

Audience!!

Very Early Perspectives

Aristotle. *The Rhetoric and Poetics of Aristotle*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts, Ingram Bywater. New York: The Modern Library, 1954.

- Aristotle wasn't the *first* to discuss audience, but he nevertheless contributed many ideas to this discussion that continue to be referenced today.

Notable Quotes:

"Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself" (Aristotle).

Beginnings of a Debate

Booth, Wayne C. "The Rhetorical Stance." *College Composition and Communications* 14 (1963): 139-45.

Flower, Linda S. "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing." *College English* 41 (1979): 19-37.

Ong, Walter S.J. "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction." *PMLA* 90 (1975): 9-21. Rpt. *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977. 53-81.

Long, Russell. "Writer-Audience Relationships: Analysis or Invention?" *College Composition and Communication* 31 (1980): 221-26.

Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy." *College Composition and Communication* 35 (1984): 155-71.

- Though debates about audience have existed for quite some time, this period produced several theories and viewpoints which brought the issue into sharper focus. Just *how much* the author does (or should) consider the audience when they write was a major focal point, and several of the above articles deal with just that issue. The idea of "audience" took on enough significance that in 1984, CCC devoted an entire issue to the concept.

Notable Quotes:

The "rhetorical stance" lies between "the pedant's stance" and "the advertiser's stance" (Booth).

"The historian, the scholar or scientist, and the simple letter writer all fictionalize their audiences, casting them in a made-up role and calling on them to play the role assigned" (Ong).

The writer's choices "*create* a very specific reader who exists only for the duration of the reading experience." The role of the writer shifts "from amateur detective to that of creator" (Long).

"The most complete understanding of audience thus involves a synthesis of the perspectives we have termed audience addressed, with its focus on the reader, and audience invoked, with its focus on the writer" (Ede and Lunsford)

Additional Perspectives

Elbow, Peter. "Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience." *College English* 49 (1987): 50-69.

Berlin, James A. "Postmodernism, Politics, and Histories of Rhetoric." *Pre/Text* 11.3-4 (Fall/Winter 1990): 169-88.

Swyt, Wendy. "Audience as a Cultural Condition: Using Popular Advertisements in College Writing Assignments." *Journal of Teaching Writing* 15.1 (1996): 51-64.

Reiff, Mary Jo. "Rereading 'Invoked' and 'Addressed' Readers Through a Social Lens: Toward a Recognition of Multiple Audiences." *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory* 16.3 (1996): 407-24.

- Once the terms of the debate had been largely defined, these authors (and others) sought to influence the ways in which these ideas could be implemented in and outside of the classroom. New terms, as well, were added to the lexicon of this concept, as the field encompassed an ever-growing understanding of "audience."

Notable Quotes:

"[T]he ability to *turn off* audience awareness – especially when it confuses thinking or blocks discourse – is also a 'higher' skill" (Elbow).

"A rhetoric argues for certain subject positions in the members of the audience" (Berlin).

"[A]udiences become primarily positioned, produced by, and inscribed in, the text" (Swyt).

Key Concepts

Rhetorical stance/Pedant's stance/Advertiser's stance – see above Booth quote.

Writer-Based Prose/Reader-Based Prose – Flower advocates alternating between these two forms.

Addressed and Invoked Audiences – see above quote from the Ede and Lunsford article.

Piaget/Vygotsky/Bakhtin/Meade – these theorists' ideas about human development are referenced often, extensively so in the Elbow article.

Primary/Secondary/Immediate/Gatekeeper/Watchdog Audiences – Reiff defines these classifications of audience as existing primarily in business-writing environments.