



## Review Essays

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To cite this article: Louise Wetherbee Phelps , David Fleming , John Louis Lucaites , Jack Selzer & Shane Borrowman (2006) Review Essays, Rhetoric Review, 25:2, 211-233, DOI: [10.1207/s15327981rr2502\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327981rr2502_6)

To link to this article: [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327981rr2502\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327981rr2502_6)



Published online: 19 Nov 2009.



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**David W. Smit. *The End of Composition Studies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004. ix–xvi + 249 pages. \$50.00 hardcover.**

*The End of Composition Studies* is as provocative and disturbing as its title promises. David Smit begins by portraying a field in crisis. Composition has lost its way, fragmenting into specialized, disconnected pieces that can't agree on goals, research methods, or means of instruction. Four decades of scholarship have produced little substantive knowledge about writing and literacy learning. While Smit faults composition for neglecting fundamental questions and forgetting its "primary reason for being—the teaching of writing," the problem is more serious than that (2). Ultimately, he views the subject matter as intractable; because of the very nature of writing, composition has come up against intrinsic limits on what can ever be learned through research and theoretical inquiry. Scholarship will never be able to resolve persistent ambiguities and differences about basic issues or to advance knowledge about writing or writing instruction beyond its current state. Thus he declares composition at an end as a scholarly enterprise.

What *is* known about writing and literacy learning, according to Smit, represents an interdisciplinary consensus on broad principles. While this is "limited and tentative" knowledge (and always to remain so, apparently), Smit considers it sufficiently reliable to show that writing instruction does not belong in generic writing classes, under the aegis of composition studies, but in the discourse communities where specific writing tasks are carried out: particularly, tasks that involve *producing text* in the genres of those communities. Writing ability isn't a general knowledge with universal application; it is a set of context-specific knowledges and skills needed for particular tasks and genres, which must be acquired through socialization in a given discourse community. There is little commonality or "transfer" from one context to another, so writers must learn by repeatedly immersing themselves in target genres and discourses. If writing can't be taught discretely as a general knowledge or ability, and only writers of genres can help novices learn them, composition is left with no clear pedagogical role. Hence Smit calls for composition to renounce its hegemony over the teaching of writing and devolve writing instruction to "teacher-practitioners" in the various disciplines.

Smit's arguments strip composition studies of any claim to specialized knowledge in the domain of writing, either through its scholarly inquiries or in its practice of pedagogical arts. In other words, Smit thinks that composition inherently lacks either a sustainable scholarly mission or a viable teaching mission and should abandon both, at least as they are presently understood. Since

specialized knowledge of a subject matter and a scholarly pedagogical mission are standard features of disciplines, prerequisite to legitimacy, Smit's propositions and proposals together spell the "end" of composition studies as a "distinctive academic discipline," an outcome he not only acknowledges but endorses.

Part one seeks to demonstrate such limitations on what is known and can conceivably be known about writing and literacy learning, investigating six "underconceptualized" issues: the nature of writing and writing ability, how writing is learned, composing processes, writing as a social practice, relations between writing and thinking, and the problem of "transfer." Part two offers models for learning and teaching writing that warrant Smit's plan to comprehensively restructure undergraduate writing instruction and graduate education in composition. He proposes (1) a "(r)evolutionary" undergraduate curriculum in three stages (increasingly domain-specific as instruction migrates into disciplinary, professional, or public discourse communities) and (2) graduate training that would prepare compositionists as writers and social critics in the genres of at least one "second" discourse so as to reclaim a professional role for the field in teaching or helping others teach those discourses.

Stated so starkly, these theses look far more radical than they come across in reading, where their shock value is tempered by the mild, good-humored tone and step-by-step reasoning by which the argument unfolds. By the end of the book, many of its boldest claims have been considerably hedged and softened by qualifications, concessions, nuances, and even contradictions. But I've highlighted them at the risk of oversimplification because the consequences of accepting Smit's argument are so momentous that readers need to give close critical attention to Smit's reasoning before assenting, in whole or in part, to his characterization of the field and prescriptions for its future role in the academy. The devil lies in the details—not only the explicit premises, inferences, logical connections, conclusions, and proposals that comprise the argument but also its penumbra of tacit presuppositions, implications, warrants, and values.

Smit's book exemplifies an honorably masochistic genre of complaint, in which members of the field lament flaws and deficiencies in its scholarship or teaching (as well as moral or political faults). It has a long, prolific tradition running in modern times from Kitzhaber and Ohmann on Freshman English to a recent spate of "crisis" works on the state and future of the discipline. Conventionally, complaints include prescriptions for transforming composition itself (curriculum, pedagogy, scholarly paradigms), often entailing grand visions of institutional or societal reform. Though some critiques are gloomy about prospects for progress (there's a deep streak of pessimism in this tradition), at the least they imply an ideal against which one must measure the current intellectual and institutional state of the field. Often this measure has been a tacit notion of "disciplinarity," or a particular model of it, like "science" as a gold standard.

There are two generic problems with such complaints that Smit does not escape. First, he assesses composition in terms of normative presuppositions about other disciplines (for example, their unity, ability to define their subject, cumulation of objective knowledge) that assume “disciplinarity” is a uniform, idealized condition. (The same construct underlies “anti-disciplinary” or “post-disciplinary” visions of composition.) This view overlooks the empirical diversity and fluidity of disciplines as projects of knowledge-making and teaching (just as context-specific as their discourses). Many features that Smit treats as scandalous in composition, delegitimizing its teaching or scholarship, characterize other disciplines whose status is not questioned. We would do better to compare various features of composition to analogues in other fields (apples to apples): for example, how fields like studio and performing arts teach production and performance or how others teach practical knowledge like medicine, archival research, laboratory science, or entrepreneurship.

Second, Smit’s argument embodies a contradiction in this genre: combining a dystopian view of composition with a utopian faith in its power (as a semi-autonomous agent) to promote transformational change in institutions and society. He denies composition a discipline-based expertise yet tries to leverage that very expertise to reorganize, not merely its own work but that of every other discipline, in a plan that challenges the most entrenched values and practices of academic culture. Smit fails to appreciate the paradox—a constitutive irony of composition as an interdisciplinary enterprise—that to decenter writing instruction (or engage in interdisciplinary scholarship) requires the cachet of visible, active disciplinarity as an institutional fact, symbolized and materially enacted in centralized features like writing majors, graduate programs, tenurable faculty, even departments. This is a fatal flaw in his proposal, though attractive elements of his plan might be delinked from his theory of composition and reimagined within a more robust view of the field. As a practical matter, composition’s potential for agency in institutional reform depends on contexts Smit does not analyze, like the higher education reform movement, the structures and ideology of academic culture, and institutions as systems with variant types.

At the heart of Smit’s problematic view of composition lie codependent concepts of knowledge, teachability, and writing. In defining teaching as *the* goal of composition studies, Smit narrows the proper role of its scholarship to producing teachable knowledge about writing, or knowledge directly relevant to teaching. Broader studies of writing are regarded as peripheral—“background” for teaching or purely of personal interest. Writing as subject morphs into “writing ability”; writing “knowledge” becomes an individual’s competence to produce situated texts. This is the productive knowledge of rhetoric, as distinguished from hermeneutical or critical knowledge (see Arabella Lyon’s

“Rhetoric and Hermeneutics” in *Perspectives on Rhetorical Invention*, ed. Janet Atwill and Janice Lauer, U of Tennessee P, 2002). But Smit finds productive knowledge impossible to define, separate out from contexts, or generalize; it resides in individual writers, not in a scholarly community. It is teachable only as “tips” from writers to other writers. This amounts to writing off the entire rhetorical tradition of articulating and teaching knowledge as *poesis* and *praxis*. (It’s not accidental that Smit designates the field “composition studies” rather than a merger of rhetoric and composition.)

To authorize his reform project and ensure the survival of composition, Smit must restore some (pseudo-disciplinary) base of expertise for its teaching. He can imagine only two sources. First, compositionists can become writers within other discourse communities. Second, they can bring “analytical-critical frameworks” to bear on the social practices of these acquired discourses. Such tools represent a critical knowledge that Smit treats very differently from productive knowledge. He simply assumes that analytical frameworks, unlike writing strategies, are generically teachable through formal instruction, producing a critical ability that applies unproblematically across contexts.

Now, even if compositionists (improbably) became fluent writers of a “second” discourse, at best they would only possess the same inarticulate competence as its other writers, representing knowledge of *that* discipline, not expertise in their own. But they do hold an edge over those writers as “social critics of the discourse communities they will help train novice writers to join.” In the “end,” ironically, having desired to recenter composition on writing and its teaching, Smit ends up so privileging critical knowledge that he proposes reconstituting composition as a field of social critics “specializing in the linguistic, rhetorical and ideological *analysis* of a broad range of genres in a broad range of social contexts” (13, my emphasis).

There is much more to this interesting, thoughtful, flawed, and frustrating book, including valuable critiques. Smit rightly challenges the field to ask fundamental questions about writing and rhetoric, and the rhetorical triumph of the book is that you can’t really read it seriously without doing so. To assess his concepts, you must decide how you would define them; if he asks the wrong questions, you must reframe them or propose others as more fundamental; to resist his view of the field, you have to make your own explicit. It helps, I found, to read an antidote alongside Smit. I recommend *In Search of Eloquence: Cross-Disciplinary Conversations on the Role of Writing in Undergraduate Education*, Cornelius Cosgrove and Nancy Barta-Smith (Hampton P, 2004).

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**Cheryl Glenn, Margaret M. Lyday, and Wendy B. Sharer, eds. *Rhetorical Education in America*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004. vii–xvi + 245 pages. \$40.00 hardcover.**

The essays in this volume provide heartening evidence for the prevalence of an explicitly *political* rationale for the postsecondary teaching of speaking and writing in this country, a rationale that links rhetorical education to the goals of civic participation, social justice, and community service. The fact that the fifteen authors included here—a diverse group working in a range of settings and on a wide variety of projects—speak a shared language regarding the ultimate ends of rhetorical education says something, I believe, about our field: Despite claims of disciplinary fragmentation and disarray, despite the academic urge to differentiate, we are more united than we tend to think. And what unites us is precisely this belief that our work is politically and socially *useful*, that we are *needed* to help young people forge thoughtful public identities, to help current and future citizens build and maintain community against the forces of alienation and privatism, to help all of us deal more responsibly with the practical exigencies of daily life, to learn to render our diversity even as we try to nonviolently resolve our conflicts.

This political justification for what we do is perhaps unsurprising given both the longstanding association of rhetoric with public discourse and the marked ideological turn that the field of composition-rhetoric has taken over the last generation. But what is striking about the civic rationale presented in this book is that it comes not in nostalgic or pious terms but in concrete, realistic images of an insistent *worldly* discipline, one that is effectively partnered with K–12 educators, that has a vital presence in everyday workplaces, that collaborates with community activists and social service agencies, that helps actual students actually articulate, analyze, and criticize the “common sense” of their societies, and that teaches those students to speak truth to power, negotiate conflicts with respect and fairness, and intervene actively in solving the problems of their communities.

But what is also clear from this volume is that there are at least two obstacles to our making these images a reality, obstacles serious enough that they lend a humility, even sometimes a gloom, to this book.

The first problem is a paradox that has haunted rhetoric since its beginnings, and it can be stated fairly simply: The link between eloquence and power is both the source of rhetoric’s liberatory potential and the reason it is so effective at helping maintain the status quo. The same art that promises to free the enslaved, right social wrongs, and unsettle established opinion is also the means by which

power is flattered, the privileged increase their cultural capital, the “ignorant” are excluded from public life, and received notions of the good, true, and beautiful are so oppressive to so many.

That eloquence is a path to belief, action, and change is attested to frequently here and in terms that will be familiar to most readers: “[F]reedom goes to the articulate” (Roderick Hart, as quoted by William N. Denman, 11), “mastery of language mean[s] mastery of the state” (Jane Tompkins, as quoted by Thomas P. Miller, 27), “social change has always been partially the result of rhetorical action” (Shirley Wilson Logan, 37). Jill Swiencicki offers a summary of these claims in her history of *The Columbian Orator*, a handbook first published in 1797 and extraordinarily influential for decades thereafter. She writes that the best rhetorical training, from the classical period to the present, has always been about “grappling with the notion of truth versus socially constructed meaning, valuing dialogue as a process of rational-critical debate on issues of civic urgency, learning diverse strategies for advancing a claim, negotiating social difference to democratic ends, and practicing eloquence as a form of action” (66). In a society of freedom and equality, where difference is acknowledged, even celebrated, and conflicts negotiated through open, peaceful means, it’s hard to imagine verbal expression and debate not playing a central role and the schools not being charged with helping young people learn relevant habits and dispositions.

But there is an underside to this project. Attempts to educate are always attempts to discipline, regulate, and stratify. Swiencicki describes this as the tension between rhetoric’s “hegemonic and transformative aims: between using instruction in ‘eloquence’ to contain or assimilate social differences and a transformative space [. . .] in which diverse subjects attempt to form themselves in relation to dominant notions of eloquent identity” (56). Perhaps the most important way that rhetorical education serves hegemony is by investing certain linguistic, cultural, and social practices with power. As Swiencicki puts it: “[E]ducation in eloquence becomes as much about acquiring a privileged subjectivity as it is a guide to critical intervention into public issues” (63). Similarly, in her introduction to this volume, Cheryl Glenn uses the work of Pierre Bourdieu to highlight the ways that “every educational program fulfills a specific function: to legitimate social inequalities that exist before, after, inside, and outside its educational operations” (ix). From this point of view, rhetorical education consists mainly in sanctioning the discursive practices of the ruling classes, whose skillful exercise of those practices is then held up, in a disturbing tautology, as proof of their intellectual and cultural superiority.

This is, to put it mildly, a devastating problem. We could say, as some occasionally do, that all education, including rhetorical education, is inherently

conservative; but the very offering of that criticism is in some sense proof of rhetoric's oppositional potential, since public discourse, including the "normal" discourses sanctioned by the schools, is such an effective way to confront power: The King's English, after all, can be used to call for the abolition of the monarchy. As Glenn herself puts it, rhetoric may be linked to the maintenance of the status quo, but it can also "be a means of empowerment for marginalized groups that wish to disrupt the status quo" (xi). This does not mean, of course, that rhetorical education is *inherently* liberatory; every educational system is implicated in structures of power and cannot be expected to further interests contrary to those of its managers.

The example of this paradox that stands out most conspicuously in this book, mentioned in two separate chapters in nearly identical terms, is the case of Frederick Douglass, the slave-turned-abolitionist who was so prominent in nineteenth-century American history. Douglass put enormous stock in the power of eloquence to change society; he had learned from *The Columbian Orator* that slavery could be a subject of argument, and his advocacy of its abolition owes much to that book. Through his writing he shaped the opinions of many and was by all accounts an impressive speaker. But Shirley Wilson Logan wonders "to what extent his oratory benefited the cause and to what extent it merely benefited Douglass" (49). Training in rhetoric, that is, allowed Douglass to influence history, but it also provided him, in Swiencicki's terms, with access to "a form of subjectivity with extraordinary cultural power" (65). As both writers show, it is difficult to disentangle these two effects of the same educational process.

Other examples of the paradox of rhetorical education can be found here: Nan Johnson's essay on nineteenth-century parlor rhetorics, focused on the elocution readers (or "speakers") used by home learners, shows how textbooks meant to "put the skills of rhetorical influence into the hands of every American citizen who could read" could become avenues not to an increasingly inclusive public sphere but to ever more restricted notions about who could speak on which topics in what genres and venues (107). The double-edged sword of rhetorical education is perhaps most obvious when considering issues of race, class, and gender, but James Watt Raine's chapter on language and identity in Appalachia reveals how rhetorical education has also been used to negatively construct students who speak and write in regional dialects.

The paradox of rhetorical education even shows up where one would least expect it. In a fascinating essay on the "extracurricular" civic instruction provided to visitors of the Saratoga Battlefield in upstate New York, Michael Halloran shows how the park's ten-mile Tour Road, complete with exhibits and memorials of various kinds, can be read as a powerful example of epideictic



speech, presenting American history to park visitors as a simple story of bravery and sacrifice. The nationalistic message of the Road, written into the very landscape, works in part because alternative representations of the battle and the battlefield are silenced here. Because the Road is a single-circuit, one-way experience, the disjunctions of the actual battles, as well as the conflicting motives of those who came after, are largely written out of the display, so that only a “simple, clear picture” of patriotism is left. Gregory Clark’s essay on Yellowstone National Park shows similarly how symbolic action has been used again and again to invent for the American people a “coherent community despite the unimaginable complexity of their actual collectivity” (153). The voice that rhetorical education encourages and trains, in other words, is as likely to repress as to liberate.

It is a virtue of this book that most of the contributors are acutely aware of this tension and do not try to write it away. What we need to do, they seem to argue, is keep working through the tension as best we can, the solution to “bad” rhetoric, now as always, being *more* rhetoric. This is both sobering and inspiring at the same time.

Unfortunately, there’s a second obstacle to the realization of rhetoric’s democratic potential. Even if we could agree on a political purpose for our discipline, and learn to reject nostalgic, pious, and naive models of its relations to power, we still have the institutional problem of a field largely without space, resources, or prestige to accomplish its goals. In most North American institutions of higher education, rhetoric has been left with a single course for first-year students that is more often than not merely a gateway to the “real” disciplines, a way to ensure that students know the basic rules of grammar and citation before they can pursue the “content” of their choice.

We have all read the many explanations given for this decline in rhetorical education, which tend to blame things like print, the nation-state, science, romanticism, or the university itself. More interesting here, in my opinion, are explanations that strike closer to home, that seem to implicate *us* in our own troubles, or at least cast some doubt as to who our real friends are. Both Denman and Logan, for example, attribute the diminished presence of rhetorical education, in part, to our tendency to define what we do in neutral terms, as a kind of technical training. As Denman puts it, “I believe that our failure is not in teaching the essential skills of managing discourse, both in public speaking and composition courses. Our failure comes in not linking those skills to a wider goal: the betterment of civic life” (16).

But for me, some of the more energetic moments in this volume concern the role that literary studies have played in the plight of rhetorical education. Thomas Miller argues that by the end of the nineteenth-century, the professional

study of literature had effectively alienated language-arts education from the everyday literate practices of ordinary people. And it had vanquished rhetoric in the academic hierarchy by privileging research over teaching and service (distinctions that have never made sense for rhetoric and composition). Miller's argument works even against the critical and cultural theory that began replacing traditional literary criticism in the 1970s; it too is fundamentally arhetorical, from this point of view, because it treats power in purely theoretical terms, that is, without attention to how ordinary people might practically and ethically access it, how they might actually intervene in political and economic affairs. But it is Rich Lane's essay on the training of high school English teachers that really revealed for me the power, and danger, of the literary model of language-arts education. Lane marshals evidence from numerous reports and surveys to claim that contemporary English education is still mired, half a century after the so-called rhetorical, pragmatic, and postmodern "turns," in chronological, nationalistic, and literary-aesthetic content. And he argues that if we want to reform English studies along rhetorical lines, this is where we should begin, with future secondary teachers.

The key to re-energizing the civic mission of rhetorical education, therefore, seems to be to look outward, to connect what we do with the life outside our discipline. For William Denman this means refocusing our curricula on persuasion and argument; for Shirley Wilson Logan it means, among other things, forging "scholar-practitioner" collaborations that combine the expertise of the academy with concrete community exigencies (51). For Thomas Miller it means shifting the perspective of the English major from "the interpretive stance of the critical observer to the rhetorical stance of the practical agent involved in negotiations of received values to address practical needs," a shift that would require from us increased commitment to *service*, to spending more time with primary and secondary teachers, local employers, social service providers, and government agencies (30). For Rich Lane it means designing neosophistic language-arts curricula that treat a variety of textual and communicative forms, interrogate diverse discourse communities, and deal with both the consumption and the production of texts, all to prepare students to become more "participatory citizens" (98).

But there is a tension here. How do we look outward and still protect what's "ours"? How do we build a project that's about involvement in worldly affairs and still remain true to *school*? How do we focus our efforts on practical agency and real world effects while still believing in ourselves as classroom teachers? Take Thomas Miller: In his essay he's all about connections, partnerships, and service; he's constantly looking out toward ordinary and everyday social praxis. But Miller is also clearly a "comp-rhet" person, intent

on protecting the spaces and interests of the discipline. He writes, for example, about trying to convince administrators at his university that “students needed first-year composition courses *and* writing across the curriculum, not one or the other” (33). In other words, despite all the talk of rhetoric’s worldly impulses, its outward-looking stance, the discipline still needs to protect its own autonomy and integrity, its professional and intellectual spaces, its courses, books, and programs. Given the recurrent calls for the abolition of first-year composition, our ingrained habit of thinking about what we do in terms of service to *others*, even David Smit’s recent argument, in *The End of Composition Studies*, for essentially dispersing our knowledge and work across the curriculum, it’s perhaps unsurprising that so many of us find ourselves increasingly Janus-faced: *both* looking outward toward the real world of workplaces and communities *and* trying to protect, let alone grow, the little piece of academic turf that we have left.

Where are we, then? If this book is any evidence, we have arrived at a moment when we can raise a relatively united voice about the *civic* purposes of rhetorical education. We have recaptured our ties to politics and are able, as these writers show, to talk about those ties with knowledge, experience, insight, and imagination. But there remains, I believe, an asymmetry in our talk of rhetoric and politics. On the political nature of literacy and literacy education—on the myriad ways that politics impinges on language and language learning—we seem to be in broad agreement, even when our ideologies differ, and we speak and write with passion and force. But when we look at the equation the other way around, when we talk about the importance, the centrality, of rhetoric to politics, to the health of democracy itself, we sometimes seem less sure of ourselves and what we can offer. And this is surprising because, in my opinion, *no* other discipline today does more to actually practice young adults in everyday political life than rhetoric, with its first-year speaking and writing courses. No other discipline is more focused on helping students, *all* students, practically and ethically intervene in public life and solve the problems of their communities. And it’s not just that this education is a *form* of political praxis or that our work is broadly *relevant* to political education. I believe we are in fact the *heart* of political education in contemporary American schooling. This book is a welcome reminder of that.

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**David Hackett Fischer.** *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 851 pages. \$50.00 hardcover.

**Lester Olson.** *Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community: A Study of Rhetorical Iconology.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. xi–xvii + 323 pages. \$49.95 hardcover.

W. J. T. Mitchell's characterization of a "pictorial turn" in the early 1990s (*Picture Theory*, U of Chicago P, 1994) coincided with a veritable cottage industry of scholarly work in what has more recently been referred to as the field or discipline of "visual culture." Work in visual cultural studies has ranged from the iconophobic to the iconophiliac, but throughout it has been driven, in Mitchell's words, "[by] the realization that [. . .] visual experience or 'visual literacy' might not be fully explicable on the model of textuality" (16). While it would be easy to reduce the key issue here to purely methodological considerations (for example, because the visual experience rarely occurs fully outside of and apart from some manner of verbal context such as "naming" or "captioning," how might one account for and engage the social, economic, political, etc., significance of visual experiences and practices without resorting to reductionist methods?), the larger question concerns the ideological and epistemological implications of "looking" and "seeing" as more than just *innocent* metaphors for knowing: What might it mean to *look/see* as a \_\_\_\_\_? One can fill in the blank with whatever term one desires—Christian? geologist? cartographer, and so on. For our purposes, and given the books under review here, the terms *historian* and *rhetorician*—perhaps even *democracy*—will do nicely.

David Hackett Fischer's *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas* is Volume III of a four-volume project designed as a cultural history of the United States. Volume I, *Albion's Seed*, was published in 1989, and Volumes II (*American Plantations*) and IV (*Deep Change*) are still in progress. Each book seeks to understand the ways in which *liberty* and *freedom* emerged and developed—both in tandem and in tension—as the principles of a new social order. As Fischer notes in the appendix to *Liberty and Freedom*, this is not a particularly new project, but it differs from an older historicism that featured leaders and events, by articulating such considerations with the new historicism's interest in social structures, cultural processes, and the ordinary experiences of everyday life, especially as manifest within the material culture of customs, traditions, and folkways. In Fischer's terms,

It is about both elites and ordinary people, individual choices and collective experience, exceptional events and normative patterns, vernacular culture and high culture, the problem of the state and the problem of society [. . .]. It has an abiding interest in historical contingency, in the sense of people making choices and choices making a difference in the world.

In short, it is a project that resonates with both premodern and contemporary interests in the relationship between rhetoric and public culture. *Liberty and Freedom* is unique among the volumes in the larger project because it is “iconographic,” or, and again in the author’s words, “It uses images, artifacts, and material culture as empirical evidence” (820).

Fischer begins by drawing an etymological tension between *freedom*—a term he links with *friendship* and ultimately *collectivism*—and *liberty*—a term he links with *separation* and ultimately a kind of radical *individualism*. The dialectical opposition here is not so simplistically stark as it might appear (and as some reviewers of this volume have suggested), but it does offer a potentially productive framework for identifying and examining one of the key sites of rhetorical contestation in the national imaginary from the time of the founding forward. The key here is to keep in mind the ways in which the conventions for representing *freedom* and *liberty* operate in relationship to one another as inventional resources for constituting American identity and negotiating social and political problems. Others, of course, have sought to work out this tension across time with more or less success, but consistently the focus has been on the use of orations, sermons, pamphlets, and occasionally fiction; that is, the focus has been primarily (if not exclusively) on words. This is an important project, to be sure, but since the terms *liberty* and *freedom* are inherently *visionary* concepts, it makes sense to consider with some care the significance of how they have been *envisioned* in material practices of the rhetorical cultures to which they have been so important.

*Liberty and Freedom* offers an important starting point for such a project as it provides us with a near-encyclopedic survey of such visual practices from the iconography of “The Liberty Tree” through the post-9/11 revival of the “rattlesnake flag” bearing the legend “Don’t Tread on Me.” Representations of the American flag, Uncle Sam, and the Statue of Liberty recur, particularly in the latter part of the book. Broken down into five main chapters, the volume follows a conventional trajectory of the phases of American history: the early colonial period up to the revolution (1607–1775), the Revolution and constitution of the new republic (1776–1840), the years leading up to and following the Civil War (1840–1912), the World War years (1916–1945), and the postwar years up to the

present (1945–2004). The volume is strongest—or perhaps appears to be more complete—in the early chapters and weakest as we move into the modern and contemporary periods. The reason for this may have something to do with the fact that Fischer is first and foremost an historian of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American history, or it might be a function of the difficulty of encapsulating the explosion of visual culture that manifests itself in the face of an increasingly mass-mediated society. In either case the fundamental weakness of this volume has to do less with the story it tells than with the way in which it accounts for the relationship between the American ideology of liberty/freedom and the visual rhetorical culture in which it operates.

Fischer seems generally aware of the rhetoricity of such images, as he notes early on that “an image does not merely communicate a vision. It can also create it, transform it, and persuade others to adopt it” (14). And yet, as the volume unfolds, and particularly as we move beyond the early national period, consideration of the constitutive, transformative, and persuasive functions of particular images tends to take a back seat to demonstrating their simple presence in the public culture. And by the time we get to the contemporary period, the images tend to be more illustrative of social and political phenomena than anything else. These are not unimportant considerations, to be sure, but it leaves the reader hard pressed to understand the rhetorical centrality and sociopolitical significance of the visual as an inventional and transformative medium for negotiating the tension between *friendship* and *separation* so pivotal to live in a democratic public culture.

The problem here, of course, is tied in part to the project of writing a sweeping history of a four-hundred-year period. It is exceedingly rare to find a project that provides both breadth and depth of analysis at the same time, and it would be a serious error to ignore the significant breadth of this project and the way in which it points to the value of a concerted effort to develop a *visual rhetorical history* of the United States. Additionally, it should be pointed out that Fischer is not trained as a rhetorician, and so his emphasis on the transformative potential of the visual notwithstanding, it may be unfair to ask that his project speak to the rhetorical significance of such practices. What is needed to address such concerns are more-focused studies that examine the particular rhetoricity of specific visual practices and phenomena as they implicate the public consciousness in which the tension between freedom and liberty resonates. This is clearly an interdisciplinary project and one that requires numerous and more focused studies of the particular rhetoricity of specific visual practices and phenomena in the context of specific contingencies and circumstances. As an example, we might consider Lester Olson’s *Benjamin Franklin’s Vision of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology*.

*Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community* is an extension of Olson's project on "rhetorical iconology" begun in *Emblems of American Community in the Revolutionary Era* (Smithsonian, 1991). In his earlier volume, Olson made a compelling case for the rhetoricity of material culture in constituting a political identity, focusing attention on the wide array of media employed by eighteenth-century image-makers to visualize the body politic during the years leading up to the American revolution, including political pamphlets, almanacs, magazines, newspapers, broadsides, illuminations, paper currency, housewares and textiles, statues, flags, and medals. In this volume Olson shifts the focus to Benjamin Franklin. What makes Franklin an important figure is not only that he was the only one among his peers to sign each of the four documents central to the founding of the new nation (The Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance [with France], the Treaty of Peace [with France and England] and the US Constitution), but the role he played as the emergent nation's rhetorician-in-chief. As Olson tells the story, Franklin was a statesman, philosopher, and entrepreneur who understood the power of language and representation and worked hard his entire life to employ the tools of communication to shape the world in which he lived. Both a prolific advocate *and* a printer, he not only understood the role and function of rhetorical invention but also and most importantly, the significance of dissemination and circulation. Sensitive to the multiple audiences he addressed—both at home and abroad—he recognized in particular the power of visual representation as both an inventional and persuasive force; and as Olson demonstrates, Franklin's apt usage of visual representation is important to an understanding of the rhetorical transformation of a colonial imaginary dedicated to constitutional monarchy into a nationalist, republican imaginary.

The primary focus of the volume is on the role that four influential visual representations of the relationship between the colonies and England played between 1754 and 1782. The argument follows from the fact that over a period of thirty years spanning four decades, Franklin crafted visual images of the body politic that became representations—and in some important measures allegories—for the evolving relationship between England and the colonies. As Olson sees it, the images function as an index for both the shift and development in Franklin's own thinking about the best and most useful form of government. Not just an index of his thinking, these images are also—at least implicitly—a measure of a shifting rhetorical culture that moved from supporting a constitutional monarchy in the 1750s to a version of civic republicanism in the 1770s and 1780s (8). The four images marking this transformation are "JOIN, or DIE" (representing the colonies as a segmented snake on a woodcut design), "MAGNA Britannia: her Colonies REDUC'D" (representing the colonies as the

severed arms and legs of Britannia in a political cartoon at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis), “WE ARE ONE” (representing the US as thirteen interlocked rings on US currency), and “*Libertas Americana*” (representing the US as the infant Hercules strangling two serpents on a commemorative medal).

The importance of these images have been much noted by other commentators—including Fischer who dedicates several pages each to “JOIN, or DIE” and “*Libertas Americana*.” What makes Olson’s work important is that he reads the images within the rhetorical tradition of emblems and devices, and against a neoclassical model of rhetoric that calls attention to the differences between deliberative and epideictic discourses. As a genre, the emblematic rhetorical tradition operates in the context of a visual rhetoric that relies upon three key features: a pictorial representation, a motto in the vernacular or the Latin, and a resulting moral lesson (3). In charting the shifts of usage within this form as they operated in the ephemeral and contingent contexts of the years leading up to and following the American Revolution, Olson offers useful insights into both the role of the visual in constituting our sense of collective identity, as well as the significance of the methods and modes of disseminating and circulating such images to multiple audiences with competing agendas and interests.

Space here does not permit a detailed rendering of each of the arguments that Olson advances, but a brief consideration of “MAGNA Britannia” should help to make the point. Created by Franklin as a note card in 1765–66, and subsequently modified and reproduced as a broadside, the image of an organic relationship between Britain and the colonies stood in stark contrast to earlier images of the colonies represented as a segmented snake in “JOIN, or DIE.” The key distinction, as Olson notes, was that radical appropriations of the earlier image implied the possibility of the colonies as a united and autonomous community while the later image implied the impossibility of autonomous colonial action. In taking account of this shift in visual representation, Olson argues that MAGNA Britannia functioned as both an act of deliberation and apologia. As a deliberative message, it was addressed to the British Parliament, seeking both to conciliate its authority in the context of the Stamp Act Crisis and to counsel against the use of military force in the context of its potential economic implications. As apologia, it was addressed to a moderate segment of the colonial public who might have affiliated Franklin with the most radical appropriations of “JOIN, or DIE” enacted during the Stamp Act riots in New York and Boston (as well as, perhaps, concerns that he had not adequately represented Pennsylvania’s interests throughout the crisis), seeking to demonstrate his “own moderate way of obtaining repeal” (107). Interpreting the image in this context, Olson calls our attention to the ways in which its “meaning” was



sequenced as a function of competing points of view of the British and American audiences who viewed it.

This last point suggests a possible limitation to Olson's approach. When we recognize the ways in which the meaning of images are sequenced, our attention is called to the rhetorical polysemy of such images. And when we do that, we should heed the caution to assume that we can too easily reduce those meanings to simple oppositions as defined by established institutional frameworks as one finds in neoclassical models of rhetoric and oratory. Locating images within the context of deliberative and epideictic models of functionality can yield useful results, to be sure, but they are not the only—and sometimes not the primary or most interesting—locus of meaning. Equally important may be the sense in which the visual culture serves as a unique site for performing social and political agency in the context of larger and often amorphous symbolic and ideological templates. So, for example, we might rethink the rhetoricity of such images within the context of the tension between *liberty* and *freedom* that animates Fischer's work, or with more attention to the institutional interests and arrangements of various counterpublics (class, gender, and race are only the most obvious) that effect invention, usage, and meaning. Additionally, and in this context, one might need to take fuller account of the broader field of rhetorical aesthetics inherent to the enactment of visual styles and cultures. And effecting such a larger project would require more careful attention to a broader range of appropriations of such images and to larger patterns of circulation throughout the public culture. And so, just as I have faulted Fischer for being perhaps too broad in focus, it may well be that the inherent limitation of Olson's work is its narrow particularity. This is *not* to undermine the important work that Olson has accomplished. It is, however, to call attention to two things. First is the need to oscillate back and forth between more expansive and more particular rhetorical histories—a project that emphasizes the inherent interdisciplinarity of a visual rhetorical history. Second, and speaking more directly to rhetoricians per se, it is to encourage us to invigorate our sense of the rhetorical by asking not only how a neoclassical model of rhetoric rooted in oratory might help us to “see” the rhetoricity of a visual culture but also how we might enhance the complexity of our sense of rhetoricity by examining the rhetorical practices of material culture through the lens of the visual.

Taken together, Fischer's *Liberty and Freedom* and Olson's *Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community* offer an important first step in constructing a rhetorical visual history of US public culture. And that is not an inconsiderable thing. What is needed now is a more concerted, collective, interdisciplinary effort to expand upon and develop this project with an eye toward

the ways in which such a visual history anticipates, frames, opposes, resists, or otherwise engages contemporary cultural and sociopolitical consciousness and sensibilities.

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**Gregory Clark. *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. 181 pages. \$34.94 hardcover.**

About a decade ago, when my daughters were ten and twelve, my wife and I and the two of them found ourselves in the Watchtower, a silo-like stone lookout tower that stands near the east entrance to Grand Canyon National Park, at the highest point on the south rim. It was late in the morning when we arrived, and the four of us had had a top-ten-all-time day already: Dawn had given us the rare and unexpected gift of a pristine, sweet, still morning after the previous night's harrowing electrical snowstorm, and with the landscape to ourselves, we had hiked the south rim for hours observing the spectacular show: layers of rock, on the vastest scale, spectacular yet subtle with yellows, oranges, whites, grays, golds and pinks; the bluest sky imaginable; bright sunshine washing everything, yet also creating deep, breathing shadows on the canyon walls below, as the sun rose all morning; everywhere snow melting and waterfalls running off unexpectedly after the night's fierce storm. Now we found ourselves inside, shaded, cool, walking up the staircases of the tower and looking out to the Painted Desert in one direction, to the serpentine Colorado far below, and across the canyon to the north rim and the mountains beyond. Around the interior of the Watchtower were magnificent pictographs, artifacts, native artworks.

I was reminded of this experience when I was reading Greg Clark's analysis of the Watchtower in the concluding chapter of *Rhetorical Landscapes*. Concentrating mostly but not entirely on landscapes he loves in the American West, Clark takes up a half dozen or so important American spaces, and a dozen or more texts that interpret those spaces, in order to support his "assertion that the experience of touring the American homeland has much to do with the public rhetorical project of constituting in diverse and divergent individuals a shared

sense of national identity” (147). Clark begins by recovering representations of New York City from the first decades of the nineteenth century to show that early in our history “guidebooks did the rhetorical work of preparing the city’s youngest visitors to identify themselves as citizens of a complex and dynamic, if dangerous, nation” (32). Next he studies how artists and travel writers, ignoring the tedium and higher purpose of nineteenth-century Shaker life, nevertheless exploited the Shakers for rhetorical purposes: Writers and painters “aestheticized [Shakers] and their way of life [. . .] to make readers over in the image of a national identity that Americans who are not Shakers [could] not share” (63). Chapter four, on Yellowstone, blends Clark’s personal reminiscences, children’s books, paintings, tourist accounts, guidebooks, and the history of the park’s development into a compelling tale that illustrates how Yellowstone (and by implication Yosemite and other western landscapes) have been constructed physically and symbolically into “a public experience of collective identity” that holds the potential to “almost magically heal” the divisions that separate Americans (71, 89). Chapters five and six together assess two important and related cultural developments from 1915: the Lincoln Highway, developed to create the first highway across the nation since the blazing of the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, “did the transformative work of constituting in diverse individuals a common public identity” (119); and the Panama–Pacific World’s Fair, held in San Francisco, similarly constituted a “fair that would provide their compatriots with [. . .] a symbolic experience of common identity and collective mission” (143) appropriate to a celebration of the completion of the Panama Canal. The book’s conclusion emerges from a discussion of “Mary Colter’s Watchtower[, which]—just like the experiences provided by the Panama–Pacific International Exhibition or the national parks [Yellowstone and Yosemite] or any number of other public places—functions primarily as a rhetorical symbol [. . . , one that has] brought many Americans together in a shared sense of common experience” (161). Clark throughout weaves his cultural history out of fascinating material fabric: Currier and Ives prints, nineteenth-century magazine articles, forgotten advertisements, poems, “God Bless America,” Walt Whitman, photography, travel memoirs, Emily Post, maps, Frederick Jackson Turner, architectural blueprints, license plates, *Cubby in Wonderland*. Touring for him is never a merely aesthetic or recreational endeavor; the places that Americans visit, says Clark, often “work rhetorically to transform private individuals into public citizens,” to create “a shared sense of being at home” (4, 26).

All this would be novel and remarkable enough: Clark’s analysis is at once an original and vital addition to recent studies of material rhetoric, to accounts of how public memory is created, and to other studies of the rhetorics of space; and, eloquent, aphoristic, and original, it demonstrates how rhetorical analysis can be effective in the service of rhetorical and cultural history. In this way the

book is a model illustration of the possibilities for rhetorical studies. And yet there's more. Clark provides the significant additional pleasure of employing Kenneth Burke as a sustained means of guiding his inquiry, in a refreshingly transparent way that readers will appreciate mightily. It was purposeful that I used a form of the word *constitution* twice, for Clark employs Burke's observations on constitutive rhetoric at the end of *A Grammar of Motives* in a way that gives new life and importance and utility to that perplexing term. Moreover, Clark washes his discussion of national identity in Burke's notions of *identity* and *identification*, such that those central Burkean terms and concepts come into clear and telling focus. And so too with *communion*, *substance*, *discounting*, *representative anecdote*, *transcendence*, and *scene*: all these useful but difficult terms are employed so deftly, with such understanding and skill, that the book becomes, without especially trying, an excellent primer on Kenneth Burke, his key concepts, and his general life and work. Even Burke's poetry and fiction get their due. Over the years Greg Clark and I have had several occasions to discuss the best way to teach Kenneth Burke. What would make the best introductory text, we have sometimes discussed—Burke's famous "Definition of Man"? The vital and foundational passages on *identification* and *pure persuasion* from *The Rhetoric of Motives*? The title essay of *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, because that essay looks backward to Burke's 1930s books and forward to the project known as dramatism? *Towards a Better Life*, on the grounds that Burke once told Clark that all of his ideas could be found in that challenging novel? The "Prologue in Heaven" at the end of *The Rhetoric of Religion*, since it seems to both round off and summarize Burke's career in such a readable and compelling way? Or perhaps a Burke course should begin with *Counter-Statement*, on the premise that a survey course should move chronologically, especially in order to counter the view that everything in Burke's career leads up somehow to the quintessential *The Grammar* and *The Rhetoric*? Now I think I have the answer: The next time I hold a Burke seminar, I think I'll begin with Clark's *Rhetorical Landscapes*. Not only does it offer a genial and informed and informative summary of most of the key ideas in Burke, but it makes fans as well.

In sum, *Rhetorical Landscapes in America* is that rare book that makes one wish for more. Most of all I wish that I had heard even more about the specific identities that were and are being constructed at the various sites that Clark describes. Yes, these American landscapes construct a national identity—but what sort of identity? When my kids, my wife, and I were visiting the Watchtower, designed by Colter a century ago to "present to tourists an expression of an American identity" (155), I got the sense from the building that the Native Americans of the West were somehow "has beens": Their past had been substantial, even glorious, to be sure, but their present seemed to be presented as faded and fading; the crumbling architecture seemed to stand in, rather sentimentally,

for a fragile people, marginal and seemingly as doomed as the Anasazi. The artworks on display and the simulated pictographs on the walls in some ways appeared primitive, childlike: Did they construct Native Americans as naive and anachronistic? And what about the wild spaces of Yellowstone and Yosemite and the open road known as the Lincoln Highway: Do these figure American identity as untamable, rural, and unlettered? Are the spaces relentlessly male in their implicit resistance to domestication? Does the frontier ethic carry with its identifications the stench of white supremacy that accompanies Manifest Destiny? Do these American landscapes accommodate—or erase—The Other? In other words, do the spaces and texts that Clark describes really create a national identity as untroubled and as unitary as his analysis sometimes (not always) seems to imply? (And for that matter, just how did the citizens of San Francisco pull off a World's Fair in 1915, less than a decade after earthquake and fire had reduced the city to rubble: What lessons might there be in that story to tutor us as placemakers and remakers in the wake of the recent disaster in New Orleans?)

I hope that Clark will turn to some of these questions in follow-up projects. Better yet, I predict that others will do so. *Rhetorical Landscapes* opens new vistas, limitless and literal vistas, to analysis, and it provides as well tools for exploration that everyone in rhetorical studies will benefit from.

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**Robert L. Ivie. *Democracy and America's War on Terror*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005. ix–xi + 251 pages. \$38.75 hardcover.**

When I was younger—maybe sixteen or so—I took a date to a double-feature at the drive-in theatre near Butte, Montana: *Rocky IV* followed by *Red Dawn*. This narrative moment of terminally bad judgment may explain why I was single until well into graduate school, but it also encapsulates everything that matters about my generation of Americans. We were the children of Vietnam War veterans, the grandchildren of The Greatest Generation, and were raised on a steady diet of anti-Soviet propaganda. We weren't raised to believe in fate, but we were raised to believe in narrative structure. And the story of the US and the USSR had only one possible ending, which was the end of everything.

We knew America could/would beat the Communists, and we were confident. We also knew that the Cold War would end in a blindingly hot flash, and we were afraid. Our world was built on a paradox, and it's on this paradox—confidence and fear—that Robert L. Ivie broadly focuses his arguments about democracy, demagoguery, and America in its ongoing war on terror.

Using what has become the most predictable trope in the field of trauma studies, Ivie opens his introduction with an explicit linking of September 11, 2001, with December 7, 1941—both days “of infamy for Americans [when] terror was visited upon a peaceful and unsuspecting people by the dastardly forces of tyranny” (1). Deploying key terms from Kenneth Burke’s *Language as Symbolic Action*, Ivie argues that his purpose is to pull back the terministic screens that keep the American *demos* living uncomfortably but compliantly in this “aggressive republic of fear”—a republic characterized by insecurity about its own security and tension about the ever-imminent threat/ever-present reality of war.

In “Republic of Fear,” Ivie argues that “the discourse of foreign threat demarcates American identity and constitutes national purpose” (11). The nation is defined, paradoxically, on two competing, mutually exclusive levels. Internally, the American *demos* is defined by its dedication to justice and peace, but the obsessive drive for national security is characterized by an almost pathological insecurity in the face of the Other. This self-centered Other-centeredness leads to America’s external definition as a peaceful nation always forced to the brink of war and beyond, leaving a peaceful nation that abhors violence in a perpetual state of violence—and leaving the American people in a constant state of fear. America’s definition of itself—and its policies both foreign and domestic—are pulled in competing directions by the “centrifugal forces of nationalism, ethnicity, religion, and economic disparity” and the centripetal force of “its own rejuvenated quest [in a post-Cold War, post-9/11 world] for ideological integration” (15). The inevitable result within a *demos* living in such a world and pulled in such directions is the mass production of fear. Paradoxically, democracy is seen as the only hope for true peace, yet the spread of democracy can only be accomplished through the application of force—virtually assuring that the spread of true democracy is retarded. In such a world, rhetoric itself is implicated, both “as a problematic tradition of political discourse and as a means of strengthening democratic culture” (41–42). Unlike Athens, a direct democracy in which “political rhetoric was the instrument of mass deliberation,” the democratic republic that is America sees rhetoric employed as a tool of the ruling elite, a criticism raised in chapter one that continues into chapter two (51).

Chapter two, “Distempered Demos,” opens with a scathing critique of the manipulation of the American people, living in their republic of fear, into a condition of perpetual powerlessness, where “Political power is displaced from the

public to a ruling elite by portraying the masses in the image of a primitive Other subject to the delirium of demagoguery, not unlike the barbarian beyond the walls of the polity" (50). And it is to the *polis* of Athens that Ivie turns, chronicling, briefly, the history of this original democracy from its origins to its proponents through its most outspoken critics, especially Plato—whose “caricature of direct democracy prevailed among the founders of the American republic.” In the slave-holding, largely disenfranchised nation they founded, the mass of the citizenry were “demoted from the role of decision maker to that of bystander” (63). In a sweeping review of the history of the idea of democracy itself, Ivie leaps from ancient Athens to the foundation of American constitutional thought in the eighteenth century, through Madison’s thoughts on Athenian democracy as penned in the *Federalist Papers* to the arguments of the anti-Federalists. Ultimately, in this argument, the distempered *demos* is left in the position of the powerless bystander living in a nation characterized by “an alienating and debilitating fear of participatory politics,” a fear of the “unruly domestic multitude” mirrored in the American fear of the world beyond its borders (89).

In chapter three, Ivie focuses his arguments on the nature of democracy to the possibilities of “Democratic Peace.” Basing its foreign policy on the accepted and highly questionable truism (advanced through careful rhetorical shifting of facts and semantic slipperiness by Bruce Russett in *Grasping the Democratic Peace*) that “democracies do not fight one another,” Ivie observes that the US entered the third millennium bent on spreading democracy across the globe as a means of achieving perpetual peace (92). Ivie criticizes this strategy at length, beginning with an examination of Russett’s work and continuing through literature both supportive and contradictory of what Francis Fukuyama argued was the end of history. The effect of this approach to peace, both rhetorically and in (language-mediated) reality, is to leave Americans and their leaders anxious about the world—to which their stance, politically and/or militarily, is always antagonistic.

Logically, if not structurally, chapter four, “Fighting the War on Terror,” is the heart of Ivie’s text. If the introduction opens with an entirely expected rhetorical gesture that encompasses both 9/11 and Pearl Harbor Day, then chapter four opens with an entirely unexpected, but related, gesture of its own. Ivie argues that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were an extension of the already-accepted practice of firebombing civilian targets, and here both Dresden and Tokyo serve as examples. But such bombings, both traditional and atomic, are a part of the same train of logic in which, tactically, civilian lives are taken as a strategic pattern of winning a war through the deliberate undermining of civil morale. The logic is clear, as is its ugly yet natural extension: The Cold War began in atomic terror, and another form of terror is the natural outcome of the ethic of this pattern of thought. “Terrorism,” argues Ivie, “is firmly rooted in

a violent history of empire since World War II" (124). Considering the state of fear in which Americans exist and the paradox inherent in the pursuit of lasting peace through perpetual war, when the attacks of 9/11 occurred, Americans reacted the only way they could react: by closing ranks and declaring war on the Other. This decision, argues Ivie, leaves the US in a "web of psychological, political, and social entanglements" that "suppress[es] the nation's democratic impulse rather than deploy it vigorously to meet the challenge at hand" (126). Chapter four ends with a lucid, well-reasoned examination of the rhetoric of and surrounding terrorism, not denying "the fact of terrorism" or questioning "the imperative of responding effectively to the reality of violence perpetrated against civilians" (127). The war on terror, as it is being fought today, is simply "a vain and doomed attempt to eradicate evil" (139); success of any kind can only come with a radical shift in American political culture, the topic to which Ivie turns in his fifth and final chapter, "Idiom of Democracy."

The shift in American political rhetoric—in American political reality—for which Ivie calls is a radical (and very Burkean) one: "[A]ddressing one's adversary as wrong, even deadly wrong, rather than evil is requisite to achieving and featuring a democratic perspective" (170). When the Other is evil, then the Other must be obliterated, for the very existence of this evil Other is a threat to safety and security. There is no negotiating with evil—neither the Evil Empire of Reagan's America nor the remaining two nations in the Axis of Evil. If such polemical thinking can be overcome, argues Ivie—on a Foucauldian foundation—then the very idea of the Other as an opponent can be supplanted by the Other as partner. In such a world, persuasion through rhetoric takes the place of persuasion through either terrorism or economic and military coercion. This is a tidal shift in both American thinking and American action that Ivie refers to, in his conclusion, as "a course correction toward a more balanced and prudent deployment of American power" (198).

In the end, Ivie describes an American nation guided by fear and hate of the Other, a nation whose leaders, he argues, show "a manifest lack of prudence combined with an excess of indifference to unfavorable world opinion" and thus "risk losing the war on terror at home and abroad" (193). On a strong foundation of scholarship from political science and history, Ivie builds a wide-ranging argument in which he deploys scholars as diverse as Kenneth Burke and Michel Foucault, Ernesto Grassi, and George Kennedy. His book provides a fine overview not only of the war on terror but also of the war on peace, from the first stirrings of direct democracy in Athens to the moves and machinations of the current Bush administration.

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