7-1-1985

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Michael Dean Baker

Recommended Citation

Baker, Michael Dean, "Achieving writers' audience awareness by basing a systematic arrangement of
modern, practical approaches on Aristotle's "Rhetoric"" (1985). *Student Work*. 3093.
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ACHIEVING WRITERS' AUDIENCE AWARENESS BY BASING

A SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF MODERN, PRACTICAL APPROACHES

ON ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of English

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Michael Dean Baker

July 1985

UMI Number: EP74491

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

UMI EP74491

ProQuest

THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of
Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Name	Department
Dennis A. Fus	COMMUNICATION
Marvin V. Peterson	English
Phillip C. Smith	English

Phillip C Smith
Chairman

July 10, 1985
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I welcome this opportunity to thank: Dennis A. Fus, Ph.D., and Marvin Peterson, Ph.D., members of my thesis committee, for their time, effort, patience and understanding; my advisor, Phillip C. Smith, Ph.D., who, through his scholarship, wisdom, common sense and humor, helps people explore and understand the elusive process of writing and revising; and especially my wife, Kimberly, who held home and family together while I explored the writing process.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Writers with a clear conception of their intended readers and an accurate idea of reader reaction produce better writing than writers without such audience awareness. When writers fail they fail mostly because they lack audience awareness.

During the writing process, skilled writers mentally construct images of audience, interact with the constructions and thus simulate feedback from the audience. Experienced writers acquire approaches to constructing and interacting with audience, usually intuitively rather than systematically, and then employ those approaches automatically without conscious awareness of doing so. Making the approaches automatic frees the writer to think about other aspects of the writing process, and writers should strive toward making audience awareness approaches automatic. But developing writers benefit more from systematic rather than intuitive approaches because systems contain procedures and organization that writers may readily grasp; intuition relies on inborn talent that not all people possess.

Any effective systematic approach to audience awareness must address egocentrism, the pervasive tendency in unskilled writers to ignore the communication needs of

readers. One remedy for egocentrism in writers, social perspective taking, consists of the following steps:

1. The writer constructs, from early childhood to the present, opinions about what makes people tick.

2. The writer constructs a particular audience as the result of specific observations of one group of people.

3. The writer interacts with the constructed audience.

4. The writer discovers gaps and strategies to overcome the gaps as a result of the feedback from the interaction.

5. The writer employs specifics to carry out the strategies.

Modern commentators suggest approaches that correspond to the second through fifth phases of social perspective taking but neglect the first phase, constructing a knowledge/value base for audience, so writers may wish to consult Aristotle's Rhetoric to find an approach for constructing such a base.

Aristotle suggests the construction of a knowledge/value base by presenting the elements of reason, emotion and desire that influence how all human beings interpret discourse. A base built upon these elements provides the writer with an understanding of the

relationship between discourse and human nature, and puts other approaches to understanding audience into perspective.

Chapter two of this work presents the concepts of writer's constructed audience, interaction with and feedback from the constructed audience, egocentrism as inhibiting construction of audience and social perspective taking as a remedy for egocentrism. Chapter three uses social perspective taking as a matrix, with each section of the chapter correspondent to each phase. The writer's knowledge/value base consists of attitudes toward universal aspects of human nature, although modern commentators offer little by way of practical suggestions for writers who wish to establish such a base. Commentators do offer approaches for the following phases: recognizing and analyzing audience characteristics; role-taking through inferring audience attitudes; discovering communication gaps and strategies; and determining specifics, such as data selection and emphasis. Chapter four presents Aristotle's attempt at constructing a knowledge/value base for audience, specifically a universal audience based on understanding of human nature through three causes of human action--reason, emotion and desire.

2 AUDIENCE AWARENESS, OR LACK OF IT, AFFECTS WRITERS

2.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF AUDIENCE AWARENESS

Skilled writers differ significantly from unskilled writers in their awareness of audience. Skilled writers succeed because they write to their readers and unskilled writers usually fail because they ignore readers. One composition textbook author says writing "probably fails more often than not because of writers either failing to consider the audience or failing to understand the audience" for which they write (Woodson 18). Unskilled writers "fail to produce a successful composition because they have too little or no knowledge of their readers" (Pfister and Petrick 213); the unskilled writer lacks "a description of the reader," especially a description of those attributes of the reader that indicate how the reader might react to the writer's message (Young, Becker and Pike 178).

Practiced writers recognize the importance of audience awareness and use that awareness to produce effective writing. Rather than merely transmitting meaning, they "pinpoint the critical differences between themselves and their reader and design their writing to reduce those differences" (Flower, Problem-Solving 123).

Through audience awareness, good writers apparently do not just consider the differences between writer and reader and then compose with reference to a static set of characteristics. They consider and reconsider readers during the writing process and "continually modify their work with reference to their audience" and to their evolving images of the readers (Mitchell and Taylor 251). Skilled writers keep "an image of audience in mind" and repeatedly refer back to that image while writing (146). This separates practiced writers from beginners, because practiced writers "return to the construct of audience and refine it; beginners do not . . . " (Roberts and Sullivan 146). This image, or "internal monitor," in the writer's mind retains the initial impression of audience; senses the progress and changes occurring during the writing process; and makes "sensible and flexible decisions about audience during composing" (Roberts and Sullivan 146). In this way, skilled writers do not just recognize characteristics of the audience and adjust their writing to those characteristics, they also interact with a dynamic, internalized audience while composing.

2.2. INTERACTION: FUNCTION OF AUDIENCE AWARENESS

Interaction requires the audience in the mind of the writer to act and react, rather than just passively represent a group of readers. Interaction helps the writer achieve the primary goal, "to engage in some sort of cooperative activity with the reader" (Young, Becker and Pike 171).

The writer and audience engage in interactive, cooperative activity from the beginning of the writing process. The audience motivates the writing (Mitchell and Taylor 250) and "fires the writer's imagination" (Ong 10-11). Because the writer directs all writing "towards an audience," the imagined audience response controls the writing, telling the writer when ideas work or do not work (Mitchell and Taylor 250). Thus the writer produces interaction, not just a piece of paper with words on it (Mitchell and Taylor 250).

2.3. FEEDBACK: GOAL OF INTERACTION

Interaction supplies the writer with feedback during the writing process. Unlike oral communication, writing does not allow for direct, immediate feedback to the message. The speaker addresses the audience in person, but the writer writes to an audience "further away, in time or space or both" (Ong 10). The writer addresses a reader

"not present at all" (Ong 10).

Because of the absence of a real audience, the writer receives feedback to the message in the form of imagined audience responses. A speaker who literally faces the audience "can observe the reaction of listeners and can profit from this 'feedback'; however, a writer must try to imagine (and remain aware of) the hypothetical responses of a group of unseen readers" (Barritt and Kroll 51).

Berkenkotter defines the basic steps that writers take to achieve imagined reader response. She analyzes the protocols of skilled writers and groups their audience-related considerations into the following four categories:

> analyzing and/or constructing a hypothetical
> > audience
> setting goals and naming plans aimed at a
> > specific audience
> evaluating content and style (persona) with
> > regard to anticipated audience response
> reviewing, editing, and revising for a specific
> > audience. ("Understanding" 389-90)

2.4. CONSTRUCTED AUDIENCE PROVIDES FEEDBACK

Berkenkotter's first category, in which the writer constructs a hypothetical audience, suggests one meaning of audience defined by Park: the "set of conceptions or awareness in the writer's consciousness" that provides direction to the composition (250). Park identifies two general categories of meanings of audience: one category includes readers external to the text, the actual, living, human beings; the other general category includes the role that the audience finds for itself in the text and the set of conceptions the writer forms while writing the text (249-50).

Park's distinction between external audiences and textual audiences corresponds to the distinction made by Ede and Lunsford between addressed and invoked audiences. They say the "'addressed' audience refers to those actual or real-life people who read a discourse, while the 'invoked' audience refers to the audience called up or imagined by the writer" ("Audience Addressed" 156). So, according to these four commentators, the writer constructs a hypothetical audience, a set of conceptions in the consciousness, an invoked audience completely divorced from the real, flesh-and-blood readers.

Ong says the writer constructs "a fiction." He notes that 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" (17). Ede and Lunsford reiterate the creative role of the writer in constructing audience, saying:

> no matter how much feedback writers may receive after they have written something (or in breaks while they write), as they compose writers must rely in large part upon their own vision of the reader, which they create . . . according to their own experiences and expectations.
> ("Audience Addressed" 158)

Specifically, the constructed audience refers not to any and all the readers' characteristics, "but to those apparent aspects of knowledge and motivation in readers and listeners" that control the composition and determine the purpose of the writing (Park 249). The characteristics of the constructed audience can, according to this view, determine the form the composition takes. Skilled writers "make a mental sketch of their audience and choose the type of discourse" applicable to that perception (Berkenkotter, "Understanding" 392-93). For example, the writer with a constructed audience that represents a group of uneducated

people might build the composition around earthy examples
and popularly accepted facts; on the other hand, the writer
with a constructed audience that represents educated people
might rely on abstract concepts and hypothetical
conclusions (Aristotle 156).

Although the preceding attempts to identify writer's
constructed audience present a less than detailed
definition, two specific attributes of constructed audience
do emerge: the writer imagines the constructed
audience; characteristics of the constructed audience
include only those relevant to the production of the
composition. The constructed audience with these
attributes interacts with the writer, providing imagined
feedback during the writing process.

2.5. THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING AUDIENCE

Those studying the process of constructing audience
have long considered it "more intuitive and less
describable" than other aspects of the writing process
(Pfister and Petrick 219). The precise nature of
constructing audience eludes commentators. In addition to
saying writers adjust to or accomodate audience, says Park,
"we also talk about writers aiming at, assessing, defining,
internalizing, construing, representing, imagining,
characterizing, inventing, and evoking audiences" (248).

Some writers, as Kroll explains, rely on intuitive,
unsystematic, almost indescribable means of constructing
audience:

> by internalizing and generalizing the reactions
> of a number of specific readers, writers begin to
> develop a 'sense of audience,' a sense of the
> ways in which readers are likely to respond to
> their words. . . . Some writers say that they
> imagine a second 'voice' when they write, often
> the voice of an uninformed or critical
> person. . . . Other writers seem to create an
> 'image' of the reader--not through systematic
> analysis or conscious questioning, but rather by
> constucting an intuitive mental representation
> . . . ("Writing" 179-181)

Ong, suggesting an equally unsystematic, although
practical, means of constructing audience, recommends
imitating the voice of an author admired by the writer:

> Why not pick up that voice and, with it, its
> audience? Why not make like Samuel Clemens and
> write for whomever Samuel Clemens was writing
> for? . . . If the writer succeeds in writing, it
> is generally because he [or she] can fictionalize
> in his [or her] imagination an audience he [or
> she] has learned to know not from daily life but

from earlier writers who were fictionalizing in their imagination audiences they had learned to know in still earlier writers, and so on back to the dawn of written narrative. (11)

Although writers may exert little conscious control while constructing audience intuitively, the initial act in the process originates with and emanates directly from the writer's consciousness. Writers determine audience by deciding who they "want to talk to" and then create them in their minds (Woodson 35). Sometimes, however, years of practice allow the accomplished writer to suppress the process of audience construction and to seemingly ignore audience after initially determining it. But throughout the process, constructed audience nevertheless substantially affects writing, as witnessed in the case of Donald Murray.

2.6. SUPPRESSION OF CONSTRUCTED AUDIENCE

Murray, an experienced writer of fiction and nonfiction, allowed a researcher to observe him during the writing process. Through a "protocol," (that is, by listening to Murray's comments as he wrote, recording the comments and later analyzing them), the researcher discovered that audience awareness directly affected Murray at the most crucial phase of his writing. This discovery

directly contradicted Murray's previously published views
on the influence of audience on writing.

Previous to the protocol, Murray identified internal
revision as "everything writers do to discover and develop
what they have to say;" he further identified the audience
addressed by the writer during internal revision as "one
person: the writer" ("Internal Revision" 91). External
revision, he said, facilitates communicating to another
audience:

> It is editing and proofreading and much more.
> Writers now pay attention to the conventions of
> form and language, mechanics, and style. They
> eye their audience and may choose to appeal to
> it. . . . Most writers spend more time, much more
> time, on internal revision than external
> revision. ("Internal Revision" 91)

But the comments he made later, during the protocol,
revealed that his constructed audience played a major role
in the formulation of his thoughts throughout the writing
process. Berkenkotter concluded:

> his most substantive changes, what he calls
> 'internal revision,' occurred as he turned his
> thoughts toward his audience. . . . Only when he
> begins to discern what his readers do not yet
> know can he shape his language, structure and

> information to fit the needs of those readers.
> It is natural that a writer like Murray would not
> be aware of how significant a role his sense of
> audience played in his thoughts. After years of
> journalistic writing, his consideration of
> audience has become more automatic than
> deliberate. ("Decisions" 166)

Murray's response to the finding illustrates the power
constructed audience exerts: "I was far more aware of
audience than I thought I was during some of the writing.
My sense of audience is so strong that I have to suppress
my conscious awareness of audience to hear what the text
demands" (Murray, "Response" 171).

2.7. SUPPRESSION REDUCES COGNITIVE STRAIN

Murray's suppression of constructed audience
illustrates his reaction to cognitive strain, the mental
discomfort that occurs when a person tries to think about
too many things at one time. Flower and Hayes claim that
writers reduce cognitive strain by relying on automatic
procedures that require little or no effort, freeing the
writer to think about problems unique to the project at
hand ("Dynamics" 42). They call a "routine procedure,"
such as automatic construction of audience, a "stored
frame," a "powerful strategy" that frees the writer to

concentrate on other aspects of composition. They describe
the value of automatic procedures in writing:

> Learning how to write is, in part, the process of
> making certain subtasks so automatic that we open
> up processing space in short-term memory and
> increase our capacity to deal with those harder
> tasks that require conscious attention. (Flower
> and Hayes, "Dynamics" 42-43)

At one point in his writing career, Murray learned to
construct and interact with audience; he later suppressed
the process to reduce cognitive strain. Unskilled writers
may follow the same track by pursuing audience awareness in
the intuitive manner suggested by Kroll and Ong. However,
some commentators propose that writers may systematically
construct and interact with audience.

2.8. SYSTEMATIC AUDIENCE AWARENESS

Intuition seems to work for people who possess it.
But because it involves "knowing without the use of
rational processes" and, many times, "guessing accurately"
(American Heritage 688), it defies willful reproduction.
One writer cannot tell another how to gain intuition and
thereby intuitively understand audience. In writing, as in
other disciplines, systems develop for transferring
understanding from one person to another. Commentators

identify categories, methods and sequences of actions that help writers understand audience with the "purposeful regularity" that characterizes systems (American Heritage 1306).

One author contends that the communicator's perception of the audience always reflects "a more or less systematized construction" (Perelman, TNR:TOA 19). Some commentators outline a series of questions designed to help the reader systematically "construct in the imagination" a "replica" of real readers (Pfister and Petrick 214). The approaches presented in chapter three, although differing in scope and emphasis, reflect the premise that the "ultimate goal of the writer is the construction of an enlarged system of human relationships" in which the writer and reader may share and interact, albeit hypothetically, during the composition process (Young, Becker and Pike 225).

2.9. EGOCENTRISM INHIBITS AUDIENCE CONSTRUCTION

Although good writers seek to interact with the constructed audience, attempting to share knowledge, values and perspectives while writing, unskilled writers fail to construct audience. More precisely, unskilled writers do not realize the need to construct or interact with audience because they fail to recognize any knowledge, values and

perspectives but their own. In effect, they write for themselves, to themselves.

Flower, addressing the question, "Why do people write to themselves when they are ostensibly writing to a reader?" blames the problem on egocentrism (Problem-Solving 148). She defines egocentrism as a lapse of memory:

> thinking centered around the ego or 'I.'
> Egocentrism is not selfishness but simply the
> failure to actively imagine the point of view of
> someone else as we talk or write. . . . When
> adults write to themselves, it is usually because
> they have simply forgotten to consider the
> reader. (148)

Sometimes writers who tend to simply forget the reader remedy the problem through subtle means of reminder, such as using a computer terminal to compose. Although the writer does not consider the computer as an audience with human reactions, "the machine's responsiveness" reminds the writer that readers will react to the text as immediately as the computer reacts to the writer's efforts (Daiute 141). In this instance, "the computer seems like an audience, thus stimulating the writer to take a reader's point of view" (Daiute 141).

But egocentrism may also indicate the writer has not yet developed the ability to overcome cognitive strain. Flower states that retaining "the perspective of another mind" demands sophisticated concentration:

> It means holding not only your own knowledge network but someone else's in conscious attention and comparing them. Young children simply can't do it. Adults choose not to do it when their central processing is already overloaded with the effort to generate and structure their own ideas. ("Writer-Based" 36)

Egocentric writers see no need to organize or explain the information since they themselves already understand it. In computer terminology, such writer's perform "a 'memory dump': simply printing out information in the exact form in which they stored it in memory" (Flower, Problem-Solving 154).

Examples of egocentric writing exhibit features that betray that the writers write only for themselves. The features may include:

1. An egocentric focus on the writer.

2. A narrative organization focused on the writer's own discovery process.

3. A survey structure organized, like a

textbook, around the writer's information.
(Flower, <u>Problem-Solving</u> 149)

Another type of egocentric writer pays too much attention to the message itself, and perceives the audience as simply a potential obstacle to communication. Such writers see themselves as persons but readers as objects; they display an I-It attitude, characterized by "self-centeredness, deception, pretense, display, appearance, artifice, using, profit, unapproachableness, seduction, domination, exploitation, and manipulation;" the communicator focuses on the message, "not on the audience's real needs" (Johannesen, "Emerging" 377).

Writers with an I-It attitude suffer from more than forgetfulness or immature recognition of readers' needs. They hold a view of reality that places little value on the sharing that can develop during interaction with the constructed audience, interaction that approximates the I-Thou relationship found in true dialogue:

> the attitudes and behavior of each communication
> participant are characterized by such qualities
> as mutuality, open-heartedness, directness,
> honesty, spontaneity, frankness, lack of
> pretense, nonmanipulative intent, communion,
> intensity, and love in the sense of
> responsibility of one human for another. . . . a

basic element in dialogue is 'seeing the other' or 'experiencing the other side.' (Johannesen, "Emerging" 375)

Through forgetfulness, lack of cognitive development or caring more about the message than the reader, writers fall victim to egocentrism. Before they can construct an audience with which to interact during the writing process they must discover a process by which they can overcome egocentrism. Simply recognizing the audience does not suffice. They must decenter their views of reality and share perspectives through interaction with the constructed audience. Therefore, rather than identifying the audience characteristics that may change from situation to situation, those investigating audience awareness should concentrate on "the constructive processes" the writer uses to overcome egocentrism (Kroll, "Cognitive Egocentrism" 279-80).

2.10. SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE TAKING VS. EGOCENTRISM

The effective writer must develop a constructive process that encourages decentering, facilitates the construction of an audience in the writer's mind and leads to fruitful interaction between writer and constructed audience. Taking a "social perspective" approximates such a process. By taking a social perspective, the writer

tries to systematically discover the reader's perspective, to see writing as "a fundamentally social activity, entailing processes of inferring the thoughts and feelings" of readers (Kroll, "Writing" 179-181).

The process of "social perspective taking" includes the phases identified by Flavell, expanded by Scardamalia, Bereiter and McDonald and modified for application to writing by Rubin and Piche:

1. The writer "draws from a knowledge/value base" (Rubin and Piche 294) containing the writer's knowledge of the subject (Scardamalia et al 3) and the writer's awareness of "those basic psychological events and processes we call perceptions, emotions, intentions, thoughts, memories, etc." extant in all people, including the writer (Flavell 73).

2. The writer observes audience characteristics and recognizes the particular audience's "inner events and processes," which the writer finds "distinguishable and potentially different" from personal thoughts, emotions, feelings, desires, and reactions (Flavell 73).

3. The writer, through role-taking, "engages in social cognition, inferring audience knowledge, predispositions, etc." (Rubin and Piche 294).

4. The writer "acquires some task specific knowledge of potential communication gaps and advantageous strategies" (Rubin and Piche 294).

5. The writer translates knowledge into "tactical specifications for the message (e.g., matters of emphasis, proportion, data selection)" (Rubin and Piche 294).

After accomplishing these tasks the writer applies the attained social perspective of the audience to the writing (Rubin and Piche 294).

To exemplify the process, let's say an advocate of liberal arts education must write an article for an audience of young business managers. A simplified breakdown of the writer's social perspective taking might look like this:

1. The writer draws on the knowledge/value base, which contains everything known to the writer about the subject, liberal arts education, and which also contains the writer's perceptions of the universal traits of all human beings. Considering universal traits, for instance, the writer may think, 'All people strive for success.'

2. Observing the characteristics of the particular audience, the writer notes that the members hold bachelor's degrees in non-liberal arts disciplines and

that they measure success by the frequency of their promotions. These become characteristics of the writer's particular, constructed audience.

3. Through role-taking, the writer creates statements and hypothesizes the audiences responses to those statements. For instance:

> Writer: You need a liberal arts education.
>
> Audience: Why? I have an education and a good job.
>
> Writer: A liberal arts education helps you understand yourself, other people and the world.
>
> Audience: Will understanding myself, other people and the world help me get promoted?
>
> Writer: Possibly.
>
> Audience: Prove it.

4. Potential communication gaps emerge as the writer perceives the two different goals: the writer's goal of advocating liberal arts education and the audience's goal of getting promoted. A strategy suggests itself when the writer explores the possibility that liberal arts education may lead to promotion.

5. The writer follows the strategy by using specific data that shows liberal arts education may lead to promotion. The writer decides to cite an article about an AT&T survey which reveals that the company promotes liberal arts graduates faster than non-liberal arts graduates (Zigli).

In the preceding example, the writer starts with a reservoir of acquired knowledge, values and perceptions, and selects that which applies to the situation. The writer views success as a universal goal, observes the audience's characteristics and asks how the particular audience pursues success. Data gathered during observation of characteristics supplies the basis for role-taking, through which the writer discovers communication gaps and strategies. The writer then selects specifics that help the writer follow the strategy.

2.11. SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE TAKING AS A MATRIX

The social perspective taking model provides a matrix for categorizing the efforts of modern commentators. As in the second phase, some concentrate on observing characteristics of the particular audience. Some emphasize the role-taking phase of inferring the knowledge and attitudes of the particular audience. Some recommend discerning the communication gaps between writer and reader and developing relevant strategies. And some discuss audience related specifics such as subject emphasis and data selection.

Modern commentators who seek to provide practical, systematic approaches to understanding the writer's audience supply the means for audience construction and, in

varying degrees, lay the groundwork for interaction between the writer and the constructed audience. Their approaches reflect the philosophy of social perspective taking, with each approach corresponding to one or more of the last four phases. However, they neglect the knowledge/value base and do not provide writers with any practical, systematic means of acquiring the audience-related aspects of that base.

2.12. NEGLECT OF THE KNOWLEDGE/VALUE BASE

As the first section of chapter three explains, the writer possesses a knowledge/value base which holds the writer's preconceptions about people in general. Preconceptions about people in general lead the writer to engage in social perspective taking and to draw conclusions about the particular audience which will receive the particular message.

Although modern approaches address audience awareness through construction of audience for particular situations, they operate with the assumption that the writer already possesses an adequate understanding of people in general. They assume that the writer has constructed a universal audience, with the traits common to all human beings (Flavell 74-75).

2.13. ARISTOTLE'S <u>RHETORIC</u> AS A BASE

The traditional, and perhaps only practical, detailed, approach in communication to understanding audience as people in general appears in Aristotle's <u>Rhetoric</u>. Chapter four describes how Aristotle starts not with specific traits of a particular audience, nor with questions concerning a specific message, but instead with the basic causes of all human actions. Before he considers the person as audience, he considers the person as a human being who has not yet become an audience (Long 224). He identifies the causes which control the reactions of all audiences and describes a universal audience when he identifies how reason, emotion and desire affect all audiences of discourse.

Based on his description of universal audience, Aristotle prescribes how to persuade particular audiences, audiences that reveal modified universal traits in particular situations. He advocates discourse based on a knowledge/value base, a constructed universal audience understood in terms of reason, emotion and desire.

Chapter three discusses how modern commentators approach the concept of the universal audience but do not provide specific details with which a writer might understand universal audience, as a knowledge/value base,

in practical terms. Chapter three also presents modern,
practical approaches that correspond to the other phases of
social perspective taking. Chapter four returns to the
idea of the knowledge/value base and universal audience,
outlining the practical, systematic approach Aristotle
takes while describing human nature as it influences
discourse.

3   MODERN APPROACHES

3.1.   KNOWLEDGE/VALUE BASE

The writer writing to business managers (in the example on pages 22-23) perceives one element of basic human nature, the universal desire for success. If the writer had not recognized that as a basic human drive, the writer would not have looked for specific instances of the pursuit of success in the particular audience. Although we take for granted that adults recognize "basic categories of human experience and action," researchers cannot effectively define and measure such recognition (Flavell 74-75). They do note, however, that some people apparently refer to a greater number of categories and more detailed categories than other people when considering the traits of others (Flavell 75). This holds open the possibility that, by systematically studying the universal traits of humans, the mentally mature writer may further develop the knowledge/value base, and mentally maturing writers may develop a complete knowledge/value base more quickly than if left to their own devices.

Although, as chapter four demonstrates, Aristotle offers communicators a systematic approach to the understanding of human nature, modern commentators do little more than consider ideas that mirror the concept of

the knowledge/value base. Such concepts include the idea
of initial "attitude" toward the reader (Woodson 4), the
"universal audience [that] transcends every particular
grouping" (Perelman, "TNRATR:RAC" 192) and the fundamental
question, "What is the person?" (Stewart 194). These
concepts address the preconceptions that communicators
bring to the communication process, the preconceptions with
which the communicator defines the basic elements of
humanity with respect to discourse.

3.1.1.   INITIAL ATTITUDES OF WRITERS

Woodson identifies the knowledge/value base as an
attitude which precedes message development and
purpose: the writer possesses an attitude toward subject
matter and audience; the writer develops a message; the
writer intends to affect the audience by convincing,
persuading, interesting, gratifying, charming or inducing
(4).

The writer starts with a knowledge/value base
consisting partly of attitudes toward the subject and
partly of attitudes toward audience in general. Attitudes
toward the subject directly affect content of the message.
Attitudes toward audience directly affect how the writer
presents the message. The attitudes toward audience in
general supplies the reference base that the writer later

consults when imagining how the audience in the particular
situation will react to the particular message.

Flower expresses an attitude toward readers that might
help the writer construct an element of the knowledge/value
base when she talks about readers needing organization and
hierarchies:

> Readers need a framework, or context, for new
> ideas. . . . Readers develop expectations and
> want those expectations met. . . . Readers
> organize ideas into natural hierarchies.
> (Problem-Solving 134-38)

The writer, using Flower's assertions, may perceive a
particular audience and organize a composition according to
that particular audience's familiar contexts, its specific
expectations and its ability to follow hierarchies. The
writer refers to the general concepts and then perceives
how the particular audience specifically applies the
general concepts.

3.1.2. UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE AS A BASE

General attitudes toward audience correspond to the
universal audience, a concept closely associated with Chaim
Perelman. Instead of reacting to a particular message in a
particular circumstance, universal audience represents the
motivations and reactions of people in general. According

to Perelman, every writer constructs the universal audience from what the writer knows of other people (TNR:TOA 33). Since the universal audience results from a person's perceptions, each writer forms a unique conception of it (TNR:TOA 33). Its traits include those possessed by all "competent and reasonable" humans (TROR 14). It represents to the writer what all readers have in common, transcending differences (TNR:TOA 33) and "every particular grouping" ("TNRATR:RAC" 192) and consisting of "an infinite variety of particular audiences" (TROR 14).

The writer in example (on pages 22-23) accepts pursuit of success as an element of the universal audience. A group of business managers might manifest that element by pursuing promotions. A group of self-employed entrepreneurs might exhibit it by pursuing profit. A group of social-workers might consider helping people as the goal in its pursuit of success. The basic trait, pursuit of success, transcends the way each particular group manifests the trait.

Perelman's concept of universal audience forces the writer to confront egocentrism. When concern for the message eclipses concern for the needs of the audience, the writer thinks of the audience simply as message recipients. But because the universal audience must necessarily include the writer, the writer considers audience not as mere

recipients of the message, but as people who reflect the basic values of the writer. The writer therefore starts with a concept of audience that includes the writer; consequently, the writer's attitudes "must be sincere, honest, and cannot consist of a manipulation of the audience" ("TNRATR:RAC" 194), because such manipulation would deceive self as well as audience. The writer who appeals to the reader's sense of success also appeals to his or her own sense of success to the extent that both the writer and reader share the same basic drive.

Although Perelman asserts the existence of universal audience, he does not suggest how a writer might construct such an audience. He does say that writers may communicate with the universal audience through reason and emotion. Any writer appealing to reason addresses the universal audience ("TNRATR:RAC" 190) but writers addressing the universal audience also write to "whole" persons possessing reason, will and emotions ("TNRATR:RAC" 194). Perelman describes, in general terms, the characteristics of the universal audience as those based on "common sense and common experience," and "common principles, notions and common places" (Perelman, TNRATH 58); through the common, or "community," communicators may connect discourse and the universal audience (TNRATH 58).

Referring again to the example on pages 22-23: the
universal pursuit of success, the audience's particular
mode of pursuing success and the writer's appeal to the
audience's pursuit all coalesced into one common message,
the writer's article. Thus the community--formed among the
universal audience, the particular audience, the writer and
the article--allowed elements of the universal audience to
manifest during the writing process.

3.1.3. UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR AUDIENCES

Despite Perelman's efforts to identify universal
audience and the means for communicating to universal
audience, his concept lacks the specificity that would make
it useful in particular situations. The following excerpt
summarizes the attitude of some modern commentators toward
universal audience:

> Perelman's concept of a universal audience is
> obviously important in the search for rapport or
> at least operational agreement among diverse
> groups. However, efforts directed to finding
> this audience or to describing it fail to take
> account of the pervasive importance of invention.
> Rather, (a) audiences are made, not given; (b)
> there is no a priori reason that there may not be
> many universal audiences, although not in a
> single situation; and (c) most important, the

task is not, as often assumed, to address <u>either</u>
a particular audience or a universal audience,
but in the process of persuasion to adjust to and
then to transform the particularities of an
audience into universal dimensions. (Scott et al
235)

The preceding opinion assumes that the universal
audience exists for the purpose of feedback to the writer
in particular situations, feedback that would correspond to
phases two through five of social perspective taking.
However, viewing the universal audience as the
knowledge/value base for understanding audience, rather
than a representation of the intended audience,
disqualifies the above objections.

First, although audiences for particular situations
are "made" when a writer goes through a process of mentally
constructing such an audience, the writer starts from the
knowledge/value base containing preconceived attitudes
about audience in general, thus starting with a "given"
universal audience that the writer "made" and continued to
build upon long before contemplating the particular
situation.

Second, if the writer always starts with the same preconceived attitudes about people in general, or with refinements of those attitudes, then there remains only one universal audience for that writer, even though not all aspects of that universal audience provide the basis for constructing each subsequent particular audience.

Third, in order for the writer to "transform the particularities of an audience into universal dimensions" the writer must start with an understanding of universal dimensions as a goal at which to aim.

The difference between particular audience as recipient of a particular message and universal audience as knowledge/value base lies in the questions the writer asks about each. About the particular audience the writer asks, 'What characteristics separate this audience from all other groups; what is unique about these persons?' About the universal audience the writer asks, 'What characteristics unite all persons; what, in essence, is the person?'

3.1.4. THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF HUMANITY

Stewart says that the question "What is the person?" lies at the heart of holistic dialogue, which seeks to unite the study of audience as "particular persons" and the study of audience as "persons-in-relation" to all other people (194-97). The advocates of holistic dialogue

contend that the communicator must seek to understand
particular and universal audiences, and that understanding
of each leads to greater understanding of the other
(Stewart 194-97).

Holistic dialogue descends from Immanuel Kant, who
reduces philosophy to the question, "What is the
person?"--the fundamental "question about the nature of
humanity" (Stewart 195). Thus an understanding of human
nature precedes understanding of specific persons. The
communicator studies the universal to come to know self or
particular audiences.

In writing, answers to fundamental questions about
universal human nature comprise part of the knowledge/value
base on which the writer founds decisions about the
particular audience. Proponents of holistic dialogue
recognize the division between the universal and particular
aspects of audience, and Perelman touches on a description
of universal audience. But in both cases, writers find no
specific details of universal audience and no categorical
understanding of human nature. Aristotle categorically
details human nature for communicators (as presented in
chapter four) in the same practical, systematic way that
modern commentators approach audience awareness (as
presented in the remainder of this chapter).

3.2. AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

The writer recognizes the characteristics of the particular audience after obtaining a knowledge/value base which contains a conception of the universal audience. Referring to the general attributes of the universal audience, the writer tries to discern how universal attributes translate into particular characteristics of the particular audience. For instance, a writer who perceives humans in general as reasoning, emotional beings asks how the particular audience specifically demonstrates its reason and how the particular audience specifically exhibits its emotion. Commentators provide specific questions about audience that help the writer observe audience traits relevant to the composition. Based on observation of characteristics, the writer constructs a mental image of the audience.

3.2.1. OBSERVING CHARACTERISTICS

Constructing a mental replica of an audience based on observation of characteristics descends from the rhetorical tradition of analyzing audience traits. Modern commentators apply this approach by posing questions the writer asks about audience. Questions may address any traits, but the most useful questions address the traits that directly concern the composition, specifically those

details that lead the writer to infer the readers'
attitudes and opinions about the subject of the
composition.

Observing a particular audience's characteristics
allows a writer to form a "replica" of that audience
(Pfister and Petrick 214), to make a "mental sketch" of the
audience (Berkenkotter, "Understanding" 392). By
replicating and mentally sketching audience, the writer
eventually acquires the ability to construct "a rich
representation of the audience" that directly influences
the success of the composition (Berkenkotter,
"Understanding" 395).

Communicators have observed and analyzed the traits
and attitudes of people as intended receivers of messages
since the ancient Greeks founded the rhetorical
tradition; today, many classroom texts likewise advocate
observing and analyzing audiences during the writing
process (Kroll, "Writing" 173). In modern adaptations of
this approach, writers "analyze the audience's beliefs,
traits, and attitudes, so that their messages can be
adapted to the particular characteristics of specific
audiences" (Kroll, "Writing" 173).

3.2.2. QUESTIONS WRITERS ASK

Modern approaches that help the writer construct an image of audience based on observed characteristics rely on questions that the writer asks about the audience. The questions range from general to specific and cover tangible items (such as, what type of automobile do they drive?) and the less tangible (such as, what values do they hold?). Answers to such questions supply material for construction of an image that represents the audience in the writer's imagination.

Woodson outlines general questions that writers ask when constructing a particular audience based on observed characteristics:

1. Who is my intended audience for this piece of writing?

2. What do they already know about my subject?

3. What attitudes do they already hold about my subject? (18)

Although the answer to Woodson's first question could include characteristics not necessarily affecting how the audience reacts to the composition, the last two questions refer to the essential elements of constructed audience, "those characteristics of the reader . . . relevant to what

the writer wants to communicate" (Young, Becker and Pike 178).

Other commentators identify essential characteristics more specifically. They endeavor to enhance the relevance of the analysis by specifying the questions that writers should ask about audience. With this end in mind, Pfister and Petrick designed a heuristic, a set of questions that helps writers learn for themselves how to analyze the most relevant audience characteristics and mentally construct an audience.

The first part of the Pfister and Petrick heuristic applies to observable audience characteristics:

The Environment of the Audience

Audience/Self

What is his/her physical, social, and economic status? (age, environment, health, ethnic ties, class, income)

What is his/her educational and cultural experience? especially with certain patterns of written discourse?

What are his/her ethical concerns and hierarchy of values? (home, family, job success, religion, money, car, social acceptance)

What are his/her common myths and prejudices? (214)

Writers feel that constructing a detailed audience provides insight into the attitudes and opinions of the people who will read the composition. Pfister and Petrick observed writers who used the heuristic and found that the writers felt "more at ease in writing" because they had identified readers "with realistic detail" (Pfister and Petrick 219). By analyzing audience characteristics, the writer recognizes that "opinions and attitudes are influenced by age, sex, education, economic status, and group allegiances . . . " (Bryant and Wallace 317). The writer may further decide, based on observed traits, to classify the audience as "partisans, neutrals or opponents" (Bryant and Wallace 317). Such classification would influence the tone, content and style of the composition.

Emphasizing audience attitude and opinion, Braddock offers a heuristic for speakers similar to that of Pfister and Petrick in an expansion of the Lasswell formula, "WHO says WHAT to WHOM under WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES through WHAT MEDIUM for WHAT PURPOSE with WHAT EFFECT?" (Braddock 88). The communicator asks the following questions about the "WHOM," the audience:

> a. What knowledge and interest groups are
> represented? Which significant groups are not
> present?

b. Did the audience come with certain
expectations?

c. Is the audience a public, an aggregate, a
mob?

d. Is the audience a captive audience?

e. Are many shades of opinion represented? How
do their various representatives react? Is there
a prevailing climate of opinion?

g. What effect is mass emotion having? How does
this affect the presentation of the message?

h. Is the audience sympathetic, antagonistic,
apathetic? What effect does this have on the
message and communicator?

. . . .

b. What facility or difficulty has the audience
for performing the suggested behavior? (Braddock
88-93)

Mathes and Stevenson narrow the focus of their
heuristic to the work environment, demonstrating the
specificity with which a writer may wish to construct
audience. They direct the writer's attention to the
primary person who will read the composition, saying the
writer may observe that person's:

OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. His [or her] role within the organization and consequent value system:

2. His [or her] daily concerns and attitudes:

3. His [or her] knowledge of your technical responsibilities and assignment:

4. What will he [or she] need from your report:

5. What staff and other persons will be activated by your report through him [or her]:

6. How your report could affect his [or her] role:

OBJECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

1. His [or her] education--levels, fields and years:

2. His [or her] past professional experiences and roles:

3. His [or her] knowledge of your technical area:

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Personal characteristics that could influence his [or her] reactions--age, attitudes, pet concerns, etc. (Mathes and Stevenson 20)

In the preceding examples, commentators propose systems for construction of writer's audience. The examples rely on observation of audience characteristics through which the writer builds an image of the audience.

But observation of characteristics and construction of audience do not in themselves provide the writer with feedback. To obtain feedback, the writer must interact with the constructed audience, as in the role-taking phase of the social perspective taking model.

3.3. ROLE-TAKING

After the writer observes characteristics of a particular audience and mentally constructs a representation of that audience, the writer interacts with the constructed audience. The writer recognizes the audience as an active participant rather than "a passive recipient," one that does not merely receive messages, but also reacts to them (Mitchell and Taylor 251).

When people talk face-to-face, they create a relationship, an area where boundaries of one person's interests overlap the boundaries of another's, the realm sometimes called the "Between" (Poulakos 207). The "Between" requires both participants to address each in the other's physical presence and to interact openly with each other (Poulakos 209-10). Such a situation facilitates·true

dialogue in which each may react honestly to the other
(Poulakos 212). The writer is physically removed from the
reader, so to gain honest reaction while writing the writer
must fabricate a "Between." The writer creates a situation
in which the writer and constructed audience interact, with
the writer taking the roles of the reader and writer. In
this way, the writer approximates reaction by interacting
with the constructed audience.

To replicate the process of audience reaction, the
writer engages in "cooperative activity with the reader" by
imagining audience response (Young, Becker and Pike 171).
The writer assigns the constructed audience a role and lets
the constructed audience act out that role. The writer
infers "the thoughts and feelings of the other persons
involved" and cultivates a "sense of the ways in which
readers are likely to respond" (Kroll, "Writing" 179-81).

By inferring the reactions of others through
role-taking, the writer creates a situation in which writer
and reader can partially share that which they have not yet
shared, as elucidated by Young, Becker and Pike:

> 1) partial sharing by writer and reader of
> knowledge, values, beliefs, and so on is
> prerequisite for communicating things
> unshared. . . . [2] to share what is unshared,
> the writer must work at understanding the reader

and the knowledge and perspectives the reader is
likely to bring to the encounter . . . 3) The
ultimate goal of the writer is the construction
of an enlarged system of human relationships, a
system in which he [or she] and the reader are in
some sense one, sharing knowledge, values, and
perspectives in a single community . . . (225)

When the writer creates a relationship in which the
writer and reader interact and share perspectives, the
relationship becomes a "bilateral relationship" in which
the writer sees the "other person as a person" (Brockriede
5). Brockriede identifies the bilateral relationship as
one initiated by the communicator as "lover" rather than
rapist or seducer (5). The communicator as rapist seeks
"to force assent, the seducer tries to charm or trick his
[or her] victim into assent . . . " (Brockriede 5). The
communicator as lover perceives the needs of the other
person while honestly preparing the message, thus
empathically considering the message from both the
communicator's and the audience's perspectives.

The second part of the Pfister and Petrick heuristic
aims at role-taking, posing questions that challenge the
writer to set up a mental situation in which the writer and
constructed audience share that which the writer wants to
communicate and the audience's hypothetical responses to

the writer's message:

The Subject Interpreted by the Audience
Audience/Subject

How much does the reader know about what I want to say?

What is the opinion of the reader about my subject?

How strong is that opinion?

Why does he/she react the way he/she does?

The Relationship of the Audience and the Writer
Audience/Writer

What is the reader's knowledge and attitude about me?

What are our shared experiences, attitudes, interests, values, myths, prejudices?

. . . .

What is the role I wish to assign to the audience? What role do I want to assume for the audience?

What are the best methods the writer can use to achieve cooperation/persuasion/identification with the audience? (214)

Through role-taking, the writer receives feedback from the constructed audience after allowing the constructed audience to assume a life of its own. Role-taking occurs as a result of the writer recognizing the bilateral relationship between writer and audience and realizing the need for writer and audience to share perspectives through cooperative activity. The writer receives the necessary feedback in the form of the hypothetical responses of the constructed audience.

3.4. COMMUNICATION GAPS AND STRATEGIES

Role-taking, the interaction between writer and constructed audience, provides the writer with the information necessary to discover the differences between what the writer wishes to project and the audience's potential resistance to the writer's efforts. After discovering the differences, or communication gaps, between writer and reader, the writer devises strategies for overcoming the communication gaps.

3.4.1. COMMUNICATION GAPS

When a writer constructs an audience and engages in role-taking with that audience, the readers emerge as individuals with traits, attitudes, opinions and reactions, "as individuals rather than as faceless blocs" (Mathes and Stevenson 16). The writer views the individuals as "people

with varying and significant degrees of difference" between themselves and the writer (Mathes and Stevenson 16).

Although "obvious differences such as age or background" surface immediately, the "critical differences" emerge as the writer discovers what the reader knows about the subject, what attitude the reader has toward the subject and what the reader needs from the composition (Flower, Problem-Solving 123). Effective writers "pinpoint" the differences between writer and reader in the areas of knowledge, attitude and needs and "design their writing to reduce those differences" (Flower, Problem-Solving 123).

Perceiving differences can lead the writer to seek writing strategies that bridge the gaps between writer and reader, but may also cause the writer to avoid sensitive areas. Schwartz says, "concern for audience, purpose and correctness" may seriously harm a composition if the writer "avoids or alters meanings rather than risk audience disapproval" (556). Fear of addressing the differences between writer and reader "may prevent exploration of an idea or feeling by making the writer cross out honest specifity and go for safe abstraction instead" (Schwartz 556).

But the identification of communication gaps, used effectively, encourages finding mutuality, rather than just side-stepping controversial areas. Identification of differences leads the writer to search for bridges over the gaps, to create "a momentary common ground between the reader and writer" (Flower, Problem-Solving 122).

3.4.2. STRATEGIES

One writing strategy for creating temporary common ground consists of identifying and using a shared goal, a goal with which both writer and reader agree. By emphasizing a mutually accepted goal, the writer motivates readers to read, remember and more fully comprehend the composition because the ideas appear in "a framework they already know" (Flower, Problem-Solving 145).

A formal method, the Rogerian strategy, named for psychologist Carl R. Rogers, incorporates stated recognition of the differences between conflicting views, stated recognition of agreement in the views and a solution based on agreement. The strategy encourages the writer:

> (1) to convey to the reader that he [or she] is understood, (2) to delineate the area within which he [or she] believes the reader's position to be valid, and (3) to induce him [or her] to believe that he [or she] and the writer share

similar moral qualities . . . (Young, Becker and

Pike 275)

Hairston offers a detailed rubric for the writer who
wants to implement the Rogerian approach:

1. Give a brief, objective statement of the

issue under discussion.

2. Summarize in impartial language what you

perceive the case for the opposition to be . . .

3. Make an objective statement of your own side

of the issue . . .

4. Outline what common ground or mutual concerns

you and the other person or group seem to

share . . .

5. Outline the solution you propose, pointing

out what both sides may gain from it. (375-76)

By determining potential differences between reader
and writer, the writer decides what areas pose problems and
what areas may yield common ground. Strategies such as the
Rogerian approach may actually incorporate statements that
address differing and shared goals in order to emphasize
that the writer's conclusion belongs to the territory of
common ground.

3.5. SPECIFICS

At this point in the process, the writer, having started with the knowledge/value base, has observed the characteristics of the particular audience, constructed a mental representation of the audience, interacted with the construction through role-taking, determined the potential communication gaps and devised strategies to bridge the gaps.

The writer now must determine how, specifically, to carry out the strategies. The specifics could include organization, word choice, tone and facts. The last section of the Pfister and Petrick heuristic suggests specifics the writer should consider:

<div align="center">Audience/Form</div>

What pattern/mode/development is appropriate?

What tone?

What diction, level of diction?

What level of syntactic sophistication?   (214)

Tone in a composition may reveal the writer's attitude toward the audience through the writer's "word choice, level of abstraction, types of instances, emphasis given to items;" the writer, by selecting specifics, reveals a perception of the audience as "equal, inferior, or superior" (Johannesen, "Attitude" 95-96).

Patterns may vary from writer to writer, but Flower offers some commonly-accepted ideas on organization. She advocates identifying a thesis or main idea, placing the ideas and subordinate points after the thesis in hierarchical order, explicitly stating conclusions and making the "organization vivid and clear to the reader" (Problem-Solving 157-58).

After the writer's pattern of ideas yields a sequence of paragraphs, the writer may want to study the sequence of sentences, because readers have difficulty comprehending when they fail to see the connection between sentences in a paragraph (Christensen 145). The writer can apply a logical structure to a paragraph by using a topic sentence followed by sentences directly subordinate to the topic; or by using a topic sentence followed by subordinate sentences that, in turn, have subordinate sentences of their own (Christensen 146-52).

Composing the sentences from an "informational perspective," the writer may simply ask if the reader will recognize how the beginning of one sentence relates to the end of the preceding one, a technique known as "dove-tailing" (Kroll, "Writing" 176-78).

The specifics phase of social perspective taking deals more with 'how' to say it than with 'what' to say. But the writer still must infer the thoughts and reactions of readers while employing the specifics, because the specifics facilitate the nuts-and-bolts transfer of meaning from writer to reader.

3.6. SUMMARY

Some modern scholars grapple with concepts directly related to the knowledge/value base, but do not address it in terms applicable to everyday writing. However, modern commentators do offer approaches to observing audience characteristics and constructing audience; role-taking, which involves interacting with constructed audience; discerning communication gaps and strategies as a result of role-taking; and employing specifics to implement strategies.

Since the knowledge/value base precedes the other phases of social perspective taking, systematic construction of a base would only serve to enhance the effectiveness of the other phases. If the writer expands, defines and categorizes the elements of the base, then, when observing the characteristics of a particular audience, the writer has more, detailed, organized, traits from which to begin observations. For instance, a writer

may consider people in general as reasoning beings. But a systematic understanding of reason allows the writer to see people as beings who reason inductively through examples, deductively through series of accepted statements and by contemplating the facts from the past, the present possibilities and the future probabilities and inevitabilities. With such an expanded background, the writer may then ask: What examples does my particular audience accept as inductive proof? What statements does my audience accept in deductive proof? What does my audience accept as facts, possibilities and inevitabilities? Aristotle offers just such a systematic approach to constructing a knowledge/value base.

4 ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC

American writers and speakers have used English translations of Aristotle's Rhetoric as a guide to better writing and better understanding of audience for more than forty years. Rice reports the success with which his college students, who used the Rhetoric as a text during 1942-45, improved their speaking and writing abilities and gained a working knowledge of practical psychology (217-19). Brandes lists thirty-one colleges, including Columbia, Cornell, Rutgers and Stanford Universities, which used Lane Cooper's translation of the Rhetoric in 1948. Bryant says "modern enlightenment has produced no new method of analyzing an audience which can replace Aristotle's," reflecting an attitude prevalent in the 1950s. ("Rhetoric: Its Function" 18). In a 1978 article, Lunsford recommends the Rhetoric as a guide to better writing, saying it encourages developing writers to employ "the Aristotelian method of close observation, classification, analysis, and generalization" instead of prescribed rules and patterns. It seems that much modern audience analysis descends directly from Aristotle's analysis of types of audiences (Ede, "Audience: An Introduction" 141; Kroll, "Writing" 173).

Most often, commentators associate Aristotle's analysis of audiences with the particular audiences Aristotle describes in the Rhetoric, such as the young, the old, the middle-aged, the wealthy and the powerful (Aristotle 131-40). He identifies the traits of specific audiences and outlines the means of persuading them.

Indeed, much of the Rhetoric revolves around Aristotle's system of persuasion. But, as Walter maintains, Aristotle presents both a starting point and a system for communicating (368). Aristotle reveals his starting point, Walter says, "in his definition of rhetoric as the art of discovering the available means of persuading," a starting point which precedes a "relatively elaborate" system of persuasion (368). Walter criticizes other rhetoricians for presenting "only a starting point," with no subsequent system. Perelman and the holistic dialogue advocates fit this description; they present a starting point by offering the concept of universal audience, but do not provide a system for constructing that audience.

Just as Aristotle identified a starting point and a system for persuasion, he concomitantly identified a starting point and a system for understanding audience. Modern critics dwell, however, on Aristotle's system of persuasion which relies on analysis of particular

audiences. Thonssen, for example, explaining the functional nature of the Rhetoric, cites the work's emphasis on variation and adaptation as the mark of a functional rhetoric that seeks to "meet particular situations and thereby achieve particular ends" (310). Corbett describes the classical rhetoric of Aristotle as rhetoric designed to persuade the particular audience "to think in a certain way or to act in a certain way" (32). Critics, such as Bator, characterize Aristotle's approach as dependent on an "antagonistic speaker/audience relationship" in which the communicator discovers and exploits the "psychological weaknesses" in particular audiences (428).

By criticizing the emphasis on persuasion in the Rhetoric, the commentators limit the discussion of audience to the object of that persuasion, the particular audience. They neglect the starting point for understanding audience, the construction of a universal audience based on common human nature. To persuade, one must understand and analyze the particular audience; to understand the particular audience, one must start with an understanding of human nature.

4.1. ACTIONS OF THE AUDIENCE

Aristotle asserts that rhetoric requires action from the audience. The audience either decides between the alternatives offered in the discourse or criticizes the discourse itself (Aristotle 16-17). For instance, if a writer seeks to persuade readers to stop littering, the audience decides between one alternative, to stop littering, or the other, to continue littering. If the writer writes an essay noting the beauty of the unlittered countryside, the audience criticizes the essay as either an effective or ineffective portrayal. By deciding or criticizing, the audience acts.

To effect action from an audience, Aristotle says a good communicator must understand reason, emotion and the "types of human character" (8-9). Later, when discussing crime, he analyzes the causes of _all_ human actions and identifies causes over which humans have not control (such as nature, chance and compulsion) and causes which humans themselves control. Humans control: reason; emotion, which translators also identify as passion or appetite, among other things (Willard 183); and desire, which includes habit, the antecedent of character (Aristotle 56-59). The correlation between the tools of the communicator--reason, emotion and character--and the main causes of human action--reason, emotion and desire--implies that the

communicator must construct a universal audience that contains the common traits of human nature. Those traits fall into the categories of reason, emotion and desire: within each category, Aristotle identifies the elements which affect discourse for all people.

4.2. THE AIM OF REASON

Aristotle identifies two aspects of reason: aim and process. The aim of all reason is good (Aristotle 24). When we reason, we base the end result, the decision or conclusion, on what we perceive as good. For instance, if a person must choose between a small economy car and large station wagon, the person weighs one good, saving money on fuel, against another good, having enough space for passengers and luggage. The person chooses the greater good and thereby the corresponding car.

Good things cause happiness. They include prosperity, self-sufficiency, security, success, family pride, possession of friends, wealth, children, comfortable old-age, health, beauty, strength, stature, athletic skill, fame, honor, luck, and virtue (Aristotle 24-32). Anything we choose "in and for itself," that which all intelligent beings deem good, is good (Aristotle 30).

Obviously, not all the specific examples of good that Aristotle noted 2300 years ago in Ancient Greece ring true for modern society. Ancient Greece tended to be homogeneous; in today's heterogeneous world, many divergent lifestyles, values and beliefs coexist. For instance, Aristotle identifies children as a universal element of happiness. That does not necessarily apply to the many single people in our society. And a significant number of childless couples in American society might not consider children as good for them, because each spouse pursues a career.

Modern critics object to Aristotle's analysis of audiences when it involves assigning specific traits to particular classes of people or assuming all the people in a particular audience have the same status or specific goals as the writer. Such stereotyping, they argue, makes Aristotle's analysis of particular audiences irrelevant to modern communicators.

Burks claims that Aristotle presents a psychologically egoistic view of human nature, a view that "all rational interests are self interests" (400). Burk maintains that "with Aristotle what is expedient and what ennobles one's self become the bases of reasonable choice" (410). Parson and Berg contend that Aristotle's Rhetoric reflects support for the "ultimate good" of Athenian society, "the good of

the community" (332). Along the same lines, Kaufer says that Aristotle's rhetoric does not accomodate expressions of individualism; it acknowledges class differences, but not individual differences (176). For instance, Aristotle describes all young people as ruled by their passions, all old people as controlled by their fears and all wealthy people as guided by their arrogance (Aristotle 132-39). Brockriede says that Aristotle's rhetoric represents a form of discourse between equals, contrasted with modern discourse, in which a poor person may write to the president, a tycoon may speak to factory workers (Brockriede 37).

Although the attributes Aristotle assigns to particular audiences may change with time and distance, when he identifies the object of reason as good, despite the fact that his list of specifics may contain irrelevant items or exclude relevant items, he uses a concept that transcends the differences between particular groups and transcends the centuries that have elapsed since he wrote the Rhetoric.

4.3. THE PROCESSES OF REASON

Just as all people use good as the aim of reason, they use basic processes to communicate their aim to each other and to convince each other their aims are good.

People base the processes they use to reason, not on the absolute proof of science, but on the probabilities used to deliberate everyday issues (Aristotle 12). We convey reason and decide what is good through common topics, examples and enthymemes.

4.3.1. COMMON TOPICS

Common topics represent universal areas of inquiry available to all people. The writer may explore the topics to better understand the subject, but, more importantly, to address the questions that people raise about every issue:

What are the possibilities concerning the subject? To determine if a proposition is possible we might reason: if B follows A, and B is possible, then A is possible; or, if the parts of a whole are possible, the whole is possible; or, if a thing has a beginning, then an end is possible (Aristotle 143-45).

What are the facts from the past about the subject? We might reason: if the less probable of two things has happened, then the more probable has happened as well; or, if B naturally follows A, and B has occurred, then A has occurred; or, if an action's natural antecedents occurred, then the action occurred (Aristotle 145-46).

What are the <u>probabilities</u> <u>and</u> <u>inevitabilities</u> in the future of the subject? We might reason: a thing will happen if the power to make it happen combines with the desire to make it happen; or, a thing will happen if people have started to do it; or, a thing will happen if what usually precedes it has occurred (Aristotle 146).

What is the <u>relative</u> <u>proportion</u>? To what degree is the subject more important, less important, more valuable and less valuable than comparable subjects? We might reason: if B is dependent on A, but A is not dependent on B, then A is greater than B; or, that which is rare is greater than that which is not rare; or, that which is judged by the majority or by recognized authorities as the greater of two things is greater (Aristotle 146-47).

4.3.2. EXAMPLES

Aristotle says the <u>example</u> corresponds to induction, the process of using a specific instance to draw general conclusions; he calls induction the basis of reasoning (Aristotle 147). An example allows the audience to put the abstract idea in the framework, or "paradigm" (Raymond 150), of a familiar instance, as in this example:

> Ebenezer Scrooge, in Charles Dickens' A <u>Christmas</u> <u>Carol</u>, undergoes a dramatic change after his nocturnal visitors expose his own needs and the needs of others

to him. Likewise, writers may undergo a significant transformation when they take a social perspective and begin to understand the needs of the audience.

The example also acts in the same way as does a witness in court, lending credibility to the argument and emphasizing important points. In the following discussion, an example of an advertising slogan helps describe the enthymeme.

4.3.3. ENTHYMEMES

The enthymeme corresponds to deduction, the process of using a generally accepted premise or maxim as the basis for statements that lead to a specific conclusion (Aristotle 10, 149-59). Raymond suggests using the word "assumption" in place of enthymeme, because people base their everyday deductions on assumptions, or accepted truths, rather than positive proof (150).

In a particular application of the enthymeme, the following example starts with a maxim acceptable to the audience, skips a step in the sequence of logic and concludes with a suggestion:

> You deserve a break today,
> so get up and get away
> to McDonald's

The maxim appears in the first line: probably everyone
thinks he or she deserves a break. The enthymeme deviates
from formal logic because it is based on probability, not
fact; and because not all the elements of the logical
sequence are stated. A complete enthymeme might look like
this:

> You deserve a break today,
>
> (you can take a break at McDonald's)
>
> so get up and get away
>
> to McDonald's

The first example does not state the relationship between
deserving a break and going to McDonald's, because the
advertiser assumes the audience knows how taking breaks and
McDonald's relate to each other.

Grimaldi extends the realm of the enthymeme to include
emotions and feelings as well as reason. For instance,
premises for an enthymeme could include highly-charged
emotional statements such as 'Remember Pearl Harbor,' 'We
shall overcome,' 'We must not forget Hitler's final
solution.' For certain audiences, these statements carry
much more weight than that of accepted truth. Grimaldi
says that the enthymeme "brings together the logical and
psychological reasons which convey meaning" and that
"Aristotle recognizes that person speaks to person not only

with the mind but with the emotions and feelings as well"
(17).

To form an enthymeme, we need as its basis a generally
accepted statement. Aristotle suggests areas of inquiry
which yield premises for enthymemes, some of which appear
below. By studying areas of inquiry, the writer
anticipates the audience's reasoning premises by exploring
the same means available to the audience. The writer
should ask these questions because the audience can and
probably will ask the same questions. Concerning any
subject, writers and readers may ask the following:

1. What is the definition and function of the subject
(Aristotle 163)?

2. How is the subject logically divided into separate
elements (Aristotle 163-64)?

3. What statements from general consensus or from
authorities are there about the subject (Aristotle
164-65)?

4. What are the good and bad consequences of the
proposition (Aristotle 166)?

5. Will the results of the proposition be identical
to results of similar actions (Aristotle 167)?

6. What are the conceivable motives that brought about the present situation (Aristotle 168)?

7. What are the motives or deterrents for doing or avoiding the proposition (Aristotle 168-69)?

8. Are there inconsistencies in the facts (Aristotle 169-70)?

9. What may obscure the facts (Aristotle 170)?

10. Is there a better course of action than the proposed action (Aristotle 170)?

11. What is associated with the subject (Aristotle 170)?

12. Does the proposition differ from previous actions (Aristotle 170-71)?

Larson adapts these and other topics and questions in a detailed heuristic (152-54). He says writers can use his heuristic to explore their subject and find out what they know before writing (147). But he misplaces the emphasis. Such questions, like Aristotle's topics and premises, work because they anticipate the questions the audience may ask: they represent the questions inherent in human nature, questions all people ask about subjects every day.

Not only do writers use examples and enthymemes to convey reason: all people use examples and enthymemes when considering any subject. Therefore, the writer uses examples, enthymemes and basic questions because of the ability of all humans to determine good through such processes, and because the particular audience belongs to humanity.

Using reason, people deliberate to arrive at a good result. Another element that influences discourse is emotion. However, people react to emotion, rather than consciously choosing it as they do reason.

4.4. EMOTION

Whether or not modern writers wish to arouse emotions as often and to the degree of ancient orators, we still find value in the study of emotions. Most writers desire an audience that remains calm, friendly and benevolent; most would avoid writing that arouses anger, hatred and contempt. In all cases, emotion affects judgment. Some emotions, such as calmness, allow reason to guide judgment. Other emotions, such as hatred, obstruct reason and cloud judgment. Whether the writer tries to encourage an atmosphere of reason or simply tries to avoid obstructing reason, the writer we must know what causes the

emotion in order to encourage it or to avoid it (Aristotle 91-92).

As Lunsford and Ede point out, some critics attack Aristotle's discussion of emotion and call it psychological manipulation ("On Distinctions" 41). However, through consideration of emotion, Aristotle intends for the communicator to bring the audience into an agreeable state of mind which the communicator may appeal to rationally (Lunsford and Ede, "Classical Rhetoric" 86-87). Aristotle tells the communicator how emotion may affect the audience's reaction to the message, and how the communicator may bring the audience into a rational state.

Leighton explores the connection between emotion and judgment as presented in the Rhetoric and concludes that judgment may change as a result of emotion, emotion may change as a result of judgment, emotion can cause a person to mishear or misread and thereby make a faulty judgment, and emotion may increase expectations and cause faulty judgment (146-53). For example, if an article contains a racial slur that angers the reader, that reader's opinion of the article may decline; emotion has altered judgment. If the reader studies the article and realizes that the author did not intend a racial slur, the reader's emotion may change from anger to embarrassment for having missed the true intention; judgment has altered emotion. If the

reader does not realize the intention and continues to read in anger, every subsequent comment in the article will take on the character of racial insensitivity; emotion has caused misreading and misjudgment. If the reader consults another article and, happily, finds that article highly sensitive to the reader's concerns, the reader may accept subsequent comments in the article as valid, even if they exhibit a lack of logic; emotion has raised expectations and clouded judgment.

4.5. EMOTION ANALYZED

Each emotion, according to Aristotle, has three constituents: the condition or mental state of the person; the object of the emotion; and situations that cause or arouse the emotion (Aristotle 92-93; Loukas 177). Pain or pleasure accompanies each emotion (Aristotle 92).

For instance, the reader who encounters a racial slur that causes anger may experience the painful condition or mental state of insult; the reader directs the anger toward the author of the article, the object of the anger; the act of reading the slur, the situation, arouses the anger.

The fourteen emotions that Aristotle thus analyzes include: anger, placability, love, hatred, fear, confidence, shame, shamelessness, benevolence, compassion,

indignation, envy, emulation and contempt (Aristotle
93-131; Loukas 177-80).

Answering those who criticize Aristotle's pioneering
efforts in the psychology of emotions as unsophisticated,
Sussman and Fortenbaugh contend that his methods and
assertions compare favorably with modern views. Sussman
compares Aristotle's description of "fear" with modern
definitions of "fear appeal," and concludes that
Aristotle's and modern understandings of fear show
significant similarity. Sussman notes that the definitions
match in three important ways: First, Aristotle recognizes
and defines the emotion in congruence with moderns.
Second, Aristotle and moderns structure fear appeal
messages in much the same way. Third, Aristotle recognizes
the variables, the constituents, involved in audience
character, a recognition which Sussman considers
significant to the modern understanding of fear. Sussman's
study concludes that, besides the time-bound and
culture-bound specifics, Aristotle's insights into the
elements of emotion correspond to our own (Sussman 206-11).

According to Fortenbaugh, Aristotle's approach to the
emotions demonstrates that emotional response depends upon
"intelligent behavior" and therefore communicators may
affect emotion through reason (Aristotle on Emotion 17).
Just as Grimaldi shows the connection between reason and

emotion, asserting that the enthymeme allows emotion and feelings to enter into the reasoning process, Fortenbaugh shows the connection between emotion and reason, arguing that emotion, in Aristotle's opinion, depends upon reasonable cognition. Because a person directs emotion at an object, such as the reader directing anger at the writer, the act of cognition, or rational perception, occurs (Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Rhetoric" 212). The reader in the example perceives the writer as the object of the anger. Because the reader perceives, and therefore can reason about, the object of the anger, the emotional process cannot be "distinct from and hostile to" reason (Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Rhetoric 217). Writers can present ideas about the object of emotion through statements of reason and thus alter the reader's emotion by altering the reader's perception of the object of the emotion.

In summary, the writer must realize the impact of emotion on writing: emotions alter the reader's judgment; emotions affect reason; and reason affects emotion.

4.6. DESIRE

The communicator cannot present acceptable reasons and cannot encourage an amenable emotional state if the audience refuses to pay attention. The audience pays attention to those it respects. It respects those who best reflect its values, those with character. Aristotle calls character the "most potent" means of persuasion (9). The writer may discover the character of a particular audience by first realizing that character results from habit which results from desire.

A significant connection exists among desire, habit (ethos) and character (eethos). According to Miller, "Aristotle used eethos to designate character of a speaker as revealed in a speech [when] he was thinking of the speaker's customs, traditions or manner of life" (310). The chain of desire, habit and character occurs when a person decides what to do and then "consciously desires" it:

> Such courses of action repeated become habits, and habits repeated until well ingrained become states or dispositions. It is thus that habitual behavior or ethos is indicative of character or eethos. (Miller 313)

For instance, a person decides to go into a specific career and then desires to master that field. The person repeatedly studies the literature of the field and continually desires to master the field. The dedication and study habits (ethos) lead to an aspect of the person's character (eethos) as the person eventually gains recognition as an expert in the field.

People desire that which provides pleasure, and pleasure is the aim of desire. Memories, anticipation of the future and perceptions of the present provide pleasure. We derive pleasure from emotions and from such things as victory, sport, honor, reputation, friendship, learning, art, personal wisdom, personal authority, relaxation and laughter (Aristotle 60-7).

People desire to perform habits because repetition of an act provides pleasure (Aristotle 59). The performance of a necessary act through habit provides pleasure because it removes discomfort, for instance the discomfort of trying to think about too many things at one time. Habit allows a driver to slow down while approaching an intersection in the car, signal the turn, stop at the stop sign, look both ways and then make a turn, all the while thinking about something else. In the same way, the habits a writer develops allows that writer to minimize the cognitive strain that can result from thinking about too

many things at once (see 2.7.).

Acquired habits are not always initially pleasant, but become so after repetition (Aristotle 59). How many people truly enjoy their first cigarette or the first cup of coffee? Habit causes initially unpleasant acts to become pleasant, and we eventually desire them regularly. People derive pleasure from comfortable and familiar habits and therefore desire to repeat them (Aristotle 59-60).

Habits of the highest order are virtues: justice, courage, temperance, excellence, generosity, open-mindedness, gentleness, caution and wisdom. These are "habits of the mind" (Aristotle 31). A person may decide and desire to be gentle. The person practices gentleness repeatedly until the virtue, the habit of the mind, develops.

Aristotle identifies "the main standard of reference" for desires, saying, all people love themselves to some degree and desire other people to emulate them, to flatter them, to honor them and to appreciate their work (66). People desire others to acknowledge their wisdom, their knowledge, their superiority, their unique talents and their sense of humor (Aristotle 66). The writer who meets the main standard of reference, who compliments or reflects the character of the audience, wins the attention of the

audience. The writer who understands that character results from habit which results from desire will look at the habits and desires of a particular audience, and determine how to compliment or reflect those same habits and desires in the composition.

For instance, a writer addressing scholars observes that scholars research subjects thoroughly (their habit) in order to master the subjects (their desire). The writer reflects the character of the audience by emphasizing the research the writer has done and the writer's mastery of the subject; the writer thus demonstrates that writer and reader share the same desires and habits and therefore the same character.

4.7. ARISTOTLE'S RELEVANCE TO WRITERS

Lunsford and Ede, in "On Distinctions between Classical and Modern Rhetoric," list the distinctions usually drawn between Aristotle's modern approaches to discourse and show that more similarities than differences exist between the two (45). The attempt in this work to outline Aristotle's universal audience based on common traits of human nature supports their findings.

First, they find that both perspectives view the person as a "language-using animal who unites reason and emotion in discourse with another" (45-46). Aristotle claims that, through language, one person may cause action in another by appealing, through language, to that person's reason, emotions and desires. In Aristotle's universal audience, the person reasons with the aim of good in mind, but may use statements in the reasoning process that reflect strong emotion or desire. The person's emotions contain elements of reason and desire. And the person may very well desire as well as reason toward good things and may desire the pleasure that accompanies certain emotions.

Second, they find that in "both periods rhetoric provides a dynamic methodology whereby rhetor and audience may jointly have access to knowledge" (45-47). Aristotle presents two methodologies: the methodology of persuasion and the methodology of analyzing audience, which has as its basis the construction of a universal audience. Lunsford and Ede note that Aristotle clearly defines the relationship of communicator and audience, but that modern discourse operates "without any such clearly articulated theory of the knower and the known" (45-47). Again, Aristotle categorically provides the communicator with a clear definition of the universal audience to which "the knower and the known" belong.

Third, the authors find that modern and ancient rhetoric can potentially "clarify and inform activities in numerous related fields" (45, 47-48). Because Aristotle bases his understanding of audience on the basic causes of human action which directly affect all discourse, any field related to discourse, any endeavor in which one person addresses another person, relies on the fundamental elements that comprise Aristotle's universal audience.

Writers can study Aristotle's method of understanding human nature to discover how the basic forces in all people affect communication. We find in the Rhetoric a methodology with which writers may understand how people employ reason, emotion and desire during the communication process. Because Aristotle identifies traits that affect all communication through language, his methodology applies to any situation that relies on the transfer of meaning through discourse. Using the material in the Rhetoric, the writer may construct a universal audience that can serve as a knowledge/value base to which the writer refers while following the social perspective taking process.

5 CONCLUSION

Aristotle's method of constructing a universal audience allows the writer to contemplate the traits of human nature that directly affect discourse before analyzing those traits in any particular audience. When considering a particular audience, a writer may ask: What examples or instances does this audience accept as meaningful? What statements does the audience accept as elements of deduction? What does this group know or say about the past, the future, the possibilities and importance of the subject? What particular statements and objects arouse emotions in my audience? What habits and desires does my audience possess?

Beyond presenting questions, though, Aristotle tells us _why_ we ask these questions and _what_ _to_ _do_ with the answers. He tells us how the reasoning process works, how emotions interact with discourse and how the desires of audience directly influence communication.

Thus, when a writer enters the second phase of the social perspective taking process and observes the traits of the particular audience, the writer knows not only what to observe, but also why to observe it. In the role-taking phase, the writer can give life to the constructed audience, inferring how it reacts to induction and

deduction, what arouses each of the emotions, why it desires that which directs its habits and character. Given the wide range of items that Aristotle considers in defining human nature, the writer faces numerous options when anticipating communication gaps; but that supply of options also contains numerous roads to strategies that will span the gaps. And while preparing the specific tactics for production of the composition, the writer compares the structure of the discourse with the patterns of reasoning, pays attention to the emotional potential of words and phrases and considers how the style and character in the work reflect the desires of the audience.

The application of Aristotle's approach in this way does not interfere with modern, practical approaches to understanding audience, such as those presented in chapter three. To the contrary, Aristotle's construction of universal audience complements modern approaches to understanding writers' audience. A developing writer's syllabus might very well follow the social perspective taking process: Aristotle's approach, as presented in chapter four, provides the knowledge/value base; and the approaches presented in chapter three accomplish the objective of the subsequent phases.

The strength of Aristotle's universal audience lies in its systematic, categorical approach rather than in its specific details. Modern writers may argue whether or not all of Aristotle's elements of good apply to us and whether or not all of his elements of desire manifest habits and character in modern society. But the system, which outlines how reason works, how emotions operate and how desire creates character, stands as a frame on which to hang the particularities of the day. As Thompson asserts, "Aristotle, if alive today, probably would be the leader in the movement to find new, accurate data for the re-evaluation of his rhetorical precepts" (3).

The framework confronts modern writers with questions as well as answers. Does reason work the way Aristotle claims? Do people form emotions and react to desire the way Aristotle says? The writer must either agree with Aristotle's assessment or disagree and provide a different one. In either case, the writer examines personal beliefs, preconceptions and notions about the influence of discourse on people. Such examination could produce only better writers.

Researchers and scholars concerned with writing may also wish to re-examine Aristotle's approach, especially from an inter-disciplinary perspective. A concise, orderly analysis of the human processes that directly influence

discourse might draw on sources in the sciences and

humanities.   Until a modern scientist draws on all

available sources and produces such a work, we can consult

the work of an ancient scientist who did just that.

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