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It's hard to tell from all the work that students put into all the various pages of entire web site, but Writing on the Line actually began as a minor assignment in my ENG 710 Jr./Sr. Seminar in Rhetoric and Poetics. I asked students to visit a station on the Orange Line and then to use some of the theoretical and critical texts we'd been reading in our course to think about these monuments and the texts from the Boston Contemporary Writers Project. I only asked students to write 500 words -- a bit of occasional writing -- but some students chose to write longer papers in the end. Below are some full papers, while others are short excerpts. I hope they will provide a way for readers to begin to think about the monuments both as rhetoric and literature. All sources can be found on our Bibliography page.

Eric Weber

Pragmatic Functions of Public Art and the Boston Contemporary Writers Project

Tzvetan Todorov, in the chapter "The Splendor and Misery of Rhetoric" from his book *Theories of the Symbol* puts forth the claim that literature is an essentially useless form (Todorov 68). According to Todorov the only rhetorical form that has any pragmatic value is effective speech that makes it possible to act on others (61). Within this narrow viewpoint literature, poetry and other similar forms are degraded rhetorical forms which have lost their ability to achieve the true purpose of rhetoric: to persuade. Kenneth Burke, in his short essay "Literature as Equipment For Living" argues that contrary to the claims of Todorov and many others, literature has pragmatic value (Burke, 296). He argues that literature acts as a rhetorical toolbox for readers, providing them with strategies with which to deal with various situations they encounter throughout their lives. The various forms of literature correspond to various sociological needs that he lists: purification, vengeance, and exhortation etcetera. In this way Burke exposes the practical value of a supposedly "useless" rhetorical form.

Burke's argument for the sociological value of literature can be applied in a similar fashion to public art, another rhetorical form many might argue serves no pragmatic purpose. With this goal in mind, it is helpful to explore the ways in which public art can act as a rhetorical form to fulfill sociological needs in certain situations.

The creation process of public art is a major factor in its rhetorical value. While most art is private, both in creation and ownership, public art, although this is not always the case, provides the opportunity for communal creation; for the work of art to be born out of a public process instead of a private one. This works to create community bonds and encourages the formation of a sense of communal identity within the participating neighborhoods. This is certainly the case in the Boston Contemporary Writers monuments. The selection of the texts for the monuments involved community members in all facets of the process. Although the original plan for the monuments called for a professional arts panel to select and commission artists for the monuments, Urban Arts, the agency leading the Arts in Transit program, successfully lobbied for the inclusion of community members in the artwork selection process (Breitbart 82). Ten member site committees made up of community members were assigned to each station, giving the community direct input into the selection process. Urban Arts also invited artists and community groups to plan and implement ideas for off-site and temporary art projects as well.

As a rhetorical form, the creation of a community identity is one of public art's most pragmatic uses. Southwest Corridor community members themselves explicitly stated that they wanted the Boston Contemporary Writers monuments to create a sense of place within their neighborhoods, and through the selection and creation processes new and existing community bonds were revealed and reinforced.

This leads to a second major pragmatic function of public art as rhetoric: as a signifier of culture within the community. Notions of high and low art have been traditionally linked to cultural value judgments, with high art being synonymous with intellectual and sophisticated culture and low art reflecting the crass and banal. Public art functions as a physical signifier of cultural sophistication and taste within a community. Walter Benjamin, in his seminal work "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" notes that traditionally the value of art has been derived from its roots in religious and cult rituals (Benjamin, 2). The authenticity and authority of the cult/art object stems from its sense of originality and exclusivity. Applying this analysis to the Boston Contemporary Writers project is revealing. The project selected texts and excerpts from texts, that is to say, easily reproducible works of art of which the question of an original is irrelevant, and engraved them into granite and marble monuments which retain the traditional aura of authenticity and authority. This worked to place the public art along the orange line and the communities it was meant to represent as founded within the traditional conception of art and culture.

For the residents of the Southwest Corridor neighborhoods, which had been systematically marginalized and alienated from the more affluent Boston neighborhoods, the Arts In Transit program was an opportunity to show the rest of the city their cultural value and importance. The residents' expressed desire for the monuments to create a "sense of place within each neighborhood" is a desire to express the cultural value and significance of their neighborhoods, both to those within the communities and without. The physicality of the monuments, combined with the distinctly "high-brow" literature engraved on their surfaces, represented the communities desire to exist within the patriarchal hierarchy of culture and taste.

Lauren Chrystal

When we first began studying the monuments erected along the Orange Line that have become so near and dear to my heart, I was not sure how I felt about them. Honestly, I initially thought they were somewhat of a pain in the neck – I had to go somewhere and do something for class. When I first arrived at Jackson Square station, in the rain, and headed out to the stone pillar that I came in search of I could not help but wonder why I was there. Why, in a course on rhetoric and poetics (aside from the obvious that I was going to read a poem) was I studying public literature that has been mostly forgotten in the twenty years since it was made into a monument? Were these monuments even still pieces of rhetoric, if they ever were?

Needless to say, in the past month or so, I have had a lot of time to think about this issue and process these questions. According to Aristotle, rhetoric is "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle 24). If Aristotle were still around today and saw the monuments he would probably scoff at them and the idea that they could possibly be rhetoric. However, in the past two thousand years "the available means of persuasion" have greatly changed from those that were available in Aristotle's time. Rhetoric by itself is no longer

considered an art, instead rhetoric affects nearly every aspect of our society, with “the available means of persuasion” having become nearly anything the public consumes in some manner or other. Instead of trying to justify something as rhetoric, it has become easy to find rhetoric in nearly everything.

In thinking of these monuments in the terms of Aristotelian rhetoric, it was Aristotle's remark on the duty of rhetoric that perhaps most stayed with me: “the duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning”. At first this duty seems to contrast with the monuments, after all, they are works of art if nothing else. But once I remembered that Aristotle's “art” means nearly the exact opposite of what modern use of the term means, the monuments seemed to carry through the duty of rhetoric quite well. There is no real “system” of dealing with the turmoil and triumph caused by protests of the I-95 expansion that the monuments were erected to commemorate (well, sort of). Conveying the feeling of community to the residents who use the Orange Line on a daily basis would not be effective if one used a complicated argument or a long chain of reasoning. However, stories and poems for passersby to read seem to be an excellent way to evoke feelings of community and convey a message to the masses.

So, according to Aristotle, it seems as though the monuments could very well be rhetoric. The next dilemma I faced as I tried to work out whether these stone pillars (or whatever shape they took) with writing on them were truly works of rhetoric was figuring out what their purpose was. As we began discussing the monuments as a class and moved forward with our idea for the website one question that we kept coming back to was “why literature?”. Even beyond that, we could not help but wonder why the particular pieces were chosen. These questions were put on our list of things to investigate, but unfortunately got left behind as we moved onto the actual creation of the website. Therefore, it was left to me to decide for myself what I thought what the purpose of the literature chosen to be put in stone was intended to be. Ultimately, I believe that the pieces were chosen to invoke images of community as well as to get the residents of the communities to look around and think about their environment. The works of prose and poetry do not necessarily give the reader a definitive answer as to how he or she is supposed to feel about the neighborhood in which the monument stands. Instead, the works are meant to inspire the reader to come to their own conclusion as to how they feel about their community, as long as they come to some conclusion.

In thinking of the two types of rhetoric – epideictic and pragmatic, the monuments fall mainly under the first category. Epideictic rhetoric commemorates someone or something, it is rhetoric that does not directly call someone to action. Pragmatic rhetoric is used as a call to action; there is a precise action that the speaker or writer wants to inspire in the reader or writer. The pieces of literature etched in stone do not directly call the reader to action, as there often is not a direct call to action in works of literature. However, I have come to the conclusion that this does not lessen the rhetorical impact of the monuments.

In his book, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, Jeffrey Walker discusses the importance of epideictic rhetoric. He goes so far as to turn the conventional theory that epideictic rhetoric followed didactic rhetoric in the creation of rhetoric and is therefore a lesser form of rhetoric, both in usage and value. Instead, he proposes that epideictic rhetoric was the first form of rhetoric and remains the most prevalent. Interestingly, he says that epideictic rhetoric “shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves and ... it shapes the fundamental grounds... that will underlie and ultimately

determine decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums” (Walker 9). He also goes on to say “epideictic can also work to challenge or transform conventional beliefs” (Walker 9).

I believe that Walker's beliefs about the epideictic have a great deal to say about the monuments that are spread along the Orange Line and about their rhetorical purpose. As I stated earlier when working out the purpose of the literature and the monuments that contain the works, I believe that the purpose is partially to commemorate the I-95 protests, but mostly to build community and force residents to think about what the literature has to say about their community. These purposes fit neatly in with Walker's definitions of the epideictic. The literature offers ways to “shape the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, members of a community identify themselves”, in Walker's terms. It is also a springboard from which community members can “challenge or transform traditional beliefs”. The literature inspires people to think about their community and from there, possibly act to change that community.

In chapter two, “The Splendor and Misery of Rhetoric,” of his *Theories of the Symbol*, Tzvetan Todorov addresses what he views as the crisis and downfall of rhetoric. He sees the downfall mainly as brought on by the fact that “the new [rhetoric] in no way differs from literature [and therefore] it is useless speech, speech without purpose” (Todorov 67). According to Todorov, rhetoric has been on a decline since the downfall of democracy in ancient Rome. As a student of rhetoric, this assertion does not entirely sit well with me as I can see rhetoric alive and well around me and believe that even speech that resembles (or perhaps even is) literature is quite powerful. One such example rhetoric alive and well around me are the monuments that I've been thinking about.

Taken individually, out of context of their stone tablets and public locations, the pieces of literature chosen to be placed along the Orange Line are simply pieces of literature, some perhaps containing an inspirational message, but for the most part they can be categorized as “useless speech” (at least among categories of rhetoric, I am sure the authors would not view their work as useless”). However, once these works were selected and memorialized in stone for the public to view as they go about their commutes they became pieces of rhetoric. Standing tall (well, mostly) for the diverse passengers of Boston's public transit to read gave them a power they had not had before.

By simply being chosen for this project and then placed in their location, the works gained power regardless of the actual words that make them up. The section of the Orange Line containing these pieces of literature covers a relatively small portion of the city – only about half of the stations along for separate train lines. Yet, the area covered by stations (or should I say, the area covering these stations) contains four very different and distinct neighborhoods, necessitating that there be some relation between the poetry and prose works and the station in which they reside, in order that they make sense to the reader that makes that neighborhood their home. Being publicized and memorialized in a specific location, the work forces the reader to question the work and perhaps even the area surrounding the work.

Instead of merely reading a work of literature, a work that could be viewed as “speech without purpose”, and simply enjoyment from the act, the pieces along the Orange Line force the reader to pay greater attention to them. Residents are used to monuments, as Boston is a city filled with them. Although they could perhaps be numb to them, readers still understand that a monument is meant to mean something specific, that it is placed in its exact location for a precise reason. This fact elevated the literature beyond merely pleasurable and forces the reader to think further about what they have just read. They question the work and its implications: Why is there? Is it directed towards them, as a resident of the neighborhood into which the monument

was placed? Are they being instructed to act based upon the words they have just read? They will perhaps continue asking questions with a greater reach, questions that impact the roles they play in their neighborhood and perhaps even the neighborhoods themselves. A piece of rhetoric, even in the guise of literature, that inspires such thought can hardly be seen as “without purpose”.

I've established that the monuments are pieces of rhetoric, but there was another part of my initial question. I still need to work out whether the monuments are still valid as rhetoric today, twenty years after their erection. As I think about this issue, I cannot help but come back to the interview that Max conducted with Chuck Turner. At the end of the interview, Turner says that “the monuments may even be more important today than when they were originally placed” (Olivier), as they are all that is left to tell of the political events that led to their creation. After thinking about it, I have to agree with this statement. While the meaning in the monuments may seem less relevant than they did twenty years ago, or at least less discernible to the casual passerby, I believe that the monuments still hold rhetorical power. They still hold the power to make people ask themselves questions. This power is perhaps even greater now that the protests that spurned the monuments' creation have been mostly forgotten. Maybe it will be through these monuments that people will remember the power that they once held as a community. Maybe the monuments will even inspire people to once again bond as a community and work together for positive change.

Jocelyn Vara

Throughout the semester, we have read various opinions on what enables a person to be a rhetorician. As Jeffrey Walker traces the origins of rhetoric in chapters one and two of his book *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, at one point, he claims that “in principle, as it appears, any citizen could assume the function of rhetoric...in practice, however, only a few could read and write well enough” (31). What exactly does he mean by “as it appears”? Along those same lines, in Plato's *Gorgias*, based on arguments made by Gorgias, Socrates determines that “the orator need have no knowledge of the truth about things; it is enough for him to have discovered a knack of persuading the ignorant that he seems to know more than the experts” (23). Plato's introduction of the idea of “knack” is later elaborated upon by Socrates within his dialogue with Polus. He describes it as being “gained by experience” (29). So, by combining Walker's and Plato's ideas, we could have a “rhetorician” that is just a regular citizen, probably with the ability to read and write decently, that through experience, has picked up the skill of convincing others on a subject about which he really knows nothing. How is an audience supposed to have faith in the authority of this person? Within *The Rhetoric and the Poetics*, Aristotle provides a more concrete way of holding an orator accountable for his reliability by explaining that “persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible” (25). Aristotle has established that, in addition to the ideas conveyed by Walker and Plato, a rhetorician's ethos is an important component of his capacity to persuade and consider himself an effective orator.

In considering the monuments along the orange line as pieces of rhetoric, I had to wonder how these ideas presented by Walker, Plato, and Aristotle are applicable. What gives the authors of this literature credibility in the public sphere? Are they even utilizing the rhetorical tool of establishing their ethos? We approach the monuments, having no knowledge about the authors

or the definite reasoning behind the location of that particular piece of literature. All of that information has to be sought out. Perhaps that is one drawback to having literature as rhetoric, especially in the form of a monument where once it is engraved in the stone, it cannot easily be altered for the purpose of persuasion. What you see is all you get and unless you are extremely engaged at that second, what would make you want to investigate it further?

This is directly relevant to Will Holton's "Four Letters Home." Reading letters by four separate inhabitants of the Roxbury community that are all from different time periods seems appealing. However, it is obvious that Holton did not experience what is described within the letters, so how can we trust his secondary account of everything mentioned? He portrays various roads and towns developing during each time period around Boston, but how do we identify the accuracy of these statements? By discovering that Will Holton has a sincere interest in Boston and has even written books about it, we can expect that his depiction of it would be precise. However, within the public sphere, this information is not available to the audience. Is it enough that an audience presumes that these writings must be significant in some way in order to be featured on a slab of stone in the community?

Jess McCann

Jeffrey Walker's "Before the Beginnings: Hesiod on Eloquence"

Historians who study rhetoric have long debated over its origins: where, when and why it developed. Many experts maintain that rhetoric first developed as an "art" in the marketplaces of ancient Athens, when philosophers and politicians practiced persuading the masses (pragmatic discourse) in an effort to influence their thoughts and actions. From there, they argue, it declined: it became "literaturized" or "poeticized" (epideictic discourse) until the speech became just a contest over who could use the most flowery language while saying the least.

However, Jeffrey Walker has a different theory about the slow, painful death of rhetoric: it never happened. He writes: "...a process of 'literaturization' is what actually causes or produces the concept...of something called *techne rhetorike* in the first place." (18) In other words, instead of gradually digressing into poetry, its lesser form, the reverse happened: rhetoric had its origins in poetry, the larger art form. Although he calls it "conspicuous" and "distinctive" (19) he stresses that it is just a different (albeit maybe simpler) form of poetry.

This theory is interesting because it directly contradicts the others. It raises important questions for the reader: how do we understand history and the origins of rhetoric? Who decided that it was the purest (and best) form of dialectic? And most important of all, what is the highest form of art?

Obviously, the capability to use poetic language has a direct impact on one's persuasive powers. We see it in presidential speeches and scholarly papers; we hear it every day on the streets. Humans have an innate need for self-expression which, it seems to me, would not come after clear, rational speaking on language's evolutionary timeline. Rather, it seems that the best rhetoricians should use whatever means necessary to best persuade their audience: this is how we measure their rhetorical skills, after all. In my mind, rhetoric skill is defined as the ability to use one's persuasive powers to persuade, no matter how (scholars may disagree). I think that this should also be taken to mean that the use of poetry is not a "digression" into a lesser form of speaking. Of course, every person does not have good intentions, and language can often be used

to mask the real message. Often in politics, flowery language is used to manipulate people's opinions and even, some argue, lull the masses into complacency. This is why many rhetoricians have argued that only the use of pure "un-metaphored" language should be considered an art.

Walker's analysis brings up this question: did rhetoric really just decay into literature, as many people believe? In other texts, we have read that the desire to persuade others is as old as language, and it seems that Walker understands this: the human tendency to create art and poetry came before the purification of language into a purely pragmatic form. His reverse timeline of the poetry vs. rhetoric (epideictic vs. pragmatic discourse) provides an interesting alternative to what many people consider the true history of language. It also gives poetic language a lot more credit. When looking at the MBTA exhibit, we might think: what does this literature represent? What is its purpose? It tells a story about a community. In this "timeline", the viewer considers the poetry first: he ponders the beauty of the language as a way to discern the message. This seems to be evidence of the pure power of literature, and a testament to Walker's theory that rhetoric, and the art of persuasion, actually developed out of poetry and the use of metaphor and imagery to make a point.

Jacey Fortin

In Tzvetan Todorov's "The Splendor and Misery of Rhetoric," he discusses the Romantic period as a time when the art of rhetoric began to revive itself after centuries of stagnancy and uneasiness. This is in fact an era in which everyone claims to have the same rights as everyone else, and to possess in him or herself the standard for measuring beauty and value.... The useful need no longer be admired, for there is no longer a common goal to serve, and each separate goal seeks priority. (79-80) In later lines, Todorov wonders whether these romantic ideals still apply in today's world of mass communication. I would argue that they do; that now more than ever, we valorize equal rights and recognize the existence of individual goals. Rhetoric today faces interesting challenges, because it often seeks to motivate group action in the face of rampant individualism.

The Boston Contemporary Writers' Project makes an excellent case study. The eighteen monuments responded to a community's demand for rights, and their completion marked the fulfillment of several differing goals: those of the city, those of the protestors, and even those of the authors who submitted work for the project. These aims were accomplished, but are the monuments still effective as rhetoric?

Todorov noted that in this new era, "there is no longer a common goal to serve, and each separate goal seeks priority." This helps rhetoric to flourish, he argues, because people are free to make independent choices. But I think that just as this social condition helps rhetoric up by the hand, it trips it up at the feet. If every individual is free to choose his course of action, all people eventually must pursue such a diverse set of goals that it becomes impossible to unite them. Todorov noted one advantage of mass communication: it allows for a much wider audience. He did not, however, seem to anticipate that the media technology of the digital age not only creates larger audiences, but also creates more speakers by allowing individuals to control media. Through vehicles such as YouTube and the blogosphere, the selection of speakers—creators of differing truths—is ever-widening. People are increasingly able to pursue highly individualistic

goals, and to choose which truths to follow; they may even become the speakers/creators themselves.

Perhaps this is why the granite slabs in the Southwest Corridor fail to capture the attention of passerby; the texts cannot compete in today's growing market of orators. At the time of their inception, the granite slabs along the Orange Line were pertinent monuments. Now, they are tombstones. Some are crumbling, some are completely effaced by erosion, and the others are routinely overlooked. Immovable literature can no longer withstand the test of time. The public is now more attracted to changes and choices, diversity and flexibility. This is not altogether a bad thing; it only has the unfortunate side effect of reducing permanent works of art to mere relics of a time before truth became personalized.

Erika Keith

Rhetorical Analysis: Arts in Transit and Nietzsche

"You need some color, like red... or a nice blue or green," insists an elderly woman. After a brief interview, she slowly walks down the small pathway, past an outdoor classroom, and the three tall stone monuments standing to her left. These monuments feature a short story called "My Robe Gonna Fit Me Well," a title that a blurry-eyed man can barely make out, the letters blending in with the stone.

Erected in the aftermath of a failed highway plan, the MBTA joined together with UrbanArts to create stone monuments that each featured a short piece by a local writer. Two monuments would be placed along nine of the stops on the newly finished orange line in neighborhoods like Roxbury, the South End, Jamaica Plain, and Chinatown. In response to these neighborhoods' protests over the highway, the MBTA felt a pressing need to offer a plan of action that involved the community's input, as Breitbart and Worden explain, "If there were to be art, its role would be to enhance the beauty of its stations, reduce vandalism and help erase memories of the past mistakes of urban renewal" (82).

Within the MBTA's decision to place these monuments along the orange line lies a level of creation. As the program of selection took place, the MBTA involved members of the community, in an effort to present an image that valued community input. In this, there also lies a level of creation. The choice of using words from the communities is a powerful one, and the additional choice to set the words in stone creates a powerful image.

When Nietzsche asks, "What is truth?" he then answers, "[A] sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions [...]" (84). Looking at Nietzsche's ideas about truth, it is obvious that he views truth as a human construction, one that involves convincing rhetoric, or strong imagery, although, after awhile, the metaphors eventually fade. Truth then becomes truth because humans have forgotten the illusion that went along with it. In the same way, the MBTA was able to effectively use their partnership with UrbanArts as a way to construct a new truth for their image. Rather than being continuously portrayed as another force behind failed urban renewal plans, they instead use the imagery of the monuments to construct a new identity for themselves. This identity cares about the community, as well as its art. They are able to

effectively construct a new truth for themselves, because they use a time-honored metaphor when erecting the monuments.

The choice of stone monuments seems to be a crucial rhetorical choice. Despite the fact that passers-by today don't notice the monuments because of it, at the time, the concept of setting the community's words in stone enforced the MBTA's understanding of the communities' own feelings of permanence. While this metaphorical image seemed to resonate well within the communities, it is obvious that after many years these metaphors have also faded away, as younger generations move up, and older generations move out. Many seem unaware of the battles others fought in order for current residents to continue to walk by where the monuments now stand.

In the case of the monuments, the truth created by the MBTA, or the truth created by the communities seems to have disappeared, and perhaps it is the original rhetorical intent that is to blame. The choice of the monuments does not thrill most who walk by the monuments today, as most rarely notice them. One older woman suggested that whoever made them should have used some color, because as they are, they mostly just look like big bricks. It seems obvious that those who erected the monuments did not think about their use ten or fifteen years down the road. For those who know nothing about the history behind the monuments, the power of the engraved words is diminished, the "truth" the MBTA created is not lasting, and any rhetorical message is lost.

Maxim R. Olivier

In his essay entitled "Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," Nietzsche looks at how the meanings behind words are conceived through the stimulation produced by an interaction between a person and an object. The resulting metaphors are an attempt to explain these new experiences. Nietzsche takes this a step further by saying that the created metaphors do not automatically attain a "true" meaning; it is not until the metaphor reaches a stage of common knowledge/acceptance through repetition that it becomes a "true" meaning.

Towards the end of the first section, Nietzsche states that "...only by forgetting that he himself is an artistically creating subject, does man live with any repose, security, and consistency." In simpler terms this means that human beings need to forget that they have the ability to create. Without the ability to create we would not grow dissatisfied with the status quo and seek reform, we would not challenge established ideas that provide comfort, and we would not be so willing to seek change purely for the sake of change. I'm particularly interested in analyzing how consistency is affected by the creative essence of human kind and how this interaction between creativity and consistency may be used to explain how something so socially impacting like the Boston Contemporary Writers Project (BCWP) could be so easily forgotten. If my understanding of Nietzsche's essay is correct, the consistency that he speaks of refers to an unchanging set of social concepts and understandings. However, for the purposes of my essay I will assume that his concept of consistency may also refer to the aesthetic social make up, such as buildings and monuments.

Now that a connection between the philosophy of Nietzsche and the BCWP has been fabricated we can look at what that connection means. As a class, we have embarked upon a project with the purpose of giving a new voice to a seemingly forgotten message. While we have

looked at the relative range of success of that message and how time has affected that success, what has not been analyzed with very much detail are the reasons the message was forgotten at all. After reading "Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," I believe that I have come to a clearer understanding of this phenomenon. As an "artistically creating subject", human beings continuously create. It is as if people do not know how not to make something new, creativity is a human reflex. As we do what comes naturally and dream up new products, building improvements and so on, a sort of catalogue is produced with it. Each new idea being placed at the top of this catalogue, fresh in everyone's mind, gradually degrades with the addition of yet more and more great acts or discoveries until it is nothing more than a historical "road sign" that only some people take the time to acknowledge.

The creativity of man can be seen as his rhetorical power. Early on we discovered that rhetoric has several different purposes. One of these purposes is to question the status quo and foster the motivation for new ideas of common knowledge. This is very similar to Nietzsche's idea that creativity causes change, removes security and disallows consistency. An essay written about the monuments of the BCWP by Myrna Margulies Breitbart and Pamela Worden states that in the early stages of this project the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) decided that "if there were to be art, it would be to enhance the beauty of the stations, reduce vandalism, and help erase memories of the past mistakes of urban renewal", it would also serve as a way to "revive images of a more prosperous past and generally improve the MBTA's public image." By deciding that part of the purpose of any art to be displayed within the train stations would be to erase the painful memories of urban renewal, the MBTA had already realized its rhetorical potential. The feelings that were held by community members about these past mistakes and the MBTA represent the common knowledge that they sought to alter. If the texts on these monuments are any indication, the community saw the purpose of these monuments and public art in the stations as be mainly to revive the images of a more prosperous past, which is another one of the fundamental purposes of tools of rhetoric.

By calling on images of past happiness and success, rhetoric and these monuments in particular ease the troubled minds of people and remind them of what they are capable of. These past images become a source of hope for the future and may even motivate the receiver of the message to pragmatic action in order to make the success and happiness of the past real again. A great example of this is the monument that holds the piece of prose written by Luix Virgil Overbea. His piece entitled "Hometown" does the work of a guided tour through history in Boston. On this imaginary tour Overbea tells his readers about some of the greatest accomplishments of African Americans within the City of Boston. He ends his tour by reminding us that the success of these individuals was not easy, they had to overcome some hardship in order to make things work. He states "Boston is criticized for its attitude towards Blacks but somehow Blacks emerge in the forefront in every phase of the Hub's activities. By recognizing the difficulty of these individuals and presenting their success in the face of that difficulty Overbea is giving hope to his readers. His piece lets the people of the Roxbury Community know that things have never been very easy and probably never will, but that's no reason to give up on trying.

Returning to my original point of analysis discussing Nietzsche's concept of metaphor, Overbea's piece along with the rest of the monuments of the BCWP are in fact metaphors that have begun to not lose but rather change their original meaning. That meaning is being changed to reflect a new common knowledge. During my conversation with City Councillor Charles "Chuck" Turner, he stated that these monuments were even more important today then they were

when originally placed. In the absence of people who took part in the efforts to fight the building of the I95 extension these monuments become the lone survivors of a forgotten battle. To him the monuments have become a symbol of the power of community involvement in government and I believe that we have more or less come to a similar understanding of these monuments together as a class. By undertaking a project to create a website that gives a new voice to the monuments we have become a part of the process through acceptance and repetition of this metaphor.

Caleb Farrell

Jeffrey Walker – Off the reservation in Rhetoric City

In *The Beginnings of 'Poetry' and 'Rhetoric,'* Jeffrey Walker explains his agenda when he says, “the claim I will pursue, in essence, is that what comes to be called the art of rhetoric, *techne rhetorike*, in fact originates not from the pragmatic discourse...but from an expansion of the poetic/epideictic realm to include, first, various kinds of epideictic prose and, ultimately, epideictic imitations of pragmatic prose” (18). Therefore, language as art is as true and pure as the civic language of the pragmatic discourse. His theory is an inclusive one that attempts to show that rhetoric has evolved with human society to fit the needs or immediate circumstances of society.

The public art monuments that were placed at MBTA stations on the orange line are art forms with rhetorical functions. The poems and short stories are functioning as epideictic rhetoric. It is not very common that public art is placed in such a public arena. Most “art” is found in museums, libraries, galleries etc so that, while it is public, the art still has its own private place where people can come and to see and appreciate it. Placing the monuments in such an every day and extremely public place is an interesting idea because of the curious juxtaposition the monuments create and how they end up interacting with their plain and practical surroundings.

According to the theory put forth by Walker, the monuments are definitely functioning as epideictic rhetoric. The fact that it is poetry and “the suasive eloquence of “poetry” is at once a subset of the general art of “rhetoric’ and at the same time is its ancient ancestor” (41) So clearly it is rhetoric. The most interesting thoughts come when considering how it does actually function as rhetoric. What is it doing? How does it speak to its audience and create thoughtful moments for them?

To answer these questions, it is best to look at one of the monuments specifically. The poem monument at the entrance to the New England Medical Center station T stop is called “Mr. Yee is in the Garden” and is written by Marea Gordett. The poem is about a Chinese immigrant working in his garden. The second stanza reads, “He weeds and laughs. The thin notes / of a song glide across the soil, dark / as the Chinese fishing village / he hasn’t seen in thirty years.” This stanza captures the nostalgia and sadness that the immigrant man feels for his homeland. The monument is standing at a T stop located in an area of Boston where there is a large Asian population. So the poem is serving as a symbol of the things the community has left behind but also what they have come to know. Mr. Yee’s character is happy in the new world, tending his flowers. The audience can read that and reflect upon their own experience or their ancestor’s experience in leaving their homeland and coming to a new place.

William Benjamin

An Ideological Criticism: Walker's Epideictic Discourse and how it Functions in Monuments from the Boston Contemporary Writers Project

Monuments are found all over world in various forms, shapes, and sizes. What is common amongst monuments is that many were originally created and designed for a particular purpose. The reasons for creating a monument may have many different possibilities, and sometimes the reason is obvious, yet in some cases the reason seems vague and ambiguous. Monuments often raise rhetorical questions concerning the reasons for the construction of a monument and what it suggests about the beliefs and values behind the meaning of the monument, its community, and the ideologies of the culture surrounding the monument. Similarly, in Jeffery Walker's discussion of epideictic discourse, in *The Beginnings of "Poetry" and "Rhetoric"*, he claims that, "the "epideictic" appears as that which shapes and cultivates the basic codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives"(Walker 9)...

He begins first by speculating about how each of the forms of rhetoric was considered during the time when Hesoid's *Theogony* was written. He defines the epideictic as, "discourse delivered outside judicial and legislative forums, such as speeches performed at festivals and ceremonial or symposiastic occasions, and it was typically conceived as the discourse of praise and blame" and the pragmatic which has two main categories of civic discourse, "speeches of accusation and defense in courts of law; and speeches proposing, supporting, or opposing laws or resolutions in political assemblies (or speeches of advice presented in council or to a magistrate or ruler)." (7) He later adds to his definition of epideictic rhetoric to "include everything that modernity has tended to describe as "literature"" (7). The two forms of rhetoric can then be distinguished from one another by examining the nature of the audience and the purpose of the rhetoric for the intended audience. For example, the nature of the pragmatic audience in a court of law would be a judge or jury, and the purpose of the rhetoric for the audience would be for them to come to a decision that warrants an action such as criminal punishment. On the contrary, the nature of epideictic audience is not to result in a decision or action, but is instead there to make observations and form opinions about what is praiseworthy, preferable, desirable or worthy of belief (9). Furthermore, epideictic discourse can sometimes also result in an audience revising and changing their formed opinions. In his own words Walker concludes, "the epideiktikon [epideictic] is the rhetoric of belief and desire; the pragmatikon [pragmatic] the rhetoric of practical civil business, a rhetoric that necessarily depends on and appeals to the beliefs/desires that epideictic cultivates." (10)

Three monuments from the BCWP, Gish Jen's "The Great World, Transformed," "Mr. Yee is In the Garden" by Marea Gordett, and "The Drum" by Sharon Cox will be used in the following rhetorical analysis to examine if it is possible to view them as epideictic functions of discourse and in what ways they shape the ideologies of the culture of their intended audiences. Gish Jen's "The Great World, Transformed" is an example of functioning epideictic discourse because of a number of different reasons. The story is about a young girl who struggles to fit into the realm of what is considered, or believed to be, the stereotypical and attractive Chinese woman. She reveals her struggle with her appearance on several occasions making remarks

about herself being “homely”, having “mannish hands”, and her “jiggling” gait to name a few. The reason she feels so bad about her appearance is largely in part due to how her parents treat her. They try to correct her odd gait by making her wear a stick contraption. Her mother looked at her feet in horror, and she continually compares herself to her sister who seems to have everything going for her just because she is going to get married. Being the oldest of the sisters, the main character ideally supposed to be the first get married, “I tried to hint: I wouldn’t mind if she married first” (Jen).

What seems to be the reason for all of the hints towards Chinese customs, ideologies, and beliefs regarding Jen’s main character? A plausible answer is that the location of the T station has a lot to do with why it can be considered a function of epideictic discourse; it is located at the New England Medical Center. Jen’s granite story boards the southern edge of Boston’s Chinatown. A person of Chinese descent, or someone familiar with Chinese customs, would likely feel a connection to Jen’s story because it speaks to some of their preexisting beliefs that maybe they, or one of their family members held. But what about to the person that is unfamiliar with Chinese customs and ideologies? Does “The Great World, Transformed” still function as epideictic discourse to them? The answer is simple: yes, of course it does because while they may not be able to make a cultural connection with the story, their opinions and observations are the sole functions of epideictic discourse. If their opinions were changed after reading the story, then they learned new insight pertaining to Chinese culture. Furthermore, this also points to another function of epideictic discourse because it does not always have to concern itself with reestablishing the same ideologies. Walker supports this claim by stating, “Epideictic can also work to challenge or transform conventional beliefs” (Walker 9).

In Marea Gordett’s poem, “Mr. Yee Is In The Garden,” similar functions of epideictic discourse can be found. In “Mr. Yee Is In The Garden” functions of the epideictic set forth in such a way that it creates a sense of nostalgia in the reader. The poem is about a Chinese man who is weeding and laughing while he is on his rooftop garden. In the second stanza of the poem he recounts a “Chinese Fishing Village” that he has not seen in “Thirty Years.” In comparison to Jen’s *The Great World Transformed*, this poem is nostalgic about being away from China, whereas Jen’s short story is almost a satire, or complaint about the silly things that are customs in China. This poem remembers that Chinese immigrants are very happy to be a part of America, and the man that is laughing in his rooftop garden suggests this possibility. Both of the aforementioned monuments also raise ideas about what cultures believe and their desire to connect with their communities. The fact that both of these monuments are at the same New England Medical Center stop, with its close proximity to Chinatown, shows how they also serve as epideictic functions in the discourse of a culture seeking identification and the sense of belonging to a community...

Something else to consider when analyzing the aforementioned monuments is Walker’s idea of the “permanence” of epideictic discourse in relation to pragmatic forms of discourse. While he relates this to ancient oral societies because everything that was epideictic had to be memorized in order for them to recreate experiences. In contrast, everything pragmatic or “ephemeral”, pertaining to business talk, is often forgotten once its function has been preformed. A possible way to view this in a contemporary sense, in relation to the BCWP and its monuments, is because they serve the epideictic functions of discourse to shape the way people feel without utterance or spoken words. When words are carved into granite tablets like the ones along the Orange Line their “permanence” is feasible as long as the words are legible because once they fade, their message is lost.

The rhetorical analysis of the monuments from the Boston Contemporary Writers Project made it possible to see how each of the monuments easily succeeded in using the epideictic functions of discourse to affect the beliefs and ideologies of an individual, community, and culture. The effort of Urban Arts and the MBTA to commission public art along the Orange Line served as a way to implement epideictic rhetoric on physical granite slabs that influences the observations and opinions of its onlookers and provides insight into the neighborhoods of the Southwest Corridor. For every passerby that recognizes the granite slabs and subjects themselves to their literature and content, whether knowingly or unknowingly, is indulging in the persuasive power of epideictic rhetoric thus relenting to the manipulation of their ideologies.

Brooke Hil

Nietzsche's Thoughts on Rhetoric in Relation to Public Art Along the Orange Line

Nietzsche's thoughts on rhetoric suggest that no real truth exists in words. Instead, he believes that language is merely a compilation of metaphors, which serve to pinpoint truths to objects but never really accomplish that task due to the fact that the words we have designated to the things around us reflect no real bearing on the crux of what they actually are. For instance, we refer to a table as a table not because this term accurately and entirely encompasses what a table truly is, but because it is a metaphorical representation of a man-made label that allows us to communicate with one another, essentially based on an ongoing slew of feathery and meaningless metaphors. In a nutshell, Nietzsche suggests that rhetoric, and language, in general, is contingent upon people lying with the masses in an attempt to communicate.

While this line of thought might initially appear daunting and pessimistic, I think it emphasizes the fact that human beings strive for truth in our existences above almost all else. If this truth can only be realized through the capacity of employing metaphors, then in my mind, that's a testament to just how much we desire communication, reliability and a common ground with one another through language. Nietzsche might very well be correct in stating that the words which comprise how we perceive the world and connect to one another are meaningless. However, it is precisely the fact that we continue to use these meaningless metaphors in our day-to-day lives that demonstrates the strength of our desire to understand and communicate with one another through language. This bolsters the importance of rhetoric to us as a people. We could become mute, or theorize repeatedly on the truth of an object, after reading, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," as the essay places this idea about what language is and isn't at the forefront of our minds and removes it from our subconscious. The fact that we do have this undeniable yearning for truth, and the way in which we use and manipulate language regardless, I believe, emphasizes how important the human inclination towards rhetoric is.

Therefore, it makes sense to me that rhetoric would be employed in an effort to ease the tension in a wounded community twenty years ago. Society has a natural inclination towards rhetoric, a natural drive for truth. I am not refuting that the words themselves etched on these monuments along the Orange Line literally mean nothing, as I agree with Nietzsche in so far as they are merely metaphors. I think our tendency towards communication and the importance of the perception of the world around us, though, leads us to connect to one another through this rhetoric, and it is in this way that I feel rhetoric does adopt a substantial meaning. While it is

true that the general public doesn't seem to be particularly interested in art on monuments, I have found that those who do take the time to read the poetry and prose, walk away with additional knowledge and insight into the world and human nature. Rhetoric is, therefore, substantial and meaningful in what it does for people and in the concepts, notions and beliefs that a series of, yes, perhaps meaningless metaphors, can still instill and teach people.

Elise DeVoe

Writing on the Line: A Guide to Persuasion

In "Traditional Principles of Rhetoric," Kenneth Burke argues that the simplest way to persuade an audience is through identification. He writes, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your way with his" (p. 55). Centuries earlier, Aristotle had argued the importance of a rhetorician's character (ethos) as an effective means of persuasion:

It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion. (Aristotle p. 25)

From an academic standpoint, one cannot help but deduce that Burke and Aristotle had been talking about the same intangible characteristic of a successful rhetorician. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any give case the available means of persuasion" (p. 24) Burke refined his definition of rhetoric by identifying what exactly Aristotle meant by "available means of persuasion:" common cultural opinions, attitudes and values (p. 56). Both Aristotle and Burke believed that a rhetorician's ability to relate to his audience was vital element in successful rhetoric.

But Burke and Aristotle wrote about identification and ethos in a simpler time: a time before Internet, before blogs and personal websites. Now, in the 21st century, the "available means of persuasion" have had to evolve. How does a faceless author of website text create an ethos? How are they able to form a connection with their intended audience through solely the written word via computer screen?

For the purpose of this paper, I will look the "About Us" section of Writing on the Line, ENG U710's website devoted to the Boston Contemporary Writers' Project. I will discuss Jacey Fortin's "About Us" and Lindsey Mawhiney's "About Us." Finally, I will compare both first drafts to the end result – the text that is currently published at

<http://nuweb.neu.edu/psullivan/about.html>. For the remainder of this paper, when I talk about an audience, I am referring to any web-surfer who happens to come across Writing on the Line. Fortin's "About Us" uses Aristotle's appeal to ethos in a very traditional way. Right off the bat she connected the website to Northeastern University which, probably instantaneously, made her credible in the audience's eyes. University and college websites are widely regarded as a credible source; even professors accept ".edu" websites as sources for academic papers. Fortin also cites Plato and Nietzsche, which helps to build her ethos.

In general, Fortin's "About Us" is traditional and minimalist. She keeps with the tone of the website by putting an academic twist on a personal section. Mawhiney's "About Us," on the other hand, deviates from the academic nature of the website.

Mawhiney's text created a very different type of ethos. Earlier in this paper, I discussed Aristotle's ethos and Burke's identification as variations of the same idea. Keeping that in mind, Fortin stayed very near Aristotle's definition of ethos (and how to build it), while Mawhiney strayed a little toward Burke's more modern identification.

Mawhiney started her "About Us" similar to Fortin's – by citing Northeastern University. Further down, she also cited Socrates, Aristotle, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Bush, Burke and Jeffrey Walker. But that is about where the similarities ended between Fortin and Mawhiney's text. Mawhiney's text was infused with heavy sarcasm. Whereas Fortin attempted to portray herself as an authority figure, or at least knowledgeable, Mawhiney seemed to desire friendship from the audience, rather than respect.

Burke mentions Cicero's three "offices" of the orator: (1) to teach, inform or instruct; (2) to please; (3) to move or "bend" (p. 73). In his argument, rhetoric had three functions. Fortin's "About Us" was clearly written to teach, inform or instruct. Her text acted as a support beam for the website as a whole. Mawhiney, alternatively, attempted to please her audience rather than solely educate. Perhaps, Mawhiney believed that the other sections of the website had fulfilled the educational responsibilities and her "About Us" section was meant to hook the audience on a more personal level.

The Final "About Us," published on the website, was a combination of both texts. The first three paragraphs were taken from Mawhiney's text and is written in her signature witty style. It gives a quick background of the class project while adding a little more personality to the website. She also poses questions that will, hopefully, engage the audience. The final paragraph was excerpted from Fortin's first draft. It still written in a more reserve style than Mawhiney's text, but when you compare her first draft with the final, it is easy to tell that she adjusted her writing to fit with the overall tone of the "About Us" section – there is more sarcasm while still attempting to create a strong ethos.

In terms of style, the "About Us" section is one of the website's most lyrical. Most of the other pages read like an academic paper, but in the "About Us" page, people were encouraged to show their personalities. Here, each student had 100 words or less to create their ethos through "mediated exhibitionism" (Miller, p. 5). Clay Calvert identifies four purposes of self-disclosure, which Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepard discuss in "Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog." They write: "Central to exhibitionism is the social psychology of self-disclosure, which serves four purposes, according to Calvert: self-clarification, social validation, relationship development, and social control ... The latter two function extrinsically, turning personal information into a commodity and manipulating the opinions of others through calculated revelations" (Miller p. 5)

On the "About Us" page, there are 17 biographies and the introduction by Fortin and Mawhiney; Eighteen opportunities for identification by the audience. Whether anyone identify with the website or not, the students of ENG U710 succeed in creating the kairos of Writing on the Line. Miller and Shepard write that the blog-as-genre is a contemporary contribution to the art of self (p. 13). Several years later, personal websites have become nothing less than Blogging 2.0.

In a time when public debate and many other forms of crucial communication are rarely face-to-face, how are blogs and personal website categorized and organized into public spheres? Are Jürgen Habermas' requirements of a public sphere completely unrealistic in modern times? Does Writing on the Line fit into Habermas' ideal in any way? Can a website be classified as a public sphere if there is no back-and-forth debate?

According to Habermas, a public sphere is an “organized discussion among private people that [tends] to be ongoing” (Habermas, p. 238). He identifies three key features of a public sphere: participation must be open to all; all participants must be created equal; and any issue can be raised for debate (Habermas, p. 238-239). Habermas’ ideal seems quite unrealistic if you break it down and think about it in the context of a traditional public sphere, like a political debate. For example, most (if not all) would agree that the realm of political debate is without a doubt a public sphere. But, are they open to all? No, there will always be some form of discrimination because to vote – that is to be politically active – you must be a citizen of the United States and you must be at least 18 years old. Are all participants at a political debate created equal? Well, that would depend on the audience. Most people who attend a political debate or watch it on television have clear preconceived views on all the participants and it is highly unlikely that the Democratic candidate, for example, would be equal to the Republican candidate in the eyes of a Republican audience members. At a political debate, a traditional public sphere, can any issue be raised? The event’s organizers and public relations specialists would tell you yes. However, just because an issue is “raised” does not mean that it will be addressed, and this is especially true of political debates.

Habermas’ public sphere needed to adapt to contemporary times. Public spheres, simply stated, are individuals engaged in active discourse within a specific community about a specific topic. They do not need to be all-inclusive, all participants do not need to be created equal and issues will inevitably be left out. All participants’ equality is left up to their own ability to develop an ethos.

Writing on the Line, like all websites, does not fit into Habermas’ ideal notion of a public sphere. But website are modern versions of public spheres for the current and future generations. The only significant issue, regarding ENG U710’s website and the idea of a public sphere, is that there is obviously no active discourse. There is no discussion board, no contact info, and no ability to post comments. Writing on the Line is one element of a larger public sphere and not a public sphere in and of itself. Residents of Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Back Bay and other affected neighborhoods no doubt engage in a public sphere at the very least annually with the Wake Up the Earth Festival. “The festival began as, and still is, a celebration of what can be accomplished when people of all traditions, cultures, ages, and beliefs come together” (<http://www.spontaneouscelebrations.org/earth.htm>).

While Writing on the Line was not exactly a call to action but it was a call to awareness. It was epideictic discourse intended for a fairly specific audience with the purpose to educate and enlighten. I think we created a strong ethos with additional appeals to the audience’s logos. Our ethos was created mostly from our affiliation to Northeastern University, a well-known and respected institution, and by supporting our argument with text from Aristotle, Socrates and the like. Aristotle clarifies logos: “...persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question” (p. 25). Through the use of ethos, arguably the most effective means of persuasion, and logos, the students of ENG U710 were able to create a successful example of ancient epideictic rhetoric in contemporary context.