Discuss the impact of the work of three authors from the History II course reading list on the “rhetorical landscape” (Royster, 2003). You may focus your argument on rhetoric itself or on a related aspect, including but not limited to agency, audience, invention, pedagogy, access, epistemology, and silence. Remember to make explicit (1) your rationale for grouping the three authors, and (2) the significance of their work in their respective contexts and as it continues to be influential in the discipline today.

The works of Alexander Bain, Albert R. Kitzhaber, and James Berlin contributed to writing pedagogy in their respective times, and continue to be important figures in the field today. There are a large number of scholars within the field of rhetoric that contribute to the writing pedagogy. The paragraph, for Bain, is particularly important in teaching writing, and his work did not go unnoticed when it was first published, and its value is still assessed today. Andrea Lunsford addresses Bain’s work in the article “Alexander Bain’s Contributions to Discourse Theory,” where she views Bain’s forms not as an “act of forms through which we can understand and analyze writing” (p. 299). Ultimately she sees value in Bain’s work as something current and future rhetoricians can aspire, which is formulating a theory that can be applied to other disciplines and useful enough to describe discourse. In Kitzhaber’s *Rhetoric in American colleges* (1950), a historical overview of changes in writing curriculum and pedagogy from 1850 to 1950 provides specific information about the impact of Bain’s work on the paragraph. Similar to Kitzhaber, Berlin (1987) provides an overview of writing pedagogy and curriculum from 1900-1985, while giving his own definition of rhetoric that contributes to the epistemological nature of rhetoric. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ways in which Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin contributed to writing pedagogy by providing a definition of rhetoric, and demonstrating the ways in which specific understandings and/or definitions of rhetoric influence writing pedagogy.

Grant Boswell’s “The Disfunction of Rhetoric: Intervention, Imaginative Excess, and the Origin of the Modes of Discourse” credits Bain as the person responsible for bringing together rhetorical theory and faculty psychology, which he defines as a “response to an episode in English history” that accounted for the perceived need to control or restrain by way of reason and rationale the imagination that was believed to have brought about a “psychological imbalance” (p. 248). Due to Civil War and the belief that the imagination, which at the time was viewed negatively due to the fact that it was seen as uncontrollable, led to several changes in rhetorical theory and curriculum. Bain’s definition of rhetoric moves it beyond oratory. Bain defines rhetoric as “the means whereby language, spoken or written, may be rendered effective” (p. 1146). This definition specifically views rhetoric as an art practiced in both oral and written forms. This definition also explains Bain’s attention given to attempts made to “methodize” instruction of composition. If the purpose of rhetoric is to be effective, then it is understandable that his view of the teacher is of a trainer of students. Bain believes improving the writing of students is difficult, as a result of limited and/or limiting knowledge of language on account of it “resulting from the practice of a life” (p. 1145). As such composition instructors must find ways to condense lessons to combat the issues with students working with limited language.

Understanding this issue as a limitation to writing instruction, Bain pushes for instructors to focus on the paragraph as a means to teach writing effectively. The paragraph, according to Bain, “handles and exhausts a distinct topic,” and “conditions essential to the effect of any succession of statements directed to a give purpose” (p. 1147). What this amounts to is that Bain urges focusing on teaching the paragraph because it can lead to avoiding “some of the worst faults of composition” by simply restraining students to a specific topic. The focus of the student is then on topic sentences, and an explicit plan “dictated by “he nature of composition” (p. 1147).

He sees this practice as leading to the student understanding in their mind what is good composition. These paragraphs that exemplify good composition would not only help students understand what is good composition, but also how to unburden the student, from what Bain refers to as “finding matter as well as language” (p. 1146). For Kitzhaber (1950), Bain’s work is significant to the field of rhetoric because of his impact on writing pedagogy.

Kitzhaber’s dissertation *Rhetoric in American colleges* touches on the impact of Bain’s work. While Kitzhaber does point out that Bain was not the first to write on paragraph theory, he does note that Bain’s work “laid down hard and fast rules,” and these hard and fast rules were aimed at benefitting students and instructors (p. 155). Bain’s six rules for the paragraph, according to Kitzhaber were “the greatest importance in the subsequent development of paragraph theory” (p. 156). Not long after Bain’s work on paragraph theory, explicit attention was given to the paragraph in the rhetoric texts in the United States of America. Eventually writing pedagogy moves away from the paragraph, and begins to focus on composition as a whole, but from roughly the 1860s until the 1890s, considerable attention was given to the paragraph. Paragraph theory was thought to be vital to writing pedagogy and instruction.

Kitzhaber does more than provide a historical overview of the changes in writing curriculum and pedagogy from 1850 – 1900. He, like Bain, provides his own definition of rhetoric. Kitzhaber’s definition of rhetoric is linked to language and human communication, which allows for a different understanding and approach to language. If “language is the medium of human communication,” then rhetoric is the “art which shows how to make this communication most effective” (p. 141). Rhetoric as communication is as significant to the field then, and now, because it moves away from rhetoric’s perception as only concerned with persuasion and allows for rhetoric to be linked and applied to both writing and the language that is used to communicate. This definition of rhetoric moves it from being “predominantly abstract” to a discipline that is more concrete, and visible within writing practices implemented in university curriculums (p. 205). The attention is now directed at writing made rhetoric practical.

Awareness of the discourse that makes up the definition of rhetoric also aids in understanding the discourse that makes up a theory, or discipline. To better understand the discipline of rhetoric we must take into account the numerous definitions and writing pedagogies that created the knowledge that informs rhetorical theory. James Berlin (1987) attempts to categorize rhetorical theories associated with writing pedagogy in *Rhetoric and Reality.* Similar to Kitzhaber, Berlin (1987) contributes to writing pedagogy by providing his own definition of rhetoric, and then discussing how it can be implemented in the teaching of writing composition.

Berlin defines rhetoric as a term that “refers to a diverse discipline that historically has included a variety of incompatible systems” (p. 3). These systems, according to Berlin, are eventually replaced, and as result rhetoric should be deemed rhetorics. Berlin argues that rhetoric should be plural due to the fact that there always exists a dominant system of rhetorics in play, and other competing systems of rhetorical ideas and theories. These theories eventually replace one another, and so his specific understanding of rhetoric informs his approach to writing pedagogy, similar to the work of Bain and Kitzhaber. The work of Berlin on writing pedagogy from 1900-1985 is a more complex approach than Kitzhaber. Whereas Kitzhaber provides the historical overview of writing pedagogy, Berlin does a similar trace of a different time period, but also provides three epistemological categories to organize how it is that each “rhetorical system is based on epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality” (p. 4).

Berlin’s chooses an epistemological approach in his work over an ideological approach, because doing so “allows for a closer focus on the rhetorical properties” (p. 6). This differs from the works of Bain and Kitzhaber. Berlin’s work reflects an attempt at categorizing how we know, and how that reality influences what we know. Berlin breaks up the theories into three categories: “objective , subjective, and transactional” (p. 6). Theories categorized as objective “locate reality in the external world,” while the subjective “place truth within the subject,” and transactional “locate reality at the point of interaction of subject and object” (p. 6). These theories fall in line with Berlin’s understanding of the writing course as an attempt to provide “students with a set of tacit rules about distinguishing truth from falsity” (p. 7).

Later in his book Berlin explains that rhetoric is moving in the direction of epistemic accounts for its role as “a method of discovering and even creating knowledge” (p. 183). He connects this approach to rhetoric with the writing course because of what he believes the writing course should do. Specifically, a writing course must “prepare students for citizenships in democracy,” in which case understanding how “often-unstated assumptions on which their being are built” is vital to their participation within and outside academia (p. 189).

Bain’s“English Composition and Rhetoric” provided a definition of rhetoric that continued to move away from faculty psychology. His definition moved towards communication and writing, while simultaneously addressing the role and purpose of the teacher. Kitzhaber’s (1950) dissertation *Rhetoric in American colleges* provided a historical overview of curriculum and pedagogical practices from 1850 to 1950, which resulted in a deeper understanding of previous practices, but also informs/informed works that followed. Berlin’s (1987) “*Rhetoric in American colleges, 1850-1900*” contributed in similar fashion to Kitzhaber by providing his own historical overview of writing pedagogy. These three scholars are grouped together because it is with Bain’s 1890 work that resulted in greater attention given to the paragraph and a more practical method of teaching writing. The works of Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin represent shifts in both rhetoric and writing pedagogy, and are significant in moving the field of rhetoric forward.Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin provide specific definitions of rhetoric in their respective works that were influential during their time, which continue to be read in the present.

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