



Conolly College

Dean's Office

Arts & Sciences Newsletter

Richard L. Conolly College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Spring 2009

From the Dean

In the last edition of this newsletter, edited some years ago by our dear friend and colleague, the late Dean Gerald Silveira, I was able to report that we were entering the new semester with robust enrollments and a faculty eager to provide students with the fundamentals of a liberal arts education. That year, we welcomed seven new faculty members dedicated to Conolly College's mission and its students.

Now, at the end of the spring semester, we look back on a year that marks a remarkable turning point in American history, when both the best and the worst in what we call the American Dream were realized. In November, in a massive voter turn-out, we elected the first African-American President, Barack Hussein Obama. President Obama reminds the world that "Yes, We Can" has always been at the heart of the American Dream: that education and hard work allow each person to transform his or her life for the better.

But before President Obama took office in January of this year, the country experienced the first shocks in what is now a global financial crisis. Some who contributed to the crisis here at home exemplify what happens when the American Dream is reduced to mere material gain to be sought at the expense of others.

With these observations in mind, I want to preface this revived newsletter, with my firm belief, shared by all in Conolly College, that the value of a liberal arts education is as crucial today as it has ever been. For students to become responsible citizens and for them to adapt to the needs of the changing job market, they need to make the most of the art of utilizing knowledge by honing their ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems—all skills the liberal arts and sciences nurture.

The current economic difficulties are daunting, especially to students now in college who might be tempted to see the expense of a college education as a luxury too costly to pursue. I argue the opposite. Students should seize the opportunity for a liberal education now more than ever—not just for the professional advancement it makes possible, but for the lifelong tools it provides them to meet their personal current and future challenges and also that of their communities and of their nation.

David Cohen
Dean

Brooklyn Campus

New Faculty 2008:

Biology:

Timothy Leslie

Dance:

Rodger Belman

English:

Michael Jarvis
Kwadzo Bokor

Foreign Language

Myriam Mompont

History:

Nicholas Agrait

Languages:

Mathematics:

Joel Zablow

Political Science:

Simon Sheppard

Psychology:

Sara Haden

Kevin Meehan

Benjamin Saunders

BROOKLYN CAMPUS





LIU Welcomes New Faculty



Biology

Dr. Timothy Leslie received his B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science (2000) and Ph.D. in Entomology (2007) from Penn State University. He also studied extensively at Wageningen University in the Netherlands as part of a federally-funded project. Prior to joining the LIU Biology faculty in the fall of 2008, he was a postdoctoral researcher in the Weed Ecology Lab at Penn State University.

As an insect ecologist, Dr. Leslie is especially interested in insect population dynamics and biodiversity conservation in human-modified landscapes.

His current research includes developing ecologically informed management practices in fruit orchards, and conservation of insect pollinators in urban community gardens.

Dr. Leslie has published five articles in top-tier entomological journals on subjects comprising population dynamics modeling, community ecology, and ecotoxicology. Additionally, he has given over 25 conference presentations and invited talks at national and regional professional meetings, as well as outreach events. He is an active member of the Entomological Society of America and the Ecological Society of America, and serves as a reviewer for several entomological journals.

Dance

Rodger Belman, assistant professor, is delighted to join the faculty of the Dance Department at Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus. He returns to NYC after a four-year appointment as a full-time tenure-track assistant professor in the School of Theatre and Dance at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. While in North Carolina, he also directed and performed with his own group of dancers appearing at venues throughout the state of North Carolina as part of the North Carolina Dance Festival Tour and at the American Dance festival in Durham, NC. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in French from George Mason University and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

English

Michael Jarvis Kwadzo Bokor is an Assistant Professor of English at Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, in New York, where he began teaching in September 2008. He earned his Ph.D. in English Studies from Illinois State University (August 2008). He also has a Diploma in Journalism and Public Relations (June 1984) from the Ghana Institute of Journalism and practiced journalism in Ghana, West Africa, before enrolling at Illinois State University in fall 2001.

Michael Jarvis Kwadzo Bokor cont'd

He has written several feature articles on political and social issues in Ghana. He has been subeditor of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) Bibliography Committee since 2004. He is married with three children.

Foreign Languages

Professor Myriam Mompoin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature and French Program Coordinator. She received her Ph. D. in Romance Languages and Literatures from the University of Miami with a specialization in the literature and film of the Francophone Caribbean and of Brazil. Her research focuses on comparative literary and cultural studies with a particular emphasis on film and representation. She has a Master's degree In Foreign Language Pedagogy from the U. of Delaware and a Master's degree from New York University in Humanities and Social Sciences with a concentration in Latin American studies, including gender and society, Latin American architecture, and French Caribbean history and literary theories. Her thesis was on Mayan women activists in Guatemala. Currently, Professor Mompoin is preparing a manuscript for publication, *Symbolic Exchanges: Haiti, Brazil and the Ethnopoetics of Cultural Identity*, and is doing research for a new project on representations of Haiti in world cinema. Her interests are in Francophone Literature and Ethnography, World Cinema, African Diaspora studies, particularly Francophone America, and Gender Studies.

History

Professor Nicolas Agrait received his Ph.D. in Medieval History from Fordham University in 2003, with a dissertation on Castilian Military Affairs under Alfonso XI (1312-50). He then moved to BMCC for five years where he taught History as part of the Social Science Department. His most recent article "Castilian Military Reform Under the Reign of Alfonso XI (1312-50)" was published in the *Journal of Medieval Military History* in 2005. He will present the paper "Social Ritual, Propaganda and Royal Legitimation During the Reign of Alfonso XI (1312-50)" at the upcoming 44th International Congress of Medieval, Western Michigan U. in May. He is now teaching both in the History Department and the Honors' Program. In the Spring 2010, he plans to expand his teaching repertoire and offer a course on the history of the Ancient world, followed by one in Fall 2010 on Medieval European History. Professor Agrait is very happy to finally be part of a prestigious and up-and-coming institution like L.I.U.-Brooklyn.

Mathematics

Joel Zablow grew up in NYC. He writes: I went to Reed College in Portland Oregon, graduated with a B.S. in Mathematics., and developed a love of the west coast in the process. I received a M.S. in Mathematics at the U of Oregon, and after a bit of time living on the west coast, returned to NYC to attend graduate school at the CUNY Graduate Center. I received my doctorate in 1999, in low dimensional topology, working on algebraic structures related to closed loops on surfaces.

Throughout my time at CUNY and for a while thereafter, I taught undergraduate mathematics at Lehman College and Hunter College. I had a post-doctoral position at Oklahoma State University, in a congenial and low dimensionally topological department, at the end of which, I returned to New York to teach for a year at BMCC. For the next four years I was at RIT in Rochester. In addition to my teaching and my research, I play cello, classical as well improvisational. I am an avid cyclist, and thoroughly enjoy hiking, cross-country skiing and backpacking.

Political Science

Dr. Simon Sheppard graduated with a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in Spring 2008, majoring in American Politics with a minor in International Relations. In Fall 2008 he joined the faculty of Long Island University, Brooklyn, as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science. His primary research focus is American political parties, campaigns and elections, the media, and Geopolitics. He has published four books over the past four years, his final volume in a trilogy on the fall of the Roman Republic, *Actium, 31BC* being released this summer. Simon Sheppard lives with his wife, Christina, and three children, Zach, Maya and Noah, in Larchmont, Westchester County.



Psychology

Dr. Sara Chiara Haden completed her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in 2007 after receiving her M.A. degree in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth in 2002 and her B.A. degree in Psychology and Italian from the University of Virginia in 1999. She completed her APA-accredited internship at the University of Florida in 2007 and served as the Research Postdoctoral Fellow on the Forensic Inpatient Service at NYU/Bellevue Hospital Center during 2007-2008.

Kevin B. Meehan, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Long Island University. He received his B.A. in Psychology and Political Science from New York University, his M.A. in Forensic Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, and his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Prior to joining the faculty at LIU he was a Supervising Psychologist at the Center for Intensive Treatment of Personality Disorders at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, and an Adjunct Instructor of Psychology at New York University. His research focuses on examining mechanisms of change in psychotherapy for patients with personality disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Benjamin Saunders recently completed his doctoral work in Social Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He was raised in the Chicago-area and received his undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Michigan.

Ben has recently presented papers and posters at both regional and national conferences in psychology, including the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, The Association for Psychological Science, and the Midwestern Psychological Association, to name a few.

His dissertation research examined whether people are socially rejected for behaving in positive-but-counter-stereotypical ways, and what implications these results may have for discourse on the racial academic achievement gap.

Departmental News and Updates

Dance Department

We welcomed Assistant Professor **Rodger Belman** to the department this past fall. He hit the ground running by performing a duet, *Fate*, and a solo, *Extended Ritual*, which he choreographed for the Dance Department Faculty Concert, which was October 10, 2008. He also restaged master choreographer Laura Dean's signature work, *Sky Light*, on the LIU Dance Majors for the Winter Concert, which was November 21 and 22, 2008.

Rodger also performed *Fate* at the "DanceMakers Redux", at the Peck Main Stage Theater, Milwaukee, WI.

Rodger was also invited to participate in "Arcs in Time", January 27-31, 2009 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. While there he taught master classes in Technique/Partnering, served on a panel discussion about the recent restagings of Laura Dean's *Tympani*, *Sky Light* and *Impact*, as well as assisting in the rehearsal of Laura Dean's "Impact."

Rodger has also been busy organizing some recruiting events. He and Mary Ann Wall represented the department at the 8th Regional High School Festival in Norfolk VA, March 4-7, 2009, by recruiting and teaching master classes. Rodger has also been teaching master classes at area high schools and has organized a recruitment event that will take place on campus April 8th. Four area high schools have been invited to take a master class with Rodger, get a tour of the campus, and see the Afternoon at LIU performance that afternoon.

In addition to recruiting, Rodger is the Dance Department liaison to the Dance Theater Workshop's College Partnership Program. He has mentored several dance major choreographers to participate in this program. His hard work paid off on March 29th, where B.F.A. sophomore, Lauren Paxton, performed her solo, *Refined Observations of the Wake*, at DTW in Manhattan.

As the Improvisation and Choreography professor this semester, Rodger worked with the dance majors to create a new work for the 60 x 60 Dance Project presented by Galapagos Art Space, Brooklyn, NY, April 7, 2009.

Lastly Rodger will be returning to the American Dance Festival Six Week program this summer to reconstruct and stage Laura Dean's *Infinity* at the American Dance Festival for the Past/Forward Program, July 20-22, 2009; as well as create new work for the Sarah Duke Memorial Gardens, July 2009.

Meanwhile Associate Professor **Dana Hash-Campbell** started off the year by assisting a recent alumni, Kate McCusker, present her work, *Untitled*, at the 2nd Annual Dance Gallery Festival at the Ailey Citicorp Theater September 13, 2008. Kate premiered *Untitled* in last year's Spring Concert, where the festival organizer, Astrid Von Usar, asked Kate to present her work.

While a recent hip injury kept Dana from performing in the faculty concert this year, she helped make the performance a success behind the scenes.

Dana presented, "Using Props for Alignment and Energetic Connections of the Trunk and Upper Extremities in the Dance Class" at the 18th Annual International Association for Dance Medicine and Science conference held in Cleveland, Ohio, October 23-26, 2008.

Dana also did some recruiting in Texas this past fall at the Houston and Dallas High Schools for the Performing and Visual Arts. She returned just in time to see the last performance of the Winter Concert and her new work *id*. *Id* was a collaboration with the casted dance majors using the recorded music of Assistant Professor Sam Newsome and the live music of Adjunct Professor Christopher Tunkel.

Also on the Winter Concert program was Dance Department Administrator and Production Coordinator, Mary Ann Wall's *Ma Tete Est Tombeé*, a work that Mary Ann restaged from her own company, Red Wall Dance Theatre's repertory.

This spring Dana is mentoring three student choreographers for the annual Spring Concert.

While waiting for hopefully her last hip surgery this summer, Dana will be attending the Horton Pedagogy Workshop to be certified in the Horton technique.



English Department

Jessica Hagedorn and Jaime Manrique (visiting Distinguished Author) are on the planning committee for the 2009 PEN World Voices Literary Festival, an annual event. This year, the festival ran from April 27 - May 3 in venues small and large throughout New York City.

Jonathan Haynes made a research trip to Nigeria last summer. Interviews with him were published in two Nigerian newspapers, he participated in a workshop in Lagos sponsored by the American Film Institute and the US Embassy, and he delivered two conference papers.

Robert Hullot-Kentor was an invited lecturer at Colgate University, the Cooper Union, and Manchester University in the United Kingdom.

John Killoran presented two papers in March: one at the Conference on College Composition and Communication on Intellectual property and the web and one at the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing.

Xiaoming Li presented the results of her sabbatical research in China at TESOL conferences in Denver and New York.

Maria McGarrity spoke on "Irish Modernism and the Primitive Other" and "Virginia Woolf, Modernism, and Empire" at the Universidade de Vigo, in Spain. She also gave the keynote address at the Sigma Tau Delta induction ceremony, Monmouth University.

Deborah Mutnick spoke on "Listening to History: Teaching Writing on the Verge of the Next Great Depression" at St. John's University and on a national database for basic writing at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 2009. In addition, she has continued to pursue her interest in oral history, stories, and technology at a three-day workshop at the Center for Digital Storytelling (Berkeley, California).

Srividhya Swaminathan won a prestigious Kluge Fellowship at the Library of Congress for 2008-2009. Her project is entitled "In Service of Commerce: British Arguments for Slavery in the Era Before Abolition, 1660-1790." Prior to that, she participated in a National Humanities Center Summer Institute in "Chaucer: Past, Present and Future." "The Savage Mother and her Noble Cause." American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, March 2009.

John High and Lewis Warsh, MFA faculty, gave a joint poetry reading in Chicago at the Association of Writers and Writing Program conference in February. Professor Warsh also read at the San Francisco Poetry Center and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in April.



Foreign Language Department

Gary Racz's commissioned verse translations of two Spanish Golden Age plays, Calderon de la Barca's "Life Is a Dream" and Lope de Vega's "Fuenteovejuna", will appear this spring in the Norton Anthology of Drama.

Honors Program

Fifteen Honors students, the Honors Co-Directors (**James Clarke** and **Cris Gleicher**), and the campus chaplain (**Father Charlie**) were in Paris, France for a one-credit, Honors travel seminar during spring break. Students taking the seminar represented a variety of class levels, from freshmen to seniors, and a variety of Conolly College majors—Speech Language Pathology (SLP), Biology, Music, Anthropology, and Journalism—and majors in the Business School and allied Health Sciences. The seminar theme, *Insiders and Outsiders: An Exploration of Multicultural Paris*, designed by James Clarke, engaged students in explorations of a variety of neighborhoods in Paris, visits to museums, historical monuments, and cultural events.

To prepare, students read materials on the history of the development of the city (from medieval times to the development of Haussmann's grand boulevards to architectural monuments such as I. M. Pei's Pyramid), including articles on more contemporary issues such as current immigrant communities in France, the 2005 "ethnic" riots, the Headscarf Controversy, and tensions between the French ideal of a universal national identity and multiculturalism.

In addition to many of the traditionally celebrated sights of Paris—Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Montmartre, Père Lachaise Cemetery, and Napoleon's Tomb—students spent time visiting the rue des Rosiers (a Jewish enclave since the 12th century), Belleville (a highly diverse Asian, African, and North African part of the city), the Institute of the Arab World, and the Grand Mosque of Paris. Food, of course, was a highly important focus of the trip. The group sampled crepes, Moroccan fare, Vietnamese-Laotian food, typical Brasserie food, a North African Salon de Thé, and French pastries and chocolate.

The students plan to present photographs and read journal entries from their trip at this year's Discovery Day and also for an Honors event next fall on Honors opportunities for educational travel.



Music Department

Prof. Robert Aquino completed a new composition, Tambourines, for vocal jazz ensemble and instrumental jazz ensemble with poems of Carl Sandburg and Langston Hughes set to music. The piece was performed in the Kumble Theater on April 29.

In the fall of 2008, **Prof. Sam Newsome** went on a European tour promoting his CD *The Romanian-American Jazz Suite*, where he was invited to perform concerts in Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Romania, Austria, Belgium, The Netherlands, and France.

On November 22, 2008 he was invited to perform at Flipfest (NYC) with Romanian pianist Lucian Ban—an all day music festival featuring recipients of the distinguished Artslink Award, presented by CEC Artslinks.

On November 24, 2008 Mr. Newsome performed with his project *The Romanian-American Jazz Suite* at Columbia University in Alfred Lerner Hall.

In January of 2008, Professor Sam Newsome released a CD recording entitled *The Romanian-American Jazz Suite*, released on Jazzaway Records.

On February 4 and 5, 2008, Mr. Newsome did a two-day residency at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York, where he conducted a master class on improvisation, performed a solo saxophone concert, and appeared as a special guest with Le Moyne College Jazz Ensemble.

On April 8, 2009, Mr. Newsome gave a master class at Princeton University for the Eastern European Studies Department, where he will discuss Romanian folk music and American jazz. He will also perform with his ensemble *The Romanian-American Jazz Suite* later that evening.

While on sabbatical, **Dr. Gloria Cooper** traveled to Cape Town, South Africa in March, 2008 - to present a paper at the SAJE (South African Jazz Educators) Conference titled "Beyond the Standards: Exploring Repertoire for the Jazz Vocalist."

In March 2008, she was a visiting scholar at the University of Cape Town – presenting vocal jazz master classes for vocal jazz majors in the Music Department.

She was a featured performer in the opening concert for the SAJE Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, as well as the featured vocalist/pianist at the Green Dolphin Jazz Club in Cape Town, South Africa – performed with leading South African musicians.

Professor Cooper was also the featured vocalist with a band of leading South African musicians for an outdoor concert in Stellenbosch, South Africa and taught and performed in a Jazz Workshop in Belgium in July, 2008

Publications 2008-2009

English

Gilles, Sealy and Alison Gilles. "An Irishwoman in China." *Studies in Travel Writing* 12 (2008): 241-263.

Hagedorn, Jessica. "Three Vampires," a multimedia theater collaboration with director Ping Chong is scheduled for production in December 2009.

Haynes, Jonathan. "Nollywood." *International Encyclopedia of Communication*. Ed. Wolfgang Donsbach. Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008. Vol. 7: 3322-3324.

—"Media: Cinema." *New Encyclopedia of Africa*. Second Edition. Eds. John Middleton and Joseph C. Miller. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008. Vol. 3: 516-518.

—"Nigerian Videos, at Home and Abroad." 2008. *Global Civil Society 2007/8: Communicative Power and Democracy*. Eds. Martin Albrow et al. London and Los Angeles: Sage. 204-207.

Hullot-Kentor, Robert, ed. *Current of Music*, by T. W. Adorno. Polity Press, March 2009, 512pp.

—"Em que sentido exatamente a industria cultural nao mais existe," Portuguese translation by Fabio Durao, in Durao, Zuin, Vaz, editors, *Industria Cultural Hoje* (Sao Paulo: Biotempo, 2008), pp. 17-29.

—"Il senso esatto in cui l'industria culturale non esiste piu," Italian translation by Marco Solaroli, in *Studi Culturali* (2:2008), pp. 223-239.

—"Robert Hullot-Kentor in conversatie cu Fabio Akcelrud Durao," Rumanian translation by Ana-Karina Schneider in *Transylvania Review*.

Killoran, John B. "The Rhetorical Situations of Web Résumés." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 39.3 (2009): 263-284.

Li, Xiaoming. *Learning the Literacy Practices of Graduate School: Insiders' Reflections on Academic Enculturation*. Coedited with Christine Pearson Casanave. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 2008.

McGarrity, Maria. *Washed by the Gulf Stream: the Historic and Geographic Relation of Irish and Caribbean Literature*. Newark, DE: U of Delaware P, 2008.

McGarrity, Maria and Claire A. Culleton, eds. *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Mutnick, Deborah. "Intersections: A Place to do 'the Work'." *Reflections: A Journal of Writing, Community Literacy, and Service Learning*. Vol. 8, No. 1, Fall 2008.

—"Reflections on 'Writing City Life': Theory and Practice of a Place-Based Composition Pedagogy." In *Composing Other Spaces*. Ed. John Tassoni and Douglass Reichert Powell. Hampton Press, 2009.

Swaminathan, Srividhya. "Anthony Benezet," "Thomas Clarkson," "Olaudah Equiano," "Granville Sharp," "John Wesley, Methodism and Social Reform," "Wilberforce Act, William Wilberforce and the End of the British Slave Trade." *The International Encyclopedia of Protest and Revolution, 1500 to Present*. Blackwell Publishing (March 2009).

Political Science

Ehrenberg, John. "Concerning Barney Frank's Claim that 'I Told You So,'" *New Political Science* 31:1 (March 2009), pp. 105-108.

McSherry J. Patrice, "'Industrial Repression' and Operation Condor in Latin America," in Marcia Esparza et al, eds., *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Dirty War Years*, forthcoming 2009 from Routledge.

Sociology-Anthropology

Ali, Syed. 2008 "Understanding Acculturation among Second-Generation South Asian Muslims in the United States," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 42 (3): 383-411.

Hendrickson, Hildi. 2008 "Toward A Cross-cultural Analysis of Dress in 19th and 20th Century Namibia." In *Heritage and Cultures in Modern Namibia – In-depth Views of the Country*. Cornelia Limpricht and Megan Biesele, eds., pp. 88-103. Klaus Hess Publishers: Windhoek – Göttingen.

Juwayeyi, Yusuf. 2008 "Human and animal interaction on the Shire Highlands, Malawi: The evidence from Malowa Rockshelter." In *Animals and People: Archaeozoological Papers in Honor of Ina Plug*: Badenhorst, S. Mitchell, P. and Driver, J.C. (eds) pp.83-93. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Juwayeyi, Yusuf. 2008 "Wealth and affluence in southern Malawi during the Proto-Historic period: The evidence from archaeology, oral traditions and history." *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 188: 102-115.

Kim, Haesook 2009 "The Avalanche Perspective: Women Jurists in Korea (1952-2008)" *Feminist Legal Studies*, Vol. 17:1 (April).

The Faculty Forum, sponsored by the Dean of Richard L. Conolly College, provides an informal venue where faculty from different disciplines within the College and from the Campus's other schools can gather to engage each other in lively intellectual exchange. Since 2004, there have been 19 faculty presentations. Currently, the Forum is coordinated by **Drs. Gladys Schrynemakers** and **William Burgos**. Faculty interested in presenting work to the Campus community or in organizing a panel on a topic related to teaching or research should direct their proposals to Dr. Schrynemakers or Dr. Burgos.

Below is an excerpt from a Faculty Forum presentation by **Prof. Harriet Malinowitz** (English), **“Propaganda: Persuasion in the Age of Unreason,”** given on October 29th, 2008.



In most of earlier human history, masses of people had had little say in anything. But with the rise of democracy, the broadening of the voting franchise, muckraking journalism, organized labor, and a growing sense that the little people had the right and the power to talk back to and act against the big ones, the big people needed new forms of social control. How they theorized about manipulating people through language, often against people's own real interests, and by creating what became known as *public opinion*, is the subject of my talk today.

To examine propaganda and its relationship to contemporary rhetoric, I'd like to start with Aristotle's definition of rhetoric—which was identifying and using all the available means of persuasion in a situation—and then consider what that has come to mean over the course of the twentieth century. This was the century in which mass media took enormous evolutionary leaps, Freudian psychology achieved professional and popular currency, and the field of public relations was born. Public relations redefined the art of persuasion and founded radical new instruments for selling us things—all sorts of things—not only products, but attitudes and beliefs: things like politics, economic policies, social conformity, bigotry, the corporate ethos, wars, patriotism, electoral candidates, beliefs about other countries and cultures, complacency about a rapidly deteriorating environment—and much more. It is virtually impossible to understand how rhetoric has functioned in contemporary life without understanding public relations, and nobody has explained public relations better than Edward Bernays, Sigmund Freud's American nephew, widely recognized as the “father” of the field.



 Twentieth-century theories of rhetoric also focus on the role of “interpretation” in discourse, and there has been a widespread critique of pure reason. In fact, probably the most significant leap, for our purposes, from Aristotle to contemporary rhetoric has to do with the former's faith in the power of logic, which itself relied on empirical evidence, and the disintegration of that faith more recently. It's true that even Aristotle seemed to *implicitly* suggest that irrationality is an important element of persuasion, as in his formulation, *pathos* and *ethos*—appeals based on emotion and on the character of the speaker as performed through the speech—accompany *logos*, or the logical argument of the speech itself.

Yet Aristotle's notion of argument was still a linear one, a progression of appeals that would scoop up the audience, by hook or by crook, and propel it in a particular direction. Bernays, on the other hand, scoffs at argument as an effective tool of persuasion, calling it “an old-fashioned approach,” insufficient as a means for accomplishing ends because it is all about “assaulting, single-handed, the resistance of inertia.” For him, “the newest weapons of persuasion” involve processes which call to mind more recent thinkers: tapping into suppressed human desires (a concept he owed to Freud); manipulating symbols (his understanding of this process is very Burkean); and recognizing that the power of persuasion is not just a top-down, repressive affair, but rather is something that circulates in society (a Foucauldian-type notion).



Conolly College Dean's Office

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