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E-mail: rhetorike@hotmail.com

Sharan L. Daniel:

Fred Newton Scott's Department of Rhetoric and Journalism

Lessons for the Internet Age

The unusual department chaired by Fred Newton Scott at the University of Michigan in the early 1900s offers insight into the compatibility of rhetoric and journalism as academic subjects. Though Scott's Platonic rhetoric ultimately did not prove a good fit for journalism, the limitations of his theory may suggest a corrective for potential future interdisciplinary collaborations, as journalists reinvent their profession amid new media and public forums. Aristotelian rhetoric could provide a better basis for preparing journalists and other citizens to invent and participate in new forums that question such longstanding journalistic boundaries as those between news and opinion or professional journalists and their audiences.

In the United States, the academic division of journalism and rhetoric occurred as writing programs divided into professional and general curricula in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[1] In recent decades, as classical rhetoric has enjoyed a revival in general curricula, it has not found a similar reception in journalism curricula. Why this academic division persists between rhetoric and journalism and whether it should continue are questions worth considering now, as the world of professional journalism, once dominated by the daily newspaper, re -

1 Katherine H. Adams, *A History of Professional Writing Instruction in American Colleges: Years of Acceptance, Growth, and Doubt*, Southern Methodist University Series in Composition and Rhetoric, ed. Gary Tate (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1993).

invents itself amid new media and public forums.

For historical insight into these issues, we can turn to the rhetoric and journalism department that Fred Newton Scott chaired at the University of Michigan in the early 1900s.[2] Scott made a valuable attempt to address a relationship he recognized between rhetoric and journalism as arts of public discourse that have powerful impacts on society and politics. Ultimately, his vision of rhetoric, inspired by Plato, did not prove a good fit for the mundane, typically ephemeral discourses of journalism. Nor did it advance the politics-changing potential of rhetoric or journalism to power democracy. Nevertheless, these limitations may suggest a corrective for potential future collaborations between the two disciplines: rhetorical theory informed by Aristotle, in what Janet M. Atwill describes as a *technê* tradition, could provide a better basis for preparing journalists and other citizens to participate in democracy.[3] Moreover, a *technê* tradition of rhetoric could better prepare rhetors to invent and participate in new forums that question such longstanding journalistic boundaries as those between news and opinion or professional journalists and their audiences.

Scott's Integration of Journalism and Rhetoric

In the first decades of the twentieth century, as journalism separated from or developed outside of composition-rhetoric programs at other universities, Fred Newton Scott included journalism among the rhetoric offerings at Michigan for the duration of the rhetoric department's existence. This arrangement reflected Scott's broad view of rhetoric, unusual in his time.[4] His national leadership illustrates his wide-

2 Parts of this article appear in Sharan L. Daniel, "The Uneasy Alliance of Rhetoric and Journalism and Rhetoric under Fred Newton Scott," ch. 2 in "Rhetoric and Journalism as Common Arts of Public Discourse: A Theoretical, Historical, and Critical Perspective" (PhD diss., University of Texas, Austin, 2002).

3 Janet M. Atwill, *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition,* Rhetoric and Society, ed. Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

4 Adams, *A History of Professional Writing Instruction*, 24; James A. Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985,* Studies in Writing and Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 35-36, 46-50; Robert J. Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*, Pittsburgh Series in Composition, Literacy, and Culture, eds. David Bartholomae and Jean Ferguson Carr (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 182–84; S. Michael Halloran, "From Rhetoric to Composition: The Teaching of Writing in America to 1900," in *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Twentieth-Century America*, ed. James J. Murphy (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1990), 175; Albert R. Kitzhaber, *Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1953), Southern Methodist University Studies in Composition and Rhetoric, ed. Gary Tate (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1990), 69-73, 93-94; Donald C. Stewart, "The Barnyard Goose, History, and Fred Newton Scott," *The English Journal* 67 (1978): 14–17, "Rediscovering Fred Newton Scott," College English 40 (1979): 539–47, "Two Model Teachers and the Harvardization of English Departments," in *The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing*, ed. James J. Murphy (New York: Modern Language Association, 1982), 118–29; Donald C. Stewart and Patricia L. Stewart, *The Life and Legacy of Fred Newton Scott*, Pittsburgh Series in Composition, Literacy, and Culture, eds. David Bartholomae and Jean Ferguson Carr (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

ranging interests and influence in rhetorical education: he served as a president of the Modern Language Association (1907–08), the National Council of Teachers of English (1911–12 and 1912–13), and the American Association of Teachers of Journalism (1917–19). The latter two organizations he helped found, in 1911 and 1912, respectively.[5] He also participated in the International English Council and the International Conference of Professors of English.

Within two years of his appointment on the English faculty at Michigan, Scott introduced what may have been the first college news-writing course in the United States,[6] which he taught for three years. Upon becoming chair of the newly established Department of Rhetoric in 1903, he resumed journalism instruction and began building a curriculum; during the rhetoric department's twenty-seven-year existence, journalism remained among its course offerings. From 1921–22 on, the Department of Rhetoric and Journalism was the unit's official name. In 1929–30, three years after Scott's retirement, journalism became a separate department, and the following fall, rhetoric merged with English as the Department of English Language and Literature.

Scott argued for journalism's place within the rhetorical tradition, along with literary criticism, fiction, and other oral and written genres. He also held that journalism, like other rhetorical arts, deserved advanced study. At the same time, he envisioned journalism as having a special relationship to classical rhetoric by virtue of its daily presence in the newspaper as a model and de facto teacher of rhetoric.

"Rhetoric Rediviva," delivered before the Modern Language Association in 1909, captures Scott's expansive view of rhetoric, as it presents a "plea for the revival of rhetoric as a science," specifically at the level of graduate study.[7] Scott defines science as entailing three criteria: a "distinct and unified subject-matter" worthy of sustained investigation, an empirical method of research, and an end of locating a "body of interlocking principles, laws and classifications."[8] He argues that rhetoric meets these criteria, if viewed from the perspective of Plato rather than Aristotle. Scott opines that the history of rhetoric, to the detriment of its development as a science, was overly influenced by the works of Korax and Aristotle,[9] which em-

5 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, "AEJMC: 75 Years in the Making", *Journalism Monographs* 104, ed. Joseph P. McKerns (Columbia, SC, 1987), 10, 13; Katherine H. Adams, *Progressive Politics and the Training of America's Persuaders* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999), 31; Stewart and Stewart, 165.

6 John L. Brumm, "The Department of Journalism," in *The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey*, ed. Wilfred B. Shaw, Vol. 2 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1951), 622, and Stewart and Stewart (3, 12, 16) claim that Scott's course, Rapid Writing, offered in spring of 1891, 1892, and 1893, was the first course of its kind in this country. Others experimented with journalism courses before Scott did, though apparently not with news-writing instruction.

7 Fred Newton Scott, "Rhetoric Rediviva," ed. Donald Stewart, *College Composition and Communication* 31.4 (1980): 413.

8 Scott, "Rhetoric Rediviva," 414.

9 Ancient rhetoricians including Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian credit Corax (as the name is more often spelled now in American texts) as the inventor of rhetoric, around 476 BCE. Corax's system of argument, used in land disputes in the new Athenian democracy, focused on probability, or persuading jurists on the likelihood of one claim as compared to

phasized success in persuasion, neglecting the search for truth. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* proved so influential, Scott claims,

> Not the invention of paper and printing, which shifted the center of gravity from spoken to written discourse, not the rise of fiction, the essay, and other forms of prose to an equality with the oration or the forensic plea, not even the organization of those great modes of intercommunication, the magazine and the newspaper, could avail to break its hold.[10]

This claim implies that the genres mentioned—fiction, the essay, and the discourses of journalism—rightly belong under the heading of rhetoric, but have been denied their place in rhetorical study because Aristotle did not consider them in his lectures. Supporting his claim that Plato retrieved rhetoric "from the narrow arts of persuasion" and conferred upon it the concerns of a science, Scott describes the wide realm of rhetoric he attributes to Plato:

> In his [Plato's] view, the proper subject-matter of the science [of rhetoric] is not a particular type or mode of speech, such as persuasion or oratory, but . . . speech-craft, the dynamics of speech wheresoever and howsoever employed. It includes every use of speech, whether spoken or written; not only speeches, but history, fiction, laws, and even conversation. The field is so wide as to embrace all modes of communication current in Plato's time, and to anticipate in a degree, those of later times.[11]

Certainly the anticipated "modes" of "later times" would include the journalistic writing Scott mentioned earlier.

In "Training for Journalism," again invoking Plato's writings on rhetoric, Scott argues for journalism's place within the academy as a liberal art and as a science worthy of graduate study, and he recommends a curriculum like the one he offered at Michigan.[12] Scott expresses a desire that journalists "be put in possession of the

others (Richard A. Katula and James J. Murphy, "The Sophists and Rhetorical Consciousness," in *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, eds. James J. Murphy and Richard A. Katula, 2nd ed., [Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1994], 19). Like Aristotle, Corax thus presents the use of rhetoric in the realm of contingent truths.

10 Scott, "Rhetoric Rediviva," 414.

11 Scott, "Rhetoric Rediviva," 415.

12 Fred Newton Scott, "Training for Journalism," n.d., *Fred Newton Scott Papers*, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 6. This paper was apparently intended for oral presentation, though it is unclear on what occasion(s) Scott may have delivered it. He probably first drafted it around 1912 and last revised it after 1925, as he makes use of catalog descriptions from that year. This paper may be the "journalist paper" Scott mentions working on in diary entries for June 20 and 21, 1912, and may have been intended for use at the founding meeting of American Conference of Teachers of Journalism (later American Association of Teachers of Journalism) on 30 November 1912. Patricia L. Stewart suggests that Scott may have prepared the paper for a meeting of the student journalism fraternity at the University of Michigan (letter to author). He attended many such events, including a Sigma Delta Chi banquet on 1 March 1913, mentioned in his diary. I suspect he last updated the paper in anticipation of the Press Congress of the World meeting in September 1926, though he did not attend due to illness, as Stewart and Stewart note (173).

basic standards by which true journalism can be distinguished from false," echoing the notion of true and false arts in Plato's *Phaedrus*, to which Scott alludes in other writings.[13] With the proper course of study, he maintains, a college-trained journalist should understand the "essential principles" of the newspaper and be able to "detect the vital means by which it affects the public mind and conscience for good or ill in the formation of public opinion." Scott comments that the kind of training he recommends should make it impossible for the journalist to think of the newspaper as "merely a device for making money," a tool to be corrupted for personal gain, or a venue for expressing political prejudice.[14] In effect, he advocates preparing the journalist to be a good rhetor in the Platonic tradition: one who would seek to improve citizens' very souls by leading them to the truth.

Scott presents his own curriculum as an example of how best to train such a journalist-rhetor. He first describes the program's three aims:

1. That every student who is looking forward to the profession of journalism, should acquire at least the rudiments of a liberal education.

2. That every such student should acquire a knowledge of the history or evolution of the newspaper and its underlying principles as a social institution of the highest importance.

3. That every such student should learn the essentials of newspaper technique and procedure, and secure, by long and hard practice in composition, as much readiness, ease, and correctness in writing the English language as may properly be expected—expected, that is, from persons who are compelled to put their ideas on paper with great rapidity and, in general, without an opportunity for revision.[15]

He contrasts this program with what he calls—"without prejudice," he notes—"the commercial college type" of training, for which his university has "neither time nor taste." Students come to the university for "what they cannot get elsewhere," Scott explains, not "merely" for the skills to make a living, although he quickly adds, with some wit, that he has no "objection" to earning a living. The aim of college journalism students, Scott says, is "to find entrance to one of the greatest of the learned professions, a profession which opens up for them the opportunity for a noble and distinguished career."[16] With this appeal to the significant role he sees for journalists as a civilizing influence on society, Scott lends support to a wider effort to professionalize journalism.

Scott argues for advanced study in journalism, remarking that "the body of knowledge about the newspaper that has up to the present time been scientifically

13 Scott, "Training for Journalism," 6; Scott, "Rhetoric Rediviva," and Scott, "Two Ideals of Composition Teaching," Address to Indiana Association of Teachers of English, 11 November 1911, Proceedings (1911), in "*The Standard of American Speech" and Other Papers*, 35–47.

14 Scott, "Training for Journalism," 6.

15 Scott, "Training for Journalism," 2.

16 Scott, "Training for Journalism," 3.

organized, is comparatively scant." Journalism cannot advance in academe, he suggests, until "hundreds of 'pale, preliminary scholars' have patiently investigated the phenomena and recorded their conclusions." To foster this gradual, methodical progress, Scott proposes a "graduate school in journalism, not to train reporters or editorial writers, but for purely scientific research in the theory and history of publication." He deems advanced study essential "if journalism is to attain and preserve a place among the learned professions."[17]

Scott mentions two books worthy of graduate study, exemplars of the research he envisions: Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, and Helen O. Mahin's *The Development and Significance of the Newspaper Headline*. Notably the latter is a PhD thesis written under Scott's direction and published in 1924. Despite Scott's argument for what would clearly be PhD-level study in journalism, there is no mention of doctoral work, even that of Mahin, in the history of the University of Michigan's journalism department written by Scott's colleague John L. Brumm. Neither does Michigan appear as a doctorate-granting institution in Albert Alton Sutton's 1940 study of U.S. journalism programs; only the University of Missouri is listed as offering a "doctor's degree in journalism."[18] As in rhetoric, in journalism Scott held a minority view among his contemporaries on the merits of doctoral training.

Scott's Curriculum: Signs of a Separation

Although Scott left no journalism syllabi or course notes, a good deal of information on his curriculum is available in university catalogs, viewed alongside Scott's correspondence and diaries. What emerges is an impression of a curriculum that resembled a rhetoric-centered *paideia* in the *technê* tradition more than it did Plato's philosophical pursuit of enduring truth: journalism courses provided the pinnacle of students' learning, and theory and practice were tightly interwoven, to provide both rhetorical skills and an understanding of the public contexts in which to apply them.[19] Ironically, the success of this endeavor brings into sharp relief the difference between journalism and rhetoric instruction under Scott's direction, the former oriented toward public practice, the latter toward scholastic study. Separate faculties and course sequences underscored this difference, creating a ready dividing line between the two subjects.

As an assistant professor, Scott introduced Rapid Writing, in the spring of 1891, and taught it for three years. In 1903–04, when the rhetoric department was established with Scott as chair, he began building a journalism curriculum with News -

17 Scott, "Training for Journalism," 7.

18 Albert Alton Sutton, *Education for Journalism in the United States from Its Beginning to 1940* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1945), 48.

19 See Atwill's distinction (4–69) of the *enkuklios paideia*, or common, general education, associated with *logôn technê* from the humanist tradition of education. The former, and represented in the works of Protagoras, Isocrates, and Aristotle, emphasized the transformative power of rhetoric, whereas the latter, derived from Plato and associated with the Roman rhetorician Quintilian, and to some extent, with Cicero, emphasized the preservation of cultural tradition.

paper Writing: Theory and Practice. This course was reserved, as Rapid Writing had been, for upper-division students who had already completed the core liberal arts requirements[20]—a trend that continued throughout Scott's tenure. In 1905–06, he added Reporting and Editorial Work, for editors and reporters of student publications. In 1911–12 a two-semester sequence, The Newspaper and Newspaper Writing, replaced the one-semester Newspaper Writing: Theory and Practice. This handful of offerings comprised the journalism program through 1915–16 and served thereafter as its foundation. In these first twelve years of the journalism curriculum, Scott taught most of the courses, with occasional help from other rhetoric faculty.

Beginning in 1916–17, several changes indicate that journalism was acquiring an identity distinct from rhetoric, though they shared a department. While something like a major had existed since 1909–10,[21] the program now assumed a higher profile, with a description of "Curricula in Journalism" appearing ahead of departmental listings, in the general section devoted to the Department (or College) of Literature, Science and the Arts.[22] In the rhetoric department's section, journalism courses appeared for the first time in their own sub-section[23]—a change that often preceded the formation of departments, as occurred in the formation of the rhetoric department from English and psychology from philosophy. Journalism offerings also doubled, from four to eight courses. New courses included Editorial Writing; Special Feature and Magazine Articles; and the two-semester Seminary in the Newspaper, its Nature, Function, and Development. All but one of the courses were taught by a junior faculty member whose primary mission was journalism teaching. In the next year, 1917–18, Scott left all of the journalism courses to another faculty member, while he taught rhetoric. This situation remained in effect through Scott's retirement in 1927. John L. Brumm, who had joined the department in 1905, did most of the teaching in journalism and none in rhetoric from 1918–19 on.

Two other significant changes occurred between 1921 and 1923, further demarcating journalism and rhetoric. In 1921–22 the Department of Rhetoric was renamed the Department of Rhetoric and Journalism, and Scott and Brumm both assumed the title of professor of rhetoric and journalism. The next year, the catalog announced a certificate in journalism for those who completed the curriculum with at least a B average.

For students who pursued this course of study, journalism instruction, like rhetoric in Isocrates' *paideia*, represented an educational capstone. As Scott outlined in "Training for Journalism," and as was the case in many of the leading programs, journalists at Michigan studied a liberal-arts curriculum before entering the major their junior year. At that point, they received courses in the theory and history of the press as well as practice in rhetorical skills—i.e., writing and editing in various journalistic genres. The core bachelor-of-arts courses comprised the foundation of Michigan's program, yet with an eye toward the journalist's application of this

20 University of Michigan Catalog 1903–04, 82.
21 UM Catalog 1909–10, 212.
22 UM Catalog 1909–10, 138–139.
23 UM Catalog 1909–10, 189.

knowledge in public life. Among the core subjects were mathematics, political science, economics, sociology, history, English literature, sciences, and foreign or ancient languages. Journalism students would vary the emphasis among these courses depending on whether they chose to follow the "general curriculum" in journalism or one of four "special curricula": history, government, and politics; economics and sociology; drama, art, and music; or "technical journalism."[24]

Two approaches are evident in the journalism courses, one oriented toward the social-political contexts of reporting and the other emphasizing professional skills seen as transferable across contexts. These approaches would later mark competing schools of thought in journalism study.[25] The Country Newspaper, offered in 1921–22, and The Community Newspaper, offered in 1925–26, exemplify the contextual focus associated with classical rhetoric, with the aim of preparing students to practice journalism within a context conceptualized as a social and political community. In courses such as Editorial Writing, Feature Writing, or Magazine Writing, far more prevalent in Scott's program from 1916–17 on, journalism is characterized more as a set of specialized skills, defined in terms of professional organizations (newspapers, magazines, advertising agencies) and professional genres (editorials, features, advertisement copy).

Whether approached from a public-context or professional-skills perspective, journalism was to the literary mindset what Scott called a vocational or commercial subject, as opposed to an imaginative or philosophical one,[26] despite Scott's arguments to the contrary. Scott's writings clearly indicate his wish to avoid too close an adherence to the skills-oriented view of journalism instruction. He sought to blend the vocational element inherent in journalism with philosophical insight, which for Scott was a distinguishing feature of college education. Most likely, Scott feared that journalism, if severed entirely from his Platonically inspired rhetoric program, would devolve into the skills training he associated with the "commercial college type" of instruction.

While Scott did not make this claim directly about his curriculum, a close departmental colleague of his did. In a letter of November 27, 1923, Thomas E. Rankin writes to Scott, who was on leave in Europe,

> I do not believe that I have any new or even modified opinions about changes in Journalism. I know, of course, that Mr. Brumm is very anxious to establish a School of Journalism apart from the Department of Rhetoric. … I am inclined to think that the Department of Rhetoric would be better off without the present association, but, on the other hand, more especially inclined to think that Journalism is better off tied up with the Department of Rhetoric than it would be floating loose.[27]

24 UM Catalog 1922–23, 159–60.

25 Adams, *Progressive Politics*, 70–94; Sutton, 14–16.

26 Fred Newton Scott, "Poetry in a Commercial Age," *English Journal* 10 (Dec. 1921), in "*The Standard of American Speech" and Other Papers*, 100–2; Scott, "Training for Journalism," 3.

27 Fred Newton Scott Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Stewart and Stewart also quote this letter (172–73).

Rankin's worry is not about journalism's viability as a department, he says, but about the direction it might take as a subject of study. "The problem is whether it might become, under the wing of the University, what is not quite in the University's field." Rankin's comment echoes Scott's distinction between commercial-college and university education in "Training for Journalism."

While Scott's journalism training, whether skills- or context-based, displayed an extra-academic orientation, the rhetoric courses, like those in literature, were oriented toward academic concerns. As with the journalism curriculum, the rudiments of Scott's rhetoric curriculum were in place at the department's formation in 1903. The headnote to the rhetoric offerings describes "three principal kinds" of courses: 1) those that provide "practice in the leading types of prose composition," 2) those that cover "fundamental principles of Rhetoric and Criticism," and 3) those that combine "advanced composition" with "rhetorical and critical theory."[28] In 1914–15 the second category disappears, and the first and third categories remain, with a new category added: courses for students "preparing for newspaper work."[29] Throughout Scott's time as chair, the department's introductory rhetoric sequence retained an academic-skills focus, with its "aim to promote clearness and correctness of expression through practice in the simpler kinds of composition."[30] The department offered two semesters of Advanced Composition and Rhetoric, for sophomores, which taught composition modes, covering description and narration in the fall and exposition in the spring. Upper-level rhetoric offerings also reflected an academic focus. Courses combining criticism and composition, which emphasized literary criticism, suggest an easy fit within the English department.

Criticism, in fact, was taught under the auspices of English, rhetoric, and journalism, and thus provides a point of comparison among disciplinary emphases. Before rhetoric separated from English, the English department offered Seminary in Rhetoric and the Principles of Literary Criticism, described as "[r]eading and discussion of the whole or of parts of some standard work or works in Rhetoric and Literary Criticism."[31] In 1890–91, Scott taught a nearly identical course—if not the same one renumbered and renamed—Problems in Higher Rhetoric and Literary Criticism.[32] While Scott was teaching Advanced Composition (in literary interpretation), Principles of Literary Criticism, later taught by Isaac Demmon in English, first appeared.[33] The descriptions of these upper-level courses suggest considerable overlap in the critical interests of English and rhetoric.

Similar criticism courses appear in the journalism curriculum, but with an emphasis on professional practice that is absent in the English and rhetoric course descriptions. In 1903–04 the rhetoric department lists Reviews, among courses to be taken in the third year.[34] Its purpose: "to furnish instruction, and give practice, in

28 UM Catalog 1903–04, 81.
29 UM Catalog 1914–15, 173.
30 UM Catalog 1903–04, 81; UM Catalog 1926–27, 407.
31 UM Catalog 1886–87, 48.
32 UM Catalog 1890–91, 53.
33 UM Catalog 1893–94, 66.
34 UM Catalog 1903–04, 81–82.

the writing of book-reviews. A few lectures on standards of criticism and methods of reviewing are given and specimen reviews are analyzed in detail."[35] Rhetoric and journalism courses were intermixed at this point, and Reviews may have done double duty as a course for students interested in either area of study. In 1916–17, Reviews appears under Journalism, with this vocationally oriented description: "A study of critical principles in their application to literature with emphasis upon the writing of reviews for periodicals and newspapers."[36] In 1920–21, Book Reviews is listed under Rhetoric, with no mention of models or preparing for professional practice; the description reads: "A study of critical principles, followed by discussions of selected works of contemporary literature."[37] The journalism courses approach criticism as a matter of practicing professional genres found outside academe, whereas the rhetoric courses, like their counterparts in English, emphasize critical principles and canonical texts of academic study.

The differences in course descriptions suggest a line of reasoning by which the journalism curriculum acquired an identity distinct from rhetoric in spite of Scott's apparent desire to keep the two subjects together: Journalism was viewed and taught as a public or professional art practiced outside the academy, rhetoric as an area of academic study. This idea is not new, but it was not a given for Scott, who wrote and spoke of journalism as one of many types of socially motivated rhetorical practice.

Overcoming Limitations of Scott's Rhetoric

Scott's writings expose some limitations of his rhetorical vision for accommodating journalism instruction. To use Janet M. Atwill's distinction, Scott professed a humanist tradition of rhetoric, one associated with Plato's ideas and valued for its culture-preserving function as a means of imparting truth understood to be universal, eternal, and foundational. In Atwill's analysis of humanism, knowledge is seen as existing apart from individual and social relations, either as the "actualization" of what is in the human mind to begin with or as the "description of an object or a practice".[38] These understandings of truth and knowledge are apparent in Scott's writings, especially in his arguments for rhetoric and journalism as subjects for advanced study, in "Rhetoric Rediviva" and "Training for Journalism."

As Atwill also notes, Plato describes the type of *paideia*, or general learning, later identified with the liberal arts, as an education that "befits a private gentleman," in contrast to a "technical" education undertaken by one seeking to be a "professional."[39] Scott's strenuous efforts to keep journalism from becoming too much like the commercial-college training recall this distinction. For Plato, attaining philosophical knowledge was the highest human virtue; one could also attain virtue in the political-social arena, but only to the extent that one's political knowledge was phi-

35 UM Catalog 1904–05, 86.
36 UM Catalog 1916–17, 191.
37 UM Catalog 1920–21, 350.
38 Atwill, 9.
39 Atwill, 29.

losophical. Citing *Phaedrus*, Atwill notes a "paradoxical relationship to the *polis*" implied for the philosopher-rhetor in this concept of knowledge and virtue: apprehending "true political *aretê* [virtue]" entails communication with the gods and a desire to please them, more than a concerted involvement in public life.[40] This paradox stymied Scott's attempt to reconcile journalism, a vocational and publicly oriented art, with the more cerebral and academic rhetoric he espoused in writings and in his rhetoric courses.

In contrast to the humanist tradition that Scott professed, the *technê* tradition of rhetoric, which Atwill locates in the works of Protagoras and Isocrates and finds extended by Aristotle, offers a more promising conceptual framework for accommodating journalism. Rather than a means of imparting pre-existing truth, rhetoric as *technê* is understood as an art used to negotiate meaning in a realm of human interaction, in which truth is recognized as contextually responsive and changeable. *Poiêsis*, the productive knowledge entailed in *technê*, is valued for its use, rather than as an end in itself. In Aristotle's scheme, *poiêsis* is the kind of knowledge one uses in *technê*, and the value of *technê* lies in the doing or making itself. The product of art is not its own end; the end of the thing made lies in the user. This idea is the basis for Aristotle's claim that the end of rhetoric is the audience's judgment (not the speech).[41]

The *technê* tradition of rhetoric is intimately concerned with the contingent knowledge of human affairs, and its characteristics are crucial to rhetoric's power in a democracy. Only as *technê*, not as a philosophical or scientific subject, can rhetoric be envisioned as empowering its users to intervene in public affairs and invent political and social realities. To align rhetoric with a body of knowledge, as Scott attempted in arguing for rhetoric as a science, is to limit its transferability across situations. Aristotle suggests as much when he summarizes his discussion of rhetoric's usefulness: "It is clear, then, that rhetoric is not bound up with a single definite class of subjects, but is as universal as dialectic; it is clear, also, that it is useful."[42] Rather than reinscribing existing social orders—including professional ones—as the content of education, rhetorical education in the *technê* tradition develops in students the wherewithal to transform the status quo.

What such an understanding of rhetoric might have yielded, had Scott adopted it, is of course difficult to guess. The logical result might have been rhetoric courses that resembled those in journalism, with an emphasis on public applications of the art. Yet, had Scott pursued a different rhetorical vision, his efforts might not have been any more successful against the tide of professionalism sweeping through journalism and rhetoric studies in the United States in his era. While students in the journalism courses ostensibly would be writing for the public in their careers, they needed first and foremost to learn to please their professional peers, who created and maintained the forums in which their work would appear. Rhetorical principles

40 Atwill, 27.

41 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, in *Rhetoric and Poetics*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts and Ingram Bywater, 1954, intro. Edward P. J. Corbett, 1st ed., Modern Library, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), I. 3, 1358a 35–1358b4.

42 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I.1, 1355b8.

from a classical tradition that centered on public reasoning would likely have had little relevance to journalists, who were focused on informing citizens, not engaging in debate with them.

What the *technê* tradition can do now, for those interested in transforming journalism and rhetoric curricula or creating new ones, is a different question, worth exploring by rhetoricians and journalists alike. Perhaps it could inspire efforts to reinvent the entrenched vestiges of professionalism that have separated journalists from other citizens and kept forums closed to public debate. Reinventing journalistic genres and forums within a *technê* tradition could offer a start.

Two basic journalistic genres, news and opinion, by-products of journalists' professional ideal of objectivity, reflect a humanist concept of truth as external to social interactions and non-negotiable. Truth, to journalists, is, or should be, reportable; unreportable truth does occur, in journalists' view, but for such reasons as the sources are not available or scientists have not yet made a discovery. What if instead of reporting or commenting on truth that is out there, existing somewhere to be found by the industrious or ingenious person, journalists considered themselves as participating in public debate about contingent, arguable truths? Rather than seeking "the" truth, they could envision themselves as seeking, as Aristotle taught, a judgment from their audience. In practice, journalists benefit from at least a partial understanding of contingent truths in the realm of human affairs; yesterday's news is not necessarily discredited by today's updates, but rather, it is understood to have been based on information available at the time (in Aristotelian terms, "the available means of persuasion"). The *technê* tradition of rhetoric offers a framework for acknowledging journalism's contextual responsiveness.

Instead of dividing their work into news and opinion, journalists might think in terms of the four stases the ancient Greek rhetorician Hermagoras used to characterize courtroom arguments: fact or conjecture (what happened?); definition (what do we call it?); quality or value (was it blameworthy?), and policy or procedure (what shall we do?). Shifting from genres of news and opinion, which assume that truth is the end (and that opinion is antithetical to truth, or at best, simply non-truth), to genres of argument that assume judgment as the end, journalists could place themselves in the middle of public debate rather than outside it. In journalists' truth-centered professional view of their work, opinion is often hardly distinguishable from partisanship; an opinion writer cannot quite be trusted to tell the truth, because he or she represents a camp or cause or position. In a judgment-centered rhetorical view of their work, journalists could be freed to make arguments (at any stasis) as participants, or informed citizens interested in obtaining a wise judgment, not partisans committed to obtaining a particular decision. Even if journalists maintained some news and opinion distinctions in their work, they could do so with the understanding that these genres coincide with stases in a public decision-making process in which they are participating.[43]

43 For further consideration of journalism as rhetorical techn , see Sharan L. Daniel, "Integrating Rhetoric and Journalism to Realize Publics," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5.3 [2002]: 514–517.

If journalists were imagined no longer as reporters of "the" truth or arbiters of opinion but participants in public debate, then it would make sense for them to share forums with non-journalists. In fact, they are doing so already, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not, as various types of news-gathering and forms of debate surface, mostly online; many of these new forums fall into a category scholars and journalists are calling citizen journalism. In some cases, journalists are soliciting reports from amateurs, to make up for the loss of newsroom staff or simply to expand their reach to sources and information.[44]

Political blogs are an example of debate forums that hold some promise for increasing democratic participation. Bloggers post arguments, often excerpting other sources (such as journalists' texts) to generate topoi; on many sites, countless readers offer further comments. As a rhetorical forum, political blogs that invite comments are an upside-down version of the newspaper, offering a few front pages of edited content and countless pages of readers' comments, largely unedited except to enforce ground rules governing the discussion. While newspapers lose readers, blogs are gathering something more: not just readers but participants.

Journalists in the United States often point out that political blogs and other new forums cannot replace traditional journalism that has assumed the role of watchdog over abuses of power by government and big business. The loss of such a watchdog is indeed a frightening prospect for democratic government. But the variety of emerging forums is a positive sign. And arguably a greater threat to democracy than the disappearance of newspapers is a lack of widely available rhetorical education that would prepare people to avail themselves of these emerging forums.

As journalism transforms for an Internet age in which the metropolitan paper is no longer the profession's mainstay, efforts to foster democracy might include, if not begin with, rhetorical education in a *technê* tradition. Universities would do well to offer a common understanding of rhetoric as *technê* in journalism and other professional communication curricula as well as general curricula, to emphasize rhetoric as a citizens' art. Journalism faculty might collaborate with rhetoricians in refashioning journalism curricula to inform the new citizen-journalism type efforts. As to creating general curricula that foster democracy, one approach would be to make rhetoric instruction central to a common core first-year course (as is the case in many American universities) as well as a common capstone course in the final year of studies. The first-year core course could introduce students to thinking of and practicing rhetoric as a powerful art of invention and intervention. Returning to rhetoric in a capstone course could help instill the practice of rhetoric as not just an academic or professional art but an art for life and citizenship. To promote rhetoric's value as a democratic art, students should not be exempted from such common courses based on majors, skills tests, or other criteria; they should have the chance to learn and practice rhetoric across disciplinary or skill-level boundaries, and outside campus boundaries as well.

Teaching a publicly responsive and responsible journalism within a curricular

44 For an overview, see Steve Outing, "The Eleven Layers of Citizen Journalism," *Poynter Online*, June 15, 2005, http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=83126.

framework of classically inspired rhetoric need not be hindered now by the same limitations that marked Scott's efforts at the University of Michigan roughly a century ago. Changes in the news industry signal an opportunity to reinvent journalism practice and training within the *technê* tradition of rhetoric, to free journalists from old constraints and afford them new ways of intervening in public debate. Simultaneously offering all students practice in rhetoric as *technê* could help ensure new generations of citizens are ready to participate in these forums.

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