



Rhetoric and Human Consciousness: A History

Craig R. Smith

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Creating a meaningful and engaging survey of the uses, definitions, and styles of rhetoric as it has evolved from ancient to present times would be a daunting task for most scholars. Luckily, for all who want to know about rhetoric's intersection with diverse disciplines of thought, how it has guided human interaction, and its place as a powerful force in public affairs and education, the latest edition of Craig Smith's *Rhetoric and Human Consciousness* provides enriching insights. His detailed, well-researched text maintains a balanced, in-depth analysis of theories, perspectives, people, and situations associated with various dimensions of rhetoric. The historical development of rhetorical theory, together with multiple examples, illustrates and highlights rhetorical themes and trends in philosophical, political, psychological, scientific, and religious thought and creativity. Smith argues that for almost every school of thought, another school of thought forms in reaction. From this perspective, he presents investigations of Greco-Roman, medieval, Renaissance, modern, existential, postmodern, and feminist thinking, examining the evolving definitions of rhetoric from myth and display to persuasion and symbolic inducement. He demonstrates that all of us use rhetoric to achieve higher levels of understanding when we communicate with others because it is crucial to decision making in an uncertain world. An elevated understanding of rhetoric helps us become better persuaders and critical listeners.

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