Fostering Knowledge Transfer in Rhetorical Situations

Course Portfolio, 2010-2011 TEAGLE Collegium on Inquiry and Action
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Abstract
In this document, I articulate the rationale, implementation, and findings for a teaching intervention geared towards determining how I might foster more sophisticated knowledge transfer in my students’ learning. Transfer is a learning outcome that occurs when students are able to transfer information and strategies they have learned in one context, to new and different situations. To test how I might better facilitate transfer specific persuasive strategies across rhetorical situations, I intervened in lessons in which I taught students persuasive theory from case studies of specific rhetorical artifacts. I provided students with examples of the strategy they were expected to learn from a case study, that differed from the artifact analyzed in the case study to varying degrees. Although further research is required for my results to be considered conclusive, my findings indicated that providing students with alternative examples fostered a greater degree of knowledge transfer.
Course Context

Background
C324 Persuasion is an upper-level course offered in the Department of Communication and Culture (CMCL) at Indiana University. Each year, an advanced PhD student concentrating in rhetoric in the department designs their own syllabus for the class and teaches the course independently. Granted the opportunity to teach this course in the 2010/2011 school year, I designed a syllabus that invited students to explore theories of persuasion. Roughly half of their readings for the class were abstract theories of persuasion, beginning with early texts that have shaped our understanding of persuasion in Western thought and ending with contemporary theories on persuasion. For the other half of their readings, we focused on theory drawn from specific case studies of dissent and public advocacy.

Class format
I taught the material through a primarily discussion-based seminar that met twice a week for seventy-five minutes. For a typical class, I would design a PowerPoint that organized the class period with a mixture of about twelve slides that would clarify concepts from the readings, provide examples of the theories, and invite student discussion through probing questions and individual or group activities.

Demographics
My spring class included 29 students, predominantly upperclassman and most students were CMCL majors or minors. With 14 men and 15 women, quite evenly gender balanced. Consistent with the demographics of Indiana University, most students were Caucasian, with only 4 students identifying as non-white.

Course description
This course challenges Platonic notions of rhetoric which liken persuasion to flattery and condemn it as crooked and deceitful, in favor of understandings of persuasion that see the productive role that rhetoric plays in constructing culture and bringing meaning to our shared experiences. With this in mind, the texts I asked my students to read, understood persuasion not only as deception (although some acknowledge this danger), but also as an integral aspect of democracy. I encouraged my students to understand that persuasion is not used in circumstances of pure coercion, for in such
situations there is no need to persuade. Persuasion is, however, used in contingent situations in which we must choose between multiple ways of thinking or courses of action in collective life.

**Learning objectives**

The reading materials and activities chosen for this course were geared to provide students with models for both persuasive critique and invention. In other words, the purpose of the course was to help students become both critical consumers and conscientious producers of persuasion. The learning objectives of the course include: 1) to learn a variety of perspectives on persuasion in order to develop their own theory of persuasion grounded in the rhetorical tradition; 2) to build a vocabulary for thinking and communicating about the power of persuasion in public life; 3) to connect rhetorical theory to persuasive practice; and 4) to enhance written and oral persuasive skills. It is the third learning objective, connecting rhetorical theory to persuasive practice, that I emphasized when promoting in their final project (described below) and was my site for intervention (described in the following section).

**Final Project**

For their final “Critical Producer Project” in the course, I asked students to create their own persuasive artifact in order to advocate for a public cause. This “artifact” could be in the form of a speech, brochure, short film, website, blog, etc. Then, their task was to present their artifact to the class and explain which course concepts informed their decision-making process in designing/creating/inventing the artifact. After their presentation, I gave them feedback as to whether or not they were using course concepts appropriately, and what other concepts they might add. The final, and most weighted part of this assignment, was to take my feedback and write a 3-4 page analysis paper applying and connecting course concepts to their project in order to demonstrate their knowledge of how theories of persuasion inform practice. (*Assignment sheet available in the Appendix*).

**Teaching Intervention Objectives**

**Objective**

My objective for my teaching intervention was to determine how I might foster more sophisticated knowledge transfer in my student’s learning. In *How People Learn*, transfer is defined as the ability to extend what has been learned in one context to new contexts” (51). Unfortunately, college students’
difficulty in extending learning to new contexts is well documented. In a written homage to the liberal arts, Dorothy Sayers laments the fact that for so many people a “subject” remains “divided by watertight bulkheads from all other ‘subjects,’” making it impossible for individuals to make mental connections between theoretical spheres and their everyday lives (148). Thus, the question of how to better promote knowledge transfer is an important pedagogical challenge to meet. This is especially salient for the liberal arts, in general, which seeks not just to give students “facts” to memorize, but to teach them to relate disparate “facts together to form a significant whole” (Joseph, 7). For the discipline of rhetoric, specifically, it is an essential task. As Joseph defines it, rhetoric involves the “adaptation of language to circumstance” (10). In short, being able to transfer learned rhetorical practices to specific contexts should be a central goal of rhetorical pedagogy.

**Challenge**

I saw the need for this intervention when teaching Persuasion in the Fall of 2010. During that semester, I noticed that while many students could recite course concepts and understand them, when it came to transferring concepts from case studies to new contexts in their final projects, connections were often made in superficial ways. In general, they were better at applying the readings of abstract theory to their persuasive projects, than they were at applying the theory from specific case studies to the context of their projects. For example, they had to read a chapter by Kevin DeLuca on “Image Events” – which entails a subordinated group performing flashy, exciting visual forms of protest in order to garner attention from the mainstream media, which is often unlikely to give them air time otherwise. The students enjoyed the reading, and could explain DeLuca’s definition of an image event, but when it came time for them to write their final papers, they often erroneously connected anything visual with DeLuca’s idea of the image event. One typical student writes:

“I felt it was necessary have a visual aid to draw the audience in and engage with each of their emotions. To accomplish this task I used Deluca’s idea of image events with PowerPoint slides. Although my PowerPoint is not exactly an image event, the images relate to what DeLuca [sic] discusses in his article. Deluca states, “Image events are a necessary tactic for oppositional politics in an electronic public sphere. Far from being desperate stunts, then, image events are appropriate actions that have been successful to a certain context” (DeLuca, 92). The use of images in my PowerPoint can be applied to the same meaning of what Deluca is speaking of. The images in my presentation allowed the audience to contrast their ideas of other cities with Austin, as well as appeal to their emotions.”
The student acknowledged that the PowerPoint was “not exactly an image event,” only because I had told her this in my feedback after her presentation. Yet, she was unable to move beyond the idea of the image event and use DeLuca (or another rhetorical scholar) in a more productive manner. She continued to refer to her PowerPoint as an image event, and tied her use of PowerPoint to a quote from DeLuca about the image event which bore no relevance to her persuasive practice.

This, and other examples, led me to believe that my students were having difficulty with making meaningful knowledge “transfer.” While they had made moves to take ideas out of their “watertight bulkheads” and put different ideas together, the linkages were so tangential that it was clear that connections were brought about because they had been asked to do so on the assignment, not because they were clearly seeing the connections. Michael-John DePalma and Jeffrey M. Ringer, underscore the importance of making richer knowledge transfer. They argue that we should attend to the ways students reshape and reform learned skills to fit new tasks. They hold that we should “attempt to account for the ways in which knowledge and skills are transformed across contexts” and “adapted to meet the needs of a new activity system” (137). My student who was quoted in the writing sample above, lacked the ability to transform the concept of the “image event” in such a way as to make it relevant to her project. Thus, in conducting my intervention, I hope not just to encourage students to juxtapose ideas from different spheres, but to do so in productive ways. Being able to make a meaningful application of a concept to a specific context indicates that a student is understanding, rather than merely memorizing a fact (How People Learn, 55-56).

In reflecting on my teaching practices, I realized that during classes I had been focusing on contextualizing the readings by providing examples of the case studies the author analyzed. So, for example, when I taught DeLuca, I used clips from Greenpeace’s “Whale Wars,” because that was the case DeLuca had been analyzing in the chapter we read. However, my observations seemed to suggest that this might not be the best strategy. Indeed, findings have shown that knowledge that is “overly contextualized can reduce transfer” (How People Learn, 53). Thus, I estimated that by contextualizing the rhetorical strategies that I was teaching my students, too closely to the case study, I was unwittingly hampering their ability to make meaningful knowledge transfer. Thus, in the following section, I detail my approach in addressing this challenge.

**Implementation of Intervention**

In order to foster meaningful knowledge transfer, I focused on decontextualizing the case studies that my students read by providing them with examples and activities that encouraged them to
abstract the rhetorical strategies posed from the particular cased studies they read. This involved two parts:

1. I redesigned my teaching approach to the course by presenting my students with clips or articles that were different from the texts analyzed in the case studies they read instead of finding samples of the texts analyzed in the readings. For example, rather than showing them clips about Greenpeace for DeLuca’s chapter analyzing Greenpeace’s use of the image event, I showed them examples of 2008 protests against the use of torture at Guantanamo Bay Prison in which protesters staged visually striking reenactments of prisoner abuse. I provided related but different rhetorical examples for all of the case studies my students read this semester. I did so because I believed that working through a level of abstraction might help them more readily transfer concepts from artifact to artifact.

When incorporating these examples into the classroom, I showed the clip or article and then asked students to explain during class discussion why the sample was, or was not, an example of the rhetorical strategy they were asked to understand for the day. This way, they were able to learn actively, and practice applying concepts to new situations, as opposed to passively watching me conduct the application.

2. I focused on the lessons of two case studies in particular to examine as evidence of student learning, one from DeLuca and the other from Steven Schwarze. I chose these two theorists because their case studies were the ones most referenced by students in their final papers during the fall semester. In examining two cases, my intent was to measure whether near transfer or far transfer best facilitated understanding. Near transfer is the connection of two highly similar concepts, while far transfer connects more distinct ideas (*How People Learn*, 53). The use of the Guantanamo Bay Torture protests to teach the strategy of an “image event” mentioned above was my example of near transfer. I used one protest to exemplify the rhetorical strategy articulated by another protest. In my lesson on Schwarze’s study of melodrama as a rhetorical strategy, I drew from an example that was further away from the original case study. The original case study documented how citizens in Libby, Montana protested against the W.R. Grace Company, which, through negligence, exposed the town’s residents to asbestos. The protestors effectively used melodrama to indict seven employees
of W.R. Grace. To exemplify this, I showed students clips of political campaign commercials that employed the strategy of melodrama. *(See the PowerPoints from both lessons in the Appendix).*

For each of these studies, I conducted an in-class learning assessment to document their understanding of the material. I developed application cards for these case studies. The application card is a classroom assessment technique (CAT) that invites students to invent and write out a “real-world application” for the concept they have learned *(Angelo & Cross, 236).* The application card for the DeLuca’s image event, like the example used in class, asked the students to make a near transfer. The prompt stated:

DeLuca describes how an “image event” may be used by environmental protestors to attract media attention. Take a contemporary social movement (i.e., the Tea Party Movement, the Labor Movement, the pro-Democracy protests in Egypt, etc…) and describe how an image event might be used by this movement.

The application card for Schwarze’s concept of melodrama, like the example used in class, asked the students to make connections that were more abstracted from the original case study. The prompt stated:

Schwarze argues that melodrama might be a valuable rhetorical strategy to draw lines of division in certain situations. Take an example of public persuasion that you are familiar with, and describe how that might be revised by the melodramatic frame.

These prompts were given to the student in the class period after I taught each concept, in order to force them to draw on their memory of the concept.
Data

There were two main elements that I looked to for evidence of student learning. First, I examined the students’ use of DeLuca and Schwarze in their final papers. I compared the amount of papers in which the students mentioned each author, and the accuracy of each usage between fall and spring semesters. Then, I used the CAT application cards to supplement this information so I could examine how the entire class understood these two theories since I knew not all students would reference each theory. The findings of each scholar are described below.

DELUCA’S IMAGE EVENT

Data from Final Papers

In the fall semester fifteen out of thirty students, or 50% of my students, referenced DeLuca. Of the students who referenced DeLuca, eight students made reference to the image event, specifically, and only one student was able to transform the concept in order to fit her particular rhetorical situation. The students who referenced the image event incorrectly, all used it to refer to the use of imagery in persuasion, rather than a visually dynamic, performed event, orchestrated to garner media attention.

In the spring semester, five out of twenty-nine students, or 17% of my students, referenced DeLuca. Only one of those students made reference to the image event. This student’s mention of the image event was inappropriate, but the error was a naming issue. She did not make the same mistake that so many of the students made fall semester. She wrote:

The example … of the filmmakers deciding to acknowledge the other side of the situation, in which Hailey is put in the wrong for killing the two boys despite what they did to his daughter, is a representation of DeLuca’s fear regarding image events. DeLuca claims that, in regards to the media, “they acknowledge contradictions and challenges to the dominant ideology but only within the parameters prescribed by the dominant ideology” (89). It may be true that this aspect of the media may limit “the nature of public discourse” (DeLuca 89), but because the film must adhere to the worldview of its audience, as proposed by Lucaites and Condit, if it didn’t stay within the parameters of the dominant ideology, its target audience would reject it and the persuasion would be ineffective. {Emphasis added}

Her error lies in using the term “image events” when she should have been referencing DeLuca’s fear of the “media.” However, she accurately characterizes DeLuca’s views on the media despite the misnomer.
Data from Application Cards

I collected twenty-eight application cards asking students to apply the image event to a new situation. Of those cards, only nine students made inappropriate transfers. These students only transferred the idea of visuality to the new context, and characterized the image event as the use of imagery in persuasion.

SCHWARZE’S MELODRAMA

Data from Final Papers

In the fall semester, eight out of thirty students, or 27% of my students, used melodrama, and most did so accurately. There was only one student who did not appropriately transfer the concept of melodrama.

In the spring semester, ten out of twenty-nine students, or 35% of my students, incorporated Schwarze into their final papers. Of those students, nine made direct references to melodrama, and six of those students utilized melodrama accurately. Of these students, two failed to transfer melodrama’s key characteristic, polarization of two separate entities into “good guys” and “bad guys,” into the new context. This error is evident in the following excerpt:

“I … feel that I used some of Schwarze’s ideals in my speech by calling on the moral aspect within my audience members. By covering the nature aspect of the pollution and plastic usage I knew that the death of innocent animals and our future environment would pull on the moral characteristics within my audience members; no one wants to be an animal killer. By sharpening my conflict by describing how some Americans are morally wrong for their usage of plastic and pollution, I was polarizing the issue by forcing my audience to take a side and hoping that it would be the morally right one of reducing their usage of plastic.”

This student certainly established an “evil” way of behaving in his persuasive project, using plastic that can be harmful to wildlife, but fails to establish a group of people who represent the “good” way of behaving. The error would seem a minor point, but another concept taught in the class (James Darsey’s “prophetic rhetoric”) would have been more appropriate for this type of strategy, as it calls out people’s moral failures, without necessarily establishing another group of people as “good.” Another student characterized melodrama as being for situations of public conflict, instead
of characterizing melodrama as something that can bring a conflict typically seen as private into the public sphere.

_Data from Application Cards_

I collected twenty-five application cards asking students to apply melodrama to a new situation. Of those cards, three students failed to accurately transfer the most salient aspects of melodrama. One of these students seemed as if he had been talking about a completely different course concept. The other two students failed to transfer the concept of polarizing of “good” and “evil” entities into the new context.

**Analysis and Reflection**

_Indications of Learning Improvements_

While, initially, the 33% reduction in the usage of DeLuca’s image event might seem like a decrease in students’ comfort with the idea of the “image event,” I think it might actually indicate an improvement in learning. The “image event,” was not a rhetorical strategy that could be applied to any of the projects my students created in the spring semester. So, their ability to judge that the image event did not apply to their projects leads me to believe that using a different but related example in teaching, one that allowed students to practice a degree of contextual transfer, did help my students learn. This finding is further supported by my findings through the application cards. This assessment revealed that only 22% of the students in the spring were unable to transfer the image event appropriately, whereas roughly 50% of the students who referenced DeLuca in the fall used inappropriate transfer methods. Granted, I am comparing different data sources here, if I were to continue this study in the future to collect more sound findings, I would implement the CAT test both semesters.

Conversely, I think the 9% increase in the number of students using melodrama might indicate that the use of an example that demonstrated a further degree of transfer might have encouraged the students to more readily apply this concept to a greater variety of different contexts.
The application card assessment also indicates that this level of transfer was helpful in learning, given that 88% of the students were able to appropriately transfer melodrama to a new context.

My findings on my students’ ability to transfer the image event and melodrama to new contexts roughly indicates that using examples that decontextualize the reading in the classroom might have positive effects. However, due to some of the differences in assessment techniques these findings are not conclusive. I think they do indicate that further exploration of this teaching strategy is warranted.

**Inconclusive Findings**

Based on the data I collected, I was unable to determine whether examples that exhibited near transfer or examples that exhibited far transfer were more productive. Students more readily used melodrama than image events, which might indicate that a greater degree of transfer in examples fostered more liberal application of the strategy to new concepts. However, it is also likely that this difference stems from the fact that melodrama is a strategy that may be used in a greater variety of contexts. Further research examining which level of transfer best fosters understanding is necessary.

**Implications for Future Teaching**

In response to my findings, I intend to continue to explore the strategy of using alternative examples when teaching from case studies. If given the opportunity to teach a course on Persuasion again, I will establish CATs across the fall and spring semesters to more accurately determine whether or not this strategy works. In the meantime, because my findings point towards the use of classroom examples that require a degree of transfer, I will more often than not use teaching examples that differ from the texts examined in case studies to prompt classroom discussions in other courses I teach.

Additionally, I believe that the application card is an incredibly useful CAT that I will continue to incorporate. Not only does it provide an incredibly useful gage of student understanding of a particular topic, it is also a dynamic method of assessment. That is, it can track learning, but it is also useful in fostering learning. It provides students with much needed practice in transferring a concept to a new context and linking it to “real-world” situations.

**References**

*Pedagogical Resources:*


**Course Readings Referenced in Intervention:**


APPENDIX

CRITICAL PRODUCER PROJECT

Project – 5%

This is project is designed to persuade any audience in any form other than a speech. This may take the form videos, brochures, essays, etc... and may be geared towards an audience other than your classmates. It is highly encouraged that you try to see if your project may be used by an organization or other entity so that you might put this on your resume.

Presentation – 10%

This is your opportunity to both present and reflect upon your critical producer project. This presentation is your opportunity to share the videos, brochures, essays, etc... that you have created. You should have time during your presentation to both present your artifact and reflect upon how course readings have informed your creation of this project. When presenting your artifact, you should first explain the issue you are addressing, indicate why you felt this project was important, and describe and share your project. Then, you will be expected to cite specific authors, vocabulary and themes of the semester to explain your decision-making process in the creation of your project. The Q&A session will be your opportunity to gain feedback on what you have done and the audience and my opportunity to ask for clarification.

Specific requirements

1) Your presentation should be 5 min.
2) You must show your project through the use of a professional visual aid.
3) You will be expected to answer audience questions during your Q&A session, for which you will be given about 5 min.
Reflection Paper - 20%

The purpose of this assignment is for you to connect persuasion theory to your project. This should demonstrate your knowledge of how theories of persuasion inform practice. To do so, your paper should include the following components:

1. **Explain the context.** As we learned from the Dissoi Logoi, persuasion is dependent on audience and cultural context. Therefore, you should first explain the details of the particular problem your persuasive artifact seeks to address, the audience to which it is directed, and the details of the cultural context important to your persuasive decisions.

2. **Relate your project to course concepts.** Draw from the texts read for class to write a critique of your project. Explain how course concepts impacted your decision-making process in creating your project and/or how these concepts relate to your project. You should attend to the ways in which your specific issue, audience, and context called for the use of particular theories.
   - **You may relate course readings to your project in either positive or oppositional ways.** Perhaps you found a particular reading to be especially helpful or informative, explain how that impacted your thought process. Or, perhaps, you completely disagreed with a particular reading, you may also explain how that impacted your decision making process and how your particular issue or context challenges that particular theory.
   - **This is the most important part of the assignment.** Therefore, you should devote the majority of your time and writing space to this component of the paper.

**Specific requirements**

1) Reference 4-6 authors in *meaningful* ways.
2) 3-4 pages in length.
3) Papers are submitted electronically as a Microsoft word document and should be saved as: [YourLastName]-SelfAnalysis.[doc or docx].
4) Citations may be in the format of either a direct quote or a paraphrase (*often papers with a mix of the two are most effective*), and must use a consistent citation format (Chicago, MLA, APA… I don’t care which as long as you use one and stick with it).
5) Format your paper so that it has 1" margins and is double-spaced with 12pt font.
6) Papers should be free from spelling and grammatical errors.

**Grading criteria**

“A-B” Papers: Will be free of spelling and grammar errors, will reasonably interpret sources and integrate any quotes or paraphrases used, will provide a rich explanation of their perspective and will demonstrate understanding of how to apply course concepts to practice. The more persuasive, and well written your paper is, the higher your grade will be. These papers should also be intriguing, relating the most obvious authors in the most obvious ways may get you a “B,” but it will not get you an “A.”

“C” Papers: May not reasonably interpret or integrates sources, may not be written persuasively, and may provide either inadequate explanation of the context or inadequate explanation on how theory informed their practice.

“D-F” Papers: Do not meet all of the requirements of the assignment and/or include inaccurate interpretations of sources.
Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism

KEVIN MICHAEL DELUCA

**Image Politics**

- Addresses the question of how people with little power can have their persuasive voices heard in public discourse despite media control.
- Also addresses how words and images work together to persuade an audience.

**The Problem of Mass Media**

- What problems does DeLuca observe about the mass media?
- “As participants in and promoters of a dominant ideology perspective, the media are an ideological state apparatus designed to produce a citizenry that accepts the existing economic and social power relations” (87).
  - In other words... certain forms of communication that may seem “neutral” are actually persuading us to accept the status quo.
The Problem of Mass Media

Concentration of media ownership is “dangerous in principle because the mass media are central to a democracy and an open marketplace of ideas for a diversity of voices” (88).

The Problem of Mass Media

How does the media influence the messages we hear?

Censorship – anything that contradicts the ideas of power holders is excluded from the story.

Frames – “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selections, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse” (89).

○ What specific frames are used in regards to environmental activists?

The Problem of Mass Media

Novel – the news media emphasizes the new and novel so dissenters must be more and more outrageous to grab media attention.

“Objectivity” – journalism’s emphasis on objectivity silences dissenters.

○ Quotes are seen as objective if they come from government officials.
Additional Problems with “Objectivity”

- “[T]he strictures of objectivity prevent journalists from making judgments about values and the moral order. Instead, values must be objectified, transformed into empirical claims that can be reported as facts” (91).

Hegemony

- Hegemony is a form of social control, it is the ideological cultural, political, or economic power dominant groups hold over others in a society.
- How does hegemony operate according to DeLuca?
  - Hegemonic power is relational and involved in everyday life.
  - It is not imposed by an essential “class.”
  - Hegemony is not uncontested or all encompassing, there are a variety of “hegemonic nodal points.”
  - It requires some degree of “consent,” although this “consent” may not be conscious.

Image Events

- Because we battle against ideologies perpetuated by the media and hegemony... “Image events are a necessary tactic for oppositional politics in an electronic public sphere. Far from being desperate stunts, then, image events are appropriate actions that have been successful to a certain context” (92).
Torture Protests

- On January 11, 2008, there were a series of protests against torture and to call for the closure of Guantanamo Bay Prison.
- To gain attention, they dressed up as Gitmo prisoners and staged acts of torture.
- For the following week, news media outlets such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, The Miami Herald, The San Francisco Chronicle, The Seattle Post, and The Toronto Star as well as televised news channels such as Fox News, the BBC and CNN covered the story.

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Image Events
For Next Class...


Environmental Melodrama

Steven Schwarze

Analyzing Communication

- Of the lenses for understanding persuasion that we have discussed in class, which would fit best with the following excerpt? And why?
  - A More Perfect Union (8:20-14:24):
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrp-v2tHiDo
Comic Corrective Review
- What are the characteristics of the comic corrective?

What are the 4 Characteristics of Melodrama?
- Focuses on public conflicts
- Sharpens conflict through polarization of characters and positions (good and evil)
- Frames conflicts as moral (i.e., conflicts occur because the other side is morally wrong)
- Encourages monopathy, or “unitary emotional identification” (244).

Why Melodrama?
- Sometimes we need “division” more than we need “identification.”
- Melodrama may be a resource for drawing the line between identification and division. “[I]f we agree that [this line] is not a matter of scientific certainty but of normative judgment, then the rhetorical resources used to draw that line must be judged flexibly, with an eye toward their timeliness and appropriateness to the situation” (243).
What are 5 Benefits of Melodrama?

- It positions conflicts on the social or political level rather than the private level, thus “clarifying issues of power that are obscured by privatizing rhetoric” (246).
- Rather than homogenizing a population, “melodrama’s polarizing tendencies can facilitate the disclosure of opposed interests and enable the formation of new social and political relationships on the basis of those interest” (248).
- Melodrama can “remoralize situations that have been demoralized by inaccuracy, displaying concerns that have been obscured by the reassuring rhetoric of technical reason” (250).

What are 5 Benefits of Melodrama?

- Melodrama “can encourage a unity of feeling, offering a basis for identification that has been obscured by emotionally dissipating and dispassionate rhetorics” providing the energy needed for sustaining oppositional stances (251).
- Melodrama has the potential to complicate, transform or invent “not merely simplify and reify, public controversies” (253).

Identifying Melodrama

- Comic or Melodrama?
  - Target Ain’t People: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FhHMIinqgD9
- Prophetic or Melodrama?
  - FCINO: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRY7wBuCcBY&feature=player_embedded
Kairos

“Rather than privilege one frame as inherently superior to others, the basis for critical judgment is better cast in terms of kairos: to what extent does a particular rhetorical intervention operate as a timely and opportune response to contingent circumstances and particular audiences? This sophistic principle allows critics to acknowledge the typical strengths and limitations of a particular frame, but also encourages critics to rethink what might count as a strength or a fault in relation to specific situations.”

Kairos Discussion

Should we always focus on persuasion in terms of kairos, or are there certain forms of rhetoric that are always inappropriate?
**Comparisons**

- What might Burke say about Schwarze's analysis?
- What might Schwarze say about Andrews's interpretation of the confrontation at Columbia?
- What might Schwarze say about DeLuca's interpretation of Greenpeace's action against the whalers?
- In what ways do DeLuca and Schwarze differ?
- So far, which author do you feel offers the most useful lens for persuasion from this section?

**Burke or Schwarze?**

- In pairs, write a 1-2 paragraph essay on whether you believe Burke or Schwarze offers a more persuasive or productive theory of persuasion.
  - Include one quote from either author and make sure integrate it seamlessly into your essay.