

Exploration of rhetorical and critical tradition and its variations based on selected theorists within the tradition

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ABSTRACT : Communication theory as a field (Craig, 1999), recommends seven traditions of communication as a way of reconstructing communication theory as a field. Each of these traditions seeks to understand and explain different phenomenon in the society. It is essential for higher degree research students to be well acquainted with different traditions so as to appreciate communication as a field, and be able to backup one's research with specific tradition. This will also help higher degree research students to comprehend embryonic fields in communication and eventually make available theoretical base for their research. This paper elucidates rhetorical and critical traditions and deliberates on their variations with other theorists within the selected traditions.

KEYWORDS: Critical, Rhetoric, Feminism, Traditions and Communication theory

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I. INTRODUCTION

Communication theory is rich in the range of ideas that fall within its nominal scope, even as new theoretical work continues to emerge. Despite the ancient roots and growing profusion of the field, communication theory is a coherent area of meta-discursive practice, a field of discourse about discourse with implications for the practice of communication (Craig, 1989). The traditions of communication theory offer distinct ways of conceptualizing and discussing communication problems and practices. Communication theory can fully engage with the ongoing practical discourse or meta-discourse about communication in society (Craig, 1989; Craig & Tracy, 1995). The seven communication theory traditions crop up from different academic disciplines, such as literature, mathematics and engineering, sociology, and psychology (Littlejohn, 1982). This paper concentrates on Critical and Rhetoric traditions that have many connotations as regarded by different scholars since ancient Greece (Craig & Muller, 2007). The paper will discuss the history of two traditions, their nature and key ideas. It will also bring out the key theorists of the tradition, and provide a theoretical basis for the paper.

II. THE RHETORIC TRADITION

According to Foss (2009), rhetoric is the body of thought concerned with the use of symbols by human beings, but Aristotle defines rhetoric as the art of discovering all the available means of persuasion. In its popular usage, the term has negative connotations. Rhetoric is frequently contrasted with action; meaning that it is empty words, talk without substance, mere ornament. Foss notes that this contemporary understanding of rhetoric is at odds with a long history of rhetoric tradition, dating back in the West to ancient Greece and Rome that provides a long-standing foundation on which the contemporary discipline of communication is built (Kock, 2002, p. 853). It is widely believed that rhetorical tradition begun in Syracuse on the island of Sicily (Foss, 2009, p. 854). According to Foss, Corax can be credited with the first formal rhetorical theory. He wrote a treatise called "The Art of Rhetoric" to assist those involved in land disputes to argue their case. Corax's student, Tisias, brought the teaching of rhetoric to Athens and mainland Greece. During this time, the belief that rhetoric could be taught gave rise to a group of teachers of rhetoric called sophists. While today, the sophists are regarded as philosophers and teachers who not only helped establish the foundations of rhetoric as a discipline, in Athens, however, they were distrusted because they were "foreigners".

In addition, the sophists charged for their services, a practice that was at odds with Greek tradition, so some disliked the sophists because they could not afford them. The sophists also claimed to teach wisdom or virtue, which had been seen as an innate capacity that could not be taught. This was an additional source of ill will against them (Foss, 2009, p. 854). Rhetoric was seen as the human use of symbols/language, to reach

agreement that permits coordinated effort (Aristotle, 2007). Kock (2002) defines rhetoric as the study of the means of persuasion available that uses language as an inducement to action, for any given situation. Kock's definition implies that public discourse is beneficial and necessary, since it looks at utterances in the public sphere and identifies the discourses that serve the society's development. Rhetoric is the on-going public discourse that establishes human societies and holds them together. It occurs whenever there is an engagement and exchange of symbols to accomplish some goal or attempts to coordinate social action. It is a combination of the science of logic and ethical branch of politics.

Aristotle classified rhetoric into three main forms: ethos, pathos and logos (Aristotle & Roberts, 2004). Aristotle focused on the use of language as a tool for shaping persuasive arguments, he argues that the rhetor's power of demonstrating his personal character will make his speech credible (ethos), his ability to stir emotions will allow for a connection to be made (pathos), and his power to prove truths through persuasive arguments (logos) (Aristotle & Roberts, 2004). This means that ethos is the ethical appeal of the rhetor; it is easier to believe those that are trusted and respected by the audience (Ramage & Bean, 1998). The tone and style of the message given can convey a sense of trustworthiness. Secondly, pathos has to do with appealing to the audience's emotions, sense of identity and self-interest through words (Ramage & Bean, 1998). Triggering emotions out of the audience is a powerful means of getting the desired message across. Thirdly, logos are persuasion through sound reasoning and clarity of message (Ramage & Bean, 1998). The rhetor can prove truth through persuasive arguments (Aristotle & Rhys, 2004). There must be consistency of the message and the clarity of the statement the rhetor is making, to appeal to the audience's sense of logic (Ramage & Bean, 1998). The rhetor should have the ability to articulate a point through reasoned discourse.

Traditionally, much research focuses on the pragmatic uses of rhetoric; such as Kuypers (2002) definition, that rhetoric is the strategic use of communication to achieve specifiable goals. Rhetoric is strategic since it is intentional; is employed only when words can make a difference. It seeks to influence our personal and collective behaviours by voluntarily agreeing with the communicator that certain value, action, or policy are better (Kuypers, 2002). However, Bitzer (1968) argues that rhetoric is a mode of altering reality by the creation of discourse, which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. However, critics analysing instances of rhetoric, take a critical look at the intentional or persuasive efforts by the rhetor. After all, the study of rhetoric is concerned with the formation of judgment and choice (Nichols, 1963).

2.1 Classical Rhetoric and Persuasion by Aristotle

The second part of this essay will discuss the variations in the tradition based on three theorists within the tradition. The paper acknowledges that whereas there are various theorists who have theorized on rhetoric as a tradition, this paper will rely on Aristotle's "Rhetoric", Kenneth Burke's "A Rhetoric of motives", and Foss & Griffin's "Beyond persuasion: A Proposal for an invitational rhetoric". The first variations will be based on Aristotle's rhetoric of persuasion that emerged from Plato's ideas. He first submitted to philosophical dissection in his Socratic dialogues (Prosser, 2009, p. 103). In *Gorgias*, one of his early dialogues, Plato (2007) dealt with truth, goodness, justice, and ethics, but contrasts monological rhetoric which was practiced by the sophists, and interactive dialectic which leads intelligent individuals to reach the truth. Plato questions whether rhetoric is a true art or merely a knack for flattery.

In his view, rhetoric "is the art of persuading an ignorant multitude about the justice or injustice of a matter, without imparting any real instruction." He criticized rhetoric as practiced by the Sophists saying that it was a means of persuasive speech that lacked a foundation in justice or truth. It was used in pursuit of power in a misleading way mainly giving the audience what it wanted to hear. In Plato's opinion, "rhetoric is merely a form of flattery and functions similarly to cookery, which masks the undesirability of unhealthy food by making it taste good" (Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 103). However, Aristotle contributed much in the early development of rhetorical studies (Aristotle & Roberts, 2004; Ramage & Bean, 1998). Aristotle (2007) defined rhetoric "as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." (p. 123). For him, rhetorical study is concerned with the modes of persuasion.

Just like dialectic, which Plato preferred, rhetoric was also concerned with truth and used similar methods to dialectic, such as demonstration. He argued, "persuasion is clearly a sort of demonstration, since we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated". He argued further that demonstration is achieved through an enthymeme, which is a syllogism, and the consideration of syllogisms of all kinds, without distinction, is the business of dialectic, either of dialectic as a whole or of one of its branches (p. 122). Although, Aristotle (2007) argued that some modes of persuasion "belong strictly to the art of rhetoric and some do not", the persuasive modes at the outset, and not supplied by the speaker, do not belong to rhetoric, such as witnesses and written contracts. Those modes that belong to the art of rhetoric are those that speakers can "construct by means of the principles of rhetoric" (p. 124).

According to Aristotle, there are three such modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word: the personal character of the speaker; putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; and the proof provided by the words of the speech itself. Aristotle (2007) explains:

“Persuasion is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is so spoken to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and readily than others: this is true generally, whatever the question is where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided. This kind of persuasion should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak. The speaker’s character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses. Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgements when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile... Thirdly, persuasion is effected through speech when we have proved truth by means of persuasive arguments suitable to the question” (p. 124).

In order to be effective, Aristotle (2007) argues that there are three means of effecting persuasion, which a speaker should be in command of: (1) reason logically, (2) understand human character and goodness in their various forms, and (3) understand the emotions - that is, to name, describe and know their causes. It thus appears that rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and of ethical studies (p. 124). Both rhetoric and dialectic strive to achieve proof or apparent proof through “induction on the one hand and syllogism or apparent syllogism on the other”. While dialectic uses induction and syllogism, rhetoric uses example and apparent enthymeme. Aristotle argues that everyone who effects persuasion through proof uses either enthymemes or examples, that when we base the proof of a proposition on a number of similar cases, this is *induction* in dialectic and *example* in rhetoric. When we show that “a further and quite distinct proposition must also be true in consequence” (*Ibid.*).

Aristotle (2007) divided oratory into the three main categories: (1) political, (2) forensic, and (3) the ceremonial oratory of display. Political speaking urges listeners to do or not to do something, and concerned with the future; Forensic speaking either attacks or defends somebody, and concerned with the past; and the Ceremonial oratory of display either praises or censures somebody, and concerned with the present, though they often find it useful also to recall the past and to make guesses at the future” (p. 127). Aristotle’s (2007) rhetoric has three distinct goals based on each of its three categories:

The political orator aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action; if he urges its acceptance, he does so on the ground that it will do good; if he urges its rejection, he does so on the ground that it will do harm; and all other points, such as whether the proposal is just or unjust, honourable or dishonourable, he brings in as subsidiary and relative to this main consideration. Parties in a law-case aim at establishing the justice or injustice of some action, and they too bring in all other points as subsidiary and relative to this one. Those who praise or attack a man aim at proving him worthy of honour or the reverse, and they too treat all other considerations with reference to this one (p. 127-128).

The ethical dimension of rhetoric emphasizes that the ends of rhetoric should be doing good or avoiding harm; establishing justice or injustice and proving honour or dishonour (Aristotle, 2007). He argues that when rhetors apportion praise or blame, urge audiences to accept or reject proposals for action, or accuse others or defend themselves, they “attempt not only to prove the points mentioned but *also* to show that the good or the harm, the honour or disgrace, the justice or injustice, is great or small, absolutely or relatively”. To be effective therefore, rhetors must also “be able to say which is the greater or lesser good, the greater or lesser act of justice or injustice; and so on” (p. 128), and demonstrate the ethical dimension.

2.2 The New Rhetoric and Identification by Burke

The second variation is by Kenneth Burke (2007), the 20th century thinker, who broadened the scope of the rhetorical tradition beyond Aristotle’s preoccupation with persuasive speech. According to German (2009, p. 491), Burke’s influence is seen in the fact that *identification* is now a key term in contemporary rhetorical tradition. German says that identification describes the fundamental process of using symbols to overcome inherent divisions among human beings. It is important in understanding the increasing complexity of the process of social influence as nonlinear, sometimes unintentional, and potentially nonverbal. Craig and Muller (2007, p. 104), explain the motivation behind Burke’s work by stating that, “during World War II and the ensuing Cold War, Burke was concerned with the *problem of propaganda*, “the problem of the pervasiveness of persuasion” (p. 104).

In his book *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke (2007) uses the key concept of *identification* to show “how a rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized or thought to belong”. He focused on the “intermediate area of expression that is not wholly deliberate, yet not wholly unconscious. It lies midway between aimless utterance and speech directly purposive” (p. 131-132). He says, for example, “A man who identifies his private ambitions with the good of the community may be partly justified or unjustified”. He may be using a mere pretext to gain individual advantage at the public expense; yet he may be quite sincere, or willingly make sacrifices on behalf of such identification” (p. 132). Burke (2007) states, that his treatment and

development of rhetoric in terms of identification “is decidedly not meant as a substitute for the sound traditional approach, rather it is but an accessory to the standard lore.” For him, ‘persuasion ranges from the bluntest quest of advantage, as in sales promotion or propaganda, through courtship, social etiquette, education, and the sermon, to a ‘pure’ form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone, without ulterior purpose.”

On the other hand, “identification ranges from the politician who, addressing an audience of farmers, says, “I was a farm boy myself,” through the mysteries of social status, to the mystic’s devout identification with the source of all being.” (p. 132). Identification takes place when person A *is identified with*, or may *identify himself with*, person B when their interests are joined or not, if he assumes or is persuaded to believe that they are. When this happens, he becomes ‘substantially one’ with a person other than himself, yet remains unique, an individual locus of motives. This means that ‘to identify A with B is to make A ‘consubstantial’ with B’ (p. 133). The term ‘substance’ has a function when seen from the perspective of consubstantiality. The doctrine of *consubstantiality*, may be necessary because “substance, in the old philosophies, was an *act*; and a way of life is an *acting-together*; where men have common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*” (Burke, 2007, p. 133).

For Burke, identification is demonstrated through the existence of division, he argues, “If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, then absolute communication would be of man’s very essence” (p. 133). Burke (2007) suggests property, as an identifying nature is property, because man surrounds himself with properties as a way of establishing his identity in goods, services, position or status, citizenship, reputation, and acquaintanceship. However, ethical array of identifications maybe considered when it is related to other entities that are likewise, forming their identity in terms of property can lead to turmoil and discord (p. 134). A utilitarian analysis of language, which looks at the ways in which men find ‘eulogistic coverings’ for their material interests, “is thus seen to be essentially rhetorical and to bear directly upon the motives of property as a rhetorical factor”. Therefore, it is “clearly a matter of rhetoric to persuade a man by identifying your cause with his interests” (p. 135).

A rhetor’s persuasiveness depends on the resources he has at his command. Burke argues that where public issues are concerned, “such resources are not confined to the intrinsic powers of the speaker and the speech, but depend also for their effectiveness upon the purely technical means of communication, which can either aid the utterance or hamper it” (p. 135). He says, for example, that a ‘good’ rhetoric neglected by the press obviously cannot be so ‘communicative’ as a poor rhetoric backed by nation-wide headlines. Thus, “we must think of rhetoric as a general *body of identifications* that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill (p. 135). Burke for example states that, if a person praises God in terms that happen also to sanction one system of material property rather than another, they are using rhetoric. The same applies when a person praises science, “however exaltedly, when that same science is at the service of imperialist-militarist expansion” (p. 135). In the same way that “God has been identified with a certain worldly structure of ownership, so science may be identified with the interests of certain groups or classes quite *unscientific* in their purposes”. Burke concludes that however ‘pure’ one’s motives may be actually; the impurities of identification are always lurking about the edges of such situations” (p. 136).

Unlike classical rhetoric, which stresses the element of explicit design in rhetorical enterprise, Burke (2007) argues that it is possible to extend the range of rhetoric by studying the persuasiveness of false or inadequate terms, which we impose upon ourselves, in varying degrees of deliberateness and unawareness, through motives indeterminately self-protective and/or suicidal (p. 137). Burke likens this rhetorical resource of identification to the psychologist’s concept of “malingering” which designates “the ways of neurotic persons who persuade themselves that they are, and so can claim the attentions and privileges of the ill” (p. 136).

Burke introduces “another aspect of Rhetoric: its nature as *addressed*, since persuasion implies an audience”. He explains, “A man can be his own audience, even in his secret thoughts, cultivates certain ideas or images for the effect he hopes they may have upon him”. This understanding of rhetoric is unlike the one found in traditional Rhetoric where the relation to an external audience is stressed (p. 138). It also sensitises us “to the ingredient of rhetoric in all *socialization*, considered as a *moralizing* process”. This means that the “individual person, striving to form himself in accordance with the communicative norms that match the cooperative ways of his society, is by the same token concerned with the rhetoric of identification.” Socialisation as a moralising process exerts pressure upon him from without but he completes the process from within. “If he does not somehow act to tell himself what the various brands of rhetorician have told him, his persuasion is not complete” (p. 138).

2.3 Invitational Rhetoric-Beyond Persuasion by Foss and Griffin

Foss and Griffin (2007), in their article “Beyond persuasion: A proposal for an invitational rhetoric”, extend the bounds of rhetoric further to a feminist critique. While Burke considered non-speech modes of rhetorical persuasion, Foss and Griffin move rhetoric to a response of patriarchal bias that undergirds most

theories of rhetoric. They claim, “as feminist scholars have begun to explicate the ways in which standard theories of rhetoric embody patriarchal perspectives, they have identified communicative modes that have not been recognized or theorized because they are grounded in alternative values” (p. 143). They proposed, “a definition and explication of a rhetoric built on the principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination rather than on the attempt to control others through persuasive strategies designed to effect change.” This is a direct response to the rhetorical theorizing embedded in the definition of rhetoric as persuasion, where rhetorical scholars “have taken as given that it is a proper and even necessary human function to attempt to change others” (Gearhart, 1979, p. 195).

However, informing efforts to change others is the desire to control and dominate, since “the act of changing another establishes the power of the change agent over that other” (Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 144). Foss and Griffin argue, “a strikingly large part of many individuals' lives is spent in efforts to change others, even when the desired changes have absolutely no impact on the lives of the change agents” (*ibid.*). In traditional rhetoric, one of the gains of successful efforts to make others change is a “rush of power” (Gearhart, 1979, p. 201), that feeling of self-worth that comes from controlling people and situations. For rhetors, the value “in the rhetorical system, comes from the rhetor’s ability to demonstrate superior knowledge, skills, and qualifications”. This boils down to the authority of the rhetor to dominate the perspectives and knowledge of those in their audiences (Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 144). In the process, the rhetor actually devalues the lives and perspectives of those others belief systems such that they are considered by rhetors to be inadequate or inappropriate and thus in need of change (p. 144).

The speaker’s role very often “may be best described as paternalistic” (Scott, 1991, p. 205), in that the rhetor adopts a “let me help you, let me enlighten you, let me show you the way approach” (Gearhart, 1979, p. 195). Audience are assumed naive and less expert than the rhetor if their views differ from the rhetor’s own. Though rhetorical scholars eschew use of physical force and coercion to influence others and produce change, the strategies they recommend “still infringe on others’ rights to believe as they choose and to act in ways they believe are best for them” (Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 144). They conclude that traditional rhetoric “is a rhetoric of patriarchy, reflecting its values of change, competition, and domination” but “these are not the only values on which a rhetorical system can be constructed” (*Ibid.*).

Foss and Griffin (2007) propose a feminist rhetoric as one alternative to “rhetoric of patriarchy”, based on the three principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination. These “principles explicitly challenge the positive value the patriarchy accords to changing thus dominating others.” The primary principle of the new feminist rhetoric is a commitment to the establishments of relationships of equality and to the elimination of the dominance and elitism that characterize most human relationships. The essence of the second principle, the immanent value of all living beings, “is that every being is a unique and necessary part of the pattern of the universe thus has value. Immanent value derives from the simple principle that “your life is worth something ... you need only be what you are” (Starhawk, 1987, pp. 115-116, cited in Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 145). The third principle, self-determination, is grounded in respect for others and “allows individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives.” This means, “Efforts by a rhetor to change those decisions are seen as a violation of their life worlds and the expertise they have developed” (Foss and Griffin, 2007, p. 145).

Foss and Griffin (2007) argue that although persuasion is often necessary, “an alternative exists that may be used in instances when changing and controlling others is not the rhetor’s goal; we call this rhetoric “*invitational rhetoric*”(p. 145). According to them:

“Invitational rhetoric is an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination. It constitutes an invitation to the audience to enter the rhetor’s world and see it as the rhetor does. In presenting a particular perspective, the invitational rhetor does not judge or denigrate others’ perspectives but is open to and tries to appreciate and validate those perspectives, even if they differ from the rhetor’s” (p. 146).

Invitational rhetors do not believe they have the right to claim that their experiences or perspectives are superior to those of their audience and therefore refuse to impose their perspectives on them. The choices selected by audience are considered as right for them at that particular time, based on their own abilities to make those decisions. There are no efforts to dominate another because the goal is the understanding and appreciation of another’s perspective rather than the denigration of it simply because it is different from the rhetor’s own. The result of the invitational rhetor’s stance toward the audience “is a relationship of equality, respect, and appreciation” (Foss & Griffin, 200, p. 146). Invitational rhetoric is characterized by the openness with which rhetors are able to approach their audiences. Though change may be the result of invitational rhetoric, it is not its purpose. In the traditional model, change is defined as a shift in the audience and the direction requested by the rhetor, who then gains some measure of power and control over the audience. In invitational rhetoric, change occurs in the audience or rhetor or both because of new understanding and insights gained in the exchange of ideas (*Ibid.*).

Foss and Griffin (2007) explain that invitational rhetoric proceeds by the process of *offering perspectives*. Rhetors articulate their individual perspectives “as carefully, completely, and passionately as possible to give them full expression and invite their careful consideration by the participants in the interaction”. They do this through *offering*, which is the giving of expression to a perspective without advocating its support or seeking acceptance. Offering is a process “of wrapping around the give, of being available to her/him without insisting; our giving is a *presence*, an *offering*, an *opening*” (Gearhart, 1982, p. 198, cited in Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 147). Invitational rhetoric must create three external conditions in the interaction between rhetors and audience members – safety, value, and freedom. Foss & Griffin explain that *safety* involves the creation of a feeling of security and freedom from danger, when it “conveys to audience members that the ideas and feelings they share with the rhetor will be received with respect and care”. Thus “the rhetor makes no attempt to hurt, degrade, or belittle audience beliefs, and audience do not fear rebuttal or retribution for their most fundamental beliefs” (p. 150).

The condition of *value* is the acknowledgment that audience members have intrinsic or immanent worth. Benhabib (1992) calls it “the principle of universal moral respect” – “the right of all beings capable of speech and action to be participants” in the conversation (p. 29). Barrett (1991) describes this condition as “respectfully, affirming others” while at the same time “one affirms oneself” (p. 148, cited in Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 151). Value is created when rhetors approach audience members as “unrepeatable individuals” and avoid “distancing, depersonalizing, or paternalistic attitudes” (Walker, 1989, p. 22 cited in Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 151). As a result, audiences feel their identities are not forced upon them by rhetors. Participants can bring any matters to the interaction for consideration; that no subject matter is off limits; and, all presuppositions can be challenged, as a condition of *freedom* in invitational rhetoric. All the participants in the interaction are able to “speak up, to speak out” (p. 148, cited in Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 151). Benhabib (1992) calls this “*the principle of egalitarian reciprocity*”, where “each has the same symmetrical rights to various speech acts, to initiate new topics, to ask for reflection about the presuppositions of the conversation” (p. 29, cited in Foss & Griffin, 2007, p. 152). Perspectives are articulated as a means to widen options - to generate more ideas - in contrast to traditional rhetoric, where rhetors seek to limit the options of audiences and encourage them to select the one they advocate (p. 152).

Aristotle’s response to Plato in defense of rhetoric is primarily concerned with the modes of persuasion, and shares a lot with dialectic. Aristotle empathizes that the ends of rhetoric should be ethical and evaluative. Conversely, Kenneth Burke introduced the concept of *identification*, by demonstrating that rhetoric is “important in understanding the increasing complexity of the process of social influence as nonlinear, sometimes unintentional, and potentially nonverbal”. Through the doctrine of *consubstantiality*, we appreciate how people have common experiences that are mutually persuasive. Burke argues that persuasiveness does not depend only on the rhetor’s rhetorical skills but also on technical means of communication. Foss and Griffin extended rhetoric into critical tradition of the patriarchal bias of traditional rhetoric, which is preoccupied with persuasion that leads to change, control and domination of others. They suggested alternative, *invitational rhetoric*, based on equality, immanent value, and self-determination. Invitational rhetoric proceeds by *offering*, which is the giving of expression to a perspective without advocating its support or seeking its acceptance. Here, the most important factor is mutual understanding of perspectives in a context of *safety*; *value*; and *freedom* that no subject matter is of limits, all presuppositions are challenged and participants are able and allowed to speak their minds and develop their perspectives.

III. THE CRITICAL TRADITION

Critical traditions originated from the Socratic dialectic as a method for attaining the truth in the give and take of the disputative interaction by asking questions that provoke critical reflection upon the contradictions that become known in the process. The tradition emphasizes that in every act of communication geared towards mutual understanding, which are certain instability that inheres (Habermas, 1984). It posits that, in order for social order to be based on genuine mutual understanding, it is necessary for communication to articulate, question, and openly discuss their differing assumptions about the objective world, moral norms and inner experience (Habermas, 1984, pp.75-101). Effective communication occurs only in the process of discursive reflection that moves towards a transcendence that can never fully achieved, instead the reflectively process is progressively emancipatory (Craig, 1999). Critical tradition studies society in a dialectical way by analyzing political economy, domination, exploitation, and ideologies (Fuschs, 2015). A normative approach is based on the judgment that domination is a problem, that a domination-free society is needed. This tradition runs through Marx through to Frankfurt school of Habermas, to post-Marxism to current theories of political economy critical cultural studies, feminist theory and related schools of theory associated with the new social movements such as post-colonial and queer theory (Huspek, 1997).

According to Craig (1999), the basic ‘problem of communication’ is society arises from material and ideological forces that prelude discursive reflection (p.146). As such, communication explains the social

injustices being perpetuated by ideological distortions, and how social justice can potentially be restored through communicative practices that enables critical reflections. The tradition typically questions, and reviews the power structure. It questions the idealist philosophy like morality, religion and metaphysics, consciousness, the ideals of ruling class, the ruling material force of the society (Marx & Engels, 2007); the problem of inauthentic culture and the acceptance of deception (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2007); systematically distorted communication by power and ideology (Habermas, 2007); the problem of discursive closure, strategic manipulation of communication, control oriented and self-referential systems of life (Deetz, 2007). As such, critical tradition “appeals to the common place values of freedom, equality, and reason, yet it challenges many of our commonplace assumptions about what is reasonable” (Craig, 1999, p.147). It challenges the naturalness of the social order and questions the rational validity of all authority, tradition, and conventional beliefs objectivity and moral-political neutrality. Marx points out that critical tradition has changed the world through praxis or theoretically reflective social action (Craig, 1999, p.148).

In political communication, the question of what it means to be critical is of high importance. Critical theorists insist that local practices and empirical outcomes of communication must be judged in light of a reflective analysis of the distorting effects of power and ideology in society, and not at face value (Craig, 1999). Therefore, reflective discourse and communication theory have important roles to play in everyday understanding and practice of communication. For instance, Karl Marx and the Marx questioned power, domination, exploitation, the political demand and struggle for a just society through categorical imperative. The theorists explain that, men must understand that they are oppressed by different factors like “having no history, no development but developing material production and their material intercourse, alter along with this real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking” (Marx & Engels, 2007, p. 433). Marx and Engels argue that the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, such the class which is the ruling material force of the society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force (*Ibid*). Critical tradition also attempts to explain the unexamined habits, ideological beliefs and relations of power (Craig, 1999), such that the hidden social mechanisms that distort communication and supports political efforts to resist the power of those mechanisms are exposed. Critical tradition interprets the acts and the symbols of society in order to understand the ways in which various social groups are oppressed.

Critical tradition teaches that knowledge is power, because knowing and having right knowledge about the issues can help to act against oppressive power and the situation. Habermas (2007) provides “a critical standard for communication that would not be systematically distorted and argues that the hopeful anticipation of undistorted communication is built into the very structure of human interaction” (p. 427). Habermas’s standards provide scrutiny to discover hidden structures, and bring change to the society. The information and knowledge acquired creates understanding, which enables one to act to change oppressive forces. Therefore, “cognitive elements such as interpretations, assertions, explanations, and justification are normal components of everyday lived practice” (Habermas, 2007, p. 450).

3. 1 The Problem of Ideology -Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels (1968)

This paper explores four major variations among different theorists in the critical tradition namely; Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels (1968), Jurgen Habermas (2001), Stanley A. Deetz (1992) and Feminists theorists. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels introduced the Marxist-based social theory. The two scholars introduced a movement that was made up of a number of loosely related theories, which oppose the dominant order of society such as economic, political, ideological, and theoretical. Marx and Engels (1968) explored the problem of ideology, which postulates that, in order to understand the problem of ideology we need to go back to question of *one and many* by the pre-Socratic philosophers. Pre-Socratic philosophy believed that after, one and many there emerged the philosophy of ideas, such that the reality, which we see, is only a shadow. According to Plato (student of Socratics), the reality remains in the world of ideas. The One and many ideologies had an impact in philosophy. Plato used the philosophy to show how dialectical communication can overcome the distortion of truth by rhetoric (Craig, 1999). Plato’s philosophy insists that such discourse only maintains the veil that blinds us to a higher reality.

The problem of ideology is drawn from questioning the dialectic idealist philosophy of Hegel, which is also influenced by Feuerbach’s materialistic critiques of religion. Ideologist (the priests) separated life from material process of production. Marx and Engels declared that ideas have reality of their own rather produced by humans for the benefit of mass production (ruling class), therefore morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence (Marx & Engels, 2007). They are against the philosophy of *ideology* that exists away from humans, to them:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of metal production so that there

by, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it” (Marx & Engels, 2007, p. 435).

The Classical Theory/Marxism, which is critique of the political economy, maintains that the means of production determines the very nature of society, as a linear idea of the base-superstructure relationship (Marx, 1888). The economy is the base of all social structure, including institutions and ideas. However, in capitalistic systems, profit drives production and thus dominates labor. The working-class are oppressed by the dominate group (in power) who benefit from profits made Marx and Engels say, “Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, real, active men as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms” (Marx & Engels, 2007, p. 433). Unless the working class rises against the dominant groups can the liberation of the workers be achieved (Littlejohn, 1992). The second ideology by Marx, was on the politics of textuality, which has to do with the ways the media produce encoded messages, the ways audiences decode those messages, and the power domination apparent in these processes (Littlejohn, 1992). Politics of textuality reviews the media content, audience interpretation of the message, and the effect of the content on dominant economic institutions, such as government. The third ideology is on the problematic of cultural studies that examines the relation between media, other institutions, and the ideology of culture (Seiler, 1999). In this ideology, theorists are interested in how the dominant ideology of a culture subverts other ideologies via social institutions, such as schools, churches, and the media.

3.2 Theorizing the problem of communicative hope -Jurgen Habermas

Habermas (2007) provides a critical standard for communication that would not be systematically distorted. He argues that hopeful anticipation of undistorted communication is built into the very structure of human interaction (Craig, 1999). Henceforth, we can hope for a possibility of a society with genuine and unconstrained discursive reflection, which will be someday possible. Habermas discusses his consensus theory of truth, validity claims that are implicit in the communicative use of language and the ideal speech situation.

According to Habermas, “any honest attempt to achieve mutual understanding with others, is acting as if that hope could be realized” (Craig, 1999). Therefore, the society must be understood in three distinctive ways: work, interaction, and power. The society must have the means to create necessary material resources, due to its highly instrumental nature of achieving tangible tasks and accomplishing concrete objectives. Building on his theory of universal pragmatics, Habermas argues that the rational validity of any act of communication is based on four implicit claims that can potentially be challenged. The act has an intelligible meaning, that it is true, and that the communicator has a moral right to perform it (normative rightness) and that the communicator is truthful or sincere on performing it (Habermas, 2007). Completely undistorted communication can only occur in an ideal speech situation in which validity claims can be freely questioned and discussed by all participants on an equal basis. Habermas’ work exemplifies a common practice in the critical tradition, which is the building of a comprehensive framework through integrating the work of many other thinkers in various traditions.

3.4 The problem of discursive closure - Stanley A. Deetz (1992)

The problem of discursive closure is built on the ideas of Habermas (systematically distorted communication). Deetz (1992) incorporates ideas from critical theory and several other traditions including phenomenological, cybernetic, and sociocultural theories (Craig, 1999). In the problem of discursive closure, Deetz (1992) explains that all communications are distorted to some degree. Every communication eventually “becomes problematic when the distortion is systematically and meaning is strategically and latently reproducing rather than being produced through free and open participation in an ideal speech situation” (Craig, 1999, p. 429).

According to Deetz (1992), discursive closure exists whenever potential conflict is suppressed. This might drive from several processes. Deetz discusses a number of them such as disqualification, naturalization, Neutralization, topical avoidance, subjectification of experience, meaning denial and plausible deniability, legitimation and pacification. There are many ways how the communication is systematically distorted. This paper will review the four major ways, including naturalization, neutralization, disqualification and subjectification.

Naturalization is the exiting social order is very natural, about which you can do nothing. This is another way of systematic distortion of the communication. In a naturalization discourse, the social historical processes are removed from view. Not only is this as occurrence in everyday life of communities but it is fostered by the operating philosophy of social sciences (Deetz, 2007). Further, Deetz argues that naturalism always plays in the privileging and marginalizing of discourse. It can systematically distort the communication by naturalization. *Neutralization* is the process; by which value positions become hidden and value-laden activities are treated as if they were value free” (Deetz, 2007, p. 466). In neutralization process, no human efforts are made; instead people act on facts, numbers or statistics. However, there are those who make use of numbers by manipulating the facts, figures and statistics. *Disqualification* is an assumption of equal opportunity

to select and employ different speeches acts for the representations of one's interests (Deetz, 2007, p. 465). In disqualification, people see how systematically one can be put of discussion or conversation. It can be based on gender, race, tribe, political affiliation or age or place of living. **Subjectification** is how people treat their opinion as truth and while treating others as an opinion. Others opinions are taken just as it is others' point of view but the truth is this (my opinion). In subjectification people try to downgrade and disagree with others opinion, yet opinion is subjective to the person (Deetz, 2007).

Marx and Engels tried to explain the society in terms ideology, while Habermas explains the problem of communicative hope and finally Deetz, systematically distorted communication and discursive closure. However, the critical tradition conceptualizes communication as discursive reflection, questioning unexamined habits of the society, ideological beliefs, and relations of power. Critical theorist mentioned here want to unmask distortion, make the lop-sidedness of society's communication, more visible to liberate participants to speak in their own interest. Their approaches desire equality, voice, participation for all people in the society.

3.4 Feminist Variation

Feminist critique examine the ways the male language bias affects the relations between the sexes, how male domination has constrained communication for female, how women have accommodated and resisted male patterns of speech (Craig & Muller, 2007). Feminism is a belief in social, political and economic equality of the sexes; a movement organized around the conviction that biological sex should not be the pre-determinant factor shaping a person's social identity, political or economic rights (Lennon, 2013). Feminists maintain that the domination of male values in the newsroom can only be addressed by responding to the 'symbolic annihilation' of women (Everbach, 2006). As much as Feminism theorists emphasized on their commitment to specific feminists' values and principles and against oppression, domination and hierarchy (Kramarae, Foss and Griffin, 1999); feminism theory of communication welcomes a plurality of perspective and focuses on the importance and usefulness of talk, connectedness and relationships (Kramarae, 1989). This part focuses on three perspectives feminist theory – the liberal feminist, the Marxist feminist and the radical feminist response.

Liberal Feminism is based on the idea that justice involves the assurance of equal rights for all individuals. It is more concerned with the public image and the women oppression such as women making less money and excluded from centers of power. According to the liberal feminist movement, opportunity for women is limited by social constructs and stereotypes. The liberal feminist views liberation for women as the freedom to determine their own social role and to compete with men on terms that are as equal as possible (Kensinger, 1997). Liberal feminists strive to gain equality for women by entering male-dominated professions and social fields, and obtaining the power roles traditionally held by men. Liberal feminism advocates that women and men are more alike and that women should take their place alongside men in society's institutions (Hardin and Shain, 2005). Liberal feminists assert that more women working in media would lead to better coverage of news stories that are of interest to a female audience, that is, stories addressing social problems, personalities and human interest (Hardin and Shain, 2005). Liberal feminists contend that employing more women in the newsroom will lead to greater coverage of stories of interest to women, and from a female perspective.

Marxist Feminism Theory is from the school of thought that suggests the primary source of female oppression as the capitalist economic system and the inferior position of women linked to the family structure within the system. While Marx did not specifically analyze women's oppression, his work is considered to provide powerful tools that offer ways to get to the structure underlying women's oppression (Laibman, 2005). Marxist feminists believe that women's subordination and oppression is caused by their economic dependence in the family and workforce. They suggest that women's subjugation as unpaid domestic laborers and reproducers of the labour force is necessary to maintain capitalist modes of production. According to Nataliza (1981), capitalism relies on the traditional structure of monogamy and the nuclear family to fulfil its economic potential. Marxist feminists argue that women must have equal participation in the economic production process and they should be paid for their domestic labour.

Radical Feminism Theorists believed that liberal democracy was limited, since the oppression of women runs deeper than public rights. Women oppression is not just about changing laws but adjusting the social structure, demand for basic redefinitions and restructuring of how society defines human experience (Loach (1987). Similarly, Morna and Ndlovu (2008) argue that an increase of women in the newsroom may not be enough to address issues of gender. Instead, the newsroom culture would have to change and so must the quality of training and sensitization of the gamut of people who work in the media generally. Radical feminists believe that patriarchy, the innate desire for men to dominate women, is responsible for the oppression of women. They argue that character differences arising from women's biology make women inherently different to men (Ashcraft, 2005). During the third wave of feminism in the 1990s, many women were questioning the liberal feminist premise that women could have successful careers and families as many men do (Everbach and Flournoy, 2007). Since, women have their own 'standpoint' in a patriarchal society that emphasizes male needs,

desires and accomplishments. Furthermore, radical feminists contend that in the male-dominated world of journalism, women's needs often conflict with the demands of the newsroom. Meaning, these theorists aim to create separate women's-only communities and social spaces to shelter and nurture women's feminine traits, and do not seek for equality. According to Hardin and Shain (2005), radical and cultural feminists' reason that a liberal feminist approach to addressing the domination of male values in media is destined for failure. Since, it does not address the dominance of male values, instead assumes that women should aspire to patriarchal values such as competition, aggression and individualism. The Marxist feminist theory is also considered inferior because the 'un-Marxist' practices of various states under Stalinist socialism have essentially failed to liberate women (Ferrier, 1991).

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that the rhetorical situation is not limited to public discourse involving speech; rather rhetoric extends to all situations involving human interaction. The audience in a rhetorical situation is now seen as actively involved in the situation thereby affecting the exigence. However, this ability is constrained by not only their rhetorical skills, but also by the technical means of communication. This means that both the rhetor and the audience need more than rhetorical skills to affect the rhetorical situation. Rhetoric is not always purposive or strategic; in some situations, it is beyond the consciousness of the human agent. One abiding concern in rhetoric is with the ethical values of truth, justice and equality. In addition, the critical tradition opposes the dominant order of society; it asks questions about the ways in which competing interests clash and the manner in which conflicts are resolved in favour of particular groups. On the other hand, critical tradition is economic and political in nature, even though major part of this tradition is in the field of communication. For instance, it looks at communication as a reflective challenge of unjust discourse; communication without critical reflection is inherently defective. It exposes hidden social mechanisms that distort communication and supports political efforts to resist power of those mechanisms. The study of communication has many variables associated with it. The variation in the two traditions -Rhetoric and Critical is an indication that even within each of the tradition, there are subgroups, all attempting to explain the complexities on how we interact, communicate, interpret and explore our reality. Communication is part of an intricate system of receiving and shipping ideas that govern, identify, and influence us as individuals, culture and society.

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