the new Republican Congress responsible to cooperate with him in realizing that goal.
Prior to the 2007 NIE, Bush had insisted that Iran was developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and he used that claim as the basis to argue that military action against that nation might soon be warranted. In 2002 Bush and his administration had led the United States to war against Iraq with similar arguments based largely on a putatively “slam-dunk” case that Iraq secretly harbored WMDs. Gradually, indisputable evidence emerged that Iraq neither had nor was developing such weapons. But it was too late. The United States was already mired in the unpopular Iraq War. The 2007 NIE, which exonerated Iraq’s neighbor Iran of similar WMD charges, seemed especially compelling because it was the product of an overhauled preparation process. Relieved Americans attended to Bush’s 4 December press conference hoping for an enthusiastic embrace of this factual correction and some expression of the President’s resolve to avoid unnecessary wars. Yet Bush’s press conference took a different, and astonishing, tack. In spite of Bush’s acknowledgment that the NIE was credible and without mounting any new justifications, Bush stood firm on his position that Iran posed such a nuclear danger that military action was not out of the question. He interpreted the NIE findings as actually supporting continuation, without modification, of his harsh policy toward Iran.

In a forthcoming essay, I consider the transcripts of these two press conferences in the broader context of contemporary democratic discourse. Certainly, there has never been a “Golden Age” in which American politicians graciously and humbly accepted correction and unfavorable feedback, reflected on their mistakes, and gratefully learned from the experience. However, intransigence and persistent self-justification—regardless of important new facts to the contrary or unequivocal negative feedback from one’s constituents, not just one’s political adversaries—seem to have become a way of life at all points on the political spectrum.

“Last night the voters not only voted for sweeping changes, they demanded that a more equally divided Congress work more closely together with the President for the interest of all the American people.”

William J. Clinton, 9 November 1994
Revisiting the Clinton and Bush press conferences offered the chance to intercept and analyze the growth of public intransigence and uncompromising self-justification as habits of argument (rather than occasional occurrences) where it is perhaps easiest to recognize them: in the rhetoric of the one official elected by all the people. When a President’s public rhetoric exemplifies unreflective intransigence and assertions of certainty regardless of the quality and clarity of challenges from friendly quarters, the tone is set for other, less highly placed public figures to react to criticism or correction similarly and for all to lash out even more defensively when confronted by political opponents.

**How would you characterize your critical approach to these artifacts? Why have you chosen this approach?**

My perspective focuses on rhetorical leadership. I draw on both argumentation and rhetorical criticism in an attempt to empower rhetorically capable and critical citizen leaders and to analyze and critique exemplary and questionable leadership practices. I choose this approach because it actively, not just reflectively, engages stakes that matter every day to real people, particularly my students. Given that my best chance at influence is through teaching my students how to recognize and analyze the various rhetorical moves that they encounter and how to develop and evaluate proactive options in light of what they perceive, my
focus on rhetorical leadership has a strong pedagogical flavor.

How would you incorporate these artifacts into a class?

For a basic argumentation class, these companion press conferences are a great place for students to practice locating and evaluating the use, in actual discourse, of many key argumentation concepts: shifting the burden of proof, straw person arguments, post hoc ergo propter hoc, false dichotomy, conditional or hypothetical arguments, false dilemma, confusing necessary and sufficient conditions, substituting the part for the whole, and cross-examination strategies. After students have read about these concepts and the instructor has taught them in class, students could search for and explain as many examples from the news conferences as possible, either as homework or in small groups or, best of all, first as homework and then in small groups with a final full-class debriefing discussion. The instructor could even give students the concepts and have them compete to be the first to find and explain each one and/or to find the most examples.

This pair of press conferences also could support a more advanced pedagogical discussion of Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s concept of dissociation. The press conferences are replete with instances of dissociating various unitary concepts into parts and then claiming the part with positive associations for one’s own position. The texts are particularly helpful because they repeatedly illustrate what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argue is the “prototype of all conceptual dissociation”: the “appearance-reality” pair. For instance, Clinton dissociates what the voters “really” mean from what they “appear” to mean; he takes the election results as proof that the voters endorse his agenda and just want it fulfilled more completely and quickly. He also insists that there has been “real” progress in securing Americans’ futures but that voters may not have “felt” or “believed” that yet. That is, he contrasts the “appearance” of ineffectiveness based on misperceptions against the

I think the NIE makes it clear that Iran needs to be taken seriously as a threat to peace. My opinion hasn't changed.

George W. Bush, 4 December 2007
quiet “reality” of effectiveness. For his part, Bush dissociates Iran’s “real” threatening nature from the “apparently” peaceful and compliant picture of it painted in the NIE and concludes that the report thus functions as proof that his militaristic policy is working and should be extended. He also argues that possessing the knowledge to enrich uranium constitutes a “real” nuclear threat that might justify preemptive military action, even though the “appearance” is that Iran is not using that knowledge and does not have the several other parts of the sequence that would make it a credible nuclear threat.

Where can interested readers find additional information? ...


Contributor: Kathryn M. Olson is Professor of Communication at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and Director of its Rhetorical Leadership Graduate Concentration/Certificate Program. Her research interests include rhetorical criticism and theory, argumentation, and contemporary public address. Her scholarship appears in journals including Argumentation and Advocacy, the Journal of Applied Communication Research, Philosophy and Rhetoric, Presidential Studies Quarterly, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Rhetoric and Public Affairs. She has won numerous awards for research and for teaching and mentoring, including two NCA Golden Anniversary Monograph Awards and NCA’s Women’s Caucus Francine Merritt Award.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
In this issue, Public Address Division member Paul Stob discusses his study of a speech given by the American philosopher and psychologist William James at the unveiling of the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial in Boston on 31 May 1897. The speech can be found in numerous locations, but the commemorative volume of the unveiling ceremony reprints not only James’s speech but also briefer remarks by other speakers. The commemorative volume is available in full and for free on Google Books: *The Monument to Robert Gould Shaw: Its Inception, Completion and Unveiling, 1865–1897* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1897). The Shaw Memorial, designed by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, stands atop Beacon Hill in Boston. A photograph of the memorial can be found here. Colonel Shaw was the white commander of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, a unit of troops of African descent recruited from the Northeast, the Midwest, and Canada. On 18 July 1863, the Massachusetts 54th led the Union Army’s charge on Fort Wagner in South Carolina. Colonel Shaw and more than two dozen of his men were killed in the assault. Badly wounded but able to survive was Garth Wilkinson James, another white officer in the 54th and the youngest brother of William James.

“*That lonely kind of valor (civic courage as we call it in peace times) is the kind of valor to which the monuments of nations should most of all be reared, for the survival of the fittest has not bred it into the bone of human beings as it has bred military valor.*”

William James, 1897
What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

James’s speech is compelling because it challenged many of the norms of commemorative oratory. Commemorative speakers are typically called to celebrate, remember, or condemn according to the expectations of their audiences, deploying familiar and predictable topoi in an emotionally charged situation. At the unveiling of the Shaw Memorial, speaking according to the expectations of the audience would have meant addressing the Civil War, the heroic actions of the Massachusetts 54th, and Shaw’s leadership. And for the first half of his speech, James did indeed articulate these themes.

But in the second half of the speech, James proceeded to upend familiar commemorative topoi. Immediately after discussing the Shaw Memorial in terms of brotherhood, heroism, and unity—which were the values that the audience looking at the relief sculpture most likely expected to hear invoked—James called these terms into question. The true meaning of the memorial, he insisted, was the “lonely courage” that Shaw displayed when he agreed to “head your dubious fortunes, [N]egroes of the 54th.” James then elaborated: “That lonely kind of valor (civic courage as we call it in peace times) is the kind of valor to which the monuments of nations should most of all be reared, for the survival of the fittest has not bred it into the bone of human beings as it has bred military valor” (85).

James’s turn to “lonely courage” isolated Shaw from his regiment and from the surviving soldiers standing in the audience. It was a risky rhetorical choice to say the least, disrupting the emotional connection between the people of Boston, the actions of the 54th, the veterans of the war, and the general feeling of collective sacrifice for the common good. Yet the turn to lonely courage allowed James to pinpoint the kind of virtue that was available to the people of Boston in 1897. In response to the upheavals of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, Bostonians could assert themselves as individuals and adopt the same kind of courage that had animated Shaw. Thus by questioning the audience’s perception of what was significant in the past, James was able to underscore their duty in the present and future.

In the end, the speech was a success because James used his ethos as America’s leading psychologist to challenge
commonplaces regarding the Civil War, Robert Gould Shaw, and the Massachusetts 54th. At the same time, he positioned his listeners as participants in the memorial’s meaning. White or black, old or young, male or female, veteran or civilian—everyone listening to James was treated as an individual who could act as virtuously at the end of the nineteenth century as Shaw had acted during the war. The people of Boston became the Robert Gould Shaws of 1897 and beyond.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

There are three contexts useful for understanding the artifact. The first is the long-standing tradition of war remembrance. Because of this tradition, which stretched back to ancient times, the people of Boston expected James to talk about brotherhood, sacrifice, military valor, and the like. The second context is the “memorial mania” that swept across the United States in the decades after the Civil War. James spoke at a time when the American people felt a profound desire to remember those who had taken up arms and committed themselves to a larger cause, be it a Northern or a Southern cause. As a result, James’s decision to challenge commemorative commonplaces was risky, distinctive, and unexpected.

Yet James’s decision was also fitting given his place in public culture—which is the third context for understanding the artifact. William James was Boston’s intellectual leader, quickly on his way to becoming America’s preeminent public intellectual. He was, at the same time, the nation’s leading psychologist. Because he was an expert on the human mind, his ethos was that of someone who could muck around in the thoughts, memories, and perceptions of the audience. At the Shaw ceremony, James used this ethos to question the audience’s understanding of the past and to redirect their memories according to the science of psychology.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

My approach to this artifact is a close reading of the speech relative to the contexts mentioned above. Such an approach allows me to isolate the turn—or what in a forthcoming essay I refer to as James’s commemorative confrontation—that takes place in the second half of
the speech. It also helps to explain the audience’s response to the speech. Those in the crowd knew that James was being unconventional, yet they also knew that the speech was a brilliant success. As a writer for the *Boston Journal* explained on 2 June 1897, “Seldom is Boston favored with an oration so fitting to the time and hour and yet so unconventional as that delivered by Prof. William James in Music Hall on Monday.” Wondering how the oration could have been perceived as “unconventional” yet “fitting” is what first led me to explore the speech.

**How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?**

James’s Shaw oration provides a compelling case study of intellectual culture, public memory, and memorialization. Because the speech deals with a memorial, it provides students with the opportunity to reflect on the visual, artistic, and architectural dimensions of public memory. At the same time, James’s words allow students to reflect on how texts can interact with material artifacts.

Furthermore, because the speech dealt with the Massachusetts 54th and memories of the Civil War, the issue of race pervaded the occasion and James’s performance. It should be noted that while James was the principal orator at the unveiling ceremony, he shared the stage with Booker T. Washington. Washington’s speech, which is available alongside James’s speech in the commemorative volume of the ceremony, is eloquent and compelling in its own right, although somewhat more conventional.

Taken together, James’s and Washington’s speeches allow for an intriguing discussion of public memory, race, visual culture, and commemorative oratory.

“The war for our Union . . . freed the country from the social plague which until then had made political development impossible in the United States. More and more, as the years pass, does that meaning stand forth as the sole meaning. And nowhere was that meaning better symbolized and embodied than in the constitution of this first Northern [N]egro regiment.”

William James, 1897
Where can interested readers find additional information?  


Contributor: Paul Stob is Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Vanderbilt University. His research focuses on the intersection of rhetoric and intellectual culture, particularly in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. His work on William James, John Dewey, and Kenneth Burke, among others, has appeared in Argumentation and Advocacy, Philosophy and Rhetoric, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Rhetoric and Public Affairs. His forthcoming book, William James and the Art of Popular Statement, will be published by Michigan State University Press in Fall 2012.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
The young Egyptian professional could pass for any New York bachelor. Dressed in a crisp polo shirt and swathed in cologne, he races his Nissan Maxima through the rain-slicked streets of Manhattan, late for a date with a tall brunette. At red lights, he fusses with his hair.”

New York Times, 7 March 2006

A Conversation with E. Johanna Hartelius

In this issue, Public Address Division member E. Johanna Hartelius discusses her ongoing study of a set of approximately 170 New York Times articles published between September 2001 and August 2011, each containing at least five occurrences of the term “Arab” or “Muslim” or “Middle East” and at least five occurrences of the word “immigrant.” She pays particular attention to articles discussing immigration in the United States. Articles pertaining to non-U.S. content (e.g., the Muhammad cartoon controversy in Denmark, the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, and the Norwegian massacre in July 2011) are used for comparative reference but are considered beyond the scope of the inquiry.

What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

Years ago I became interested in two philosophers’ use of the notion of “face.” To put it simply, for Paul de Man, face is the mask of subjectivity that is put onto someone—or, more accurately, onto nothingness—before
that someone has a subjectivity. In classical rhetoric, the relevant trope here is *prosopopeia*, a personifying word or phrase through which an absent or fictional character is presented as though speaking and/or acting. Conversely, for Emmanuel Levinas, face is what shatters the mask that has been put onto someone by others. The understanding that the community has of the person is insufficient, and something else breaks through. My analysis of this conceptual oscillation—face as both the construction and destruction of subjectivity—led me to try to explicate what happens rhetorically when the two face-processes occur in “real life.”

Part of the inquiry’s appeal for me was to seek answers to an abstract and theory-driven question in a text as traditional as a newspaper, using that text as a snapshot of public discourse. I started with a theoretical concept, “face,” and a question about public rhetorical habits. Because I wanted to understand such habits as part of public address, I selected a set of *New York Times* texts. For the purposes of my project, and as a function of the considerable cultural power of the *New York Times*, this artifact afforded an instructive perspective. I chose the artifact on the assumption that the *New York Times*, a publication and medium with a long tradition, represents widely circulating cultural constructs with serious political and social implications. Available in digital form, it is a searchable repository whereof a rhetorical critic can ask: What rhetorical practices surrounding Topic X circulate among the American public?

One of the more complex contexts wherein subjectivity and community are negotiated currently is U.S. immigration. My previous research on the subject directed me toward immigration debates as illustrative of the rhetorical processes of face.

“Besieged Canadian officials told him to come back in two weeks. And when he dragged their suitcases back to the American side, United States immigration agents promptly arrested him and his two teenage sons, leaving the rest of the family wailing in despair in the icy cold.”

*New York Times, 25 February 2003*
Specifically, I wanted to examine those processes as they pertain to immigrants who, especially after 9/11, appear in public discourse as a threatening menace. Much of the extant scholarship on media representations of immigrants focuses on the Latino/a population and thus raises different issues than those at stake in my project. My questions were: What does it look like when, in public discourse, Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern immigrants are “faced,” that is, when a rhetorical figure is imposed on them in such a way that it brings them into public subjectivity? And then what happens when that face or figure cracks? What comes through the cracks? How are the cracks mended rhetorically?

**What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?**

The potentially relevant contexts are many. Situating the *New York Times* in context, a critic could, for example, discuss the changing conditions for newspapers and other traditional media. To contextualize media coverage of Arabs and Middle Easterners, one would need to discuss race and U.S. public culture. And so on. Because my research focus is immigration, this was the context in which I located the artifact, framing it as a specific subset of *New York Times* texts about immigration, specifically Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern immigration. As the “nation of immigrants” mythology reflects, however, even this is a large, unwieldy context; much of American history is potentially about the culture and politics of immigration. Further, it is worth noting when contextualizing Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern immigration that the constructed category is complex: Clearly, not all Muslims in the United States are immigrants; a majority of Arab Americans are Christian; only a small minority of the world’s Muslims are Arabs; and so on. Nevertheless, the fraught concept of Muslim-Arab-Middle Easterner exists in public perception, propagated and circulated through mainstream media.

For the Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern immigrant community, post-9/11 U.S. society is precarious. For instance, in November 2002 the Department of Homeland Security introduced a “special registration program,” registering thousands of male noncitizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and other countries of suspicion.
Under this so-called absconder initiative, the largest registration effort in decades, authorities detained and deported suspects, most of whom were cleared of any connections to terrorism. Despite reports of civil liberties violations, the program was deemed a success by the U.S. Justice Department until its termination in May 2003. This initiative illustrates the centrality of sociopolitical context for analysis of this artifact.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

I originally approached the text set with theoretically driven questions about face. Then, through a close textual reading of the articles, I identified a wide range of themes, tones, images, and tropes. This exploratory method befits the open-endedness of the above-mentioned research questions, which articulate curiosity: What happens when...? What does it look like rhetorically when...? By offering curiosity as a critical orientation, I mean a model of public address scholarship that deliberately turns to the text to discern a rhetorical practice.

My critical approach to this artifact differed on at least one specific point from existing analyses of the social and political implications of media representations of immigration. Whereas most critiques center on negative representations, explicating the impact of public discourses that in various ways indict immigrants, I focused specifically on what might be called nonaccusatory rhetorical constructions of immigrants. Instead of drawing attention to the directly incriminating or overtly hostile representations (e.g., that Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern immigrants are prone to crime and violent misogyny or that they have contact with terrorists, both of which recurred frequently in the set of articles), I explicated three prevalent themes in the prosopopeia, or “face-assignment,” of Muslim-Arab-Middle Eastern immigrants: the face of an assimilated newcomer, the
face of a patriot, and the face of a powerless victim. This methodological decision was motivated by my assumptions about the theoretical concept of face. My objective was not to condemn the assignment of subjectivity as a rhetorical and social practice. *Prosopopeia* isn’t necessarily sinister intentionally. But arguably, it always entails some kind of domination.

**How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?**

This project fits within a larger research program, as part of which I recently developed a course on rhetorics of immigration. However, the artifact could be useful in almost any course on contemporary issues or conflicts in U.S. society. The text set is large and diverse enough that each student could design an individual research project around whatever topic or question she or he discovers therein. Or an in-class small-group discussion activity would be suitable.

As students work through the *New York Times* articles, an important and challenging task is to maintain focus on form and practice. Many of the articles are narratives about individual lives, suffering and triumph, innocence and guilt. As students read through a very large set of texts, I would encourage them not to get lost in the information conveyed about a particular person or family but to extract patterns: What do we learn about individual lives that seems to reappear? Better yet, might we as critics learn something about the rhetoric of immigration by noting the fact that so many texts about immigrants are stories of individuals? From a hundred portrayals, does a whole character of “the immigrant” emerge? What is that figure like? Active or passive? Humble or arrogant? Dangerous? Virtuous? Specifically, what are the dimensions of this character that seem surprising compared with the student critic’s expectations?

Where can interested readers find additional information?


**Contributor:** E. Johanna Hartelius is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at Northern Illinois University. She studies rhetorical theory and criticism with an emphasis on the rhetoric of expertise, public memory, and digital rhetoric. She published *The Rhetoric of Expertise* at Lexington Books in 2011, and her scholarship appears in journals such as *Argumentation and Advocacy, Critical Studies in Media Communication, Management Communication Quarterly, the Quarterly Journal of Speech,* and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly.*

**Editor:** Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
A Conversation with Leroy G. Dorsey

In this issue, Public Address Division member Leroy G. Dorsey discusses his study of “The Woman and the Home,” a speech given by President Theodore Roosevelt to the National Congress of Mothers on 13 March 1905 in Washington, D.C. It is available in The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, National Edition, vol. 16, American Problems (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 164–71. It is also available online.

What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

How presidents talk about gender is as important as how they talk about war, the economy, and American exceptionalism. Theodore Roosevelt helped to shape his enduring, larger-than-life persona by addressing themes involving masculinity, militarism, and fighting evildoers ranging from greedy corporations to rogue foreign powers. In other words, much of his rhetoric centered on what he considered manly pursuits. But Roosevelt also rhetorically engaged the “women’s issues” of the time: women’s equality in the workplace, in politics, and in the home. So when I came across his

“The man or woman who deliberately foregoes these blessings [of children] . . . merits contempt as hearty as any visited upon the soldier who runs away in battle, or upon the man who refuses to work for the support of those dependent upon him.”

Theodore Roosevelt, 13 March 1905
speech to the National Congress of Mothers—an organization that evolved into what we now know as the Parent Teacher Association—I wondered how his “masculine” rhetoric would address the “feminine” issues of his audiences. What’s more, his speech contains the rhetorical themes—or unspoken fears—that might be partially driving contemporary political debates surrounding a woman’s right to birth control and abortion.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Americans engaged in a controversial debate about women’s role in society. In stark terms, some advocates called for women to remain true to interpretations of biblical guidelines that cast them as pious and subservient; other advocates urged women to free themselves of the social and legal constraints that prevented them from realizing their full potential. Roosevelt’s speech in 1905 entered that debate. He attempted to find a middle ground between those contested positions by using his “strenuous life” rhetoric to frame the typical “woman’s work” as equivalent to the “manly work” of ensuring national greatness.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

A number of economic, political, and cultural issues directly affected how audiences might react to the notion of women’s equality and consequently influenced how Roosevelt’s speech might be received. Economically, with the industrial boom in full swing, manufacturers needed workers: cheap labor largely unencumbered by labor union influences. For women this represented a blessing and a curse, as the opportunity to earn wages provided a level of freedom that was countered by male workers earning much more and employers engaging in abusive practices against women because they were women. Politically, women challenged their voting inequity in a number of “unwomanly” ways, such as appealing directly to male voters to change laws and lobbying lawmakers. Culturally, the nation faced a dramatic influx of immigrants, and some public advocates, Roosevelt included, feared “race suicide,” with foreigners and their offspring outnumbering “real” Americans. In his 1905 speech Roosevelt had to navigate all these competing contexts.
How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

I have always been fascinated by Walter Fisher’s discussion of humans as storytellers and his notion of the narrative paradigm. For him, narratives provide a dialectical union of the argumentative and the aesthetic that allows people to understand and to be persuaded by certain characters and plotlines. Coupling this with the work of Joseph Campbell on myths—cosmological stories that speak to a culture’s identity and reasons for existence—provides a frame in which to examine how one of the most common discursive forms can affect how we engage other people. Politicians, particularly, employ the “grand stories” that speak to the quintessence of a culture’s personality. Such mythic narratives popularize ideologies that have guided American success and likewise have justified the nation’s imperfections.

Roosevelt was fond of embedding his policies into narratives about America’s origin and expansion, most notably the Frontier Myth. He recrafted that myth’s storyline to incorporate modern characters. He shaped how contextual impulses could be considered and attempted to elevate the political conversation into a mythic realm in which the choices of those modern characters could be restrained.

In this speech, Roosevelt does not mention the term “frontier,” but his thematic development of “duty” could remind

“Teach boys and girls alike that they are not to look forward to lives spent in avoiding difficulties, but to lives spent in overcoming difficulties. Teach them that work, for themselves and also for others, is not a curse but a blessing; seek to make them happy, to make them enjoy life, but seek also to make them face life with the steadfast resolution to wrest success from labor and adversity, and to do their whole duty before God and to man.”

Theodore Roosevelt, 13 March 1905
audiences of a recurring plotline in much of his other frontier-themed political rhetoric. He acknowledged women’s rights as being just as important as men’s rights, but he noted that “duties are even more important than rights.” Just as a man’s duty in the frontier paradigm was to be martially strong and to fight for America, so too did he expect the same from women. In other words, Roosevelt militarized motherhood, identifying women who had children as soldierly heroes who exhibited the same strength as men and fought for American greatness. For a woman who shirked her duty he had nothing but contempt, comparing her to “the soldier who runs away in battle.” Women could prove their martial courage if they birthed multiple children and trained them in Spartan fashion. Anything less, according to him, proved that such women were “ignoble.”

As scholars, we gain insight by examining the narrative paradigms that a rhetor constructs in order to influence how the contexts surrounding political discussions can be experienced. For me, it is remarkable to see political figures today routinely refresh historical and mythic themes that seek to constrain particular choices.

How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?

In an undergraduate class on rhetorical criticism or American public oratory, an instructor could have the class examine multiple versions of Roosevelt’s speech. The Theodore Roosevelt Center has digitized three drafts of his speech to the National Congress of Mothers (the first and second are here, the third is here). Students could examine those drafts to understand the rhetorical choices Roosevelt made. Why did he add and delete certain passages and phrasings before settling on the final version? What arguments can be made about the evolution of his rhetorical strategy, as evidenced by multiple speech drafts, to address the various audiences and contexts he faced?

In a graduate course on presidential rhetoric, this speech could be positioned as part of an assignment to explore how presidents negotiate gender and identity in their discourse. Mary Stuckey’s Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity (2004) and Vanessa Beasley’s You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric (2004) provide required reading for such an assignment.
Where can interested readers find additional information?


**Contributor:** Leroy G. Dorsey is a professor and the chair in the Department of Communication at the University of Memphis. His research examines the symbols used by political figures to promote their legislative agendas, to shape their identities as morally sound advocates, and to transform their audiences into seemingly active agents poised to support particular positions. His book *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple: Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism* won the 2008 Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award from the Public Address Division. He also edited *The Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership* (2002), and his scholarship has appeared in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, and *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*.

**Editor:** Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
In this issue, Public Address Division member Michelle Murray Yang discusses her study of a speech given by Soong May-ling (1898–2003), the First Lady of China, at the Hollywood Bowl in Hollywood, California, on 4 April 1943. Married to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who was then the head of the Nationalist government in China and the leading Allied commander in the Eastern war zone, Soong toured the United States in 1943 to raise money for United China Relief. She spoke before diverse audiences during the tour, including Wellesley College students, members of the U.S. House and Senate, and Hollywood starlets.

A full text of the Hollywood Bowl address, as well as her other remarks from the 1943 tour, can be found in Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Selected Speeches, 1943–1982 (Taipei: Chinese Women’s Anti-Aggression League, 1984); this is the source cited herein. Texts of the Hollywood Bowl address are also available elsewhere, including the Los Angeles Times, 5 April 1943, pt. 1, p. 9; and Franklin Watts, ed., Voices of History, 1943–44: Speeches and Papers of Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Chiang, Hitler and Other Leaders (New York: Gramercy Publishing Co., 1944), 147–53. A transcription of the Los Angeles Times text appears as Appendix 1 below.

“We shall not be cozened of an equitable peace. We shall not permit aggression to raise its satanic head and threaten man’s greatest heritage: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all peoples.”

Soong May-ling, 1943
What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

Soong’s address at the Hollywood Bowl is compelling because the substance and tone were markedly different than in her 18 February 1943 speeches before Congress. In her congressional addresses, Soong focused on constructing the Chinese and Americans as a common people whose shared goal of securing the survival of freedom, justice, and democracy transcended divisions of race and nationality. Despite Soong’s glowing praise of American ideals, scholars such as Chih-Yu Shih and Laura Tyson Li have noted that her remarks before Congress rhetorically functioned as veiled critiques of the Europe First military strategy that the United States was practicing. Along with Great Britain, the United States aimed to defeat Nazi Germany first, while deploying limited resources in Asia, and only later to engage in the Pacific theater of operations in a sustained way.

Soong offered a much more pointed critique of U.S. policy in her Hollywood Bowl address. She had made only vague references to China’s wartime burdens in her speeches before Congress, but Soong devoted nearly all of her Hollywood Bowl address to articulating China’s desperate attempts to fend off the Japanese invaders. Detailing the grueling conflict, she repeatedly lamented China’s lack of suitable aircraft and maintenance supplies, contrasting China’s dearth of war machinery with Japan’s staggering abundance. Soong’s stirring word choice and rich description of the brutalities suffered by Chinese fighters and civilians further substantiated her claim that China was sorely in need of aid. Unlike her speeches to Congress, the Hollywood Bowl address provided graphic accounts of the infrastructural and human destruction in China. Depicting the atrocities perpetuated by Japanese forces against the Chinese city of Nanking in 1937, she described how “the invaders plundered and stripped the crucified populace of all means of livelihood, molested our women and rounded up all able-bodied men, tied them together like animals, forced them to dig their own graves and finally kicked them in and buried them alive” (117).

Through graphic descriptions like this, Soong emphasized the destruction rendered upon Chinese soil by the Japanese military. However, she also reassured listeners that the enemy had failed to quell the Chinese spirit. Despite material damages and mounting casualties, both civilians and soldiers continued their service to the cause of freedom, their will unabated. Soong
linked this courage to the strong leadership exhibited by her and her husband, detailing how they provided guidance to anxious Chinese airmen, visited battle lines in the midst of constant air strikes, safeguarded cultural treasures from ruin, and fled alongside Chinese civilians from the advancing enemy.

that she and her husband had made and challenged those who were critical of China’s wartime strategy. She dared skeptics to ask, “What other peoples in the modern world have endured the agonies of war for so long and so bravely, held so tenaciously and so staunchly to the defense of principles as the Chinese people?” (117).

Additionally, she spoke at length of her role in organizing a Women’s Advisory Council and explained how this organization enabled Chinese women to contribute to the war effort by training them to care for the wounded and orphaned.

“My face so young, . . . twitching with the excruciating pain made by a gaping wound, how can I ever forget?”

Soong May-ling, 1943

Additionally, Soong’s account challenged the characterization of her in the U.S. press as a fragile “China doll,” casting her instead as a strong woman who worked alongside her husband. In turn, she extended this recognition to other Chinese women by emphasizing their contributions to China’s war effort.

Despite the daunting hardships faced by the Chinese people, Soong reaffirmed that China was not fighting on its own behalf but for a higher cause shared by other Allied nations. China’s casualties of war died “in order that civilization may survive,” she said (116). By valiantly engaging the Japanese forces since 1937 and fighting alone until 1941, China had given “time to democracies to prepare their defenses” (118). Soong acknowledged the ongoing U.S. war effort, but she did so briefly. Instead, she focused on enumerating China’s contributions, concluding her remarks by stating, “We shall not permit aggression to raise its satanic head and threaten man’s greatest heritage: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all peoples” (118). Explicitly quoting from the Declaration of Independence solidified the connection between China’s cause and the survival of American ideals,
bolstering Soong’s indictment of U.S. leaders.

Through her use of rich description to articulate the ravages of war, to illustrate the Chinese people’s unwavering resolve, and to depict China’s strong leadership, Soong constructed a much more pointed critique of the Europe First strategy than she had done in her earlier remarks to Congress. She persuasively made the case that although the Chinese people had suffered unimaginable horrors while fighting for ideals expressed in U.S. founding documents, the United States had failed to grant the aid necessary to sustain China’s war efforts. I contend that Soong thus crafted an emotionally powerful argument to try to shame U.S. leaders into providing material support to China, which deeply resonated with the sympathetic crowd of 30,000 spectators who came to hear her speak.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

There are several important contexts to consider, the first of which concerns the conventions of diplomatic rhetoric. Typically, visitors are careful not to offend the leaders of the host nation. Soong subverts diplomatic convention with her stinging critique. Although her speech at the Hollywood Bowl contains brief praise for the United States, the gripping description of China’s hardships makes any praise for the United States appear ironic. It further strengthens her claim that China had borne the wrath of the Japanese military for far too long with far too little aid.

It is also important to consider Soong’s unique speaking position as it relates to race and nationality. Although Soong was born in China, she came to the United States at the age of ten to study. After graduating from Wellesley College, she returned to China. Reporters praised Soong’s perfect English after her appearance before Congress; for example, on 19 February 1943 the Record of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, declared that she “not only spoke American, but thought American.” Soong’s embodiment of a dual Chinese/American identity can be viewed as both an advantage and a disadvantage. It helped to ingratiate Soong with American audiences and heightened her ethos, but in conjunction with her rhetoric, it also linked China with American principles, therefore eliding complex issues pertaining to intercultural differences.
My critical approach is best characterized as a comparative close textual reading. Comparing and contrasting Soong’s Hollywood Bowl address with her speeches before Congress provide an opportunity to examine how the substance and tone of her rhetoric evolved during her tour of the United States.

As the first Chinese to address both houses of Congress, Soong provides students with a valuable opportunity to reflect upon the relationships among race, gender, and identity. Soong’s speeches offer a useful case study for examining diplomatic rhetoric as well as twentieth-century women’s rhetoric. The U.S. press repeatedly commented on Soong’s petite physical features and what reporters deemed her exotic “Oriental” manner of dress, thus marking her as a cultural “other.” However, Soong’s perfect English, adherence to feminine norms of gender performance, and espousal of American ideals allowed her to constitute a hybrid Chinese/American identity in which her cultural difference was perceived as beguiling rather than threatening. Having students research how news articles described Soong’s speeches and public appearances during her 1943 tour can be helpful for examining how her hybrid identity was constructed, in part, through press accounts.
Where can interested readers find additional information? ... 


A transcription of the Hollywood Bowl address of Soong May-ling (Madame Chiang Kai-shek) as published in the *Los Angeles Times* begins on the next page. Different versions of the address exhibit variations in wording, punctuation, and order of paragraphs; thus the *Los Angeles Times* version does not precisely match the version quoted above.

*Contributor:* Michelle Murray Yang is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Belmont University. Her research focuses on how China is understood, interpreted, and portrayed by policy makers and media outlets within the United States. Her work has appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* and *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*.

*Editor:* Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
Following is the complete text of the address given yesterday by Mme. Chiang Kai-shek at Hollywood Bowl on the occasion of her only public-speaking appearance here:

All experiences, happy or tragic, leave their impress, and consciously or otherwise influence our subsequent thinking and attitude of mind.

As the seventh year of China’s resistance against Japanese aggression approaches, I shall sketch a few of the incidents most vividly incised on my mind, and, insofar as it is humanly possible, adopt a detached and objective view in examining the processes of mind which led me to certain convictions. For, from them, perhaps, you may gain an insight into the lives and motives of a people who for many long years have endured the brutalities of being invaded. Time does not permit me to give you a balanced or comprehensive account of the war. I shall leave that task to the historians.

I hesitated to talk to you about war in China lest it should appear that my intent is to over-emphasize the suffering of my people. On second thought I believe you would understand that the purpose animating me lies in essaying in my own mind, as well as in yours, to profit by the lessons which these years should teach us.

Pearl Harbor Has China Parallel

I shall not encumber you with the history of the perfidy of the Japanese. We can well find its counterpart and parallel in the talks between the Kurusu Mission and the State Department just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, for they have a flavor familiarly reminiscent of those in the days following the Lukouchiao incident when Japan feigned negotiations with the Chinese government while massing her troops for total invasion.

At the beginning of war in 1937, my duties as Secretary-General of the Chinese Air Force kept me chiefly engaged in air activities. We had just reorganized the air force and the total number of planes we had was pitifully and incredibly scanty—less than 300. Of these, something short of a hundred were fighters and bombers. The Japanese, on the other hand, had approximately 5000 fighting planes.

Outfought Enemy in First Engagement

On the very first day of air combat our young cadets shot down 14 enemy bombers. We ourselves on that day sustained no irreparable loss, for although our planes were riddled with bullets, they still could fly. For three consecutive days enemy planes attacked the same objective—the Hangchow Aviation School—and each time our airmen, flying archaic Hawk II’s and a few Hawk III’s, matched and outfought the enemy, shooting down a considerable number.

The Japanese were completely bewildered and even went so far as to say that we had some secret beam which enabled our young pilots, many of whom were yet undergoing training,
successfully to shoot down their bombers. At first we, too, could not believe that the reports were entirely accurate. The charred remains of the enemy planes, however, bore witness to the veracity of the reports.

China’s Air Force Dwindles Away

As time passed, fewer and fewer combat planes remained to us, for most of the planes ordered before the war were not due for many months. The lack of replacements for our lost planes was further accentuated by the paucity of spare parts and nowhere on the horizon shone there a ray of hope to mollify and alleviate our dire difficulties. Problem after problem stalked in nightmare procession. The Nanking aerodrome did not have a runway sufficiently solid to allow the take-off of the heavy Martin bombers which eventually arrived and were then being assembled. A new runway had to be made. Where was the material to be found at such short notice, especially with the nation’s transportation geared to more pressing tasks? A solution evolved. I asked myself to what more appropriate use in such an emergency could the material on the excellent roads leading to Dr. Sun’s mausoleum be put than this? So we decided to tear up those roads and take that material for the runway. But hardly was the first problem solved before another interlinked difficulty confronted us. Where could we find the labor?

Recalls Dire Days of Nanking Stand

I thought of the thousands of refugees who were daily streaming into Nanking and undertook to appeal to them for help. Every able-bodied man responded. As the enemy planes bombed the city every day during daylight hours, the refugees worked by night—tens of thousands of them by the dim light of kerosene lamps. Through concerted and unflagging toil the heavy runway was completed in record time, thanks to the energy, persistence and patriotism of the refugees who gave their time and labor without stint and without murmur; asking in return no remuneration, no manifest recognition of their service.

Wherever the generalissimo went to hold conferences with his officers at the front I accompanied him. The trips held dangers even when made in the dead of night, for rail traffic was disrupted by constant bombing and congested with troop movements and on the highways road lights were turned off and all motorcar headlights dimmed by black cloth lest enemy planes should spot us.

Once we arrived in Soochow just when some troop trains had pulled in. The station was a shambles from repeated bombings but the railway officials, tottering with weariness and lack of sleep, stuck doggedly to their work. Stretcher-bearers worked like wordless automatons trying to clear the station platform of the wounded while more and more wounded were unloaded. Clammy, sticky blood clung like glue to our thick walking shoes while more blood seeped through the soles; still more blood spattered over us as we stumbled through the closely packed station. The wounded were huddled in every inch of available space—young men who a few hours before were full of vitality and vigor and who now were slowly being drained of life itself.

Wounded Youth Pleads for Water

Only an occasional gasp of pain echoed across the roofless station; most of the sufferers bore their anguish in stoic silence. One young boy, stretching out his hand, tugged at my coat as I
passed, murmuring: “Water, water.” I sent an aide-de-camp for water. Immediately a medical officer advised me that in the case of stomach wounds no water should be given. I shall never forget the look on the young lad’s face as I sorrowfully shook my head and told him that for his own good I could do nothing for him. That face so young, almost that of a child, twitching with the excruciating pain made by a gaping wound, how can I ever forget? Why should the Almighty select those so innocent, so untried, to be offered as sacrament on the communion table of national honor? Have they, perhaps, sinned against the tenets of God? Or is theirs the vicarious lot of retributive justice?

It is true that life, if it is of any worth, must have as its constant companion, Honor. Death occurs as the final culmination inevitable in the processes of life. And indeed it falls not to all men to share the privilege with the crusaders of truth to breathe their last while in line of duty, and to have the benediction of knowing during their last conscious moments that they are dying in the upholding of ideals more meaningful than life. War is cruel, terrible and revolting and should never be permitted to recur. We who have experienced it at its worst cannot extol nor glorify it but we [take] comfort in knowing that the last moments of our youths in making the supreme sacrifice are illuminated by the lambent glory of righteousness and justice while the youths of the enemy are decimated without the solace that they are dying in order [that] civilization may survive.

Scorched Earth Strategy Adopted

To return. As the enemy landed increasingly long-ranged guns and heavy artillery, the time came when the central government decided that all civilians should evacuate Nanking. Hundreds of thousands of people who hitherto had made the capital their home had to take what they could carry and leave the rest to be consumed by fire in adopting the strategy of what is now commonly called the “scorched earth policy.” In no wise did we want the enemy to have any more advantage than we could help.

The trees which we had planted so proudly 10 years before in our high hopes to make Nanking truly the capital beautiful, had to be hewn down so that artillery could have the necessary unobstructed view. To have watched the saplings gradually grow year by year into sturdy trees and finally to witness their tops cut off was like seeing live pets killed before our very eyes.

The generalissimo and I were amongst the last of the officials to leave Nanking. Before we left we took steps for the removal of the irreplaceable and priceless treasures of the National Museum of Art to quarters safe from enemy looting. Later I went outside the city wall for a final look at the now empty buildings of the schools for the children of the revolution. Here and there in the fields beyond the campus I saw thatched huts not yet devoured by flames, some outside walls still intact, and hanging on them strings of dried beans, peas, lentils and cobs of corn. They were the pick of the harvest and had been carefully saved as seeds for the next crop. But for these humble folks, who for generations had lived, loved, and had their being on the spot, there was now no next crop, not for many years, anyway, not until after victory is won.

The need for planes became ever more pressing and the devastation and destruction wrought by the enemy over the whole countryside made it imperative that we had to resort to measures which may seem ludicrous to you. Yet what else could we do? Every effort must be made, every means must be employed to equal the high morale of the army and the people.
The constant cry of the young cadets was to give them anything which could fly and so we put bomb racks on the Hawk II’s and III’s which from that time on served both as bombers and pursuits. We also equipped the primary training planes—the Fleets—with bomb racks. But, alas, the latter were found to be too fragile and too slow to be effective. To those lads, however, any machine which could go soaring into the sky meant snatching that much edge off the vast initial advantage held by the enemy.

Small Air Force Parceled Carefully

We husbanded our small air force with the utmost care and each mission was carefully planned so that for the least expenditure could be achieved the greatest result. It was heartbreaking to send the boys up to defend our Capital from the skies or out on bombing missions, for the odds against them were so tremendous that each time many failed to come back. For many months I had worked with the boys and had learned to know them personally. They trusted me because they knew that what I had been telling them were my honest convictions: that we must fight for principles; that every man was to be judged on his own merits; that no favoritism was to be shown to anyone, but that absolute impartiality in spirit and in treatment was to prevail throughout the whole air force.

Through my experience of that period I have come to be reaffirmed in the belief that any service can be built up when the directing policy is based on impartiality and fairness and when the ranks know that reward and punishment are meted out according to their just deserts.

Meanwhile the Japanese had concentrated their naval power at Woosung and under its protection landed an ever-increasing number of troops in the eastern part of the International Settlement of Shanghai. Thus, whilst the enemy had the advantage of the International Settlement as their base for attack, our troops had the disadvantage of the International Settlement, for we were not allowed even to use it as a thoroughfare. Our soldiers, with totally inadequate mechanized equipment and with absolutely no air protection, fought on the outskirts of Shanghai literally for every inch of land that the Japanese gained through the combined use of heavy artillery, naval guns and incessant bombing. And the Japanese average gain was less than a mile a day.

On This Front There Was No Defeat

On that front for three months our troops fought with the fury of the inspired whilst the Japanese military moaned that China was not playing fair because her troops did not know when they were defeated. The spirit of our soldiers showed with steadfast splendor, and their selflessness instilled courage and determination in our sorely tried and harassed people. It was all that the high command could do to hold back the troops in their trenches. They wanted to combat the enemy at close quarters; so clear was their realization of principles at stake, and so great their indignation that good faith could be broken by the mere whim of those who knew only desecration.

Bloodthirsty Mania Causes Wonderment

During such moments I wondered whether the mania of the bloodthirsty is ever slaked by the display constantly before their eyes of the human suffering and havoc they have wrought.
Are they such diabolic Lucifers that they can only revel in human misery? Well might I have such musings, for the world now knows to what extent the Japanese military carried their calculated cruelties after they occupied Nanking and other areas, how they plundered and stripped the terrified populace of all means of livelihood, molested our women and rounded up all able-bodied men, tied them together like animals, forced them to dig their own graves, and finally kicked them in and buried them alive.

Settled temporarily in Hankow, we realized that the war would be long and hard and that to sustain a defensive war of the magnitude and length we had in mind, Hankow was merely a stepping-off place to enable us to take stock of our weaknesses and reassess our strength in making preparations for the future. In equipment the enemy undoubtedly outstripped us in every way, for theirs was a modern army with all auxiliary services complete, including mechanized units, trained engineer corps and fully equipped medical contingents, in addition to a powerful navy and an equally powerful air force.

And what did China have? We had no navy to speak of, only an embryo air force and an infantry equipped mainly with rifles, machine guns and outmoded artillery pieces. But we had manpower, which willingly volunteered its flesh and blood. We had fighting spirit, for we knew we were struggling for justice and righteousness. And, also, we had the advantages of time and space.

It was our intention and strategy to make the enemy pay, and pay dearly, for every inch of land they wrested from us, so that in time we could wear them out, provided that the will to win could withstand the onslaught of steel and high explosives.

‘Magnetic Strategy’ Proves Correct

China’s long-continued resistance in the face of formidable difficulties proved that our envisionment of the situation both psychological and military was correct. To those skeptics who sneered at China’s “magnetic strategy” I should like to ask: What other people in the modern world has endured the agonies of war for so long and so bravely, held so tenaciously and so staunchly to the defense of principles, as the Chinese people? And in the face of such odds in fighting equipment?

Of these same skeptics, I should also like to ask: Given the same conditions, what would they have done, in our position what could they have done?

I should like to reiterate here that we have been fighting not only for our homes and hearths; we have been fighting for the upholding of pledges and principles because the violation of one pledge means the breaking of the whole chain of international decency and honor.

During those Hankow days, the generalissimo and I were constantly making trips to the various fronts. The ever-recurring spectacle of the hundreds of thousands of our well-to-do countrymen reduced to being refugees, fleeing on the roads over the countryside, being bombed and machine-gunned by enemy planes, and of the thousands of dead on the roadsides awaiting burial, are ghastly memories impossible to forget. When will the ghosts of our bombed cities, ruined villages, and myriads of men, women, and little children murdered in cold blood be laid?

Women’s Organizations Spring up Everywhere

Meanwhile there was work to be done for the living. As war continued, women’s volunteer organizations sprang up all over the country. Systematic co-ordination, however, was
lacking, and, as a result, duplication of work and confusion prevailed. At a conference called in
the hills of Kuling, 50 women leaders representing every section of the country came together.
During those 10 days of the meeting we laid the foundations of the National Women’s Advisory
Council which all agreed should function as the supreme body in directing women’s war efforts.
We established various departments to meet war emergencies without interfering with
existing organizations, but by supplementing and co-ordinating local efforts. The training of girls
and women to work amongst the wounded, the refugees, and as liaison between the people and
the army, the care of the war orphans, the increase of production, all received the consideration
they deserve.
The response to this movement on the part of women throughout the country was electric.
Branch associations mushroomed overnight. Differences of opinion were freely aired and hotly
contested, but the final decisions of the Women’s Advisory Council ruled. From this experience I
am convinced that women can work together: they can, they will and they must—women of
every creed and belief, and, yes, of every nationality—provided the cause is big enough, and the
challenge worth accepting.

Hankow Evacuation Orders Hurried

A few months later the Central Government issued hurried orders for the evacuation of
Hankow. I had gone to the boat to bid good-by to several hundreds of the girls whom I had
helped to train for war work. How I hoped and prayed that they would reach their destination, for
just the day before a boatload of refugees, including many of our war orphans, was bombed and
all perished. As I was walking home I noticed that over the gutters in the streets there still
remained thick slabs of iron grates. Would they not be used by the enemy to be made into bombs
to kill more of our people? I mentioned this to the generalissimo and he issued orders that the
metal should be taken up and thrown into the river.
The generalissimo and I took the last plane which left the night before Hankow was
occupied by the enemy.

Chungking, wartime capital, now became the center of activity. The same difficulties
which obtained at Hankow followed us there. Even the government organizations had a hard
time trying to find quarters, for all of a sudden, millions of refugees poured into this district from
the Hankow area. But there was one difference; we had already sustained the first impact of war,
and the people had become accustomed to makeshifts in living.

Enemy Air Force Follows up Refugees

Hardly had we arrived, however, before the enemy air force started their bombing and
strafing again hoping thus to break down the morale of our resistance. For several years during
the clear season, whenever the city was not enveloped in opaque fog, we were constantly subject
to overhead attacks. In fact, Chungking and its vicinity never had a respite until the famous
Flying Tigers grappled with the air marauders and fought them off. But, alas, there were not
enough Tigers to patrol the vast skies over China, nor enough to give even a little overhead
protection to our valiant armies spread out in the nine war zones. Our Chinese Air Force, as time
went on, dwindled, for although Russia supplied us with some planes, the need was ever greater
than what was obtained. But whenever we could, we made desperate raids over the enemy’s
supply bases. For the rest, we had to be content with training pilots in the hopes that some day planes would be forthcoming.

Anyone who has an idea of the topography of Chungking would understand the heart-breaking hardships our people had to endure. The city itself is situated on a tongue of land at the juncture of two rivers, the Chialing and the Yangtze. Steep stone steps laced their ways up and down the hillsides and the old houses were built in such a way that there was only one entrance. Oftentimes when a bomb exploded and cut off the one entrance the householders would be trapped without any means of egress. Whole sections of the city were turned into shambles by a few bombs, as the houses were so closely packed together that one incendiary bomb could set off a whole block into flames. We knew days when it was impossible to obtain coffins as the toll of death mounted.

City’s Entire Business Section Demolished

In time, all the business section of the city was demolished, so that it was possible to stand in the midst of the city and get an unobstructed view of the rivers on both sides. It is to the credit of the resurgent spirit of our people that they were not intimidated, for after each bombing, scarcely had the air raid siren trailed off its last echo before the surviving householders returned to their burnt shops and homes and began to salvage whatever they could. A few days later, temporary shacks and buildings would make their appearances on the old sites.

Some days the raids were so close and numerous that no one had time to prepare food. Hours were wasted in the dugout; valuable hours needed for work and rest. But moonlight nights were the worst, for the marauding planes, timed with devilish cunning, came in successive waves. Terrible tiredness permeated every nerve and bone so that it was preferable to risk being bombed to death than to get out of bed and seek safety.

But we knew that the enemy was trying to break our morale through sheer physical exhaustion. We were therefore inflexible in our determination not to give in. No greater tribute could be paid to our sorely tried people than this—that in all their suffering never did they complain against their leaders. Never did they falter in the determination that the enemy must be driven from our shores.

China Resisted[,] Knowing Democracies Would Aid

They had faith, too, that, in the end, America and the other democratic powers would realize that it was not only for ourselves that we were fighting, and that by continuing to engage the enemy, we were giving time to the democracies to prepare their defenses. Here I should like to say that neither we nor posterity can deprive unerring tribute to the foresight and statesmanship of President Roosevelt when he envisaged to the full the implications and consequences of the struggle of right against might, and took decisive measures to enable America to become the Arsenal of the Democracies. History and posterity will panagerize [sic] your President’s unswerving convictions and his moral courage to implement them.

We take pride in the fact that, amid all the stern and never-ending demands of war, we are preparing for a just and permanent peace and for the strenuous world-building that lies before us. You, too, are taking similar steps and, like us, you are [as] determined to contribute your share in the organization of a new and happier social order as you are in prosecuting the war.
We in China through these years of suffering have not turned to indiscriminate, gally hate of the enemy. We shall not abrade the sharp, stony path we must travel before our common victory is won. But we, like you and the other United Nations, shall see to it that the Four Freedoms will not assume the flaccid statutes of ethical postulates no matter how belated may be the final victory.

We shall not be cozened of an equitable peace. We shall not permit aggression to raise its satanic head and threaten men’s greatest heritage: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all peoples.
The Wood memorial was created in the same year that Canada legalized same-sex marriage. . . .

[T]he statue responds to that moment, implicitly and explicitly making claims that gay Canadians have always been a part of the nation.

In this issue, Public Address Division member Thomas R. Dunn discusses his study of the Alexander Wood Memorial, a statue of a “Gay Pioneer” who settled in Toronto, in Upper Canada, in 1797. The statue was designed by Del Newbigging and was built with funds from local businesses and the City of Toronto. Erected in 2005, the memorial is located on the corner of Church and Alexander Streets in Toronto’s Church-Wellesley neighborhood, home of Toronto’s largest GLBTQ community.
What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

The memorial falls into that category of rhetorical artifacts that scream out for critical attention. I found it compelling for two primary reasons. First, its very existence is fascinating. As Carole Blair has suggested, the mere presence of certain commemorative sites signals a cultural recognition that someone or something is worthy of attention. Historically, this attention has rarely been bestowed on gay men or lesbians. As what Michel Foucault would label “subjugated knowledges,” queer pasts are regularly regarded as unimportant, nonexistent, or forgotten. This is particularly true for queer pasts prior to 1969. As such, a statue to a “gay” man who lived in the early 1800s is a rare artifact that inevitably generates an array of remarkable audience responses.

The second feature that drew me to this artifact is the style in which Wood is remembered. Of all forms of commemoration, statuary—particularly neoclassical statuary—is the least likely form that one would expect. Since queer pasts are often rendered ephemeral by heteronormative society, to see such a memory expressed in stone is stunning. To see a publicly gay man on a raised pedestal is unheard-of. The memorial’s aesthetic is highly traditional, while a plaque on the pedestal blatantly proclaims Wood a “Gay Pioneer.” Yet at the same time, the statue maintains a queer mystique; the figure is highly buttoned-up while expressing a campy, in-your-face attitude almost indecorous to the occasion. As a critic and a gay man, I found myself pulled in for a closer look.

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

To understand the artifact, it is important to note two particular contexts, one broadly historical and the other local. Beginning more broadly, the statue has to be understood as emerging from and responding to a relative paucity of publicly available queer memories. Along with a small set of similar queer memory projects (which it both echoes and positions itself against), the statue represents an effort to stave off the public forgetting of GLBTQ lives. This is made easier—and even encouraged—by a profound cultural shift in how GLBTQ persons are viewed by wider society, particularly in Canada. The Wood memorial was created in the same year that Canada legalized
same-sex marriage and, to an extent, began accepting gays and lesbians as full citizens. In many ways, the statue responds to that moment, implicitly and explicitly making claims that gay Canadians have always been a part of the nation.

At the local level, understanding the Wood memorial means situating it within an evolving geography and landscape. The memorial is located in the midst of Toronto’s Church-Wellesley “gaybourhood”—a former gay ghetto transformed into a thriving business district, gentrifying upper-class neighborhood, and tourist destination. In this complex space, the memorial serves a variety of audience needs. Certainly, it is a symbol heralded by GLBTQ residents and tourists during the annual Pride Week. But it is also a cruising spot for the neighborhood “bears,” a common place to meet for a first date, a rallying point after the bars close, and a lucky charm for superstitious residents who “rub the bum” of a militiaman pictured on a plaque at the base of the statue. At the same time, the memorial is a source of anxiety for some new residents who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the neighborhood’s character. Collectively, these contextual elements make for a rich artifact that inspires an array of public sentiments and statements.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

Overall, my approach to the Wood statue mimics common practices for examining most commemorative sites in rhetorical studies: after selecting the artifact, I researched Wood, collected and analyzed pertinent discourses, crafted an initial reading of the statue from a distance, and visited Toronto to conduct an on-site analysis.

I also went beyond this approach to attend to the artifact’s unique qualities. For example, I spent a significant amount of time verifying the Wood narrative. As a historical queer, Wood possesses fame largely based in rumor and innuendo. Therefore, to assess the memorial, I spent a number of days in local archives to become as proficient in Wood’s documented life as possible. Another way I approached the artifact was to question to what degree I was supposed to take this statue seriously. Queer culture is highly reliant upon tongue-in-cheek commentary, camp, and kitsch. If the Wood statue could be read queerly, could I really take it at face value? Did its meanings
need to be teased out in a different way?

For personal and political reasons, it was also important for me to go beyond writing a critical essay and build a queer archive. Consequently, as I collected information, preserved images, and conducted interviews, I did so with an eye toward making those resources publicly available, particularly to the wider GLBTQ community. I think all critics, particularly those in public address who so often deal with transitory materials, should consider how they can contribute to the preservation of these materials and not just the completion of their projects.

Finally, I chose to embrace a polysemic reading of the statue among three prominent audiences, or “viewing positions.” The more time I spent with the memorial, the more apparent it became that large parts of the Toronto community were developing their own meanings of it, sometimes in ways that were completely antithetical to each other. To engage these diverse interpretations, I needed to reach different audiences. This meant expanding my critical approach to incorporate subcultural discourse, to conduct oral history interviews, and to spend some time with local community members to get a better sense of the statue’s place in everyday life.

**What happens if you see the statue only from the front? . . . How might filling the space around the memorial with hundreds of revelers alter your perception of its meaning?**

**How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?**

I find that memorials always make interesting pedagogical tools, either because students take to their rhetorical value immediately or because they have rarely given memorials the critical attention that such artifacts deserve. Unfortunately, when studying any memorial that doesn’t happen to be located in the city in which you teach, it becomes nearly impossible to put students in its physical presence. However, I think that this challenge is really a pedagogical opportunity to give students a vivid introduction to the importance of “being there” in evaluating material and visual forms of public address.
In my rhetorical criticism class, I begin a session by showing a large, front-facing image of the Wood memorial and asking the class to read the artifact. This view of the memorial is the most conservative, and student comments usually reflect this messaging. Next, I introduce other images of the statue from different perspectives. With each additional image, I invite students to refine their readings, asking questions like these: What happens if you only see the memorial from the front? What readings become possible if you violate the prescribed pathways? How might filling the space around the memorial with hundreds of revelers alter your perception of its meaning? By the end of the activity, students become cognizant of the role that material and visual elements play in understanding the memorial. After the class completes the analysis, I always follow up with a trip to a local monument or memorial to reinforce these ideas and to highlight the insights that “being there” can provide. Overall, it is a good exercise to introduce critical standpoints and concepts like framing, modes of looking, materiality, and polysemy.

To help orient students to these concepts and critical perspectives, I recommend Carole Blair’s chapter “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality” in the 1999 book *Rhetorical Bodies*, edited by Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley, and Blair’s essay “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places” in the Summer 2001 issue of the *Western Journal of Communication*.

**Alexander Wood 1772–1844**

Militia Officer, Businessman, Public Servant, Justice of the Peace, Gay Pioneer

Alexander Wood came to Canada in 1793, settled in York in 1797 and started a mercantile business, one of only three stores in York at that time. Within a year he was a lieutenant in the York Militia; he was appointed magistrate in 1800 and by 1805 was a Commissioner for the Court of Requests (a senior planning officer). He was involved in a homophobic scandal in 1810 and fled to Scotland, but in two years he was back in Canada and resumed his duties. In spite of ridicule and discrimination he had a successful career in public service; he was on the executive of nearly every society in York, often as treasurer; he was manager of several businesses and acted for clients in land transactions. Wood died in 1844 at the age of seventy-two while in Scotland. The British Colonist paper called him one of Toronto’s “most respected inhabitants.”

*From a plaque on the Alexander Wood Memorial, Toronto*
Where can interested readers find additional information?


Contributor: Thomas R. Dunn is an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Colorado State University. His research examines the intersection of queer culture, politics, and rhetoric with a focus on public memory and visual rhetoric. He is the 2011 winner of the National Communication Association’s Stephen E. Lucas Debut Publication Award and the Critical and Cultural Studies Division’s Outstanding Dissertation Award. His research is featured in the Quarterly Journal of Speech and Rhetoric and Public Affairs.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
In this issue, Public Address Division member Robin E. Jensen discusses her study of a 1918 speech, written and delivered by Dr. Rachelle Slobodinsky Yarros and subsequently published in the journal *Social Hygiene*. Yarros was a Russian immigrant and the first woman admitted to the Boston College of Physicians and Surgeons, as well as a long-time doctor-in-residence at Jane Addams’s Hull House. She advocated for (and provided) public sex education that targeted not only white men but also women and minorities. Yarros’s 1918 speech offers important clues about how she attempted to convince American Social Hygiene Association members not only to fund public sex education programs aimed at overlooked populations but also to join in such teaching efforts. The speech was published as Rachelle S. Yarros, “Experiences of a Lecturer,” *Social Hygiene* 5 (1919): 205–22; Jensen’s transcription of this text appears below as Appendix 1. Yarros’s surviving papers are in the *Rachelle and Victor Yarros Collection*, Special Collections Library, University of Illinois at Chicago.

“**In introducing the subject of social hygiene, the initial appeal of the speaker should be through the idealistic to the better, finer sentiments and emotions in human nature, irrespective of age, race, class or education.**”

*Rachelle S. Yarros, 1918*
What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

Yarros’s “Experiences of a Lecturer” survives as a pivotal example of rhetoric designed to build support for social change by constituting those in power in ways that aligned with such change. In this specific case, Yarros worked to alleviate gaps in health care by convincing social hygiene advocates of the value in offering more inclusive public sex education. This was no easy task, as American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) members were not only ideologically sympathetic to eugenics—and therefore less concerned with the needs of those believed to be genetically inferior—but also preoccupied with maintaining postwar sex education programs for white men. With the ASHA’s male-oriented agenda in mind, Yarros peppered the content of her address with arguments that emphasized men’s honor and the ways that sex education programs for women would benefit men and society at large. For instance, she held that teaching women about sexual health would keep them from unintentionally exploiting men’s sensitivity to sexual excitation and other sexual weaknesses. Women, according to Yarros, just did not understand the power of men’s natural drive to have sex and were unaware that their own dress and behaviors put men at risk for behaving immorally. In this respect, Yarros maintained that sex education would surely help girls and women to “learn to play a fair game with boys” (220). As effective as this type of argument may have been in this context, Yarros’s claims are nothing if not ethically questionable as she reiterated existing beliefs about women’s subordination in order to garner support for programs that women needed. Her rhetoric—like that of many other social reformers dedicated to women’s rights issues at the time—invites continued consideration about whether the rhetorical means justify the social-change-oriented ends.

Yarros structured her arguments in what might best be described as a speech within a speech, repeatedly switching from speaking directly to ASHA members to speaking to hypothetical audiences of women in need of sex education. In this way, Yarros encouraged male social hygienists to see sex education through women’s eyes, to confront the world as, for instance, a club woman determined to protect her children from disease, a girl approaching puberty without preparation, a working prostitute suffering from a venereal disease, or an
immigrant mother hoping to build a prosperous life for her family’s next generation. By casting social hygienists as women attending sex education lectures, Yarros provided them with the opportunity to consider issues of social hygiene anew. Her speech called into being the opportunity for social hygienists to identify with women’s concerns and to experience some of the reasons why it was so important for women to have access to public sex education programs.

Ultimately, the speech’s historical positioning—it preceded the creation of ASHA-led social hygiene poster campaigns that explicitly and aggressively targeted traditionally overlooked populations—suggests that this speech, and Yarros’s discursive efforts as a whole, helped to establish public sex education initiatives for women and minorities in the United States.

**What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?**

Since this speech was given directly after the conclusion of World War I, “Experiences of a Lecturer” must be situated within the context of the war and the extensive work that the U.S. government’s Committee on Training Camp Activities did to protect white soldiers from venereal diseases. Before the war, there was little support for public sex education. Once government officials began to realize that many enlistees were infected with syphilis, however, social hygiene advocates used the war to justify teaching soldiers about the dangers of sex outside of marriage. Yarros’s speech worked to extend governmental and lay support for sex education during the war to postwar contexts, demonstrating that problems such as prostitution and venereal disease were just as threatening to national security during peacetime as they were during wartime.

This speech can also be considered and contextualized within debates about public sex education across time. Yarros was dedicated to making sure that access to information about sex was available to all. More recently, advocates of comprehensive sex education argue that federal support for abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula not only withholds important information about sex from the nation’s young people but also keeps such information from those who have the least access to health care. In this respect, Yarros’s discourse in favor of ensuring that sex education is available to the public as a whole is part of a continuum of arguments
that reach into the twenty-first century.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

My critical approach or methodology, in this case, is probably best characterized as close reading, in that I analyze rhetorical strategies, argument patterns, and discursive style in order to draw conclusions about how the discourse functioned in context, all the while accounting for the discourse’s intertextuality with other rhetoric circulating concurrently. I am especially interested in the ways that Yarros represented and negotiated intersectionality in this speech, and so I pay special attention to the ways that she constituted her own identity, the identities of her audience members, and the identities of those for whom she was speaking.

How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?

This speech offers a wonderful jumping-off point for talking about issues such as constitutive rhetoric and the theoretical, practical, and ethical quandaries that one faces when speaking on behalf of others. As the feminist philosopher Linda Alcoff argues, speaking for or about others can constitute an act of violence against them by reiterating existing hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Yarros’s “Experiences of a Lecturer” is an example of rhetoric that could be framed as just as violent as it was helpful to Progressive Era women. Thus the speech encourages students of public address to consider the lived implications of words spoken in the name of social change.

“How now we know that ignorance and secrecy about sex matters have led to disaster to the individual, home, community and nation, and it is in you young people, who have all the future before you, that we must center our hopes.”

Rachelle S. Yarros, 1918
Where can interested readers find additional information?


A transcription of Yarros's speech as published in *Social Hygiene* begins on the next page.

**Contributor:** Robin E. Jensen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Utah. Her research interests include health and science communication; rhetorical history, criticism, and theory; and women’s and gender studies. Her book, *Dirty Words: The Rhetoric of Public Sex Education, 1870–1924*, was published in 2010 by the University of Illinois Press. An earlier version of a chapter from that book won the NCA Public Address Division’s 2007 Wrage-Baskerville Award. More recently, an essay she coauthored with Erin F. Doss, entitled “Balancing Mystery and Identification: Dolores Huerta’s Shifting Transcendent Persona,” was featured on the division’s top paper panel at NCA in 2011. Jensen’s scholarship has also appeared in *AIDS Patient Care and STDs, Argumentation and Advocacy, Communication, Culture and Critique, Communication Monographs, Communication Theory, Critical Studies in Media Communication, Health Communication, Health Education and Behavior, the Journal of Children and Media, Qualitative Health Research, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Science Communication, and Sex Roles*. She is currently working on a book manuscript tentatively entitled *Expectant Voices: Articulating Fertility in the Twentieth Century*.

**Editor:** Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
EXPERIENCES OF A LECTURER

RACHELLE S. YARROS, M.D.
Chairman, Social Hygiene Department Illinois State Council of Defense; and Supervisor of Education for Women, Division of Social Hygiene, Illinois State Department of Public Health

When the United States entered the great world war we already knew from the experience of other warring nations that venereal disease and prostitution were a great menace to the armies and navies. It was stated on good authority that many hundred thousand soldiers were incapacitated for service as the result of these diseases. We also knew from our own experience on the Mexican border how drunkenness and prostitution threatened the health and morale of our soldiers. We knew that all the warring nations were facing these facts with great concern and were more willing than ever before to discuss openly the methods of prevention. From the very beginning of the war, medical men urged early diagnosis and thorough prophylactic treatment. Great efforts had been put forth in this direction all over Europe, but conditions were still grave.

Those of us who had been studying and working in the social hygiene movement in America for many years knew that something more fundamental than diagnosis and treatment would have to be supplied if we were to keep our boys fit. A program at once idealistic and practical was presented by leaders in this movement and approved by the War Department. One of the most fundamental features of this program was the declaration that continence is consistent with health and is the best preventive of venereal disease. This challenged the oldest, strongest and most common reason heretofore given for promiscuous indulgence.

When the appeal came from the federal government to the civilian population to do its part to help clean up vice in cantonment cities, furnish proper recreation for soldiers and sailors, and help uphold the high standard of morals set by the govern-

ment, many men and women, myself among others, felt the time had come to make an intensive social hygiene campaign under the most favorable conditions—with the wonderful and effective backing of a strong government program.

I enjoyed the privilege of being among the first to whom the opportunity was given to do such intensive work under the auspices of the National War Work Council of the Y. W. C. A., the War Board of Louisville, Kentucky, and the Illinois State Council of Defense.

The size and type of the groups reached varied widely. Some groups were small and exclusive; most groups comprised between one hundred and three hundred; the largest was sixteen hundred. Most of the groups were made up of girls or young women, more or less of the same age and station, trade or occupation, and to them I gave a series of three talks, lasting from twenty to forty minutes each. The last talk was followed by questions or personal conference. Approximately thirty thousand people were reached through this campaign which extended from Chicago through the Central and Southern States.
The wonderful response from all these groups to the idealistic, patriotic and practical appeal was so impressive that I feel justified in recording my experience and briefly outlining some of the talks to various groups.

The important conclusion which this experience has driven home to me, one which became more and more irresistible as I went from city to city, is this: In introducing the subject of social hygiene, the initial appeal of the speaker should be through the idealistic to the better, finer sentiments and emotions in human nature, irrespective of age, race, class or education. With such preparation, creating a high-minded, receptive atmosphere, one need not hesitate to give scientific facts about diseases and their dangers. While a recital of these facts alone would not insure right conduct or even ardent interest in the problems of conduct, yet knowledge combined with a sincere appeal to the idealism of the American nature, to the highest loyalty and patriotism and the ideals of democracy never failed to create the right atmosphere and interest in what is considered proper conduct. No audience, I repeat, failed to respond almost instantaneously to such an appeal. It communicates its thrill, its enthusiasm for righteousness and unselfish service, to the speaker, and the best possible mood is thus created for the sympathetic reception of facts and suggestions that might otherwise seem repellent or technical and uninteresting.

This experience has helped to convince me that the question as to what should be taught to different groups, which has been so much discussed, is in reality a simple one. As I went from group to group, with but a short interval between, I found myself relating practically the same facts, merely emphasizing different aspects of the questions according to the type of audience. The following is a résumé of talks to some of the groups.

**TALKS TO CLUB WOMEN AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF WOMEN**

Most of these groups I found had scarcely heard of the social hygiene movement. Especially was this true in the south; and none had heard about the government social hygiene program for the Army and Navy. As a rule, I found them exceedingly responsive and very earnest in trying to learn what they could do. Beginning with the general introduction, covering the important reasons why we entered this great war, reminding them of the statement of our President that we are fighting to help make the world safe for democracy (the most idealistic reason ever given in the history of the world), and pointing out that if we are to lead the world, we must ourselves rise to the very highest idealism, I proceeded to outline as an illustration of idealism and good practical sense the government social hygiene program, so different from anything which the other warring nations had attempted. I then called their attention to the high prevalence of venereal disease, especially in war time, illustrating this with statistics from the warring nations; telling them that in our own country, at the Mexican Border, prostitution and immorality had been rampant and that prophylactic treatment was supposed to have saved us from a higher rate of venereal disease. I emphasized the fact that in this new government program, we have the strongest
backing for a single standard of morals and the possibility of a definite change in the attitude of
man toward the problem of promiscuous sex indulgence; and that this was the time women must
learn the scientific facts about venereal diseases and face the situation frankly. Then I gave them
the facts about venereal diseases, especially gonorrhea, the effects on the man and particularly, in
detail, on the woman, and the danger of ophthalmia neonatorum to the new born child. Then I
spoke of syphilis, its dangers to the individual, community and race. I discussed prostitution as
the chief distributor of venereal disease and told them what they must do: namely, first, spread
education as to the dangers of venereal disease among civilians; second, help to establish
dispensaries and improve hospital facilities for the early diagnosis and treatment of these
diseases; third, study their own local conditions and help to solve the problems of commercial
and clandestine prostitution, which I explained to them in considerable detail, and fourth, provide
proper recreation for their young people. One of the most important things that mothers must
learn, I pointed out, was properly to instruct their children early in facts of life and later in
matters of sex, since by doing this they would not only help to carry on the government program
but make a permanent contribution toward the solution of intricate social hygiene problems, thus
insuring greater happiness and making it possible to look forward to a better race.

The second talk to mothers was intended to show how best to tell children the story of
life. I proceeded somewhat as follows: “Children must be taught very early to know that
continued life of any living thing is impossible unless there is a way to reproduce it, and that
reproduction is one of the great wonders of nature. Every mother, therefore, should learn how to
tell simple stories of the various forms of reproduction. For example, the story of the flower; how
wonderful it is to watch the butterfly and the bee attracted by the aroma and color of the flower,
flitting from one to another, and carrying with them the pollen, which is the father element of the
flower, to the seed, which is the mother element of the flower, thereby min-

[page 209:]

gling the two elements and preparing the seed, which only then can grow into a new, beautiful
flower. Or the story of the father and the mother fish, traveling together for miles to reach the
quiet waters, where it is safer for the mother to deposit her thousands of little eggs, while the
father pours over them the vital fluid, which fertilizes the eggs and without which there could be
no new fish. Then our dear friends, the birds. They are stirred by a feeling which we call love at
the mating season. You have watched them and observed how hard they work to build their nest,
preparing for their offspring. The mother bird has fewer eggs to give than the lower forms of life,
such as fish, and her eggs must therefore be fertilized before they are laid. The higher the living
being is, the more time it requires on the part of the mother, either inside or outside of the body,
to nourish and protect the offspring, and so the mother bird sits for days, in spite of her love for
freedom, furnishing the eggs with the warmth they need for their development. She makes this
great sacrifice, even risking starvation, and sits waiting for the time when the little birds will
come out of their shells and see the light. The father bird will be seen somewhere near, anxiously
watching over his little family, singing to cheer his mate and distracting attention of the enemy
from the sacred little nest.”

The story of reproduction in the human being can be told in a simple way and before sex
feeling has awakened, because the child then takes it in an impersonal way. I explain to the
mothers that I speak from experience, having told the story to many children, either on the occasion when another baby was to come into the same family, or directly asking them if they would not like to know how they came into the world. It takes a long time for children to formulate questions, and it is better to tell them too early rather than too late, as some one may tell them the story in the wrong way. I tell them as simply as possible about the organs; that low down in the abdomen, surrounded by the pelvic bones, is located a small, pear-shaped, hollow organ called the “womb” or “uterus;” that on either side of it there are little tubes running down, below

which there are almond-shaped bodies, the size of a lima bean, called the ovaries, which contain the human eggs. The eggs, I explain, are so small they cannot be seen by the naked eye, and there is a canal leading from the “womb” to the outside. In the human being it is necessary that there be a father and mother who love each other like the father and mother bird, and who also prepare a comfortable little nest, or home, and then plan for their baby. The mother egg becomes fertilized by the father element of life through the canal. Then that little particle of life—the fertilizing egg—attaches itself to the inside of the womb where it slowly grows and develops, taking its nourishment from the mother’s blood. As it grows, the womb stretches, and finally, at the end of nine months, when the baby is fully developed and the womb is stretched to the utmost, it slowly begins to draw together, causing a great deal of pain to the mother, but slowly the womb opens at its lower end and gradually the baby is pushed out from the womb into the canal and from the canal it comes out into the world. The mother soon forgets her pain and both father and mother are overjoyed to see that wonderful little being,—the little baby, which is made of their own flesh and blood. All this can be explained very simply to a child.

Briefly I sketch for the mothers the period of childhood, showing how mothers can gradually tell their children more and more about their bodies, minds and feelings, and how they can instruct children in matters of sex before the sex feelings awaken. Finally, I speak of the period of adolescence in boys and girls, and point out how important it is for parents to understand this period and what they must do to keep in close touch constantly with their children, informing them as to the reasons why certain things can or cannot be done, appealing to their love and intelligence to coöperate for the sake of better physical, mental and moral development.

TALK TO GROUPS OF YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

Usually I give three talks, lasting from twenty to forty minutes each. After a general patriotic appeal, I dwell on the value of democratic ideals, pointing out that democracy means freedom of thought and speech, greater equality of opportunity to every individual to develop the best in him, the absence of class distinction; that democracy is what we make it and consequently the opportunities for improvement lie within our power; that the forefathers of this country fought and died for these ideals. “The younger generations,” I continue, “having lived always under this form of
government have apparently ceased to realize consciously its great blessings and possibilities. Now the call has come to them. They must rally, not only to protect their own democracy, but to help make the rest of the world safe for democracy; they must put their whole being into this struggle. Our boys are already showing how keen and willing they are to make sacrifices for this cause, and the women of this country must not fall behind. They, too, must be ready to make sacrifices; they must form a strong second line of defense. The whole world expects, and has a right to expect, a great deal from the American women and girls because of the greater freedom and equality they have enjoyed, and we must live up to these expectations. In addition to the material sacrifices which are expected from us, and which we, no doubt, are ready to make, we must learn to meet frankly and openly certain problems that are put before us more vividly because of war conditions, and help to solve them."

I then sketched the government program for the soldiers and sailors, emphasizing each point according to the amount of time, and calling their attention particularly to the fact that if the boys are to live up to the high standard of morals prescribed for them, the girls must learn to understand thoroughly what is expected of them.

In the second talk, I gave the essential facts regarding the prevalence and dangers of venereal diseases and prostitution, illustrating some of the facts by cases from my own experience. To illustrate the dangers of gonorrhea, I relate the case of a young couple of splendid families and high education, in love with each other since early high-school days, each dreaming and preparing for the great future when they would marry and be everything to each other. The story of the woman on admission to the hospital was as follows: “I have always been well and strong; never a pain nor ache of any kind. I could row, climb and walk almost as well as my husband (who was, by the way, a great athlete when at college). I have only been married four months. After the first menstrual period, I began to have some difficulty in urination, and a little later, pains low down in the pelvis. I got steadily worse, and here I am now, an invalid, in pain most of the time, unable to walk even an ordinary distance.” Upon examination I found a large tubal mass on either side of the uterus. She was operated on and both tubes removed; they contained a great deal of pus. Four days later the young woman died of obstruction of the bowels. The poor husband, who I am sure loved her more than he did his own life, suffered tortures. In fact, he had a complete breakdown, and recovered only after many months. It was then that I made him tell me how he had contracted gonorrhea. It was when he first went to college at the age of eighteen, only with the vaguest notions as to his sex feelings, without any instruction on the part of his parents, who had taken great pains to instruct him in everything else that pertained to his body and conduct. It was the night of the fraternity banquet, when they had all taken a little more drink than most were accustomed to. He, in company with many others, in a state of drunkenness, was taken to a house of prostitution in the vicinity of the college. It was then that he contracted the disease. In a few days, when a discharge appeared, his feeling of remorse and dread had almost unbalanced him. He then went to the family physician for advice. The old-fashioned doctor smiled, patted him on the back, and told him “not to be a goose,” that the danger was very slight, and that it was an experience that happened to many. He gave him some wash and told him to come back in a few days. The attack was apparently very slight and he was “discharged cured.” “This,” he said, “happened many years ago, and I never dreamt of any danger.”
I relate other cases in a similar way to illustrate the danger

of abortions, miscarriages, locomotor ataxia, sterility, ophthalmia neonatorum, etc.

In the third talk of the series, I proceed as follows: “You now know facts that you have
not known before, and some of them are very disagreeable and almost shocking for young people
to face. We bring them to you because we feel that the time has come for a change, and we see
clearly what can be done to eliminate these diseases. The most important reason why there has
been such dread in the minds of people to approach openly the question of venereal disease was
because of its intimate connection with the most sacred relationship of man and woman. But now
we know that ignorance and secrecy about sex matters have led to disaster to the individual,
home, community and nation, and it is in you young people, who have all the future before you,
that we must center our hopes. It is not only a question of treatment of disease. The bigger
problem confronting us is how we should educate our young people in matters of sex so as to
bring about a higher relationship of man and woman and eliminate the problem of disease
altogether. Our mothers thought that by keeping us ignorant as to sex feelings, they were curbing
them. But, as a matter of fact, that sex instinct, which begins to manifest itself early in life, is so
strong that it cannot be eliminated or ignored, and should therefore be understood, regulated and
directed. In other words, this instinct should be treated as that other strong instinct of life,—
hunger. A mother who knows her business realizes from the very beginning that hunger must be
regulated, guided and controlled. She begins, therefore, to feed the child at certain times, giving
it a certain amount and kind of food. If it cries, she lets it cry, regardless of her own feelings,
hoping that it will soon learn the lesson of self-control and submit. The child learns that it cannot
have all the food on the table, that it cannot wear all the clothes of the family, that it must share
its things with the family, then with its school fellows and next with its fellow citizens. In other
words, we learn to live and let others live. In fact we learn self-denial; we learn to give away
things we love to keep; we learn to do things we do not want to do; we learn
to abstain from having material things we desire and see before us, because we know it is best
that we should. Loving life and clinging to it, as we all naturally do, we even learn to sacrifice
life itself for ideals. That is indeed a triumph in the life of some individuals, beginning as they do
as little savages and ending up in a short lifetime with such control. It is useless to deny that the
struggle with self goes on constantly inside of us, and it is not always easy to control it. Indeed
some people do not conquer it as fully as others, because they have not had the training, and have
not been taught to see clearly just what life is for and what we should aim at. One of the striking
illustrations of extreme self-denial, which is really another word for self-control, with which we
are all familiar and proud of now, is afforded by what has happened in our own country in the
life of our young people this last year. Think of those young soldiers and sailors, full of life,
desiring and longing to live and to get the most out of life, yet ready to sacrifice life itself for the
sake of a great ideal!

“The instinct of sex begins to manifest itself in a normal boy or girl at the age of eleven
or twelve. At this time the boy begins to change slowly into a man, and the girl into a woman.
Great changes take place in the period between twelve and eighteen or twenty. This we call the
adolescent or up-building period. This is the period of highest growth, physically, mentally and morally, when we either build into a strong human being who can weather many physical dangers and moral temptations, or turn into a flabby piece of humanity that succumbs to every little change of weather and fails at the first real test of life. It is at the beginning of this period that definite changes take place in the reproductive organs. In the girl the ovaries begin to function, maturing a follicle every month, which breaks and discharges the human egg. The ovaries also produce a secretion which is absorbed by the body and supposed to be responsible for many of the changes in body, mind and feelings. The womb or uterus becomes congested once a month; some of the small blood vessels break as a result of over-filling—hence menstruation.

"In the boy the testicles, which correspond to the ovaries in the girl, also begin to function, producing a secretion most of which is absorbed by the body and vitalizes it, while some of the fluid is discharged through the tubes once or twice a month. This is the time when both boy and girl begin to be conscious of self. The girl notices her physical changes; the desire to attract attention of the opposite sex comes to her; consciously she begins to adorn herself, and from that time she goes on paying a great deal of attention to her personal appearance, sometimes improving it, but mostly only following whims and fashions which actually detract from her personal appearance, and make her conspicuous. Then comes the distinct desire to attract the attention of a particular boy; then again she adorns herself to please him. She longs for his love, which means to her admiration, courtship and tenderness. She likes to be near him, perhaps even to fondle him and allow herself to be fondled, but that is practically all. She goes home after spending hours with him, goes to sleep and sleeps the sleep of the just, perhaps even dreaming of her love. As to the boy, nature has made him different; he is more conscious from the earliest development of his sex organs. His sex urge is more direct and manifests itself in a distinctly conscious feeling in his genital organs. He is much more sensitive, much more susceptible to every stimulus of sex feeling. To him, too, first comes the general desire to attract attention of the opposite sex, but he accomplishes this not through adornment, but by pretending scorn and indifference to them and through many acts of assumed manliness. And when the attraction to a particular girl comes into his life, although he, too, likes to be admired and fondled, the real sex urge makes him long to go further and further. It is hard for him after many hours of courtship to dismiss the whole thing from his mind. He usually tosses backward and forward and longs definitely for the sex act, and consequently may seek a way for this gratification.

"It is extremely important for boys and girls not only to understand themselves, but to understand each other. They must all learn that during the period of adolescence or up-

building, every bit of energy must be used for that purpose, and that sex indulgence during this time is a waste of this much-needed energy. The girl must learn that nature has made her somewhat different; that sex temptation is not so great in her, and besides, she instinctively feels where she must stop. What she has not known and what she must learn is fully to realize that she cannot play with love; that indecent manner of dress, dancing and behavior, flirting, coquetting
and leading on, while not directly injurious to herself, and as a matter of fact giving her a good deal of the kind of satisfaction for which she longs, are distinctly unfair, because the boy is over-stimulated by such manifestations. Not having the knowledge as to the dangers of early sex indulgence or promiscuous indulgence, and not possessing the control which would come from public disapproval, he may seek satisfaction of his desire, which he can only secure through prostitution. In many instances he contracts disease, and if not properly treated, brings it into the family after marriage to the one woman whom he loves more than anybody else in the world, for whom he is willing to work and slave from morning until night, and to the children of his own flesh and blood. Girls and boys in their relations with each other must therefore aim at real friendship and comradeship. They will find a great deal more fun and joy in such relationships. The big aim in life must be conscious building of body, mind and character, so when fully mature, we can take our place in life and make some impression on the affairs of the world.

“When real love comes to us, we are fully thrilled with its joys and its possibilities and are ready to enter the relationship of marriage. Unfortunately this relationship is often entered into far too lightly, resulting in much unhappiness and many divorces. Many girls marry because they are weary of work, and look upon it as a relief from all burdens; others marry merely because they want a home of their own. Most young people do not realize that although love is of the highest importance, other essential elements, such as fitness, respect, admiration, must be considered if marriage is to turn out truly happy. Marriage is not a question of how much you can get out of it but how much you are willing to put into it. In addition, one aim of marriage is progeny and we must never forget that children are what their parents and ancestors were, plus environment; that man differs from the sub-human in that he is in part the maker of his own destiny, and that of his children. It is therefore exceedingly important, if we are to have a better race of men, that man and woman before marrying ask themselves this question: ‘Am I physically, morally and mentally fit and worthy?’ The girl who flirts and leads a man on, thinking that in this way she will marry earlier and thereby be relieved of work and responsibility, is making a great mistake. First of all, the girl who does this wastes a great many of the precious manifestations of real love, and consequently, when finally the great event comes into her life, when she decides to marry the man whom she really thinks she loves, the thrills of courtship bring her very little satisfaction, and she feels she is cheated of something,—she knows not what. Then men do not always marry girls who are easy and forward. Frequently, under stress and excitement, they promise marriage, hoping to secure gratification, and then they pull out. Fear comes to them that such a woman will not make a safe wife and mother, and the girl is left disappointed, heartbroken, to pay the penalty for it all. Girls must realize, as they never have before, that marriage is a wonderful relationship, but also a tremendous responsibility, and for which one must be thoroughly prepared—that it is a partnership and not a relief from work, and unless the woman does her share, she pays for it either in unhappiness or complete loss of her own individuality.”

In the case of the high-school girls, I usually devoted much of the first talk to the ideals of democracy for which so many of our boys are willing to give their lives, and tell them that girls, too, are ready to do everything in their power to serve if they are only told definitely what is expected of them. “It is a great mistake to think that we do not need any definite ideals when
we are young; as a matter of fact we need them in early life probably more than we do later on, when through our own experiences we learn that we must do right. Definite ideals during youth are like a guiding star, constantly pointing the way and helping us to move upward. You young people are really privileged individuals. Not all children of the world have the opportunities to attend high school, or even grammar school; there are thousands of children just as bright as you are who do not have the opportunity to go to school because they are compelled to drop out early and go to work to help support the family. Many of your parents made great sacrifices to give you these privileges; you must learn that with every privilege goes a duty; that the aim of education is to fit people to perform better their functions in this world as citizens, fathers and mothers, and to help build a greater future; and in order to live up the highest, we must have a better understanding of our own make-up—our body, our mind, our instincts, and our soul.”

In the second talk I speak of heredity, giving the reasons why every child has the right to be well born, by which we mean that father and mother must be physically, mentally and morally sound.

In the third lecture I present the facts of the physical development of girls, giving special attention to puberty or adolescence. The ground is covered in somewhat the following order: description of organs of reproduction, maturing follicles, menstruation, awakening of sex as manifested in boys and girls, the sex urge in the male, the attitudes of girls toward boys, right companionship, right habits of study, reading and thought. Into this talk I press all the idealism that I can command, telling my hearers that boys and girls should build consciously for the great future, and that love and friendship are not toys, but the most wonderful gifts of life.

In one place I had the unique opportunity to talk to a group of prostitutes. They had just been interned, and some of them were infected with venereal disease. It was a most pathetic group, made up of girls and women from 14 to 40,—all types and classes,—Mexicans, colored and white, most of them shabby and highly painted and powdered, rebellious and coarse in their manner of addressing the burly policeman who was trying to keep them in order. We had a hard time persuading the police that I could not talk to these women in their presence when the girls were either flirting with them or cursing them, and the police did not believe we could keep order unless they were there. Finally we compromised. The police left and only the physician, who himself seemed to be a man of rather uncouth manners, somewhat brusque and familiar with the girls, remained to help in case of emergency. Even then they refused to listen to me for about ten minutes. The first thing that silenced them was the assurance that I was not there to scold them or even preach to them; that I was there as a friend to tell them some of the things they would like to know. I told them first that as a matter of fact they were to a great extent not to blame for their sins, and that they were almost as much sinned against by society. I asked how many of them had had a home—a loving, comfortable home—a good education or training to earn a decent living wage, and ample opportunity for wholesome fun. Very few indeed assented. “That,” I continued, “is the story of most of the unfortunate girls who go wrong. The world has not always understood the situation as it now does. We know now
that a good number of girls who go wrong are children in mind; that they do not know actually what they are doing, but are under the influence of some vicious man who uses them to satisfy his craving, then deserts. And the rest follows. A good many girls believe the promises and confessions of love and even promises to marry, and then desertion, with its full penalty, is left for the girl. Still others crave for more than they have in the way of clothes and enjoyment, and under the influence of someone who promises great things, and probably with a little drink, the girl forgets herself. Then parents and friends consider her lost and the underworld is the only place for her.” By this time my audience was eager. I proceeded: “I came to tell you that the life of prostitution is not an easy life; although you might pretend that all is well, you know what the hardships are. At first perhaps you get more money and live in greater luxury, but it does not last long. Soon this promiscuous relationship leads to disease, and then down and down the career goes, and finally comes the gutter. It is no use fooling yourself. There is just one life to live here, and all human beings are alike, longing to live happily with the respect of one’s friends, relations and the community. It is no use pretending that you don’t care. In your hearts you know you crave for real things at your best moments, but you shut your eyes and try to forget in despair, because you see no other way. I came to tell you that there is another way; that the world is changing; that they are beginning to understand that the girl is not always to blame; that conditions under which she lived were frequently unjust to her, and responsible for what she is. The girls now are given a chance, therefore, to begin all over again. The government of our country is anxious to protect our girls, not only those who have not sinned, but those who have fallen. There are all over the country now what we call Committees (under government supervision) for the protection of girls, to which any girl can go and appeal, and she will be given a chance to begin all over again. The government is trying hard to inaugurate a new policy—demanding chastity from boys and pointing out to them that immorality is full of dangers, because [a] promiscuous relationship almost always leads to venereal disease. But all of us, girls and women, in order to bring about the single standard of morals, must learn to play a fair game with boys.”

Then I made a general appeal to them, saying that their country needs them to help in this great struggle for democracy, which will give the whole world, ourselves included, a better chance to live and develop; that many of our boys are training, submitting to all kinds of discipline, preparing to go across to give their lives if need be, for this great cause; that women, too, must not be slackers; that every woman can do something to help by making some personal sacrifices, or working at something which our government or the boys need over there. “I am sure that you are just as sensitive to the appeal as the other women in this country, and that you ought to forget your immediate past and resolve to begin all over again, for you have a chance now to take your place with the rest of the women in this country—women who have had greater opportunities to learn self-control, because they have not been so sorely tempted, are here to help you do this thing.”

I was myself surprised at the effect of my speech, though I had always had the profound belief that there is a way of appealing to the best in the worst of us. Now I am more than ever
convinced that if the women of our country who have leisure and understanding would actually give their attention and energy to this cause, many of these girls could be rehabilitated, or at least placed on farms and given a chance to earn an honest living under state protection.

Another group of special interest was made up of Mexican mothers. I spoke to them through a Spanish interpreter. Their own customs and ideas were so different from the American ones that it was difficult to know just how they would take my speech. They seemed interested when I told them the dangers of venereal disease, especially when I pointed out the dangers to the women and children; but a look of absolute hopelessness came over them when I suggested what should be done to eliminate disease. They apparently felt utter inability to cope with the situation, but when I mentioned the great possibilities for the future, if our children were brought up and taught differently almost from the day they are born, their faces changed greatly, and they began to show real interest in the matter. It is the wonderful feeling of the mother—what she can do to save her child from dangers—that shone in their strange, interesting faces. They listened with such intense interest that it almost seemed as if they understood what I said. When I told them that the child should be told by its mother at a very early age, long before sex consciousness awakens, simply and plainly about its own body, organs, and the wonder of the process of reproduction, so that it would learn from her the truth, instead of picking up notions on the street that are vicious and vulgar and that are permanently stamped on the minds of many men and women who can never look at the question of sex in a high-minded way; and when I argued that by telling these facts to a child, both mother and child become closer to each other,

making it possible for the mother subsequently to take the child step by step in its development, they all looked eager and begged me to tell them how to give children the facts of life. I told them that they must first of all be truthful and learn to tell the story in the right way. Then I sketched as well as possible under the circumstances the facts that parents should know in order properly to guide their children. At the end of the meeting, I was surprised at the vigor and fluency with which these mothers bombarded me with the most intelligent questions.

My experiences were no doubt similar to that of many others who carried on such educational work in other parts of the United States under the auspices of the Section on Women’s Work, Social Hygiene Division of the Commission on Training Camp Activites, and all will agree that this education has awakened a sincere desire for knowledge as to the dangers of venereal diseases and how best to prevent them. Such interest and knowledge are bound to play a very important part in solving the social hygiene problems in this country and formulating our newer ideals of health and morality. Thousands and thousands of women and girls will never again be indifferent to these problems, and they will form a great asset for a permanent campaign in this country to eliminate disease and bring about a better and purer relationship between men and women.
In this issue, Public Address Division member Greg Dickinson discusses his coauthored study of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art (WGWA) and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (BBHC) in Cody, Wyoming. The WGWA is one of five museums that constitute the BBHC. The BBHC is a nationally and internationally recognized center for the representation and study of the U.S. West. The center traces its origins to the founding of the Buffalo Bill Historical Society in 1917, the year of William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s death. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney’s monumental sculpture *Buffalo Bill—The Scout* (1929) was the founding artifact in what became the Whitney Gallery of Western Art. In the photograph above, visitors view Whitney’s sculpture from the gallery.

Although there is no really good way of experiencing the WGWA without actually going to Cody, you can find online images of the WGWA at the [BBHC’s Web site](http://www.bbhc.org). Much of the art in the WGWA’s and the BBHC’s collection is viewable through the center’s [online image archive](http://www.bbhc.org).
What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

Over the last ten years, Eric Aoki, Brian L. Ott, and I have been sojourning regularly in Cody, Wyoming, in order to study the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. The project began with a hallway conversation about representations of Whiteness and masculinity in an old BBHC brochure that Brian had saved from a childhood trip to Yellowstone. Out of this conversation grew one and then multiple trips to Cody and the BBHC.

Our initial impulse was to write a single essay on the center, with a focus on memory, masculinity, and race. The BBHC resisted this reading. The center, with its five museums, was too complex for a single paper or a weekend-long visit. In spite of our repeated visits and consistent writing about the BBHC’s museums, the Whitney eluded our grasp. But in 2009, museum curators redesigned the gallery. No longer organized chronologically, by artist, or by genre, the gallery confounds received understandings of how art galleries should work.

With this re-hanging of the West completed, we returned to the center and the gallery, curious not only about the changes wrought in the WGWA but also about the issue of museum change more generally. Changes in the built environment constitute one of the significant challenges confronting rhetorical critics of space and place. Although the built environment seems far more permanent than, say, a photograph, it is always and incessantly changing. As the needs and aspirations of inhabitants, owners, and designers change, buildings are remodeled and rebuilt. What is more, the building’s transformations often hide under newly tiled floors and behind freshly painted walls.

Considering the complete overhaul of the WGWA, we wondered what the rhetoric of the newly designed museum would be. In what ways would this new rhetorical performance be consonant with the old space, and in what ways would it be different or new? And how might these changes refract our understandings of the BBHC more broadly?

We found that the new gallery—organized into five aesthetic and narrative themes—shifts the privileged gaze from that of the artist to that of Buffalo Bill himself. Indeed, we argue, the gallery functions like a hymn authorized by and in praise of Buffalo Bill and the West he embodies.
What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

The question of context is absolutely central to our understanding of the WGWA. In our coauthored writing about the BBHC, we have suggested that we engage any particular material site through a series of interlocking landscapes of experience. These landscapes include past experiences with museums, art galleries, images of the West, and the like. Landscapes of experience also involve the material landscapes that visitors traverse to get to the gallery. Since the gallery is located in a remote corner of Wyoming, travel to it involves substantial commitments of time and money, and the characteristics of the journey condition responses to the gallery. The images of Yellowstone on the gallery’s walls, for example, lie in Old Faithful’s shadow, and Little Big Horn, the subject of two massive canvases near the museum’s physical and affective conclusion, is a battle site in Montana that many gallery visitors pass by or visit before coming to the BBHC. The surrounding museums celebrating Buffalo Bill, firearms, Plains Indians, and the natural environment also shape experiences with the art museum. Finally, struggles over the meaning of the West remain centrally important to understanding the gallery and the BBHC. In fact, the BBHC has recently rededicated itself to “Celebrating the Spirit of the American West,” and the center’s promotional material argues that this celebration is foundational to the flourishing of democracy.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

As we engaged the gallery as fully embodied coauthors, we consistently returned to music as a way of helping us to think and write about the WGWA. The WGWA, built of complex, immersive, and interactive spaces, makes untenable traditional practices of reading.
Instead, we struggled to understand the built environment on its own terms: that is, as material rhetoric rather than primarily as symbolic or discursive suasion. Thinking of the gallery as music—more specifically as a hymn—urged us to attend to the rhythms of the building. For example, it is structured in ¾ time, with the final, strongest beat occurring when Buffalo Bill—The Scout fully appears through the cathedral windows at the museum’s apogee. Thinking in musical terms also invited us to write about the dissonances and resolutions in content and form among the paintings, sculptures, and the gallery’s arrangement. As Kenneth Burke argues, there is deep pleasure in form, and this pleasure can be heightened through formal frustrations (dissonance) and their resolutions. So it is in the WGWA.

This critical approach allows us to engage the gallery and its preferred performances as material, embodied, and affectively rich. With our musical approach, we are better equipped to argue that the WGWA (re)installs a Western sublime and, in so doing, engages the West and sublimity not only as discursive enactments but also as material and materially consequential embodied performances. Our hope in our work is to produce heuristically meaningful criticism that can enrich our and our readers’ engagement with experiential landscapes.

How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?

Clearly, few professors will be able to teach a public address or rhetorical criticism class while in Cody, and we cannot bring the artifact with us to the classroom. However, in classes on public memory, rhetorical criticism, or rhetoric and space (there are more and more of these), our forthcoming essay on the WGWA in *Cultural Studies ⇔ Critical Methodologies* and its included images will be useful in helping students to make the transition from writing about words and symbols to engaging spaces and materiality. Almost every town has an art gallery or a museum or a memory site. Reading this essay and others like it alongside visits to local museums, memorials, old towns, and the like will enliven both the class readings and students’ (and professors’) engagements with everyday landscapes.

To push students to think even more deeply about embodiment and materiality, I might urge my students to dance or sing the space they are inhabiting, both while they are there and later as they reimagine their experiences. As I was writing drafts of our essay, I was in my hometown café literally dancing my way through
(my memory of) the gallery. for a great story, right? studying public places of
Of course, you might get Such a story, by the way, would demonstrate the
kicked out of the museum, risks and pleasures of
but that too would make

Where can interested readers find additional information?


Contributor: Greg Dickinson is Professor of Communication Studies and Interim Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies at Colorado State University. His work engages the intersections of place, memory, materiality, and everyday life and has appeared in Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, Critical Studies in Media Communication, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Rhetoric Society Quarterly. He is the editor, with Carole Blair and Brian L. Ott, of Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials (2010) and, with Brian L. Ott, of the forthcoming Routledge Reader in Rhetorical Criticism.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
In this issue, Public Address Division member Josue David Cisneros discusses his study of a speech given by Reies López Tijerina, the founder and leader of La Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants). The Alianza was founded in 1963 to advocate for poor, dispossessed, and rural New Mexicans, many of whom had claim to Spanish and Mexican land grants that dated before the Mexican American War. From the Alianza’s founding to its dissolution in the early 1970s, the group agitated for the return of land and cultural rights to Chicano@s through a multimedia rhetorical campaign involving public speeches, newspapers, local radio programs, public letters to government officials, marches, protests, confrontational activities, and even violence. The speech under consideration here, known as “The Land Grant Question,” was delivered on 26 November 1967 at the University of Colorado at Denver during a national speaking tour by Tijerina. A large portion of the speech has been anthologized in Josh Gottheimer’s Ripples of Hope: Great American Civil Rights Speeches (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2003), 306–14. The full transcription discussed herein is available in Robert Tice’s unpublished manuscript “The Rhetoric of La Raza,” 1971, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe.

“We—like the black man and like the Indian—are here to stay, and we don’t intend to allow anybody from here on to tamper and fool around with our cultural rights and our property. . . . We are dedicated to justice.”

Reies López Tijerina, 26 November 1967
What do you find especially compelling about this artifact?

Tijerina’s speech is historically compelling, and it can also illuminate theoretical questions, such as how situated agency and identity are rhetorically enacted through public address.

I was originally drawn to Tijerina’s rhetoric, and to the Alianza movement as a whole, out of historical interest. Although Tijerina and the Alianza are considered to have been profoundly influential in the Chicano movements of the 1960s and 1970s, I was struck by the fact that, with a few exceptions, their rhetoric had been largely overlooked by public address scholars. My interest was magnified when I encountered very different portrayals of Tijerina in scholarly and biographical sources. Some scholars characterized Tijerina and the Alianza movement as radical, confrontational, and even separatist, while other sources portrayed them as conservative and integrationist.

One reason why “The Land Grant Question” is compelling is that it places these tensions into stark relief in a single text. In the speech, Tijerina moved between legal and moral appeals for the civil rights of Mexican American citizens on the one hand, and radical and confrontational discourse of racial/ethnic nationalism and separatism on the other. At times, Tijerina referred to Chican@s as “American citizens” and framed the Alianza as a movement for constitutional rights and full inclusion. At other times (and sometimes even at once), Tijerina argued that Chican@s (and Latin@s more broadly) were a “new breed,” a race and nation subjugated by Anglo-American imperialism and struggling for separate, collective identity. In parts of the speech, Tijerina maligned “evil” Anglo-Americans, who were perpetrating “crimes” and “violence” against Mexican Americans, and called for a struggle for collective liberation. At other times, Tijerina chalked up the oppression experienced by Mexican Americans to misunderstanding or ignorance and invited Anglo-Americans to join in the Alianza’s struggle for full rights and integration. In fact, several of Tijerina’s rhetorical strategies and appeals integrated and held in tension these competing arguments. Although at times the speech seemed contradictory, much of the rhetorical force of “The Land Grant Question” stemmed from the contextual enactment and negotiation of these conflicting themes. What Tijerina’s speech demonstrates (and what a
broader analysis of the Alianza movement substantiates) is that interpretations of the movement as radical and as integrationist are both justified, yet neither is sufficient. “The Land Grant Question” straddled, stretched, and traversed these tensions to appeal to multiple audiences and to negotiate the exigencies and constraints of the situation. Both Tijerina’s radical pronouncements and his appeals to civil rights were integral to his rhetoric and to the larger movement.

Furthermore, “The Land Grant Question” shows how Tijerina and the Alianza worked in, from, and through these tensions and contradictions to enact multiple identities and forms of agency for the movement. This connects to recent theoretical scholarship on agency in rhetorical studies, which focuses on how rhetors enact concrete, contextual, and contingent forms of rhetorical agency. “The Land Grant Question” evinces what I refer to as border identity and agency because it embraced, challenged, and integrated the tensions and multiple worlds of the border(lands).

What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of this artifact?

I think that two contexts are particularly important for understanding “The Land Grant Question.” The first is the immediate historical context of the speech, which was delivered just five months after the Alianza’s most (in)famous action, the courthouse raid at Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico, on 5 June 1967. Tijerina and Alianza members stormed the federal courthouse in Tierra Amarilla to free a group of jailed activists and to perform a citizen’s arrest on the New Mexico District Attorney, for what the Alianza argued was his illegal arrests of Mexican Americans and violation of their rights. During the courthouse raid, armed Alianza members clashed with police, a shootout ensued, and two government officials were wounded and two others were taken hostage in the Alianza’s escape. Media coverage of the events

“I only stand as a citizen, as an American citizen, for those rights that truthfully, constitutionally belong to the Spanish American.”

Reies López Tijerina, 26 November 1967
catapulted Tijerina and the Alianza into the national spotlight, portraying them as revolutionaries. “The Land Grant Question” was one of many speeches Tijerina delivered during 1967 to capitalize on the publicity of the courthouse raid and to explain the movement.

With this background in mind, Tijerina’s oscillation between radical and integrationist rhetorics is more significant, because at times his speech drew on the tenor of the courthouse raid to paint the Alianza as part of a revolutionary vanguard overtaking Anglo-America, and at other times Tijerina attenuated the courthouse raid by arguing that the Alianza was really a peaceful movement for rights and integration and that any contrary notion was a distortion. The broader trajectory of the Alianza movement, including the courthouse raid itself, also demonstrated this negotiation of multiple forms of identity and agency.

A second important context to consider is that of Mexican American rhetoric. Mexican Americans and Chican@s have historically encountered a number of racial, cultural, national, and colonial borders, from the forcible takeover and incorporation of what is now the U.S. Southwest during the Mexican American War to the assimilation and/or othering faced by Mexican American citizens throughout the twentieth century, to the racially and culturally charged debates about Mexican immigration. For this reason, communication scholars have used the border or borderlands as a metaphor to describe the ambivalence and displacement characterizing Mexican American communication. In this sense, Tijerina’s speech demonstrates how these historical and cultural contexts provided inventionial resources for the crafting of a border rhetoric that embraced ambivalence and displacement as forms of identity and agency.

How would you characterize your critical approach to the artifact? Why have you chosen this approach?

My critical approach to this particular speech consisted of close reading of the text in relation to its historical and cultural contexts. This approach allowed me to place the meaning and significance of Tijerina’s speech in a new light by considering how his supposedly contradictory rhetorical strategies contributed to the overall effectivity of the speech. I also consider this project a study of what Michelle Holling and Bernadette
Calafell call Latin@ vernacular discourses, or discourses that emanate from Latin@ vernacular communities and that negotiate with mainstream U.S. society. This approach involves (re)discovering and (re)examining Latin@ vernacular discourses and the insights that they provide about rhetoric, culture, and identity.

Gloria Steinem, Mario Savio, or Harvey Milk, my students learn about the rhetorical strategies of protest rhetoric and the importance of the rhetorical situation in adapting these strategies. Tijerina’s speech could also be useful in a rhetorical criticism class as an example of constitutive rhetoric or as a case study in identity, culture, and rhetoric. In addition, the speech could be useful in a social movement or public address course as a way to introduce the Alianza and the broader Chicano movements of the time period.

“...This is an educational institution and writers and historians are like architects. They build, they coin, they frame the history; they write it. They either irritate, incite hatred or harmonize and bring synchronization between languages, races and creeds. So I’d like to state clear to the student body: I think you should be interested in knowing the facts. In order to understand the, or to find a medicine for the illness we must discover first what is the kind of disease, what is the ailment, . . . how the illness or disease developed.”

Reies López Tijerina, 26 November 1967

How would you incorporate this artifact into a class?

I think that Tijerina’s speech could be useful in a number of classes. In my public speaking class, for instance, I sometimes assign Tijerina’s speech as one of several examples of social protest rhetoric to aid my students in preparing their own protest speeches. By analyzing Tijerina’s speech and comparing it to other protest speeches of the 1960s and 1970s such as those from Malcolm X,
Where can interested readers find additional information?

A more detailed discussion can be found in Josue David Cisneros, “Reclaiming the Rhetoric of Reies López Tijerina: Border Identity and Agency in ‘The Land Grant Question,’” Communication Quarterly, forthcoming in 2012. A broad overview of the Alianza movement and Tijerina’s rhetoric can be found in chapter 1 of John C. Hammerback, Richard J. Jensen, and Jose A. Gutiérrez, A War of Words: Chicano Protest in the 1960s and 1970s (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985). Finally, for an explanation of Latin@ vernacular discourse as well as studies of Latin@ and Mexican American cultural rhetorics, see the essays in Michelle A. Holling and Bernadette M. Calafell, eds., Latinal/o Discourse in Vernacular Spaces: Somos de Una Voz? (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011).

Contributor: Josue David Cisneros is Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Northeastern University. His research and teaching explore the relationships between rhetoric and social identity in U.S. public culture, especially with regard to race, immigration, and citizenship. His research has appeared in journals such as Argumentation and Advocacy, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Rhetoric and Public Affairs. His book “The Border Crossed Us”: Vernacular Rhetorics of Borders, Citizenship, and Latin@ Identity is under contract with the University of Alabama Press. He is a recipient of the Robert G. Gunderson Award (2007) and the Wrage-Baskerville Award (2012) from NCA’s Public Address Division.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.
My dear Sir and Madam,

In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction here, is scarcely less than your own. So much of promised usefulness to one’s country, and of bright hopes for one’s self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly dashed, as in his fall. . . .

Abraham Lincoln to Ephraim and Phoebe Ellsworth, 25 May 1861

A Conversation with Charles E. Morris III

In this issue, Public Address Division member Charles E. Morris III discusses his study of Abraham Lincoln’s queer rhetorical pedagogy. He engages a constellation of Lincoln artifacts that might be deployed in K–12 classrooms as queer rhetorical education: narrative fragments of Lincoln’s life, such as his bed sharing with Joshua Speed and David Derickson, his friendship with Elmer Ellsworth and his grief over Ellsworth’s death, and his admiration for Walt Whitman’s poetry; fragments of Lincoln’s texts, such as the “Chronicles of Reuben,” the letters to Joshua Speed, a condolence letter to the parents of Elmer Ellsworth, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address, and the Second Inaugural; and texts about Lincoln, including Maira Kalman’s children’s book *Looking at Lincoln* (2012).

What do you find especially compelling about these artifacts?

For more than a decade I have been interested in competing memory/history discourses about Lincoln’s sexuality. The very notion of Lincoln’s sexual non-
normativity has generated copious and diverse apologia, historical argument, ad hominem, and fiction-passing-as-fact by the Lincoln Establishment (defined by sociologist Barry Schwartz in the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* in 2003 as “thousands of partisan biographers, historians, antiquarians, organizations, and curators”; in my view, those deeply invested in the perpetuation and circulation of Lincoln’s normative national mythos), and by gay Lincolnists and their allied scholars, journalists, and activists. Lincoln’s sexuality is a textual as much as a political or cultural controversy, and its close reading reveals much about the practices of interpretation, the politics of historiography and hagiography, and the complex relationship between history and memory. In a recent project, I consider the “unfinished work” that may come from these battles over Lincoln.

What do we, as rhetorical-historical critics, do with Queer Abe? Put more broadly, for public address research and its practitioners, what is “engaged scholarship”? By producing an interdisciplinary collaboration of LGBTQ educational theory with rhetorical history and rhetorical education, my answer is to consider the prospective queer deployments of Lincoln’s life and words, and words about Lincoln’s life and words, in the K–12 classroom. How might Lincoln’s rhetorically produced, performed, and debated queerness function as a meaningful, perhaps even lifesaving intervention at school, a site that formatively contributes to heteronormativity and homophobia, a key location of devastating bullying in the United States?

**What do you believe are the most important contexts for understanding the rhetorical functions of these artifacts?**

I am fascinated by context. In teaching courses in rhetorical criticism and public address, I puzzle over the dearth of its meta-engagement in published scholarship: explicit discussions of what constitutes context, where to find it, how to assemble it, how to make sense of its complex relationship to text(s), how to engage modes of inferential reasoning related to it, and how to narrate it.

Multiple animating contexts are at work in this project. Among them, first, are the contexts related to the specific intervention: late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century politics of sexuality/LGBTQ politics; K–12 education; heteronormativity and homophobia in K–12...
education; conservative bigoted discourse of “gay recruitment”; and bullying and its individual and collective effects.

Second are the contexts related to Lincoln, then and now, across time, intersectionally: nineteenth-century homosociality and homoeroticism; nineteenth-century politics and culture; nineteenth-century rhetorical culture and genres; the history of homophobia; the genealogy of Lincoln memory and history in U.S. politics and culture; the genealogy of Lincoln’s texts; Lincoln in K–12 education; and public controversy concerning Lincoln’s sexuality.

How would you characterize your critical approach to these artifacts? Why have you chosen this approach?

My critical approach includes the following modalities:

1) Archival: the “text” for this project, past and present, which continues to grow;

2) Rhetorical/Critical: intertextual and intersectional close readings in context(s) of Lincoln’s rhetoric and discourse about queer Lincoln;

3) Critical/Rhetorical: disruptive and self-reflexive readings of the politics of Lincoln historiography and memory, as well as imagined/invented contributions to queering Lincoln discourse; and

4) Critical/Performative: staged recitations, spoken compositions, and debates of/about Lincoln’s rhetoric and discourse about queer Lincoln.

How would you incorporate these artifacts into a class?

This project specifically focuses on how teachers, aided by invention resources produced by engaged rhetorical/historical critics (whom I call archival queers), might queer Lincoln for the K–12 classroom. However,

“The earlier children’s contact with difference is initiated, the more certain the inhibition of prejudice.”

Arthur Lipkin, 1999
similar exercises could provide valuable learning experiences for undergraduates and graduate students as well as a means of exploring the interanimating relationships among history, memory, rhetoric, pedagogy, and world making.

books from children’s and young adult literature would also work well. Which words from Lincoln might be linked in age-appropriate ways to words and illustrations about Lincoln that could be added to the book as a means of orienting students to LGBTQ social justice? In Kalman’s book, the themes of love and freedom,

At the elementary grade level, this project imagines queer supplements to Maira Kalman’s book *Looking at Lincoln* (2012), written for children aged four to eight. Any number of Lincoln punctuated by personal pleasure and collective commitment, effortlessly could accommodate queer content and inflection. An illustration of Lincoln and Speed’s “sleepovers” in Springfield could illustrate the love of his best friend that so centrally shaped who he would become. Along with images of Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass, an included image of Walt Whitman, whom Mr. Lincoln admired so, could illustrate that loving all people means loving gay people too. On the page depicting Elmer Ellsworth’s uniform, Kalman might have said, in addition to “Here is a bullet hole at the point of his heart,” that Lincoln had long loved the handsome and dashing young soldier and cried and cried at his death. This could be accompanied by a line or two from Lincoln’s poignant condolence letter to Ellsworth’s parents. Such modest changes answer education theorist Arthur Lipkin’s call in *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools* (1999): “The earlier children’s contact with difference is initiated, the more certain the inhibition of prejudice.” Efforts to create points of contact
Walt Whitman

"Hush’d Be the Camps Today"

Hush’d be the camps to-day;
And, soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons;
And each with musing soul retire, to celebrate,
Our dear commander’s death.

No more for him life’s stormy conflicts;
Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time’s dark events,
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But sing, poet, in our name;
Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in camps,
know it truly.

As they invault the coffin there;
Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—one verse,
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

Whitman composed this elegy shortly after
Lincoln’s assassination in 1865.

with difference fit quite well in an age of bullying alongside Lincoln’s words of December 1862, anticipating the Emancipation Proclamation, which Kalman quotes elsewhere: “The occasion is piled high with difficulty. . . . As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthral our selves, and then we shall save our country.”

At the high school level, I take as a useful invention, pedagogical resource an adaptation of an in-class exercise that Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano describe in their book Reading Like a Historian (2011): students analyze a documentary dossier containing Lincoln’s words and discourse about Lincoln, and then they stake multiple positions in public presentations on the question “Was Lincoln a Racist?” In this case, the question would be “Was Lincoln Gay?” I also adapt Stephen Hartnett’s prison pedagogy, which he characterized in an essay in the May 1998 issue of the Journal of Applied Communication Research. Hartnett had students engage, debate, and role-play Lincoln, Stephen Douglas, and David Walker intertextually on issues of race, slavery, and the prison-industrial complex. Again, in an adaptation of this activity, the issues and figures would concern sexuality, homophobia, and bullying—a queer variation on “What would Lincoln do, who makes him do it, and why (and why do we care)?”
Where can interested readers find additional information?


Contributor: Charles E. Morris III is Professor of Communication and Rhetorical Studies and LGBT Studies at Syracuse University. He is an archival queer whose research concerns the politics and performance of LGBTQ history and memory. His edited volumes are Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse (2007), Remembering the AIDS Quilt (2011), and, with Jason Edward Black, An Archive of Hope: Harvey Milk’s Speeches and Writings (forthcoming). Morris’s scholarship has also appeared in Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Rhetoric and Public Affairs, the Southern Communication Journal, the Western Journal of Communication, and Women’s Studies in Communication. He is a two-time winner of NCA’s Golden Monograph Award.

Editor: Angela G. Ray, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University, is chair of NCA’s Public Address Division for 2012.