MUST WE ALL BE "RHETORICAL CRITICS"?

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No reader of journal articles and miscellaneous publications in rhetoric and public address during the last two decades can have failed to note a mounting interest in something called "rhetorical criticism." All scholars in the field, it sometimes appears, aspire to the appellation of "critic." The publication of Edwin Black's Rhetorical Criticism in 1965 was especially influential in stimulating further attempts to develop and elucidate the subject; articles have appeared regularly suggesting new purposes and emphases and delineating new critical methods or approaches which are being applied to an ever widening variety of critical objects. All this is to the good, but concurrent with this glorification of the critic may be detected (or so it seems to some of us) a tacit denigration of those who are merely rhetorical "historians." Indeed, one may infer from some exceedingly censorious criticism of criticism (some of which I confess to have written myself) that when one can't quite make the grade as a critic, what he manages to come up with is "history."

One book on the criticism of public address published in 1966 notes sorrowfully that "most of the so-called criticism today really is historical scholarship." 1

A writer in one of our journals recently proposed a distinction between rhetorical history and rhetorical criticism, and went further to urge that studies of discourse should usually be "either exercises in rhetorical history-writing or critical ventures into interesting problematic, or insightful aspects of discourse." 2 Although I am not so sure that such a radical separation of these two kinds of study either can or should be accomplished, I do agree that there are valid distinctions to be made between a piece of writing which is essentially "historical" in intent and one which might properly be called an essay in "rhetorical criticism." I shall try to suggest such distinctions, but my primary interest in this article is in emphasizing that the work of the historian of public address and that of the rhetorical critic are complementary, that both are worthy scholarly enterprises, and that neither should be


2 Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Rhetorical History and Rhetorical Criticism: A Distinction," Speech Teacher, 24 (1975), 310.
elevated above the other in our academic scale of values.

The discussion of the relative merits of these two scholarly emphases has had a long and interesting history. Forty years ago Donald Bryant called attention to "some problems of scope and method in rhetorical scholarship," one of which was the question of whether rhetorical scholars should properly be engaging in criticism or in historical fact-finding and reconstruction of the past."³ Expressing the opinion that "rhetorical criticism must depend almost entirely upon historical knowledge for its effectiveness," Bryant concluded that "historical study must go on . . . rhetorical criticism will be sound only when it uses the results of historical study both in judging the past in terms of the past and in judging the past for the present."

A few years later, the first two volumes of the Brinicle studies appeared, significantly titled "A History and Criticism of American Public Address." In his preface, Professor Brinicle distinguished between "the critical studies" (essays on individual speakers) and the "historical studies" (those sketching the background of various periods: Colonial, Early National, etc.). One of the charges subsequently levelled against these volumes was that the "critical studies" were often more "historical" than "critical." In his review of the Brinicle volumes, Loren Reid stated that the contributors "write with a keen sense of their dual responsibility as historians and as critics of public address."⁴ But he was soon warning against "The Perils of Rhetorical Criticism," the greatest of which is that "the critic may produce something that is not criticism at all."⁵ This "something," we infer from the context, may be among other things "simply a narrative of the circumstances under which a speech is delivered," or "an excursion into other fields of learning."

As the study of public address continued, and as research manuals in speech began to make their appearance, the matter of history and criticism (or history versus criticism) surfaced again. Professor Auer in his Introduction to Research in Speech (1959) spoke of "the historical method, also referred to as the critical method," and later listed the critical study as a kind of historical study, one of several approaches to historical research. But Professor Bornmann, in his Theory and Research in the Communicative Arts (1965), distinguished sharply between the historical and critical methods and warned of the difficulties of combining the two. The historian, he explained, adopts an expository stance. He looks for meaningful structure in past events and constructs a narrative. The critic, on the other hand, is concerned with evaluating individual works. He applies artistic standards to works of art in order to appreciate their artistry. As if commenting on the unimportance of the distinction, Professor Everett Lee Hunt asks of a passage from the third volume of A History and Criticism of American Public Address, "Shall we call this verdict rhetorical criticism, or shall we call it an historical, ethical, or logical judgment? At any rate, it is such insight we seek. . . ."⁶

The fact that a distinction, or a failure to make a distinction, can sometimes be important is seen in the case of my friend and colleague Ernest J. Wrage. In 1947, Professor Wrage’s essay "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History" appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Speech.⁷ This essay advanced the thesis that "students of pub-

³ QJS, 25 (1937), 183-84.
⁴ QJS, 29 (1942), 366.
⁵ QJS, 30 (1944), 416-22.
⁶ "Thoughts on a History and Criticism of American Public Address," QJS, 42 (1956), 189.
⁷ QJS, 35 (1947), 451-57.
lic address may contribute in substantial ways to the history of ideas. They possess credentials worthy of acknowledgment and interest in a type of materials germane to the object.” Because public speeches are prepared with a listening audience in mind, Wrage reasoned, “because they are pitched to levels of information, to take account of prevalent beliefs, and to mirror tone and temper of audiences . . . they serve as useful indices to the popular mind.” He urged that students of public address concentrate upon the speaker’s ideas, that a speech be regarded as “a repository of themes and their elaborations from which we may gain insight into the life of an era as well as into the mind of man.” Wrage sought to challenge his fellow rhetoricians with the idea that the student of public address, like the student of music or literature or other forms of artistic expression, working in his small corner with materials that interest him most, can contribute to the writing of the more general “intellectual” history of the nation—a task in which all scholars are ultimately involved.

It is important, I think, that we remember the context of Wrage’s 1947 article. He was not writing a handbook for rhetorical critics nor presenting a new critical paradigm. He was offering a rationale for the kind of historically-oriented courses in American public address he was then pioneering at Northwestern University by contrasting them with the then-prevailing approach. That approach he characterized as a study of individual speakers—their personalities, platform virtuosity, and rhetorical techniques—to determine their influence on history. For this “speaker-centered” approach, with its emphasis upon personal persuasion, he proposed to substitute an “idea-centered” approach, a venture in intellectual history through public address, which he thought would yield “knowledge of more general interest in terms of man’s cultural strivings and heritage.”

I believe, therefore, that Professor Wrage would have been astonished to discover himself depicted in a recent textbook on Methods of Rhetorical Criticism as a founder of a method of criticism designated the “historical method.” This approach, we are told, “assumes a causal relation between events in history and public address. It views public address “as both formed by and formative of the events of history.” This “historical” approach, and another called “neo-Aristotelian,” are listed as subcategories of a general type called “traditional criticism,” the model for which was constructed in 1925 by Professor Herbert Wichelns. We are told that the salient characteristics of this so-called “traditional perspective” are that it is speaker-oriented, viewing the orator as “influencing the men of his own times by the power of his discourse;” that it is amoral, since it generously and unquestioningly grants the speaker his purpose, regardless of its ethical consequences; and that it is preoccupied with raising and answering technical questions. In view of Wrage’s repeated insistence that his is an idea-centered rather than a speaker-centered approach, his close examination of the possible consequences of a speaker’s purposes, and his relative lack of interest in details of technique, there would seem to be some question about this classification of him as a “traditional critic” of public address.

I have always regarded Ernest Wrage as essentially an historian of public address, and an uncommonly able one. I suppose it makes no great difference whether we label him historian or critic, but it does make a difference that he is set up as a leader of a school of criticism, and then condemned for being too much of an historian. This is what Scott and
Brock seem to me to be doing when they characterize Wrage as an historical critic, and then describe “historical criticism,” as being a distorted and incomplete version of “traditional criticism” because it concentrates unduly on “the historical elements.”

Thonsen, Baird, and Braden do much the same thing. They conclude an admirably lucid discussion of the “social and intellectual history approach” by accusing its practitioners of leaning more toward being historians than speech critics, of seeking goals different from those of critics who measure artistic excellence. “This approach,” they assert, “lacks sufficient dimension for adequate rhetorical criticism, for it does not judge the worth or quality of a speech or a speaker.”

Similarly, Edwin Black, in appraising three distinct approaches to the practice of criticism, has this to say about Leland Griffin’s “movement study”: “It is ... to the rhetorical historian that Griffin offers the greatest promise.”

Precisely. And we might say similarly of Wrage that “It is to the intellectual historian that he offers the greatest promise.” This, I am sure, would have pleased Wrage, since this is exactly the aim he affirmed. The point being made somewhat laboriously here is that it is unfair to condemn a writer for not doing well something he never set out to do, for not being what he never professed to be.

This attempt to draw a distinction between the rhetorical historian and the rhetorical critic may strike the reader as a singularly profitless endeavor. It goes without saying that the historian, like all other researchers, must be a critic in the sense that he must subject his data to critical examination. He must be able to dispel the myths which hang heavily over the “great orators.” He must be able to recognize excellence when he encounters it, and to explain why it be excellence. He must select and reject materials, allocate space, emphasize and subordinate, make judgments about the meaning and relevance of details—all on the basis of some system of values.

The historian who goes beyond the production of a mere chronicle must interpret, and this, surely, is a critical function. Still, to insist that an historian must be “critical” is not the same as asking that he become a critic. There is a difference between adopting a critical attitude or using critical methods in one’s scholarship, and evaluating individual works of art with an eye to intelligent appreciation, to discover how and why they “work,” or to develop normative or predictive generalizations applicable to similar works of art. In both cases judgment is involved, but the judgments are of a different kind and in a different context. To the literary historian a novel may be essentially a document, an artifact illustrating social or intellectual history; to the literary critic, the novel is a work of art, to be evaluated for its artistry. To the rhetorical historian a speech is more than a document, for it is something that happened, rather than something written down to be read, but it too is an artifact (albeit a dynamic one) illustrating social or intellectual or political history; to the rhetorical critic it is a work of practical art, to be judged by its own artistic standards.

The above attempt to draw an analogy from the field of literature may remind some of a debate among literary scholars several decades ago. In the early 1930’s, the champions of literary criticism and the champions of literary history engaged in a spirited controversy in published books, in the pages of the Eng-

lish Journal, and the meetings of the Modern Language Association. In the opinion of the critics, college departments of English were placing too much emphasis on literary history. Literary historians, it was charged, tend to look upon literature as the written record of the life of a people, "the crystallization of current political, religious, social, and economic ideals," and in so doing they ignore artistic merit and devote their attention to much writing that has no literary value. To the critics, the ultimate aim and the crowning accomplishment of literary scholarship was the appreciation and evaluation of the aesthetic qualities of the master works of literature. Not so, replied the proponents of literary history. "I do not think," wrote Howard Mumford Jones in the English Journal, "that it is the primary business of scholarship to produce literary criticism. We should be grateful when the scholar is also a critic, but we should not be surprised when he is not. . . . The true business of the literary scholar is, in my judgment, that he is the historian of literary culture, that is to say, the historian of those ideas which have expressed themselves in literary form. He is also the historian of the significant forms in which those ideas are expressed." Preoccupation with criticism, Jones suggested, is apt to result in following the latest vogue in critical method or subject matter. Scholarship, he affirmed, is concerned with all times, not merely the present moment.

It might be supposed that those advocating the dominance of criticism would readily have acknowledged the importance of literary history to their work, but such was not always the case. Literary history, it was admitted, may be a good thing, but its values as an aid to criticism have been overestimated. Actually, all that is needed for criticism is a body of principles, sensitivity to literature, and such learning as is necessary to an intelligent reading of the text. The paraphernalia of history—who the author was, out of what experience the literature came, why he said what he did, etc. —is largely irrelevant. The other side could be equally intransigent. Arthur M. Schlesinger, coming to the aid of the literary historians, asserted that "literary criticism and literary history are two distinct branches of scholarship, each with its own point of view and technique. . . ." Grudgingly acknowledging the services rendered by aesthetic critics, he hinted that they wrote for one another rather than for posterity. Schlesinger, who admittedly favored the study of literature from "a broadly social point of view," urged the historian of letters to free himself from the domination of the literary critic.

I am not suggesting that the battle among rhetorical scholars, if it comes, is apt to follow similar lines. We are not likely, I think, to hear it asserted by either the historians or critics of public address that they do not need each other. In the field of imaginative literature, where the judgment to be rendered is an aesthetic one, it is understandable that some critics should take the position that extrinsic factors are irrelevant. But if the distinctions traditionally drawn between poetic and rhetoric are worth anything at all, it is clear that a consideration of "historical" data—rhetor, purpose, audience, situation—is indispensable to the critical judgment of rhetorical discourse. The dictum of Bower Aly,


written in 1941, has become a commonplace: the requirement imposed by audience and occasion "determines the nature of oratory and forms the mold of its criticism." And we recall the words of Bryant quoted earlier, "rhetorical criticism must depend almost entirely upon historical knowledge for its effectiveness." An observation by literary critic David Daiches serves to highlight the contrast between the literary and the rhetorical approaches to criticism. Daiches answers the question of whether biographical or historical information is necessary to criticism by saying that it is not needed "in order to assess the written work as it exists, an independent and self-existent work of art," but he acknowledges that such information may be needed "in order to see the work properly before we begin to assess it." 

But the artifact under scrutiny by the rhetorical critic is not "an independent and self-existent work of art"; it is discourse in context, discourse functioning in what Bitzer has described as "the rhetorical situation." This being the case, historical information is needed both "to see the work properly" and to judge its appropriateness in modifying the situation.

All of which is to say that although the value of literary history as handmaiden to literary criticism may be in some doubt, there can be no such doubt regarding the close relationship between rhetorical history and rhetorical criticism.

What then is my concern? It is that in our enthusiasm for rhetorical criticism—narrowly regarded as the examination of individual works of art leading to enhanced understanding and appreciation or to normative critical statements, or broadly conceived as pronouncing a judgment upon the persuasive effects of almost anything—we may neglect important scholarly responsibilities. As the literary scholar has made himself custodian of a body of imaginative writings, so should we be the custodians of a body of purposive, public discourse in which the literary man for various reasons has not shown much interest. If, as Professor Jones asserts, the literary scholar is "the historian of literary culture," the "historian of those ideas which have expressed themselves in literary form," can it not be said that the student of public address is (among other things, perhaps) the historian of those ideas which have expressed themselves in practical public discourse?

Yet, unless I am mistaken, we are moving in a quite different direction. It is my observation, corroborated by several colleagues, that new Ph.D.'s like to regard themselves as "theorists" or "critics." Moreover, we have rushed to get courses in criticism into the undergraduate curriculum, courses which are often taken by students who can scarcely name a half-dozen American speakers or speeches, students to whom Webster, Clay, Ingersoll, Beveridge, Otis, and Everett are almost total strangers. Most of our undergraduates feel capable of writing a "criticism" of a contemporary speech by President Nixon, Father Berigan, or Jack Anderson, but many do not see the necessity of making the acquaint-

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15 Bruce Gronbeck, in the article cited earlier (n. 2), defines rhetorical history as "the study of the historical effects of rhetorical discourse." Such analysis, he affirms, is primarily extrinsic, it "finds most of its confirming materials outside a rhetorical artifact." Rhetorical criticism, "the analysis of rhetorical discourse and acts for a series of essentially normative or advisory purposes," is essentially intrinsic analysis, which "finds most of its confirming materials inside a rhetorical artifact." I find several difficulties in these definitions and distinctions, the most serious of which is that the rhetorical artifact is not simply an object (e.g., a speech text) as Gronbeck seems to imply, but a transaction, a dynamic process—rhetorical discourse operating in an historical context. Hence, the chief distinguishing feature of rhetorical criticism cannot be that it relies upon intrinsic rather than extrinsic analysis.
ance of any American speech or speaker prior to Malcolm X.

I intend no derogation of criticism, whether narrowly or broadly conceived. But I do protest the view that historical studies of orators and oratory are less important or valuable than critiques of individual speeches, that all good theses and dissertations must be titled "A Rhetorical Criticism of . . ." Just as all scholarly writing about literature and the writing of literature is not literary criticism, so all writing about orators and oratory is not rhetorical criticism. And the further point I am anxious to make is that scholarly writing which is not "criticism" is not, ipso facto, unworthy, nor is it necessarily an excursion into other fields of learning. Histories of literature, of religion, of music, of journalism, we have—but no completely satisfactory history of American oratory. And we shall not have one until a great many more historical (and, yes, more critical) monographs are undertaken.

If for the moment we may assume acceptance of the proposition that all students of public address need not be "rhetorical critics," that a need still exists for sound historical research and writing, which like all research should be "critical" in the sense we have indicated, the question remains—what kind of history? I suggest that we may profitably turn for one answer to Wrage's 1947 article. There, it will be remembered, he advanced the thesis that students of public address have the credentials and the subject matter interest to contribute substantially to the history of ideas. To the objection that to do so is to invade the sanctuary of the professional historian, he replied that "a study is to be judged by its merits, not by the writer's union card." Calling attention to the need for an academic division of labor, he pointed out that the writing of intellectual history is dependent upon contributions from scholars in a variety of fields. The same opinion was expressed a year later by historian Arthur Lovejoy, who, in an essay on "The Historiography of Ideas," noted the need for cross-fertilization among primarily distinct disciplines. The pieces to be put together in trustworthy historical synthesis, he said, "must be provided, or at least be critically inspected, by those having special training and up-to-date technical knowledge in the fields to which the pieces primarily belong."16 And in 1946 Professor Bert Loewenberg had urged upon his colleagues in the Mississippi Valley Historical Association the importance of scholarly collaboration, and had called for "a 'Manhattan project' of learning in the social sciences and the humanities."17

Central to Wrage's message was the idea that speeches are mirrors as well as instruments or engines. Because speeches are prepared with listeners in mind, he said, because speeches on vital issues are "vibrant with the immediacy of life, with the sense of interaction between speaker and listeners," they are admirable indices to social thought. It appears in retrospect that Wrage's principal contribution as an historian of public address was his moderation of the overpowering emphasis upon personal persuasion, upon demonstrating the influence of oratory on human events. He shifted the focus to ideas; his was an attempt to learn what the substance of a speech, together with the rhetorical strategies by means of which that substance is communicated to audiences, can tell us about the times out of which the speeches grew, the audiences to whom they were addressed, and the men and women who uttered them. Professor Brigance introduced his two volumes with this

sentence: "This work deals with the influence of American public address on the flow of history." Today's writers are more modest about their ability to assess influence upon history; they know that influence is an extraordinarily difficult thing to establish, much less to measure.

This change of emphasis may be seen in subsequent scholarship in the field. *American Forum* and *Contemporary Forum* made a start in selecting speeches for study which reflect the values and attitudes of their times, and later anthologies adopted a similar pattern. Idea-centered, issue-oriented courses in the history of American public address were introduced. Some of our most distinguished published volumes have been such contributions to social history as Wrage might well have applauded: Auer's *Antislavery and Disunion*, which one reviewer called "the speech profession's most imposing exercise in social and intellectual history"; 18 Gunderson's *Log Cabin Campaign; Braden's Oratory in the Old South; Holland's Preaching in American History and America in Controversy; Oliver's History of Public Speaking in America*, which eschews the effusive personal eulogy of earlier histories and presents the history of American public speaking as "a central core around which to depict the general flow of the history itself."

All these scholars, and there have, of course, been others, have given credence to Wrage's observation that he "who is sensitized to rhetoric, who is schooled in its principles and techniques," possesses credentials for scholarship in the history of ideas "as that history is portrayed in public speeches." They have been engaged, as Wrage believed we should be, in illustrating, testing, verifying, and revising "generalizations offered by other workers in social and intellectual history."

Ernest Wrage, then, has provided one answer to the question, "What kind of history?" Others are not far to seek. When Howard Mumford Jones described the "true business" of the literary scholar in much the same way that Wrage counselled his fellow rhetoricians, he added: "He is also the historian of the significant forms in which those ideas are expressed." Certainly there is much to be done in recording the history of the various forms of public address. I know of no recent book which undertakes such a task, and relatively few articles. In the last century articles in the popular journals on after-dinner speaking, campaign oratory, the lecture, and various types of occasional speaking were fairly common. T. B. Reed's fifteen-volume deluxe edition of *Modern Eloquence*, published at the turn of the century, introduced each genre with a special essay. Edward E. Hale contributed a chronicle of lectures and lecturing; Lorenzo Sears described after-dinner speaking, Hamilton W. Mabie the literary address; and Senator Jonathan Doliver wrote an excellent historical account of stump-speaking. These are modest beginnings from which genuine histories of these forms might be developed.

Another scholarly emphasis has been suggested by Bower Aly. Despite Wrage's warning concerning the difficulty of establishing influence, we are continually reminded that oratory can be a force in history. After studying the persuasive skill of Alexander Hamilton in the New York ratifying convention, Professor Aly proposes that students of public address, viewing people "engaged in the process of persuading one another to do what they want done," may formulate a "rhetorical theory of history" to replace, or

18 Wayne C. Minnich, *QJS*, 49 (1963), 85.
at least to supplement, prevailing interpretations of history.\textsuperscript{19}

There would also seem to be a need to make some significant beginnings toward a history of the art of oratory. Not a series of critical essays on individual speeches nor a collection of biographical sketches of speakers, but a history of the art, analogous to histories of the art of music or architecture. Perhaps the closest thing to the kind of approach I am suggesting here is found in Guy Carleton Lee’s ten volume work on \textit{The World’s Orators} (1900). Each volume includes an essay on the period of oratory therein illustrated. These essays deal with such topics as conditions propitious to the development of an art of oratory, forces responsible for molding the art, changing conceptions of eloquence, oratorical genres and epochs, the rise and decline of oratory in various nations and periods. The claim of the editor that these essays, when taken together, comprise “a history of oratory by specialists,” may be somewhat exaggerated, but they do suggest a method and a direction which twentieth-century scholars might profitably explore. What, we might ask, were the needs and expectations of audiences at different periods in our national history; how and why did these expectations and needs change, and how did oratory change with them? How was the orator regarded? What principal social functions did he perform? In what esteem was he held? How did he perceive his own role in society? What qualities in oratory were admired and applauded? What constituted oratorical excellence in a given period, and in what ways did these standards of excellence change with changing times? No doubt the completion of such a history of the art must wait upon many perceptive historical and critical monographs, but let us begin.

If it be true as Professor Homer Hockett has affirmed that “no phase of human conduct or thought is any longer regarded as closed to the historian,” then it is clear that he will need considerable assistance from many who are not dignified with the title of professional historian or addressed in care of a university Department of History. There is no space here to enumerate the ways in which historians of public address may be of assistance to the general historian, but for an excellent discussion of the subject I would refer you to Marie Nichols’ Louisiana State lecture on “Rhetoric, Public Address, and History,”\textsuperscript{20} in which she reports conversations with professional historians who discuss the kinds of materials they look to us to provide.

Let me try in conclusion briefly to summarize some of the points I have wished to make in these speculations concerning history and criticism. First of all, it goes without saying that all scholarly research and writing must be “critical” in tone, must employ critical methods. However, “criticism” as a literary genre focuses upon the artistry of the maker; it has as its end interpretation, appreciation, elucidation, appraisal, of a work of art. Sometimes, though not necessarily, it may culminate in normative critical statements. History, on the other hand, whether primarily concerned with individuals, or with groups, movements, or eras, furnishes a record which associates works of art with background. It provides perspective. It may deal with the influence upon the art of political, economic, social, or geographical factors. Nevertheless, despite differing emphases, criticism and the history of public address are complementary studies. Histori-


\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Rhetoric and Criticism} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1963).
cal reconstruction provides indispensable information on which judgment and appreciation may be based; it helps get straight the facts of the rhetorical situation. The critic who has the greatest familiarity with the history of his subject—its foremost practitioners, its movements, eras, forms, and changing canons of judgment—is best equipped to discern quality in individual works. And painstaking analysis of rhetorical discourse by a critic may contribute to the enrichment of subsequent historical writing about a given period, form, or movement.

Moreover, given the practical nature of rhetorical discourse, its close relationship with audience and situation, it is inevitable that "history"—the weaving of facts regarding speaker, audience, and occasion into some kind of meaningful narrative—will often constitute a part of, or a preliminary to, an essay in rhetorical criticism. Thus, the familiar concept "history and criticism" or "historical-critical studies" is particularly appropriate to public address. But all significant writing about public address need not be criticism, in the special sense of that term, nor need all scholars be rhetorical critics. The worth of a product of scholarship is determined not by the label placed upon it, but by the competence with which it is executed. A need exists for good history and biography, for meticulously researched descriptive monographs. In our field, as in most fields, there is a need for scholars who can record accurately and artistically the history of our art as it relates to more general history, to delineate its place in and contribution to the cultural history of the nation.

One would hope that this final point would be obvious, and scarcely in dispute. But perhaps it needs to be explicitly stated, if only to modify an apparent preoccupation with criticism and to defend those whose *forte* is historical writing about speakers and speaking against the repeated charge that they are guilty of excursions into other fields. Each discipline develops its own historians; there must be historians of public address as there are historians of literature, art, music, education, and religion. The historical method is not the sole possession of any one academic discipline.

I would suggest finally that indispensable as criticism is, and despite our remarkable success during the last decade in achieving greater artistry and sophistication in our critical writing, criticism, as it becomes more technical, becomes more parochial in its appeal; its consumers are likely to be other critics, usually in the same academic enclave. Our most effective links with the rest of the academic community are apt to be forged by scholarly writing which contributes what we are best equipped to contribute to that "Manhattan project' of learning in the social sciences and the humanities" envisioned by Professor Loewenberg.