

Part I

Interlude One: The Fault of Noreen Garman

My title is a play on the subtitle of the French Philosopher Bernard Stiegler's first translated book into English, *Technics and time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, in which he tells the tale of Prometheus and Epimetheus and how humans were always connected to and with technology. Epimetheus always came after. His brother took the lead, after all he was Prometheus, but Epimetheus wanted to show to his brother that he could handle the responsibility given to the one who came first by the gods to hand out the talents and powers to all the living creatures. When it came time to bestow some abilities onto the humans Epimetheus ran out. He had failed his brother and his brother the gods. There would be Hades to pay for such lack of foresight. Never give a job to someone who always comes after, comes too late, thinks too slowly. Powerless and facing the uncertainties of the world because Epimetheus's realization did not come quickly enough, humans from the start had to fend for themselves by inventing their own abilities. They had to utilize their own language and hands to create what they needed. This was, for Stiegler, the first interactions between humans and technology, and it happened right at the beginning. Humans are technological from the start.

Why am I so critical of methodology, especially the stifling non-thinking found in most activities of education? Why do I resist all attempts to codify research protocols? Why do I instinctively reject any notion that sets a method into steps and pretends it guides any search for truth or anything empirical or factual? In a few words: it is the fault of Noreen Garman. It was Noreen Garman who introduced me to the history of rhetoric and the rhetorical turn of the 1980s and 1990s. My first class I took with her was called of all things qualitative research. One of the many items she had us read was an article written by Margaret Marshall and Loren Barrit titled *Choices Made, Worlds Created: The Rhetoric of AERJ*. What a fascinating article, published in of all places *AERJ*, the American Educational Researcher Journal, the official journal of the American Educational Research Association. What a dreadfully dry journal. Still to this day it is stuck in the positivist realm in which statistics, traditional anthropology, and modest "mixed methods" serve as the dominant paradigms and deep seated ideology. This article looked at the rhetoric of the journal and confirmed those who had an inkling of suspicion of the deep biases

of the journal towards only a certain type of research. Marshall and Barritt (1990, 593) noted the articles in AERJ “conform to a predictable form.” Anything that went outside of the boundaries, tightly guarded by the methodology police who know the protocol and know interlopers and intruders when they see them, was not legitimate research, never scholarship, and an abomination to the science gods. If one were to pick up recent issues of AERJ and then explored a few more representative issues, the newcomer reader would be worm-holed back to Post War World America where Positivism and empirical Social Science reigned. One would never get the sense that intellectual debates raged in the 60s over Poststructuralism and Feminism, Postmodernism in the 90s or Posthumanism or New Materialism in the early Twentieth-first Century. These intellectual traditions and scholarly approaches simply do not exist in the minds of the AERJ faithful. When the idea of innovation and compromise is considered to be mixed methods, one without doubt enters into an intellectual wasteland where researchers are intellectually intimidated to venture beyond the norm. The binary of quantitative or qualitative methods with an Aristotelian golden mean of mix methods in the middle still holds firm in the (non) thinking of too many in the fields of education.

After I read the *The Rhetoric of AERJ* I asked Noreen to feed me some more. She had piqued my curiosity. I was convinced of the intellectual limitations of traditional scholarship before I entered into her class, but no doubt she convinced me that my suspicions were well founded. I needed more to sustain my new curiosity. Because of who she is, she fed me. Noreen introduced me to the scholars who were reintroducing rhetoric to USA intellectual debates. She did not just guide me to rhetoricians. When she found out in 1994 that I was offered a position at LSU-Shreveport, Noreen hugged me and said two things: “I am so happy you found a job, we were worried our students would never find one and make sure you look up the two Bills.” That was Bill Pinar and Bill Doll. I indeed did. Bill Pinar supported me in getting graduate status in his department in Baton Rouge so I could teach doctoral courses, just as Joe Kincheloe did in the 1980s, in Shreveport. Bill Doll came to my class one semester and spoke to my students and it was afterwards at dinner that he suggested I attend Bergamo which at the time was being held in Tennessee. I did and thus began my career in Curriculum Studies. This too is the fault of Noreen Garman.

In the two chapters that follow I name names. I share with the reader those who were leading the intellectual resurgence in the late Twentieth and early Twentieth-first Centuries, trying to return rhetoric to the realm of scholarly inquiry. I move from the rise of rhetoric in Ancient Greece and Rome through the early modern period and the first attempt to banish rhetoric from human inquiry, rhetoric’s return to the human and social sciences, and I end with a discussion of the rhetoric of science. In the second chapter of this section I do some applied rhetorical analysis with such terms as data, models, and statistics. In both chapters I use economics as the back drop because economics may be glibly viewed as the “dismal science,” it is a science and, along with biology, the field that reigns supreme in our unfortunate continuation to construct hierarchies of knowledge. Deniers of climate change certainly question the outcomes of the sophisticated models of climate scientists but

strangely they never question the equally complicated models, and the assumptions embedded in them, of economists and mathematicians. It is just one example of the rhetoric of hierarchical knowledge and where scholars and non-scholars place their faith. Of course all of this is the fault of Noreen Garman, but nothing in these chapters that are deemed out of bounds or incorrect are not. She helped create me but, like any good professor, she did not dictate the boundaries from which my mind could roam. I did.

References

- Stieger, B. *Technics and time, 1: The fault of Epimetheus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Marshall, M., & Barritt, L. (1990). Choices made, worlds created: The rhetoric of AERJ. *American Educational Research Journal*, 27(4), 589–609.