Michel Foucault's Theory of Rhetoric as Epistemic

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In this essay, Michel Foucault's notion of the discursive formation is used as a starting point for formulation of a middle-level theory that explains the process by which rhetoric is epistemic. Five theoretical units derived from Foucault's work–discursive practices, rules, roles, power, and knowledge–are discussed, along with the relationships among them. Foucault's theory then is illustrated in an analysis of Disneyland, a system of discursive acts that result in clearly specified knowledge or truth of a particular kind. Finally, the contributions Foucault's theory makes to the debate on rhetoric as epistemic are discussed.

OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, beginning with Robert Scott's essay in 1967,[1] scholars in speech communication have debated the relationship between rhetoric and knowledge. Although the debate was presaged by the Greek sophists and Plato, [2] and Douglas Ehninger correctly located its modern roots in such scholars as Susanne Langer, Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, Henry Johnstone, Jr., and Michael Polanyi,[3] viewing rhetoric as epistemic is a radical departure from the modern tradition of rhetoric.[4]

Scott's article is prolegomenous at two levels of scholarly concern. At its most fundamental, metatheoretical level, the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate involves ontological questions that, at times, are masked by taxonomic disputes. For example, Barry Brummett argues that humans apprehend sense data by symbolic processes; hence, "reality" is constructed by humans, in concert, as they transform sense data into symbolic, intelligible experience. "Truth" becomes, for Brummett, a product of consensus.[5] Richard Cherwitz, and coauthors James Hikins and Earl Croasmun, respond that reality exists independently of human experience and is accessible to humans. Truth is correspondence to reality.[6] Celeste Condit (Railsback) attempts to bridge the two views by contrasting an objective reality with a humanly created truth arrived at by *perceived* correspondence to such reality.[7]

Even the term "knowledge" causes dispute. The Cherwitz camp defines it as "justified true belief."[8] Brummett seems to agree; however,

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his notions of both truth and justification are anchored in human agreement rather than in a noumenal, apprehensible sphere.[9] Thomas Farrell and Walter Carleton debate types of knowledge,[10] and Richard Crable posits knowledge as the status of argument claims.[11] As important as such taxonomic debates are, our concern here is with another level of the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate.

This second level of discussion in the debate has emerged in response to Michael Leff's call for middle-level theory in this area. He asserts that studies concerned with rhetoric as epistemic tend to be either meta-rhetorical essays that focus on theoretical issues but lack concrete points of reference[12] or historical/textual essays that address the particular to such an extent that the understanding of their theoretical significance is difficult.[13] He calls for studies that address the "middle level issues that form the content of a[n epistemic rhetorical] theory" to address the "void in the conceptual space between the specificity of the historical/textual studies and the grand abstractions of the meta-rhetorical essays."[14]

Among those who formulate middle-level theory of the kind for which Leff calls is Richard Gregg, who traces human symbolizing to its origination in the mind-brain, deriving principles of "symbolic inducement" from neuropsychological studies of perception.[15] Cherwitz and Hikins focus instead on the relationship of the self to the known. They distinguish knowledge from perception by the former's "inherently linguistic" nature, arguing that humans come to justified true belief by the "differentiative," "associative," "preservative," "evaluative," and "perspectival" constituents of rhetoric.[16] Using similar perspectives, Crable and John Lyne both discuss the nature of "justification,"[17] and Condit (Railsback) deals with language networks as materially bounded by the physical stimuli that exert "semi-universal forces" upon linguistic structures.[18]

Others have contributed to the development of middle-level theory on rhetoric as epistemic, even though they do not specifically relate their work to this theme. Much of rhetorical theory and criticism developed in the field of speech communication since Leff's article relates to the notion of rhetoric as epistemic. For example, Walter Fisher's developing notions of the "narrative paradigm" offer a theory about the creation of knowledge by means of *mythos.*[19] Various authors have contributed to the "ideological turn" in rhetorical criticism, wrestling with questions of method, perspective, and, ultimately, what can be known.[20] Some argumentation studies, as well, have abandoned questions of validity rooted in positivism for discovery of socially created knowledge.[21] Similarly, Lyne proposes "rhetorics of inquiry" to understand discourse in various academic disciplines and to relate it to public-life discourse.[22] Leff himself suggests that metaphorical structure may function in the same manner as topical invention, acting as "imaginative rationality."[23]

Many of these scholars who indirectly contribute to middle-level theory about rhetoric's epistemic function avoid the "epistemological mare's nest"[24]—perhaps purposively—that characterizes the metatheoretical level of the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate simply by not dealing with ontological issues. As a result, middle-level theory by those directly concerned with the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate has remained relatively insular. Theory building in this area could be enhanced by consideration of the work of these and other scholars who are concerned with similar issues but who do not respond directly to the debate.

One scholar whose work has influenced a number of speech communication scholars outside the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate is Michel Foucault. His elaboration of the notion of the discursive formation specifies elements involved in the rhetorical creation of knowledge that can serve as units for a well-developed epistemic rhetorical theory. In an attempt at rapproachement between the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate and modern theories of and approaches to rhetoric that as yet have had little impact on the debate, we will review briefly Foucault's notion of the discursive formation as a starting point for formulation of a middle-level theory of the process by which rhetoric is epistemic. This notion suggests units of such a theory that focuses on rhetorical structures rather than on such things as the workings of the individual mind-brain, the self as the creator of discourse, or the criteria for true knowledge, the current foci of rhetoric-as-epistemic theory builders. Finally, we will demonstrate the applicability and utility of the theory derived from Foucault's work in an analysis of Disneyland. We hope that this discussion will suggest the usefulness of incorporating into the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate notions from those who do not directly enter that debate.

THEORETICAL UNITS OF AN EPISTEMIC RHETORIC

Foucault defines an episteme as "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems."[25] It is the code of a culture that governs "its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices."[26] An episteme, in other words, is a characteristic order that defines the discourse for a period.

The episteme Foucault finds in the sixteenth century, the Renaissance, for example, was based on the ordering principle of resemblance or similitude.[27] Plants were seen as resembling stars, the intellect of the human being as reflecting the wisdom of God, and painting as imitating space. Knowledge consisted of the finding of resemblances, and language was not so much used by humans as experienced as part of a natural order. In the Classical Age, the period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, representation was the

principle of the episteme.[28] Language served as the signs of things that made up reality, severing the natural connection between words and things. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the period that might be called the Modern Epoch, the theory of representation was replaced by an awareness of history so that elements, including language, became intelligible in terms of their growth and evolution.[29] Language thus became one object of knowledge to perceive among others and no longer had privileged status over other things. In this age, human beings have gained supremacy over language and have replaced it as the organizing principle of knowledge.

With the publication of *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Foucault began to use the term "discursive formation" rather than "episteme." The new term makes clear the central role Foucault sees for discourse in the structure of knowledge. A framework for knowledge is constituted by a shared body of discourse or given discursive practices.

From Foucault's discussion of the discursive formation come five primary units that form the basis of a middle-level epistemic theory: discursive practices, rules, roles, power, and knowledge. These units or concepts serve to elaborate Foucault's notion of the discursive formation by describing its specific processes in greater detail.

Discursive Practices

Of primary importance in Foucault's theory on rhetoric as epistemic is discursive practices. By "discursive practices," Foucault does not mean the speech acts of our daily lives. Rather, he is concerned with discourse that, because it follows particular rules or has passed the appropriate tests, is understood to be true in a culture. For example, "It is going to rain" is a common speech act of the kind that does not concern Foucault. This statement becomes part of the discourse in which Foucault is interested, however, when it is spoken by a meteorologist for the National Weather Service and is deemed true in the culture because of its grounding in meteorological theory.

Foucault's use of the term, "discursive practices," is not limited to written and spoken discourse but includes non-discursive acts as well. He includes as discursive practices in his own writings such phenomena as architectural forms, use of space, institutional practices, and social relations.[30] In *The History of Sexuality,* for example, he discusses "the polarity established between the parents' bedroom and that of the children"[31] and sees such elements as the "space for classes, the shape of the tables, the planning of the recreation lessons, the distribution of the dormitories" as referring to "the sexuality of children."[32] Another example of the broad scope Foucault envisions for discursive practices can be found in *Discipline and Punish,* where Foucault discusses the use of the architectural figure of the panopticon to induce particular effects on inmates.[33] Foucault's notion of discursive practices seems

generally synonymous with many contemporary definitions of rhetoric as symbolicity in all of its forms—both discursive and non-discursive.

Rules

A second theoretical unit of a discursive formation is rules. Rules, for Foucault, are principles or procedures that govern a discursive formation; a discursive formation assumes its particular character because of these rules. Generated themselves through discursive practices, these rules determine that one statement rather than another comes to be uttered in a discursive formation. The rules are not likely to be conscious and often cannot be articulated without great difficulty, but they determine the possibilities for the content and form of discourse.

Foucault suggests a number of rules that govern various aspects of the discursive formation. Some rules, for example, control the fact that certain things are able to be talked about; these rules are necessary for the appearance of objects of discourse.[34] Foucault uses as an example the lack of a concept of children's sexuality in the Victorian Age. Children's sexuality was not discussed and was not known as a concept. In other words, it simply was not an object of discourse.[35]

Other categories of rules concern who is allowed to speak and write in a discursive formation. Such rules dictate that we listen to certain people and reject as null and void the discourse of others. The discourse of students, children, the insane, and prisoners, for example, generally is not "heard" in our discursive formation.[36] Still other rules impose conditions on the individuals who speak so that only those deemed qualified by satisfying these conditions may engage in discourse on a specific topic. Lawyers, for example, must pass the bar examination in order to practice law. Rules also define the gestures, behaviors, and circumstances that must accompany speakers as they talk. Religious discourse, for instance, must be accompanied, in many cases, by the wearing of particular clothing if it is to be viewed as legitimate for that role.

Another group of rules concerns the form that concepts and theories must assume to be accepted as knowledge in the discourse.[37] In other words, they specify the kind of discourse in which knowledge resides. Such rules govern the arrangement of statements, style, and terminology used in discourse. In our discursive formation, for example, non-linear perspectives and ways of writing and speaking generally are not recognized as valid or appropriate; truth or knowledge does not reside in statements produced from such approaches.

Roles

A third unit of Foucault's theory of how rhetoric operates epistemologically is the notion of roles played by rhetors in a discursive

formation. His notion of roles suggests that discourse, rather than the rhetor, serves as the organizing principle of discourse and thus of knowledge.

While human beings currently constitute the organizing principle of knowledge or are viewed as the origin of knowledge in the discursive formation, Foucault sees this view as changing. We are on the brink of a new discursive formation, Foucault believes, in which the conception of the human rhetor as the organizer and creator of knowledge will disappear. In this new formation, the ordering principle of knowledge will not be the knowing subject but rather discourse as a set of formal relationships, structures, and practices.[38] Specific individuals will not be seen as organizing discourse and knowledge; rather, discourse as a set of formal relationships long antedating our personal identities will constitute the organizing principle for those who use the discourse. Impersonal, authorless discourse will be the primary source of knowledge.

Foucault's conception of roles further suggests the unimportance of individual rhetors in a discursive formation. Who, in particular, is doing the speaking and writing in a discursive formation is of little interest to Foucault. Instead, he sees rhetors simply as playing roles and filling vacant spaces in a discursive formation that could be filled by many different individuals. Foucault does not deny that discourse originates with human beings and that the production of discourse is uniquely human. His focus is simply on the roles human beings assume in a discursive formation—roles that receive power and position from discursive practices rather than individual qualities of individual rhetors.

The notion of role, then, allows Foucault to view the rhetor as a subject knowable only through the discursive practices of the formation in which that rhetor "speaks." This role is created and constrained by the discursive formation, allowing rhetors in certain roles to be heard in that formation, while others are not. Foucault, then, is not interested in the individual gifts that enable a specific doctor to practice medicine but rather in the rules that must be followed in order for the role of doctor to be held.[39] The collective activity of a discursive formation—operationalized as rhetorical roles—is of greater significance, in Foucault's theory, than the specific individuals who fill those roles.

Power

Another unit in Foucault's theory of rhetorical epistemology is power. He defines power as the overall system, process, or network of force relations spread through the entire discursive formation.[40] Foucault uses the term "disciplinary power" to describe this view of power—operating through conformity to norms or standards for correct behavior. It exerts control that is continuous, subtle, automatic, generalized, taken for granted, and present in all aspects of the discursive formation.

Foucault's notion of power also includes the view that power is not only negative or repressive; it is productive and creative as well. Foucault explains why this must be so:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse.[41]

In a prison, for example, power may produce an individual subjected to habits, rules, order, and authority; delinquency, recidivism; and destitution in the inmate's family.[42]

For Foucault, then, power as conformity to norms is omnipresent, diffused, and thus generally hidden to the participants of the discursive formation because it is contained in all relationships in that formation. What we tend to think of as mechanisms of power—overt controls over individuals or rules exerted by one group over another—are, in Foucault's view, simply the terminal forms that power takes.[43]

Knowledge

The final theoretical unit Foucault suggests is knowledge. Knowledge is whatever is considered to be truth in a discursive formation. Whatever can be talked about or is an object of discourse constitutes knowledge. This knowledge is discourse that comes from individuals' occupation of certain roles, that follows specified rules, and that involves certain power relationships of the discursive formation. Knowledge is a function of the interaction of the other units and, in turn, affects them.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THEORETICAL UNITS

The interactions among the theoretical units—discursive practices, rules, roles, power, and knowledge—found in Foucault's works constitute a middle-level epistemic rhetorical theory. The focal point of the theory concerns the relationship between discursive practices and knowledge: discursive practices are equal to knowledge. In turn, knowledge has an impact on the form and content of the discursive practices. The other units of the theory are dynamically interrelated; descriptions of the major interactions among them detail the manner in which discursive practices come to equal knowledge.

A reciprocal relationship exists between, for example, the units of power and discursive practices. Power is generated through particular kinds of symbol use, while at the same time the power spread throughout a discursive formation has an impact on the nature of the discursive practices in a discursive formation. The power involved in the penal system, for example, allows the existence of a discourse of criminology that, among other functions, defines a criminal population.[44] Con-

versely, that discourse of criminology provides the power to define a population of criminals. Similarly, the power involved in the educational system produces particular discursive practices to embody and carry out that power. These discourses, in turn, give power to that system in various ways—to define certain individuals as gifted and others as learning disabled, for example.

The relationship between discursive practices and rules in Foucault's theory also is a reciprocal one. The discursive practices of a discursive formation produce certain rules that govern that formation. At the same time, those rules have an impact on the nature of the discursive practices that result. Rules that control what can be talked about, for example, produce discursive practices that dictate what concepts receive support in the discourse. At the same time, the discursive practices that contain some objects of discourse and repress others constitute rules or guidelines by which future discourse will be guided.

The rules that govern and are produced by discursive practices are viewed as producing particular kinds of roles for rhetors in a discursive formation. The rules determine who is allowed to be heard, the conditions that individuals in these roles must meet in order to assume the roles, and behaviors that must accompany assumption of the role. The reverse relationship exists as well. Particular roles produce, sustain, and legitimize particular rules of the discursive practices.

The relationship between roles and knowledge is a dynamic one as well. In Foucault's view, rhetors speak the knowledge of a discursive formation by assuming particular roles. When rhetors engage in symbolicity ensconced in roles that are deemed powerful, what they speak is the knowledge of the discursive formation. The discursive practices of those in powerful roles, in other words, follow the rules specified so that their discourse is correct, appropriate, and thus true. Reciprocity exists between the units of roles and knowledge, too, in that the roles not only produce knowledge, but the knowledge continues to create and maintain those roles and the perception of them as legitimate.

RHETORIC AS EPISTEMIC AT DISNEYLAND: ILLUSTRATION OF FOUCAULT'S THEORY

To leave Foucault's theory at this point does not fully respond to Leff's plea for middle-level theory concerning the epistemological function of rhetoric. Identification and illustration of the units of his theory and their interactions place it largely in the "grand abstractions of the meta-rhetorical essays."[45] For Foucault's theory to meet the demands specified by Leff for middle-level theory, it must deal with practical issues that are affected by our meta-theories. As he explains:

> In fact, then, our meta-rhetorical speculation is autotelic. It does not have an outlet for application, and as a result, our theoretical literature stutters at the level of pure

abstraction. Ironically, however, this same literature keeps insisting that rhetoric is a practical discipline, that it operates mainly in the context of concrete problems, and that it calls for decisions leading to action.[46]

If Foucault's theory is to be viewed as a middle-level theory that deals both with abstraction and with concrete problems in the practical realm, it must have relevance and implications for the rhetor who wants to make his or her communication more effective. Foucault's theory functions at this level in that it serves as a critical tool that allows rhetors to analyze and understand the framework, context, or system in which discourse is produced and functions. It helps us understand the effects of discourse-created knowledge on us and how those effects were achieved. It does this by alerting us to the many instances of discursive production that are functioning in a rhetorical framework to produce certain kinds of knowledge and enables us to analyze the rules that influence that process. Further, Foucault's theory enables rhetors to examine the various roles held by and available to rhetors in the discursive formation and, finally, to understand the operation of power in that formation.

To demonstrate how Foucault's work can be used as middle-level theory by which to explain the rhetorical processes that create knowledge, we have chosen as a case study Disneyland, an amusement park conceived by Walt Disney and located in Anaheim, California, as well as in a section of Disney World in Orlando, Florida. [47] Disneyland was selected to illustrate Foucault's theory because it constitutes a fully developed system of discursive acts that result in clearly specified knowledge or truth of a particular kind. Yet, it is a system that is confined by the boundaries of the park so that its knowledge clearly can be distinguished from other knowledges outside of and apart from it.

Discursive Practices

Illustration of Foucault's theory is perhaps best begun with the central unit of the theory and identification of the various discursive practices in Disneyland that follow rules or have passed appropriate tests so that they are understood to constitute knowledge. Three basic types of practices or mechanisms constitute the major discursive practices of Disneyland—the design elements of the environment, the visitors' role, and the image of the employees.

Among the design elements of the environment that constitute discursive practices are architectural and spatial mechanisms that regulate the flow of people. One such element is "the hub," referred to in Disneyland's literature as the "most unique crowd flow or 'people system' of all."[48] Main Street of Disneyland is an entrance corridor that can absorb large masses of people in a short period of time. As visitors enter the park and move down this corridor, they encounter a large hub from which the various lands—Fantasyland, Frontierland, Adventureland,

and Tomorrowland—radiate out like the spokes of a wheel. Each land is easy to enter and exit because everything leads back to the central hub. This spatial feature maintains traffic flow and continuously directs visitors to a point from which they are encouraged to enter all of the "lands."

Design elements of the shops on Main Street constitute mechanisms of discourse at Disneyland as well. While typical stores are separated from each other, emphasizing their competition for patronage, open passages connect stores to facilitate visitors' movement among them. The resulting perception is that the shopkeepers are friendly and cooperative and that all will gain from any purchase made in any of the shops.

Scale is another such element used at Disneyland. A process called "forced perspective" is used in the park to make buildings and other objects appear taller or farther away than they actually are. Buildings and landscaping are scaled progressively smaller toward the rear or top of a scene, resulting in the illusion of a dramatically larger and deeper scene than actually exists.[49]

Other design elements used at Disneyland are various practices that regulate the flow of lines and make them appear shorter than they are. This constant "attention to people comfort and crowd flow"[50] is evidenced in queue areas placed out of the mainstream of traffic and in lines that appear to end at a particular visible point but that actually continue out of sight of passersby inside a ride or exhibit hall. Still other mechanisms are used to make those who must wait for long periods be more comfortable. Drinking fountains are placed next to queue areas, cover is provided for such areas to provide protection from the weather, and occasional live entertainment is provided for those who wait.

Music is another important part of the Disneyland environment. Every afternoon, a band concert performs in the central park of Town Square, and at least once a day marching bands and floats create the impression of a Fourth-of-July celebration as they march down Main Street. Music emanates from bushes, from a variety of performances, and from rides and exhibits. The music is the same—trivial, not socially significant, not challenging, but lilting, melodic, and captivating. The song, "It's a Small World, After All," sung in various languages by figures representing children of the world, typifies the musical style of Disneyland.

Yet another design element of Disneyland that constitutes a discursive practice is the extensive signage of the park. There are more than 45,000 individual signs at Disneyland and Walt Disney World, ranging from hand-lettered price cards to complex attention graphics.[51] These provide constant instructions for visitors, telling them such information as directions to attractions or how to behave on the monorail.

Finally, another predominant feature of the design of Disneyland is the synthetic and thus inauthentic nature of many elements in the environment. The jungle cruise promises a journey "through untamed lands and waterways where elephants, hippos, tigers and snakes threaten at every bend,"[52] but the animals are all synthetic and programmed. Brand-new creations—buildings and boats, for example—are aged through paint rather than the weather. Restaurants are housed in "authentically motifed facilities,"[53] but they are authentic neither in substance nor motif. Copies of design details remain just that—copies rather than originals. In the Hall of Presidents, for example, the claim is made for "absolute authenticity from the furniture on stage to the wigs, jewelry and costumes worn by the presidential figures."[54] A source of particular pride for the Disneyland corporation is that the chair in which the figure of George Washington sits is an exact reproduction of the chair he used during the 1787 Constitutional Convention.[55] The results are labeled "ultra-authenticity," but again the items are fakes and not authentic at all.[56]

Lack of authenticity can be seen in what is omitted at Disneyland as well. In Frontierland, for example, many elements of an authentic frontier environment are missing. The streets are not dirt or mud, restrooms are not outhouses, and heating and cooling are not provided by fire and open windows. In the jungle of Adventureland, there are no insects, and the horseless carriages on Main Street do not backfire and throw out black smoke. Also omitted are any natural occurrences that might inconvenience or offend guests. The streets are hosed down every night, the dew is wiped off the benches every morning, chipped paint is touched up daily, and fresh flowers replace old ones as soon as they wilt.[57]

Various design aspects of the rides and exhibits that constitute discursive practices also include animated figures and characters that are programmed to move in a repetitious and cyclical manner. These generally are designed to be perceived by the viewer as cute and adorable. In the Pirates of the Caribbean, for example, the basic premise of the story portrayed is that of a disaster—pirates have captured, pillaged, and are burning a town. The audience, however, tends not to perceive the scene as one of a disaster because the buccaneers are portrayed as lovable, blundering, fun loving, and cartoon-like. Even the figures to whom the disaster is happening are not to be viewed with alarm, for they are portrayed as generally enjoying their plight.

The role visitors are assigned in the rides and exhibits also constitutes a discursive practice at Disneyland. Visitors sit passively through the rides or before the exhibits, engulfed in programmed stimulation; nothing is required of them. While publicity material proclaims that there "is no substitute for the excitement of actual physical involve-

ment . . . the challenge of doing the real thing"[58] and that visitors "experience each scene just as surely as one of the cast because the entire range of human senses comes into play,"[59] the actual involvement of visitors is very limited.

Finally, various discursive practices can be seen as well in the image created by the employees of Disneyland. Employees appear clean and freshly scrubbed; there is no facial hair on the men. Disneyland's publicity stresses the importance of a particular physical image for the employees. Not only do these employees not come close to "what was once the stereotype amusement park image of the surly, unshaven, cigar-smoking barker . . . or the slovenly gum-chewing waitress,"[60] but the employees embrace "grooming standards that wisely avoid the shifting winds of fashion extremes and controversial styles."[61] Employees smile constantly and are always pleasant, friendly, and courteous. They also are sexless; the crotches on the men's pants are cut so low that nothing resembling a sexual being is evident. Because only the first names of the employees appear on their name badges, omitting the ethnicity of last names, sameness is promoted in visitors' perceptions of the employees. This omission also encourages a view of the employees as childlike in nature.

Rules

The discursive practices evident in the discursive formation that is Disneyland exemplify the rules of that formation that allow certain utterances and thus knowledge to emerge. Rules can be identified that indicate what constitute objects of discourse at Disneyland—what can be spoken about and what is prohibited, thus either contributing or not to the knowledge in that discursive formation. Individuality, initiative, choice, originality, and negative emotions such as frustration and anger clearly are not part of the body of discourse and thus the knowledge of Disneyland. Design elements are fashioned to prevent frustration, the rides prevent activity and initiative, the sameness of the employees prevents individuality, copies belie originality, and the visitor is offered no choices except trivial ones.

What constitutes objects of discourse is equally clear. Cleanliness is such an object. The synthetic materials used suggest easy maintenance for superb cleanliness, as does the fresh-scrubbed image of the employees and the litter-free grounds. That cleanliness is an object of discourse also is evidenced in the exchange of "dirty" money for colorful, fun, clean coupons upon entering Disneyland. Proper form is valued as an object of discourse over substance, evidenced in the copies of furniture, clothing, and works of art that lack the substance, spirit, and essence that led to their original creation.

Rules at Disneyland also govern the form that concepts must assume to be accepted as knowledge. These deal with the arrangement, style,

and terminology that knowledge assumes. Disneyland specifies that lilting, melodic music is the correct form for music, evidenced in its association with positive images such as patriotism and fun. Punk-rock music, on the other hand, is not a proper form for music and does not produce knowledge. This rule is evidenced not in any explicit statement made against such music but because this form never appears—it is not an object of discourse. Plastic and other artificial imitations of life also are forms that produce truth or knowledge—in part because they can be made better than the real thing. Because natural, original, authentic objects are more difficult to maintain and are unpredictable, these are not correct forms through which the production of knowledge can occur. The form that fun assumes also is clearly specified and leads to particular knowledge or truth about what fun is. To have fun at Disneyland is defined in this formation as sitting in rides and watching artificially created people and animals. It is not testing one's individual skills and abilities, nor is it making choices about what one thinks fun is.

Roles

Foucault's theory next suggests that the discursive practices in Disneyland, which embody various rules, also produce particular roles for rhetors to play in the discursive formation. Particular roles are created and constrained by the discursive practices and their rules, allowing rhetors only in certain roles to have their discourse heard in that formation. At Disneyland, the discursive practices create a clear, consistent voice or role for rhetors—one that is clean, sexless, polite, passive, follows orders, and does not initiate action or assert individuality. Employees exemplify these traits, the design elements of the park give voice to these traits, and the visitor is expected to express them as well. The role that is established for the rhetor at Disneyland is pleasant, sanitized, and passive, and only those who conform to this pattern are welcomed or have their discourse accorded value.

Knowledge and Power

Finally, the specific knowledge or truth of Disneyland that is produced by discursive practices that follow rules and maintain particular roles can be identified. The highest truth in the park resides in what is clean, synthetic, good, and fun. When truth or knowledge is defined in such a way and the discursive practices create these elements of the definition, there is little room to question the knowledge of the body of discourse that is Disneyland.

The discursive practices, rules, roles, and knowledge of Disneyland all are infused with a normative power that comes to control in very subtle ways the behavior of the visitor to the park. Numerous examples of this control can be cited. The breaking up of long lines visually controls the way visitors wait in line so that the frustration they normally

would experience at waiting in line is dispersed. Other aspects of humanness–sexuality, for example–are repressed as well. The constant instructions and music discourage visitors from thinking–perhaps about the possibility of engaging in behavior other than that presented as the norm. The figures featured in the rides and exhibits that are so predictable and well behaved because they have no choices help establish behavioral norms for the park as well; visitors are controlled and are expected to give up their own freedom to choose. Where visitors ordinarily would scorn fakery and imitations of real objects, here they embrace them, evidenced in one visitor's response to the passages between the stores on Main Street: This "isn't the way Main Street really was . . . but it is the way it should have been."[62] The power embodied in the system dictates acceptance of and preference for the inauthentic over the genuine.

Disneyland, then, is a powerful discursive system that succeeds at making people accept as normal what they generally would not, enjoy what they ordinarily would not, repress aspects of themselves that they generally would not, and not question what they generally would. The extreme detailing of the Disneyland experience in the "skillful orchestration of colors, lighting, special effects, motion and shapes"[63] constitutes discursive practices that create an entirely new frame of reference for the visitor. These discursive practices embody rules and power relations that promote wholesome, sterile, and predictable behavior and that produce rhetors who fill passive, clean, unquestioning roles.

This analysis of Disneyland by means of the theory suggested by Foucault's works demonstrates the utility of that theory as a pragmatic tool for understanding the discourse that affects our everyday lives and leads us to action. This middle-level theory gives rhetors insights into the operant discursive formation and the options available to us in that formation. Thus, we can analyze the formation in which discourse is produced, the effects of the formation and discourse on us, and how those effects are achieved.

But perhaps more important, Foucault's theory gives rhetors the understanding to create change in a discursive formation. When we understand the rules of a discursive formation, we are more able to question why some statements are considered true in a discursive formation and whether we want such rules to govern the discourse that creates our knowledge. When we understand how particular roles in a discursive formation are formed and maintained, we are more able to change our roles as rhetors within that system and to explore options for changing other roles that create particular kinds of knowledge as well. Similarly, when we are armed with knowledge of how power relations operate in a discursive formation, we are more able to choose whether or not to accept the influence of the power in the system, how to garner more power as rhetors in that system, and how to loosen the hold of that power over us.

Through an understanding of how discursive practices come to create knowledge, in other words, we have an opportunity to free our knowledge from the rules, roles, and powers that characterize the discursive practices that produced it and thus to know differently. Through such understanding, we are able to speak discourse that had been condemned to nonexistence and silence, with consequences described by Foucault: "A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom."[64]

CONCLUSION

Through his formulation of the middle-level theoretical units by which discourse creates knowledge, Foucault makes three contributions to the debate on rhetoric as epistemic. First, he focuses the debate clearly and firmly on the *process* by which rhetoric creates knowledge rather than on metaphysical abstractions and first principles about the human creation of discourse or the existence of objective reality apart from discourse. By focusing on the specific processes by which rhetoric becomes knowledge, he avoids the metaphysical conundrum in which the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate is mired. He makes the object to be explained discourse itself, apart from metaphysical existences. As those who believe that rhetoric makes truth prevail point out, discourse and its analysis must proceed on the basis of some acknowledged existences. From Foucault's perspective, this existence is discourse. In such a view, the study of rhetoric is the study of the constraints upon discourse and of knowledge, which is discursive.

A second contribution Foucault makes to the debate on rhetoric as epistemic through his middle-level theory lies in the pragmatic consequences of his theory. He encourages us to question much of what we have taken for granted in our study of rhetoric as a practical tool for practical living. Generally, when theorists and critics discuss the implications of their theories for the practical world of common rhetors, they deal with various aspects of the rhetorical process such as speakers, strategies, and effects, without examining or even paying attention to the larger framework in which these rhetorical processes occur. Foucault's theory, in contrast, forces us to analyze the framework in which rhetoric is produced and the effects of it on the rhetorical practices that occur within it.

Finally, Foucault contributes to the rhetoric-as-epistemic debate by settling questions, without acknowledging that he does so, about the domain and significance of rhetoric. Rhetoric becomes clearly separated from the study of lives and times (history), what is real and good (philosophy), and how individuals think (psychology) because it focuses on rhetoric not as the everyday discourse of our lives but as the global creator of all other thought. As important as the disciplines of history,

philosophy, and psychology might be, their discourse conforms to the principles of the production of knowledge through rhetoric. Rhetoric, then, constitutes the foundation, provides the boundaries, and generates the knowledge of these other disciplines. The epistemic rhetorical theory derived from the work of Michel Foucault explains the processes by which these foundations are constituted and knowledge of them is generated.

ENDNOTES

1. Robert L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," *Central States Speech Journal* 18 (1967): 9-17.
2. See, for example, Gorgias, "On the Nonexistent," trans. George Kennedy, in *The Older Sophists*, ed. R. K. Sprague (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972) 42-46; Mario Untersteiner, *The Sophists*, trans. Kathleen Freeman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954) 27-28; and John Poulakos, "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984): 219-22.
3. Douglas Ehninger, "A Synoptic View of Systems of Western Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 450-52.
4. Michael C. Leff, "In Search of Ariadne's Thread: A Review of the Recent Literature on Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 29 (1978): 77.
5. Barry Brummett, "Some Implications of 'Process' or 'Intersubjectivity': Postmodern Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 9 (1976): 21-49; and "On to Rhetorical Relativism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 425-37.
6. Earl Croasmun and Richard A. Cherwitz, "Beyond Rhetorical Relativism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 1-16; Richard A. Cherwitz, "Rhetoric as a 'Way of Knowing': An Attenuation of the Epistemological Claims of the 'New Rhetoric,'" *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 42 (1977): 207-19; James W. Hikins, "The Epistemological Relevance of Intrapersonal Rhetoric," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 42 (1977): 220-27; Richard A. Cherwitz and James W. Hikins, "Toward a Rhetorical Epistemology," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 47 (1982): 135-62; Richard A. Cherwitz and James W. Hikins, "Rhetorical Perspectivism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 249-66; and Richard A. Cherwitz and James W. Hikins, *Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986).
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8. Cherwitz and Hikins, *Communication and Knowledge* 21.
9. Brummett, "On to Rhetorical Relativism" 427.
10. Thomas B. Farrell, "Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62 (1976): 1-14; Walter M. Carleton, "What is Rhetorical Knowledge? A Response to Farrell—and More," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64 (1978): 313-28; and Thomas B. Farrell, "Social Knowledge II," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64 (1978): 329-34.
11. Richard E. Crable, "Knowledge-as-Status: On Argument and Epistemology," *Communication Monographs* 49 (1982): 249-62.
12. Leff provides as examples of such meta-rhetorical studies these essays: Cherwitz, "Rhetoric as 'A Way of Knowing'"; David M. Hunsaker and Craig R. Smith, "The Nature of Issues: A Constructive Approach to Situational Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 40 (1976): 144-56; and J. Michael Sproule, "The Psychological Burden of Proof: On the Evolutionary Development of Richard Whately's Theory of Presumption," *Communication Monographs* 43 (1976): 115-29.

13. Leff provides as examples of such historical/textual studies these essays: Kathleen M. Jamieson, "Pascal vs. Descartes: A Clash Over Rhetoric in the Seventeenth Century," *Communication Monographs* 43 (1976): 44-50; Ray E. McKerrow, "Campbell and Whately on the Utility of Syllogistic Logic," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 40 (1976): 3-13; and Gordon F. Hostettler, "George Saintsbury's View of Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 41 (1977): 210-20.
14. Leff 90.
15. Richard B. Gregg, *Symbolic Inducement and Knowing: A Study in the Foundations of Rhetoric* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984).
16. Cherwitz and Hikins, *Communication and Knowledge* 92-111.
17. Crable 253-55; and John Russell Lyne, "Rhetoric and Everyday Knowledge," *Central States Speech Journal* 32 (1981): 145-52.
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26. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1970) xx.
27. For Foucault's discussion of the episteme of the Renaissance, see *The Order of Things* 17-45.
28. Foucault discusses the episteme of the Classical Age in *The Order of Things* 46-214.
29. The episteme of the Modern Epoch is discussed in Foucault, *The Order of Things* xxiii, 43-44.
30. Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (New York: Tavistock, 1980) 106-07.
31. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (1978; rpt. New York: Vintage, 1980) 46.
32. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 28.
33. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977) 195-228.
34. Rules concerning objects of discourse are discussed in Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* 41-44.
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36. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* 224-25.

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38. Foucault, *The Order of Things* xxiii, 386; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977,* trans. Colin Gordon et al., ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980) 117; and Roy McMullen, "Michel Foucault," *Horizon* 11 (1969): 37.
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42. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 266-68.
43. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 92.
44. Paul Patton, "Of Power and Prisons: Working Paper on *Discipline and Punish,*" in *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy,* ed. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton (Sydney, Australia: Feral, 1979) 112.
45. Leff, "In Search of Ariadne's Thread" 90.
46. Leff 90.
47. While his subject matter, of course, differs, Foucault himself has done similar kinds of analyses. See, for example, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality,* in which various practices and mechanisms are analyzed for how they create particular kinds of knowledge.
48. *The Disney Theme Show: An Introduction to the Art of Disney Outdoor Entertainment: Volume 2* (n.p.: Walt Disney Productions, n.d.) 8.
49. *The Disney Theme Show* 9.
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59. *The Disney Theme Show* 4.
60. *The Disney Theme Show* 18.
61. *The Disney Theme Show* 19.
62. *The Disney Theme Show* 16.
63. *The Disney Theme Show* 15.
64. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 6.

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