

# **Aristotle's Rhetoric for Everybody**

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And why man is a political animal in a greater measure than any bee or any gregarious animal is clear. For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech . . . . [S]peech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city state.

Aristotle, *Politics* (1.1.10-11)



For David H. Bell



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## PREFACE

There are two questions to answer for both students and teachers who have come upon this treatment of the third liberal art of language: Why rhetoric, and why Aristotle?

Why rhetoric? “Rhetoric” has been—since its ancient invention and until now—a suspect study. Even its prominent defenders in the tradition—Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, and Erasmus, for example—handle it with the kind of care one reserves for dangerously powerful things. I will not here defend the art of rhetoric as a good since the Introduction does so; instead, I will only assert that one may practice rhetoric well or badly, but everyone practices it. Human beings are essentially language animals, and, since rhetoric is one of language’s necessary forms, we are essentially rhetorical animals. The art simply acknowledges that fact of our nature. This art can be thought of in relation to its ancient competitors (philosophy, for instance, and poetry), or in relation to the other two arts that with it make up the medieval trivium (grammar and logic/dialectic), or in relation to its contemporary studies (speech and communication or rhetoric and composition). But it is one essential, good art.

Why Aristotle? One might offer Cicero instead, for example, and there are good historical reasons for doing so. Even so, there are two reasons for using Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* as our guiding star. First, Aristotle’s treatment offers the advantage of being part of his encyclopedic treatment of other essential human subjects—including his logic and ethics, the study of both important to encourage rhetoric as an art of private and public flourishing and not simply verbal success. Rhetoric needs to be studied within a horizon larger than itself, within a circle of other subjects which supplement it, and, of all the major figures of the rhetorical tradition, Aristotle provides the most



comprehensive and detailed circle of subjects of knowledge. One must usually refine Aristotle's arguments, but one may profitably begin with them since those arguments are often wise. John Henry Newman's hyperbole in *The Idea of a University*—Aristotle is “the oracle of nature and truth” (V.5)—catches the fact that one can go a longer way with Aristotle in trying to understand most things than with anyone else. That is especially true of his rhetorical thought.

Second, his *Rhetoric* is simply the best treatment of the art. As with so much else, Aristotle discerned the nature of the art with clarity and breadth. This book is *not* a scholarly treatment of Aristotle's treatise, though I have studied and taught the book for over twenty-five years. Instead, it tries to articulate an Aristotelian approach to the art of rhetoric without any historicist or philological anxieties about using later examples of rhetoric and English terms for them. I am not trying to get his text precisely right; I am trying to get the art precisely right, and his treatise will provide the occasion for that latter enterprise. It is an adaptation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, like a film of a long, complicated novel, one that requires omissions, alterations and additions to be even more instructive and pleasurable for its audience. Think of this as a sequel to Mortimer Adler's fine *Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy*. Where he explained the whole of Aristotle, I will explain only a part. Its title, *Aristotle's Rhetoric for Everybody*, pays homage to that incomparable teacher.

I should caution the reader, however. The book is an advanced introduction which makes demands on the reader. And, because commissioned to be the third course covering the arts of language on the *Arts of Liberty* site, it presumes and reviews some grammatical and logical material useful for understanding rhetoric. John Nieto's essay on grammar and Anthony Andres' course on logic on the site are presumed prerequisite readings. A more accurate if not graceful title might be *Aristotle's Rhetoric for Everybody Who Knows A Little Grammar and Logic and Who Likes to Read Challenging*





*Books: Difficult Thought Made Easier.* I have selected the title I have because I believe even a reader who does not know those two arts could read the book with profit and might very well be persuaded to then study the other two arts. Education often follows a crooked path.

What can the reader expect here, and how might the book be used? This is an introduction to the art of rhetoric, written from the perspective of Aristotle—that is, if he were a contemporary American with an interest in old books. Think of it as a simplified, Aristotelian account of the art, simplified since I will avoid almost all Greek terminology, I will not feel obligated to cite Aristotle all the time, instead paraphrasing, and I do not plan on weighing in on arcane, scholarly disputes about this or that. The appendices offer sources for more advanced study. I intend this as an *introduction* for those who want to know what rhetoric is and who may have an interest in Aristotle. You may want to improve your writing, your reading, your speaking, and/or your listening. Aristotle always improves your thinking. Indeed, when Adler divides Aristotle's overall concerns into three general categories—making, doing and thinking—he explains that each is actually a form of thinking: thinking about making, thinking about doing, and thinking about thinking. As we will see, rhetoric concerns all three: Since it is a productive art, rhetoric asks us to think about “making” speech; since that made speech occurs in social settings (intimate and civic), rhetoric asks us to think about “doing” ethical and political things with it; and since that made-speech for ethical and political purposes is intimately related to philosophy, it is often theoretical. Every rhetoric, no matter how concerned with technique or virtue, assumes a *theory* of rhetoric. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, then, takes up all three subjects of making, doing and thinking about language.

This book might be used for courses on the trivium, composition, speech and communication, philosophy (especially ethical or political), or on Aristotle himself. Or



it might be used simply for the pleasure of learning from Aristotle about a central human attribute: persuasiveness. What is that attribute, and why is it central? Those two questions are answered by the book itself. The audience in mind here is young students not yet ready to read the *Rhetoric* by themselves. Ultimately, its purpose is to persuade the reader that the art of rhetoric is an interesting and important subject and that its study reveals and empowers a most important attribute about us as human beings—our use of what distinguishes us from the other animals as we try to flourish as human beings.

The order of the sections and chapters will be thus. After an extensive introduction (Chapters 1-5), I will present the five sub-arts of the art of rhetoric: Invention (Chs. 6-14), especially the three genres or kinds of rhetoric and the three appeals; organization (15-18); style (19-22); memory (23); and delivery (24). After the presentation of each sub-art will be an exercise built upon Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby," one of his less famous but nonetheless rhetorically masterful pieces. (There are disputes about whether Lincoln actually wrote the letter, but I will ignore those and assume he did.) Afterwards, I will conclude by locating Aristotle's art of rhetoric within the other subjects he discusses and within the other two arts of language in the trivium, grammar and logic. I will assume an elementary knowledge of grammar and logic, so I recommend completing those courses on the site first. One thing to point out is this: Aristotle spends a great deal of time proportionally on invention. His is an invention-centered rhetoric and the most logical of rhetorics. I have included three appendices: 1) a Study Guide for *Aristotle's Rhetoric for Everybody* composed of questions for each chapter; 2) a Study Guide for Aristotle's *Rhetoric* itself (outline and discussion questions), keyed to George Kennedy's translation of the text; and 3) an Annotated Bibliography for those who would like to further pursue their study of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and rhetoric generally. My greatest hope for the book is that it will



be only the *beginning* of your rhetorical education and will lead you to the *Rhetoric* itself.

This book's treatment of the art of rhetoric builds upon the other two arts—grammar and logic—courses which are available on the *Arts of Liberty* site, fulfilling them. If Aristotle is right in the book's epigraph—that it is language for the common purpose of happiness that distinguishes human beings from the other animals—there are few more dignified and rewarding studies since, like grammar and logic, rhetoric is an art present in so many other studies. If a liberal education requires the liberal arts of language, and if rhetoric itself is the consummate liberal art of language—both views are traditional—then no one without the art can be considered liberally educated.



## INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER ONE

### RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY

If you are suspicious of the art of rhetoric, you are in agreement with Plato, but not with Aristotle. Aristotle believed that rhetoric is the partner of philosophy, for everybody tries to persuade or reason with others, even if only in casual conversation and correspondence. Plato appeared to believe otherwise. In his *Gorgias*, during which Socrates dismantles the arguments of three sophists (including the Gorgias of the title), Plato has Socrates explain that the partner of rhetoric is not philosophy, but cooking. Cooking? In an elaborate simile, Socrates says that the soul needs both governance and justice, and the body both exercise and medicine. Good governance and exercise help soul and body, respectively; when things go wrong, enter justice for bad souls and medicine for bad bodies. There are four counterfeit arts to these. On the soul-side of things, the counterfeit of governance is sophistry, and that of justice, rhetoric. On the body-side, the counterfeit of exercise is makeup, and that of medicine, cookery. So Plato has Socrates say that rhetoric is to the soul what cooking is to the body—its partner in flattering people into being persuaded that they are being led toward justice or health when they are, instead, being led in their opposite directions. Leaving to the side Socrates' low opinion of nutrition, we can see that Plato is having his character Socrates argue that rhetoric is a corrupt thing.

Aristotle is challenging his old teacher when he says rhetoric is the partner of philosophy, for rhetoric is now the counterpart, not of cooking, but of Socratic philosophy itself. Socratic philosophy proceeded by question-and-answer, during which Socrates would lead his conversation partner to see that one of his opinions contradicted another so that the student would have to refine his position to avoid



inconsistency. The historical Socrates became so unpopular that the Athenians executed him.

How did he become so? According to his own testimony in his defense speech, *The Apology*, it happened thus. A friend of his went to the Delphic oracle to ask if anyone was wiser than Socrates, and the oracle answered that there was no one wiser than Socrates. Socrates was perplexed. He knew that he did not know anything, yet the oracle itself said no one was wiser than he. What could the oracle mean, he wondered? So he interviewed a number of leading people, people he presumed did know something, and he asked them questions, only to find out that, under serious questioning, they only appeared to know something but in fact did not. After several such interviews, he concluded,

I am wiser than this man; for neither of us really knows anything fine and good, but this man thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas I, as I do not know anything, do not think I do either. I seem, then, in just this little thing to be wiser than this man at any rate, that what I do not know I do not think I know either.<sup>1</sup>

Inevitably, they did not appreciate Socrates' exposure of their ignorance, even if he too did not know; after all, he did not pretend to. The technique he employed in the discussions was called "dialectic," and Plato represents Socrates as *the* philosopher by making up stories about Socrates in just such dialectical discussions.

Back to Aristotle teasing Plato. Plato has Socrates say that the partner of rhetoric is cooking; Aristotle says, "No, its partner is dialectic, the very technique of philosophical reasoning you, Plato, admired in Socrates." In Aristotle's thought, dialectic is a logical method of reasoning about things without contradicting yourself.

Plato did have a point in the *Gorgias*. Gorgias couldn't explain to Socrates what rhetors actually studied or what rhetoric's subject is, and he kept answering Socrates'

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<sup>1</sup> 21D in Fowler's trans. in the Loeb edition. Unless otherwise indicated, citations from ancient texts come from the Loeb series, many of which are available on [Perseus](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu).



questions with absurd claims that rhetors know everything because rhetoric can be persuasive about anything. Gorgias confused method for subject, and Socrates nailed him. Someone can be persuasive about something without knowing anything about it, like an actor playing a doctor during a pharmaceutical ad on television. As Plato represents him, Gorgias did not understand the distinction, so Socrates appeared to show that rhetors know *nothing* since they do not know the subjects they speak about as well as, or better than, students of those subjects do.

“Hold on!” Aristotle might say. “Just because the rhetor is not an expert on the subjects that come under his concern is no reason to say that rhetoric is not something of its own, or that it is just a counterfeit of that subject.” After all, just because the actor persuasively playing a doctor does not know anything about medicine, that does not mean that doctors who do know wouldn’t be well-served by lessons from rhetoricians on their bed-side manner. Aristotle acknowledges that rhetoric, like dialectic, is not a science. That doesn’t mean it’s simply a fake science. No, it’s a real art. What is an art? That’s our next chapter’s question.

The *Gorgias* inaugurates a long history of bashing rhetoric (even if, later in the dialogue, Socrates changes his tune and defends one special kind of rhetoric). That anti-rhetorical tradition tends to be very strong among philosophers, but Aristotle rebelled early against that trend by writing the *Rhetoric*, opening with a direct challenge to Plato: the art of rhetoric is the partner of the art of dialectic. We all already do both, but not as well as we might.



## CHAPTER TWO

### RHETORIC AS AN ART

We are all rhetorical because we speak and write, trying to reason through an issue or persuade someone else to agree with us. Even so, sometimes we practice dialectic or rhetoric better, sometimes worse—either at random or through habit. Everyone has felt more or less reasonable or persuasive on any given day. How did you know? There must have been some standard distinguishing better from worse reason or persuasion. If so, that standard belongs to the art itself.

What is an art? Aristotle defines an art as the reasoned capacity to make something. We all have natural talents in potential, but to varying degrees. Any potential talent can be fulfilled and turned into an actual talent through education: we learn principles of the art, usually by experiencing many examples of its execution under instruction—principles we then learn ourselves through the practice of imitating those examples until they become habitual. Then, eventually, we vary them. For example, if we have a natural talent for drawing, we can study its principles, learning about perspective or shading, for instance, as we imitate other drawings while attempting our own. Such techniques become habitual. During more mature phases of our instruction later, we begin to vary what we have imitated, trying to do things we have not seen done before. Instruction in principles; exposure to the best examples; practice in imitation until it becomes a habit; encouragement in innovation: these are the steps of learning any art. We make by learning how things are made well, then making as well as we can, better and better all the time. When evaluating made things, we can discern when and how a particular instance of the art succeeded or failed.





Language is an innate part of a human being: we all have the potential to learn a language—how to speak and listen to it; how to read and write it. And language has its arts.

The arts of language—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—are studies which can develop innate potentialities into actual talents. I would not deny that some people have more natural talent than others for an art. I myself have very little natural musical talent. If you were to doubt that, I could call my family forward to testify to the painful effect of my singing upon them; nevertheless, even so talentless a fellow as I could improve my singing by studying music and voice. No matter how much I studied and practiced, I would never be a Nat King Cole or Frank Sinatra, but I might sing less painfully.

Study, practice, imitation, habit, innovation: these stages of learning and practicing an art are never completed. Not even the masters stop learning their arts; they learn them still as long as they practice their arts, only better and better all the time. And such training prepares one for something that cannot be planned or controlled, but is nonetheless central to the best work in any art—inspiration. One of the most interesting and hopeful instances of such preparation comes in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, his autobiography, in which he recounts his struggle to teach himself how to read. His master's wife began to teach him how to do so, only to be stopped by her husband, who realized that a literate slave would be more difficult to dominate. Once she stopped, he used his practical wisdom to get poor white boys to teach him to read:

When I was sent on errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get my lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little



urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

He had a natural talent for language—everyone does—but, because of his condition as a slave, he had to get his reading lessons the hard way. But he did, and, once he could read, he read *The Columbian Orator*, his first book, an anthology of dialogues and speeches, during which he began to learn the more advanced arts of dialectic and rhetoric. After he learned to write, he used his new art to escape slavery in the South, forging his master's signature on paperwork. After learning to write at an even more advanced level while in the North, he imitated the dialogues and speeches from *The Columbian Orator*, preparing himself to be inspired to write some of the best speeches in American history (though less well known, Douglass is Lincoln's equal as an orator) and, of course, his autobiography, an American classic.

The artist prepares him or herself to be inspired, and, when it occurs, one's habitual knowledge of how to make something—a drawing, a song, or an argument—manifests itself, and there it is: some new made thing in the world that was not there before! This is the case with all arts, even that most useful of arts, the art of rhetoric.

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (The Library of America: New York, 1994), 41.



### CHAPTER THREE

#### WHY RHETORIC IS USEFUL

Aristotle argues that the art of rhetoric, the partner of dialectic, is a useful art, and he offers five reasons to defend that argument.

The first reason is this: Truth and justice are naturally stronger than falsity and injustice, so, if all other circumstances are equal yet truth or justice is less persuasive than falsity and injustice, the fault must be in the rhetor, the audience or both. Aristotle is quite optimistic about the human capacity for truth and justice. Because he is, the philosophically virtuous have no excuse for not learning the art of rhetoric. Who are the philosophically virtuous? Those who are knowledgeable and good, but who, because of the anti-rhetorical prejudice that rhetoric is beneath them, neglect its study and therefore fail to persuade others of truth and justice. Aristotle thinks such neglect and failure shameful. Socrates in the early parts of the *Gorgias* was wrong to believe rhetoric beneath the philosopher; in fact, it is useful, even necessary, since otherwise philosophy itself will be unable to help its community flourish through good decisions.

The second reason rhetoric is useful is that Aristotle does not believe that all audiences can be taught; they have to be persuaded. Not everyone can or is willing to learn the principles and details of a subject, but must, instead, have the subject presented in a simplified, persuasive form. This sounds more offensive than it is. Many of us who are knowledgeable in one area, after all, are not so in others, so we must rely on the persuasion of others. I, for example, rely on my doctor's recommendations since I have no medical training. This defense may indicate Aristotle's aristocratic disdain for the many; then again, it may indicate only the human limitations making rhetoric useful.



The third reason is that arguing two sides of any case is very useful for understanding that case and being persuasive about it. Only rhetoric and dialectic invent arguments for and against a position so that nothing about the case will go unnoticed. Aristotle is very clear that one is not to practice such pro/con thinking in order to argue both sides of the case, let alone the *wrong* side since to do so would be to lose integrity. He simply means that one's own appeals will be stronger if one knows what appeals are bound to arise on the other side. Not doing so might very well end up with the better case losing to the worse one—simply because the philosophically virtuous speaker refuses to see the matter at hand from the other side, which, as we saw with his first reason, would be shameful.

The fourth reason is really just an ancient Greek thing, but it may still have traction: Aristotle thinks that rhetoric is useful the way martial arts are; you should be able to defend yourself physically *and* verbally. In fact, since language is more distinctly human than mere physical strength, he thinks being unable to defend yourself verbally more embarrassing than being unable to do so physically.

The fifth and last reason is his most devastating critique of the anti-rhetorical position that rhetoric is mere sophistry:

And if it be objected that one who uses such power of speech unjustly might do great harm, *that* is a charge which may be made in common against all good things except virtue, and above all against the things that are most useful, as strength, health, wealth, generalship. A man can confer the greatest of benefits by a right use of these, and inflict the greatest of injuries by using them wrongly. (1.1.13)<sup>1</sup>

Rhetoric is useful because it is a good thing which, used justly, does the greatest good. Rhetoric is not sophistry since “[w]hat makes a man a ‘sophist’ is not his faculty, but his

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<sup>3</sup>Unless otherwise stated, all references to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* come from Lee Honeycutt's ed. of W. Rhys Roberts' [translation](#). Numbers refer to book.chapter.section.



moral purpose" (1.1.14). Both rhetoric and sophistry share an ability to persuade, but they are opposed in how one deliberately chooses to use that ability.

We now know that rhetoric, like its partner dialectic, is an art and that it is useful, but a rather significant question remains: What, exactly, is rhetoric?



## CHAPTER FOUR

### WHAT IS RHETORIC? A DEFINITION

According to Aristotle, “Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (1.2.1). Like any definition, this one has three parts: 1) the thing to be defined; 2) the general category, or *genus*, within which the thing falls with other things; and 3) the specific attributes, or *differentiae*, which distinguish it from other things in the same genus. If human beings are rational animals, then they fall into the genus animal, but rationality differentiates them from other animals.

What is rhetoric? Its genus is a faculty of discovery. We all have a power of the mind potentially capable of discovering—of discerning things. There are a great many things to be discovered, which is why there are so many arts and sciences, but the art of rhetoric discovers something in particular—available means of persuasion—and that particular object of discovery is indeed its *differentia*. Rhetoric is usually defined as an art of persuasion. What makes Aristotle’s definition even better is that he realizes 1) that it is innate to human beings, which is why we all have a faculty for it, 2) that it is an art of discovery, and 3) that it operates in contingent circumstances. Perhaps one day we will discover the rhetoric gene; for now, we will call it a faculty. That faculty discovers means of persuasion, but only those available at any given moment, contingent on the particular case at hand. A logical syllogism is true or not, validly arranged or not, no matter what the particular case, but a rhetorical appeal’s persuasiveness depends upon the rhetor’s rhetorical situation. What is “a rhetorical situation”? I will discuss that in the next chapter. For now, what is crucial is that rhetoric is an art of discovering means of persuasion, an art which relies upon an innate human faculty for doing so. We could chart the definition of the term “rhetoric” thus:



Rhetoric is the faculty of discovering means of persuasion.

*Thing to be defined* = *genus* + *differentiae*

Once a term's meaning is stipulated, we can make predications about it.

When do we practice rhetoric and how? Aristotle thinks we practice rhetoric in three kinds of activity—the political, the ceremonial and the legal—which call for three distinct, but related genres of speech—deliberative, epideictic and judicial. In each, we appeal to reason, character and emotion. Each genre and each appeal will get its own chapter later, but, for now, we still need to understand what kind of subject the art of rhetoric is persuasive *about*. Although rhetoric often borrows from other arts and sciences, its central subject is the debatable. As he puts it,

The duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning. The subjects of our deliberation are such as seem to present us with alternative possibilities: about things that could not have been, and cannot now or in the future be, other than they are, nobody who takes them to be of this nature wastes his time in deliberation. (1.2.12)

No one debates whether the sun will rise tomorrow since, of necessity, it will. We debate what could be otherwise—not the given or the certain, but the possible and the probable. The rhetor might employ the given and the certain, but he or she does not invent them since they already exist. (That is why Aristotle distinguishes between “artistic” proofs, the ones you invent, and “non-artistic” ones, which you don’t.) If I am prosecuting someone for murder, I will rely on laws against murder, but those laws already exist, having resulted from the art of law. It is certain that murder is illegal. What is debatable is whether or not the defendant did it. The case admits of two possibilities: the defendant either did or did not do it. Or, if he or she did do it, it was premeditated or passionate. And so on. A law against murder cannot apply itself to the particulars of a death. Rhetoric does that. The art of rhetoric, then, is the art of the



debatable in a particular case, during which the rhetor discovers available means of persuasion.

There are three central means of persuasion in the art of written rhetoric: invention, organization, and style. Invention is *what* you argue; organization, the *order in which* you argue; style, *how* you argue. There are two extra means of spoken rhetoric: memory and delivery. Aristotle is most interested in invention, next in style, and last in organization. He does not discuss memory at all, and unfortunately dismisses delivery with disdain. Chapters 6-14 will cover invention; 15-18, organization; 19-22, style; and 23-24, memory and delivery, during which I will offer a less disdainful, "Aristotelian" discussion of the final two sub-arts of rhetoric.

Rhetoric, then, is the art of discovering, arranging, stylizing, remembering, and delivering these means of persuasion in the particular case at hand. But what are the variables of a particular case?





## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

The variables of the particular case at hand, the rhetorical situation, are five: 1) the rhetor; 2) the subject or issue at hand; 3) the audience; 4) the means; and 5) the end or purpose. Aristotle explicitly mentions four of the five:

Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object. (1.3.1)

Yet he has already explained that rhetoric is an art, so the means of persuasion— invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery—make up the art of rhetoric itself. But let's back up. How does each variable participate within any rhetorical situation?

The first variable of any rhetorical situation is the rhetor, the person speaking or writing, or, rather, the person as s/he is during the rhetorical moment, the one *doing* the persuading. Although prior reputation matters, any rhetorical moment requires the rhetor to discover available means of persuasion by calling attention to his or her own character, playing to strengths and avoiding weaknesses. The rhetor must have self-knowledge and, Socrates-like, know what s/he does or doesn't know. And it is one's actual words that establish this rhetorical character, so one must attend to them to establish and maintain credibility.

The second variable is the subject matter, generally, and, specifically, the defined issue at hand about that matter. Different subjects call for different means of persuasion. Just think about how one writes in different academic subjects: a lab report for biology requires different appeals than an essay on a Shakespeare play for English,



even if a good writer can do both well. And, of course, different subjects often call for different kinds of writing, different genres.

Yet further defining the issue at hand is crucial: What, exactly, are you trying to persuade your listener or reader *of*? Sometimes, the issue takes the form of a question. Should we go to war, or not? Is the accused guilty of the crime, or not? Should we admire this person, or not? Sometimes, the issue takes the form of a statement one responds to. Be that as it may, persuasiveness requires knowing exactly what one is discussing.

The third variable is one's audience, the person or people being spoken or written to. Different audiences require different appeals. Is your audience young or old, for example, or uneducated or educated? Or is your audience mixed? To be persuasive about something, one must be persuasive to someone, the one *receiving* the persuasion.

The fourth variable is one's means, which come from the art of rhetoric itself—that is, the five sub-arts of invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery. That will be the content of this book. Once known, these sub-arts become the “means of persuasion” the rhetor discovers about the subject for the audience at hand.

The fifth variable is one's purpose, and it is certainly true that one's goal is to persuade one's audience. Yet persuasion alone is not enough. For one thing, a great rhetor might fail to persuade the audience but still be a great rhetor (since sometimes audiences fail). For another, one persuades audiences to think and do things, for audiences need rhetors when they are making judgments, deciding what to think or do in the situation at hand. This is why Aristotle calls all audiences “judges”: they are judging and deciding. So the purpose in any rhetorical situation is this: to persuade an audience to make the best decision possible, which is why rhetoric is an art of practical reason, one which helps people flourish by offering the best possible counsel to encourage the best decisions—choosing the best public policy, freeing the wrongly



accused, admiring the truly admirable. Aristotle assumes that human life is difficult and that we need good fortune to be happy, but he also believes that, all things remaining equal, better decisions lead to happier lives. Rhetoric is ultimately an art of happiness. Because happiness requires virtue, the rhetor and the audience members must call upon their own virtues—intellectual and moral—to persuade and be persuaded wisely as they attempt to achieve the final end of rhetoric: human happiness.

All five variables—rhetor, subject matter and issue, audience, means, end—are in a complex relationship with one another, the interconnections of which are too numerous to fathom. But, as the rhetor chooses means of persuasion in his or her rhetorical situation, he or she is engaged in one of the most significant acts of human life—using language in cooperation with others for mutual flourishing. We cannot keep from doing this, but we can always do it better. How? By studying the means of persuasion to be discovered in the art of rhetoric. That art is the subject of the rest of the book.



**EXERCISE ONE**

## Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby"

Please read the following letter, and from the letter alone answer the discussion questions. You may find it helpful to review the Study Questions for Chapters 1–5 before doing so to make sure you have understood the material.

Executive Mansion,

Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,—

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln



Discussion Questions

1. Identify and explain the five variables of the rhetorical situation here. What is each, and what is the relationship between and among them?
2. What is dialectic? Why might dialectic be helpful, but insufficient here? Why does Lincoln need rhetoric?
3. How might Lincoln's rhetoric have been useful to Mrs. Bixby?
4. How is the letter artful, and how do you think Lincoln acquired this art?
5. If happiness is the goal of rhetoric, how can Lincoln succeed, given that his audience has lost her children?



**THE ART OF INVENTION**



## CHAPTER SIX

### ARGUMENT AND PROOF

Once you understand what your rhetorical situation is, the two most important points to remember about the art of rhetoric are these: you need to state your argument and prove it. Both are the heart of rhetorical invention, the *what* of your persuasion.

What is an argument? We usually call an argument a thesis, a statement (usually in one sentence) that establishes what, essentially, we want the audience to be persuaded to believe about the issue at hand. “We should go to war,” or “we should not do so.” “The defendant is guilty,” or “he is innocent.” “She is admirable,” or “she isn’t.” The argument is a declarative sentence—that is, a predication that declares a proposition. As you will remember from grammar, a predication requires both a subject and a predicate:

The defendant		is guilty/innocent.
<i>Subject</i>	+	<i>predicate.</i>

In Plato’s *Apology*, for example, Socrates’ argument is that he is innocent of the charges against him: He did not introduce new gods into the Greek pantheon, and he did not corrupt the young. Socrates’ argument is simple: “I am innocent.” Because Aristotle believes that rhetoric should help our judgment while we make decisions, the argument itself is a judgment about the subject or issue at hand, and the audience will decide whether or not our judgment—in the concentrated form of the argument about the subject or issue of debate—is good. If so, our argument will influence that audience’s thought, speech and action in a general way; in a very specific way, it will inform the audience’s specific decision.

Of course, it isn’t enough to assert an argument. After all, others will assert counter-arguments, as well. How could an audience decide whose argument was more



persuasive if all the rhetors did was to assert contending arguments? You must supply proofs; you must *prove* your argument. How does one prove an argument?

First, you need to realize that your rhetorical situation includes a variable I did not mention earlier: the genre or kind of rhetoric. Aristotle believes that there are three essential rhetorical genres: the political, the legal and the ceremonial. Each addresses a different kind of subject and issue, and each takes place in a different forum. Although any instance of rhetoric will probably have features of all three, it will still belong in one of the rhetorical genres. It is debatable whether these three genres are exhaustive: Do the three genres account for all instances of rhetoric? Probably not, but, as we will see, they can account for a very large number of them. Be that as it may, in his defense speech, Socrates is clearly defending himself in court, so the speech falls into the legal genre; in fact, “apology” here means “defense.” So, even though he practices both political and ceremonial rhetoric, the speech is primarily legal. Each genre will get its own chapter, so I need not say more here. For now, remember that proving an argument requires drawing upon the resources of the particular genre.

The three genres are related by features of the rhetorical act: What the rhetor does, when s/he does it, and why s/he does it. The political genre attempts to persuade or dissuade about the future to achieve the end of the good; the legal genre, to prosecute or defend about the past to achieve the just; the ceremonial genre, to praise or blame in the present to achieve the beautiful. (If this material is too dense, don't worry. I will explain much further later: this is a preview.)

Second, while recognizing the rhetorical genre, you need to realize that, although rhetoric appeals to reason—and Aristotle's rhetoric is undoubtedly the most rational of them all—it also appeals to emotion and ethics. Audiences are persuaded to believe arguments that are more reasonable than their counter-arguments. The rhetor is required to be logical, and s/he is required to persuade an audience that the counter-argument is *less* logical. Every part of the art of logic you will have already studied will





be useful for inventing rhetorical proofs. But, unlike the strict logician, the rhetor must also appeal to more than logic alone. The proofs must be satisfying not only logically, but also emotionally and ethically. Aristotle inherited from Plato in Book 4 of the *Republic* a tripartite model of the human soul, even if his treatment of it is different than Plato's: both agree that each of us has reason, emotion and spirit. (For reasons I will explain later, spirit is the faculty of ethical understanding.) Plato has Socrates argue there that the virtue of justice in the soul requires the harmony of all three; he then goes on to associate each part of the soul with a class in the city, using the tripartite model of the soul to defend a threefold caste system for his ideal city. Aristotle's own model of the soul and his plan for the best city are different than Plato's, but he is influenced by Plato to believe that the soul has these three parts, all three of which the rhetor addresses. Philosophy appeals to reason alone; rhetoric appeals to reason, emotion and spirit. Even Socrates, who is perhaps the consummate philosopher, required both emotional and ethical appeals to supplement his logical ones when he was defending himself in court. Each of the three appeals will receive its own chapter, so there is no need to discuss them further here.

Each genre has topics of invention specific to it, distinct lines of argumentation that are rhetorical resources for fashioning political, legal or ceremonial proofs; the appeal to logic has topics of invention common to all the genres, general lines of argumentation that are resources for fashioning any proof. But let me not get ahead of myself.

The art of rhetoric requires invention: you must state your case within its genre and prove it through your appeals.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE RHETORICAL GENRES, I: POLITICAL GOODNESS

What does it mean to say that political rhetoric persuades or dissuades about the future to attempt to achieve the end of the good? The word “political” is probably too reductive here. A better adjective for this kind of rhetoric is “deliberative.” In our political discussions, we deliberate about what “we” as citizens want our government to do in the future. We don’t deliberate about everything; we deliberate only about those things within our power, those things we can do something about. I might praise a beautiful sunrise, but I would not deliberate about whether or not the sun will rise tomorrow. It will, no matter what we say about it. We do not debate nature or chance, since we cannot do much about them. Recognizing that many subjects are *not* rhetorical—scientific ones, for example—helps keep one from being a fool. Politics, on the other hand, allows for influence, and in our legislative bodies, our representatives deliberate about those things within our power.

Aristotle says that there are five political topics: The first is finances; the second, trade; the third, national defense; the fourth, war and peace; and the fifth, legislation. Finances and trade fall into economic policy while war and peace and national defense fall into military policy. Legislation concerns the actual workings of political legislation itself—that is, not *what* gets discussed, chosen and approved, but *how*. Notice that these subjects are fields of expertise in and of themselves, which is why legislators often rely on economists, military historians and political scientists. But political rhetors do not have to be experts in these fields; instead, they need have only an intelligent, generally educated understanding of them. This is why citizens and legislators alike should study economics, history and politics. Even if not experts, rhetors and audiences alike



should be able to judge economic, historical and political arguments. One sees here that such citizenry is improved through broad, liberal learning.

About all five topics, a people will deliberate about what to do, not only in the legislature, but also in the culture at large. A government decides what to do. Should we raise or lower taxes? Should we or should we not economically sanction a particular country? Should there be a draft or not? Should we or should we not go to war? Should we alter the Constitution, or leave it as it is? In such deliberations, the rhetor persuades an audience to choose one way, and he or she dissuades it from choosing another. Believe it or not, all of these questions concern one goal: happiness, *the* good being sought as the end of collective deliberation about the particular goods argued over. Thomas Jefferson recognized this in his Declaration of Independence when he held as a political position that all people have an inalienable right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of” —here it comes— “happiness.”

What is happiness? In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that “happiness” is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue (1098a15). In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle offers a more encompassing series of definitions:

We may define happiness as prosperity combined with virtue; or as independence of life; or as the secure enjoyment of the maximum of pleasure; or as a good condition of property and body, together with the power of guarding one's property and body and making use of them. That happiness is one or more of these things, pretty well everybody agrees. (1.5.3)

Not everyone in one's audience will value virtue above all, so the rhetor needs to know what other things make people believe that they are happy.

Aristotle also allows that other goods make us more or less happy, whatever our definition of happiness. Good health, for example, makes us happy even if we could be virtuous without it. One of the distinctions between Plato and Aristotle is this: Plato thinks that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for human happiness; Aristotle, that it



is necessary, but not sufficient. Political deliberation involves more than virtue alone because even if virtue is *the* good involved in happiness, there are many other goods in the happy life. For example, happiness requires a degree of wealth, according to Aristotle, so poor fiscal policy would affect one's happiness; happiness also requires children, he believes, so a fruitless war that cost a mother and father their child would diminish their happiness, no matter how virtuous they were. Other than virtue, Aristotle lists many goods most people believe make up the happy life. Some of these are beyond deliberation, of course: no one ever talked his or her way into being lucky. Good health may be a result, in part, of genetics, but, of course, it can also be a result of diet, so it makes sense that safety standards for food are part of any legislative agenda. The point is this: political rhetoric concerns future policy and action about what would be good. If the ultimate purpose of rhetoric is human happiness, the ultimate purpose of political rhetoric is the achievement of goodness and the goods important for such happiness.

One of the truly great pieces of literature about political rhetoric is Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars*, his history of the wars between Athens and Sparta in the classical period. Much of it is composed of political speeches that illuminate the nature of deliberative rhetoric trying to persuade or dissuade about future actions as Athens hopes to achieve the goods of the happy life. During that war, Athens had decided to attempt to conquer the Greeks of Syracuse in Sicily, and they had put Nicias in charge of the imperial expedition, even though he had opposed the city's decision. They deliberated the action again to discuss funding the effort. Nicias used that occasion to argue against the expedition again. What goods is he aiming to help the city achieve? His introduction indicates more than one good at stake:

And yet, individually, I gain in honor by such a course, and fear as little as other men for my person—not that I think a man need be any the worse citizen for taking some thought for his person and estate; on the contrary, such a man would for his own sake desire the prosperity of his country



more than others—nevertheless, as I have never spoken against my convictions to gain honor, I shall not begin to do so now, but shall say what I think best. (6.9.2)

Notice that Nicias is arguing, from one perspective, against his own good: he does not believe that Athens should undertake the expedition, even though it would bring him honor (a good), one clearly animating the Athenians, who prize martial glory. But he still considers his own person and estate (life and property) as goods, as well, and he believes that the expedition will eventually cost lives and property without success. His central proof is that it is a bad idea to undertake an imperial venture before one has protected one's own city: "A man ought, therefore, to consider these points, and not to think of running risks with a country placed so critically, or of grasping at another empire before we have secured the one we have already" (6.10.5). Nicias is trying to dissuade Athens from the expedition by arguing that it will not achieve the good of security.

Another rhetor, Alcibiades, argues in favor of the expedition because he believes that that security can only be had by continual expansion:

And we cannot fix the exact point at which our empire shall stop; we have reached a position in which we must not be content with retaining but must scheme to extend it, for, if we cease to rule others, we are in danger of being ruled ourselves. (6.18.3)

Alcibiades is trying to persuade the Athenians to confirm their earlier decision. Notice that both hope to achieve the same good—security of life and property—but one thinks it will be better achieved through prosecuting a new war, the other through concluding an old one.

Interestingly, Alcibiades argues *against* re-deliberating; Nicias, *for* it. Alcibiades is a man of action:

And do not let the do-nothing policy which Nicias advocates, or his setting of the young against the old, turn you from your purpose, but in



the good old fashion by which our fathers, old and young together, by their united counsels brought our affairs to their present height, do you endeavor still to advance them; understanding that neither youth nor old age can do anything the one without the other, but that levity, sobriety, and deliberate judgment are strongest when united, and that, by sinking into inaction, the city, like everything else, will wear itself out, and its skill in everything decay; while each fresh struggle will give it fresh experience, and make it more used to defend itself not in word but in deed. (6.18.6)

Nicias, by contrast, believes that deliberation is a good thing:

And you, [President of the Assembly], if you think it your duty to care for the commonwealth, and if you wish to show yourself a good citizen, put the question to the vote, and take a second time the opinions of the Athenians. If you are afraid to move the question again, consider that a violation of the law cannot carry any prejudice with so many abettors, that you will be the physician of your misguided city, and that the virtue of men in office is briefly this, to do their country as much good as they can, or in any case no harm that they can avoid. (6.14.1)

Though also a man of action, Nicias is a man of reflection; indeed, he trying to be the very city-doctor he mentions, “the physician” of a “misguided city.”

As it turned out, Athens was persuaded by Alcibiades, not by Nicias. The Sicilian expedition was a disaster for Athens, and Nicias was killed. Alcibiades survived.

What is important for our purposes is this: the deliberative rhetoric Thucydides represents seeks future goods as it debates war and peace. No one in the Athenian audience wanted to lose life and security, but, because so many were persuaded by the weaker argument, they did. They made a bad decision and weakened their city.

When persuading or dissuading with respect to a future matter for an audience deciding how best to achieve a good, the rhetor employs topics of invention, intellectual “places” one goes to find arguments (usually in the form of answers to questions). The central topic of invention in political rhetoric is that of degree. Things are seldom all



one way or another in human matters. No policy will make one completely happy; none will make one completely unhappy. So the political rhetor must persuade an audience to choose what will make it *more* happy and dissuade it from choosing what will make it *less* unhappy. One needs to be able to weigh a good. What is a good? A good is something we choose for itself as an end, not as a means to some other end. But a lesser good can become, as well, the means to achieve a greater one. Wealth is not an end, but a means only; pleasure, though, is an end in and of itself, even if it is not as great an end as virtue. So the first specific political topic of invention is this:

Special Topic of Invention 1: Goodness

- 1a) Is the good which is the end of persuasion or dissuasion here truly a good?
- 1b) Is it the greatest good achievable, given the circumstances?
- 1c) Will the policy argued for be more or less likely to achieve that good?

As we deliberate, we must be able to argue based on an agreement about goods, even about goodness itself; otherwise, there is no target to aim at. And we must persuade audiences to believe that our argued course of action will be more likely than our opponent's to hit that target.

The political rhetor must have knowledge of his or her people's constitution, the governmental framework for political deliberation, choice and action. Again, rhetors need not be constitutional scholars, but they must have a general yet not superficial grasp of the principles and rules making up (or constituting) the government. This is why most legislators and many citizens have a copy of the United States Constitution on their persons as a kind of holy text for secular life, providing as it does the form of political life in which we choose together the goods that will be more likely to make us happy.



Deliberative rhetoric is the highest of the genres because its end—happiness—is *the* goal of human life. The next two are very important, but (for Aristotle) they are not as important as deliberative.





## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE RHETORICAL GENRES, II: LEGAL JUSTICE

Whereas deliberative rhetoric concerns the future, legal rhetoric concerns the past. The legal rhetor prosecutes those thought to be guilty of wrongdoing and defends those thought to be innocent. The wrongdoing is in the past, of course. What does it mean to say that legal rhetoric prosecutes and defends about the past to achieve the end of the just? There are two broad categories of law: universal and specific. Universal law, sometimes called natural, is agreed to by all human beings, but specific law is agreed to by members of a polity—a nation, state or city. Aristotle believes that some laws are simply natural to us:

Universal law is the law of Nature. For there really is, as everyone to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men, even on those who have no association or covenant with each other.  
(1.13.2)

The legal rhetor is concerned with specific law, criminal or civil, whose purpose is to discourage, rehabilitate or punish wrongdoing, the voluntary breaking of a law.

Why do some people break the law willingly? It is important for Aristotle that wrongdoing be voluntary. Actions taken by chance or necessity (either by compulsion or by nature) are not unjust; only those done through reason, anger, or desire are. Interestingly, we see these three faculties of wrongdoing as elements of the tripartite soul—reason is . . . well, reason; anger is a function of spiritedness; desire is the master-emotion. Whether rational, angry or desirous, we can acquire habits of wrongdoing that become increasingly difficult to resist. We call Aristotle's habits of wrongdoing "addictions," some of which are mere vices, some of which are actually illegal acts. Aristotle explains that a habit can almost create a second nature, which is why we



experience our addictions as involuntary. If you smoke long enough, you don't experience your daily cigarettes as a choice—only as a necessity. "I've just *got* to have one." Willingly breaking a law indicates intent.

Why do people break laws? Two reasons: they want either goods or pleasures. We already dealt with goods when discussing deliberative rhetoric. Many people break laws to acquire wealth, clearly a good. What is a pleasure? A motion of mind, spirit or body which feels good; pain is its opposite. For example, murder is wrong by both natural and criminal law. A person might murder for gain, in the execution of a robbery; then again, he or she might murder out of anger. (Aristotle actually lists revenge as one of life's pleasures, a pleasure of spirited retribution.) A person might hire a prostitute for bodily pleasure—illegal in contemporary America, but legal in Aristotle's Athens—or undertake a con game for the mental pleasure of the "game" itself. In Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, the main character actually murders an old woman as a kind of thought-experiment, imagining that breaking both a natural and a criminal law would liberate him from conventional morality and give him the mental pleasure of superiority; of course, all it does is activate his conscience to drive him mad. Particular motives aside, we do wrong for gain or pleasure; ultimately, one of these is the motive . . . or both are. After all, Dostoevsky's philosophical murderer robs the poor woman, too.

Who is more likely to do wrong? Wrongdoers have not only motive, but also means and opportunity. And one can see probabilities working in all three. Means: A strong person is more likely than a weak one to have assaulted someone. Opportunity: Someone who lives in City A is probably not guilty of a murder in City B. You get the idea. Legal rhetors accuse or defend others by means of intent, motive, means, and opportunity.

Where the end of deliberative rhetoric is the good, the end of legal rhetoric is the just. What is justice? Aristotle devotes Book 5 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* to justice.



Justice is the virtue of doing what is right generally, of course, but it is also the proportional relationship between wrongdoing, or injustice, and punishment. If someone were found guilty of murder, most of us would find the punishment of a small fine to be an offense against justice. By the way, there are instances where justice in the first sense above—doing what is right, is in conflict with justice in the second sense—proportional punishment. Such instances require equity. This is why being fair often means being forgiving. Aristotle does not believe that a personal failing or an actual mistake is the same as wrongdoing, so punishments need not be proportional in such cases. One might pardon the act altogether. Whether achieving strict justice, though, or humane equity, legal rhetoric argues about wrongdoing relative to the law in order to achieve a more just social order.

The legal rhetor calls upon a variety of proofs not needing to be invented—the laws themselves, for example, or witnesses. Such proofs are not “artistic” since, remember, they need not be invented. Artistic proofs must be invented. The central topic of invention in legal rhetoric is the topic of magnitude. How great is the wrongdoing?

### Special Topic of Invention 2: Justice

- 2a) Has the accused committed the wrongdoing?
- 2b) If so, how great is that wrongdoing?
- 2c) What should the punishment be?

There are other topics of invention in legal rhetoric, but our second topic helps us understand Plato's *Apology*. Remember that Socrates stands accused of corrupting the city's young and disbelieving in its gods. He defends himself against both, but he refutes the former in his cross-examination of Meletus, who brought the charges against



him. Through a series of questions, he is able to get Meletus to concede that no one would want to live among the corrupt; thus, anyone corrupting his or her fellow-citizens must be doing so involuntarily and must be forgiven. So Socrates proves that it is improbable that he has corrupted the young or that, if he has, he could have done so willingly. He is either innocent of the charge or deserving of pity. But it is pretty clear from earlier arguments that what Meletus means by corrupting the young amounts to teaching them how to refute people who think they know what they do not know, which may make them obnoxious, but hardly corrupt. Socrates refutes the second charge, as well.

Nonetheless, Athens finds him guilty. In response to the new question of sentencing, Socrates—believing that he has done no wrong, but has, in fact, been a benefit to the city—recommends he receive free meals since he has been so busy serving the city that he has not been able to earn a great deal of money. The city decides, instead, on the death penalty.

As in Thucydides, so in Plato: good rhetoric can fail to persuade and its failure can lead to private and public disaster. Audiences are free to decide, and they do not always decide well. The potential tragedy of rhetoric is this: rhetors can discover the best available means of persuasion in the particular case and still not persuade. Decisions, whether political or legal, can be made badly, even when the people making them are counseled well. Athens poisoned Socrates; Rome crucified Christ: such reminders should caution us about assuming that the best rhetoric always succeeds.



## CHAPTER NINE

## RHETORICAL GENRES, III: CEREMONIAL NOBILITY

What does it mean to say that ceremonial rhetoric praises or blames to achieve the end of the noble? The third rhetorical genre indicates that cities and countries must not only deliberate about goods and adjudicate justice but also praise the noble and blame the ignoble. Perhaps the most common form of the ceremonial genre is the funeral oration, the speech marking the death of one whom friends, family, colleagues, and fellow-citizens praise. The roast is the most common form of blame. Parental rhetoric is often characterized by praise and blame—one hopes more of the former than of the latter.

What we praise is virtue; what we blame is vice. For virtue is noble or beautiful. But what is virtue? In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines “virtue” as the ability and practice of doing good for oneself and for other people. Such virtue is composed of specific virtues: for example, justice, courage, temperance, prudence—the classical or cardinal virtues. The praiseworthy person has and exercises such virtues; the blameworthy person, not so much. Their vices to be blamed would include injustice, cowardice, intemperance, and imprudence.

The rhetor assumes that virtues are noble and beautiful and that vices are ignoble and ugly. Where deliberative rhetoric hopes to encourage goodness and legal rhetoric justice, ceremonial rhetoric hopes to note and encourage the noble and the beautiful. What is the noble? Whatever is chosen for itself as praiseworthy is pleasurable simply because it is good. There is something moving about the noble. When firefighters went *toward* the Twin Towers in New York on 9/11 and not *away*, they exercised the virtue of courage in the service of others in hazard of their own lives, and



that prospect struck the nation as a beautiful act. The ceremonial rhetor must not be afraid to praise virtue nor to blame vice.

How does one do so? One must be able to discern what is praiseworthy or blameworthy, and to know how to amplify or diminish such when speaking or writing of the person praised or blamed. Praise what is praiseworthy: something whose reward is honor, not money; something done for itself and therefore good; something done for others, especially if sacrificing oneself. Notice that people are ashamed of the opposite of these: doing something for money that should be done for honor; doing something for something else so that it is not a real good; doing something for oneself instead of for others. Praise and blame have a central topic of invention, as well: the topic of amplification and diminishment.

### Special Topic of Invention 3: Nobility

- 3a) Is the person worthy of praise or blame, and why?
- 3b) What virtue of theirs is especially noble or vice especially ignoble?
- 3c) How can you amplify the virtues of those you would praise, and the vices of those you would blame? Conversely, how can you diminish the vices of those praised, or virtues of those blamed?

Returning to Thucydides, we can examine the most famous of funeral orations, Pericles' Funeral Oration, in which he praises not only the soldiers, but also Athens, the city the soldiers fought for. This is a speech Lincoln imitates to great effect in his Gettysburg Address. Pericles praises Athens' form of government and its way of life, going so far to say that as a city, Athens is "the school of Hellas," an education for all other cities of what a city should be (2.41.1). When he praises the citizen-soldiers, he



confirms Aristotle's recognition that those who exercise their virtues, here courage, on behalf of others are noble. Their prospect is beautiful to behold:

So died these men as became Athenians. You, their survivors, must determine to have as unaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue. And not contented with ideas derived only from words of the advantages which are bound up with the defense of your country, though these would furnish a valuable text to a speaker even before an audience so alive to them as the present, you must yourselves realize the power of Athens and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; and then when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honor in action that men were enabled to win all this, and that no personal failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valor, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution that they could offer. For this offering of their lives made in common by them all they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulcher, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall fall for its commemoration. (2.43.2-3)

These Athenian citizen-soldiers gave their courage to the service of their city, even at the cost of their lives, and Pericles praises them for it. An Athenian audience would be moved by such a noble example.

Of course, Pericles wants not only to praise such self-sacrificing courage but also to persuade his living fellow-citizens to imitate it: the war is not over yet. Aristotle tells us that we should praise what we would want others to do, a wise piece of rhetorical advice that reminds us that these genres are not mutually exclusive. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates has Apollo himself praise him, and his ridicule of Meletus is good fun. Any piece of rhetoric, though it may fall primarily into one of the three rhetorical genres, may still avail itself of the resources of the other two. This is no doubt due to the



human need for all three ends—advantage, justice and nobility—in our private and public lives, even as we concentrate upon one of them. The happy life requires all three.





## CHAPTER TEN

## THE RHETORICAL APPEALS, I: LOGICAL (THE GENERAL TOPICS)

Whatever one's rhetorical situation and whichever the rhetorical genre, the rhetor first and foremost appeals to his or her audience, putting forward proofs in support of the argument about the subject at hand, whatever that argument might be. If grammar concerns predications and logic concerns propositions, rhetoric concerns proofs or appeals. In rhetoric, there are three appeals: the logical (*logos*), the ethical (*ethos*), and the emotional (*pathos*). The next five chapters will concern the invention of these three kinds of appeal or proof. The first three will be logical ones, supporting the idea that Aristotle's rhetorical understanding is supremely *logos*-centered. Judgments should be made that are reasonable first, then ethical and emotional. The central form of invention is the enthymeme, which is an informal syllogism. (You might want to review Arts of Liberty's art of logic course.) Although I will explain the enthymeme fully in Chapter 12, allow me to define and illustrate it here.

An enthymeme is a form of reasoning whose premises are probable and often implicit, and it encompasses all rhetorical proof. It structures all proof. (Some rhetoricians believe it encompasses organization and style, as well.) Suppose someone advises you to beware of a companion of yours you believe is your friend: "He is just using you; he is not your friend." That is an enthymeme because it has left out a probable premise. We can reconstruct the reasoning thus:

Premise 1: Friends want what is best for their friends; they don't use them.

Premise 2: Your companion is using you.

Conclusion: Therefore, your companion is not a true friend.



When your advisor counseled you, he or she left out the first premise because it could be *assumed*. When you heard the counsel, you supplied it. The enthymeme is implicit, not explicit. As well, Premise 1 is not always the case; in fact, Aristotle will argue that friends of utility are still friends, just not the best kind. The enthymeme persuades when certainty cannot be had. The enthymeme relies on general principles it draws from the common topics, and it relies on specific instances it provides through examples. This chapter concerns the common topics.

Rhetoric is like philosophy, and its forms of reasoning are *like* those of philosophy. Philosophy and science are always working either inductively or deductively. You will remember from the art of logic that induction works from particular instances of something to a generalization about them, while deduction works from two premises (sometimes generalizations, sometimes particular instances), which lead to a conclusion. The first form of logic provides evidence; the second, reasoning. But rhetorical induction is not as demanding as scientific, nor rhetorical deduction as demanding as philosophic. The common topics provide premises for enthymemes; so, too, do examples—more about how when we get to the enthymeme, which holds both in a structure of persuasion.

According to Aristotle, common topics are those topics not specific to any one rhetorical genre, but general or common to all three genres—and probably other genres, as well. He lists a large number of such topics, but I will limit our discussion to five common topics: definition; division; comparison; cause and effect; and authority.

### Common Topic of Invention 1: Definition

- 1a) What is the definition of the thing at hand?
- 1b) What is its genus?
- 1c) What are its differentiating characteristics?



When trying to be persuasive about something, one may define it. Enthymemes often include definitions—even if only assumed and not stated. Socratic rhetoric, for example, relies upon definitions. In the *Phaedrus*, to choose only one instance, Socrates and Phaedrus are trying to decide whether one ought to give oneself to the person who loves one or to the person who does not. Lysias appears to be trying to seduce Phaedrus with favors, and he argues in a dreadful speech that one should receive a favor in return for a favor from someone who does *not* love one, which looks more or less like an argument in favor of prostitution. Socrates is not impressed with Lysias' speech, so he re-writes it to improve it, first by defining love. After all, how will anyone know if love is advantageous or disadvantageous unless by knowing what it actually is? He gets to work: Love, Socrates argues, is a desire for the beloved (237D). The genus here is "desire"; the differentiating characteristic is in its object—"for a beloved." Without going into the rest of the argument here, we can see that, in order to be persuasive in his revision of Lysias' speech, Socrates begins by defining "love."

Socrates writes a better speech in favor of the non-lover, but is then ashamed to have spoken against Love, who was for the Greeks, a god: *Eros*. So he recants his speech and composes another in favor of the lover. To do so, he needs not only definition, but also division:

### Common Topic of Invention 2: Division

- 2a) What parts can it be divided into?
- 2b) By what principles does one consistently divide?
- 2c) Is the division exhaustive?

Socrates argues now that love is one form of madness, dividing the forms of madness by their divine origin—prophetic madness comes from Apollo, for example; poetic,



from the Muses (244A-245B). Madness is divided into its forms, one of which is love. Since love's madness comes from Eros, it must be good; after all, it is a divine gift. This leads him into his great speech in favor of restrained love and the immortality of the soul, a speech he hopes will redeem him for his earlier corrupt speech against love. But it begins with division.

Of course, one can always compare the subject at hand to something else, different but related. Frequently, that something else is in the same genus and therefore is alike, but it is unlike through its differentiating characteristics:

### Common Topic of Invention 3: Comparison

3a) How is it alike to something else?

3b) How is it different?

In one place, Socrates distinguishes between a sexual desire that is unrestrained and one that is restrained; in another, he compares the cultivation of the body with that of the soul. One can usually show through comparison that one ought to judge one thing better than another based on a significant difference.

Frequently, the rhetor must decide not just what the subject of his or her speech is, how many forms it has, or what similarities to other, related things it holds, but also what its causes and effects are:

### Common Topic of Invention 4: Cause and Effect

4a) What is its cause?

4b) What is its effect?



According to Socrates, the forms of madness above, one of which is love, are all caused by a god, and their effects are good: The madness of prophecy comes from Apollo, and its effect is the ability to see the future; the madness of poetry is caused by the Muses, and its effect is the ability to write poetry; the madness of love is caused by Eros, and its effect, according to Socrates, is to occasion philosophical reflection by the soul about itself—if, that is, the love is restrained.

Through this discussion, I have drawn upon Plato's *Phaedrus* and its central character Socrates as authoritative instances of topical invention. These are examples, but they have also been appeals to authority.

#### Common Topic of Invention 5: Authority

5a) What does an authority say about it?

5b) Is s/he truly authoritative?

A rhetor is free to appeal to an authority, especially one who has passed the various tests—including the test of time—confirming authority. In some ways, this book itself is one long appeal to authority since it is *Aristotle's* understanding of rhetoric I am explaining and drawing upon, and I presume the reader is more likely to be instructed and persuaded by Aristotle than by me. Of course, one can always question an authority's credibility, and for a variety of reasons. But there is a reason people return to Aristotle as they try to understand so many of the subjects he examined: for example, he is right that the enthymeme is the body of persuasion in rhetoric, a structure holding premises from topics of invention and examples.

Logical appeals are often premised upon definitions, divisions, comparisons, causes/effects, and authorities.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE RHETORICAL APPEALS, I: LOGICAL (THE EXAMPLE)

Premises in rhetorical syllogisms—called enthymemes—come from topics of invention and from examples. In rhetoric, the example is a kind of induction. Examples come in two forms, and both provide concrete, vivid support for one's argument.

The first form of example is the common instance of providing a piece of evidence for one's argument. No one would expect the rhetor to provide the exhaustive evidence common in the sciences here—natural or social. The demands of scientific induction are high, but they cannot always be met since one cannot always wait for “studies”: rhetors and their audiences are often judging things before or as they are happening without the leisure for empirical studies. So rhetorical expectations differ here. One expects a rhetor to provide accurate, representative and numerous examples. But one excellent example can be quite persuasive, perhaps even more so than a catalogue of merely good ones. I have throughout this account of rhetoric used one example of each rhetorical principle, trying to select especially persuasive ones instead of bogging down to catalogue numerous ones. A short book requires it. I could supply many more examples, but the one will have to suffice.

The second kind of example is the one that interests Aristotle more: historical or hypothetical, literary analogies to the matter at hand. (The study of history and literature is crucial to the rhetor so that he or she may have such analogies at hand, especially those historical periods and episodes and those novels, plays and poems an audience is likely to know.) Historical parallels provide guidance from the past for the purposes of the present. Aristotle's own examples are interesting. For the historical example, he imagines a Greek rhetor arguing that one should prepare oneself to defend against the Persians since they invaded Greece before. For the hypothetical example, he



offers Socrates arguing against choosing political officials through lot since no one would choose the pilot of a ship that way. Notice that these are certainly open to refutation if the historical precedent is no longer applicable—perhaps the Persians are no longer strong enough to invade; or if the hypothetical example relies on an analogy that is faulty—perhaps the analogy of the state to a ship is weaker than Socrates assumes.

The literary example is often a fable. Aristotle himself draws upon Aesop. Jesus' parables in the Gospels work this way, as well. For example, when in the book of Luke the Pharisees are critical of Jesus for spending so much time with reprobates, he offers a parable to persuade them that they are mistaken that there is something wrong with that:

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance." (15:1-7, NRSV)

The parable provides an imaginatively hypothetical example—an analogy—to explain why he spends so much time with "sinners." He is like the shepherd trying to find his lost sheep; any reprobate he spends time with is like a lost sheep.

One's argument tends to be general, but an example makes it more vividly reasonable. "Sinner" is vague; a lost sheep is not. Governance is a complex human activity outside the realm of common experience; piloting a ship is simpler, clearer. "Invading Persians" is rather vivid, if not lurid. Topics provide general premises;



examples, specific instances. The enthymeme, remember, puts both into a form that persuades.

Before moving on to the enthymeme in the next chapter, I would like to point out that Aristotle also believes that maxims or proverbs are especially helpful. They are general premises. Yet because they are often put into vivid, concrete form, are the result of ancient, communal persuasion, and are known by an audience from childhood, maxims impress audiences as wisdom itself. And their very compression is eloquent. “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” Explaining why one ought to be satisfied with what one actually has—“a bird in the hand”—rather than expend time and energy on more or better things one might fail to get—“two in the bush”: that would take a great deal of rhetorical time. The proverb does it in eleven words. Through oral tradition, maxims or proverbs have been perfected to concise distillations of wisdom. Like topics, they are general; like examples, they are often concrete. The rhetor should know as many maxims and proverbs as possible, for they are supremely enthymematic since they invite the audience to complete the enthymeme with its own experience.





## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE RHETORICAL APPEALS, I: LOGICAL (THE ENTHYMEME)

One of the most important discoveries Aristotle made was that of the enthymeme, and the enthymeme informs the whole of the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle argues that the enthymeme is the body of persuasion itself. Indeed, the reason he thought earlier treatments of the art of rhetoric defective is that they ignored the enthymeme. So what is an enthymeme? An enthymeme is a kind of syllogism.

But, then, what is a syllogism? You will remember that a syllogism is a form of reasoning in which two premises lead to a conclusion not asserted in either premise. (At this point, you might want to review the course in logic on the Arts of Liberty [site](#), especially Lessons 12-17.) The most famous example of the syllogism is an instance of the categorical syllogism:

Premise 1: All human beings are mortal.

Premise 2: Socrates is a human being.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Aristotle distinguishes dialectical from scientific syllogisms by arguing that the former employ premises that are only probably true while the latter employ those that are certainly so. Whether probable or certain, though, each supplies both premises and the conclusion. The syllogism is explicit.

The enthymeme is implicit since it omits a premise when the audience can supply it. The rhetor might say, "Socrates will die since he is human." An audience naturally supplies the second premise above—"All human beings die"—filling in the reasoning between premise and conclusion, without needing the premise to be made explicit. Aristotle discovered an important feature in human discourse: We often assume what need not be asserted in speech (oral or written); the human mind can



supply, indeed enjoys supplying, missing premises in rhetorical situations. Of course, if too much is left out, an argument can appear cryptic, but, if too much is included, it will no doubt be experienced as pedantic. "Stop beating a dead horse," we silently plead to the pedant whose witlessness can be difficult to endure: "We get it." The enthymeme may indeed be the pattern of human speech, which is made of informal arguments that assume more than they demonstrate since there is no need to demonstrate everything. Those shared points we call "common sense," the opinions we share as members of a discourse community: these the rhetor can assume without asserting. "Of course all human beings die."

Unlike a scientific or dialectical syllogism, then, a rhetorical enthymeme is implicit, not explicit. Its premises may also be probable, not certain. Notice that the example above is implicit reasoning, but its premises are not merely probable: Socrates was certainly a human being, and human beings are certainly mortal. These are certain truths of biology. Rhetoric concerns things that may be otherwise. A different example may illustrate the point. "Socrates was a bad parent since his sons turned out badly." (You should be able to reconstruct the enthymeme.) This enthymeme assumes that a good parent's children turn out well, which is probably true, but not necessarily so, given that children are free to rebel against their own good upbringing.

An enthymeme, then, is an implicit form of reasoning from probable premises. But it must still pass the test of logic. A categorical enthymeme must still distribute its middle term; a hypothetical one must still avoid affirming its consequent; a disjunctive one must still be exclusive and exhaustive. And one can test enthymemes—one's own and those of others—by supplying the missing premise, then judging the reasoning once it has been unpacked so that its implicit premise is explicit. This is why the study of syllogism is an invaluable aid to that of the enthymeme. When we call the enthymeme an "informal syllogism," that does not mean that it trades in bad logic; in fact, Aristotle calls enthymemes that are fallacious "sham" enthymemes—that is, fake



ones. A genuine if informal enthymeme is logical, but less explicit than a genuine, formal syllogism. And it requires judgment about what is probably true in any given situation, lacking as it does the confidence of certain premises. After all, if premises are certain, what is there to argue about? Human life is difficult, and we make judgments without certainty.

Let's examine the way enthymeme works in a moment from the Gospel of John:

Early in the morning [Jesus] came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. (8:3-9)

The scribes and Pharisees set out an enthymeme: "The law punishes adultery by stoning; this woman is guilty of adultery." Notice the enthymeme's character: there are here two premises without the apparently necessary conclusion. They want him to acknowledge the conclusion. Jesus appears trapped by logic, but, after reflecting upon his rhetorical situation and writing in the sand, he fashions a new enthymeme—he who would punish sin should be sinless—requiring not only the establishment of the woman's guilt, but also that of the judges' guiltlessness. If it were a syllogism, it would look thus:

Premise 1: The law must be executed by the sinless.

Premise 2: You are not sinless.

Conclusion: Therefore, you must not execute the law.



Since none of them is without sin, and therefore must acknowledge Premise 2, they leave. They have supplied the rest of a new enthymeme, one which probably does not deny the spirit of the law of Moses, but instead fulfills it by shifting the focus away from the criminal toward the judge. He does not need a syllogism; all he needs is an enthymeme—here explicitly providing only Premise 1. In fact, because they must supply the missing premise that no one of them is sinless, each must convict himself of sin. Apparently, the elderly can do so more swiftly than the young.

An enthymeme may employ a common topic of invention or an example as one premise for its conclusion, all the while leaving the other one unsaid. The audience supplies it, experiencing the pleasure of thought. (That pleasure above is paradoxical since what one discovers is painful—one's own hypocrisy.) For Aristotle, the appeal to *logos* takes place through the rhetor's enthymemes, but so too do the appeals to character and emotion.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## THE RHETORICAL APPEALS, II: ETHICAL

Because audiences are legitimately persuaded by more than reason alone, the rhetor must invent not only logical appeals, but also ethical and emotional ones. (I'll take up the emotional appeal in the next chapter.) We are rightly persuaded by character, the appeal to which is called *ethos*. We call the appeal ethical since it is based on the perceived behavior of the rhetor, without it always being an obviously moral, let alone moralistic, appeal. (Aristotle also realizes that audiences have an *ethos*, but I will focus on the rhetor's.) How and why is the rhetor's character itself a proof? Aristotle explains in the *Rhetoric* that there are three characteristics we find persuasive when seen in a rhetor: practical wisdom (prudence), moral virtue, and good will (2.1.5). Let me take them up individually.

First, since the rhetor's purpose is to assist an audience's judgment so it may decide prudently upon matters political, legal and ceremonial, one naturally credits those who are themselves prudent with better advice. What, exactly, is practical wisdom? It is an intellectual, as opposed to a moral, virtue, and, as Aristotle explains in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the person who deliberates well has practical wisdom: he or she knows how to ascertain both what good or goods to strive for and how best to achieve them (6.5). Even if honor is a good end, for example, one should not sacrifice the security of one's city to achieve it; as a consequence, Nicias in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars*, has greater prudence than Alcibiades, who would sacrifice almost anything for his own vainglory. Of course, Athens was *not* persuaded by Nicias' prudence, but Thucydides is clear that the city ought to have been. Notice that Nicias, in order to appeal to his own prudence, made his argument upon the principle of prudence: "A man ought, therefore, to consider these points, and not to think of running risks with a



country placed so critically, or of grasping at another empire before we have secured the one we have already" (6.10.5). The prudent rhetor appeals to prudence. As we will see, this indicates a pattern: you must appeal to what you would have your audience believe you possess, inviting them to share in the ethos you exhibit.

Second, because the good, the just and the noble are goals of the three rhetorical genres, we assume the morally, not just the intellectually, virtuous are more reliable guides to all three. The virtuous rhetor exhibits and appeals to moral virtues. In Plato's *Apology*, for example, Socrates shows the virtue of courage in telling his audience that the jurors should not free him if they expect him to stop engaging in the philosophical life that has landed him in legal trouble. He will continue to be a gadfly, he reveals to them, a revelation whose honesty requires courage—intellectual, moral, even physical. Socrates' ethos is tremendously persuasive to us, as readers of Plato's work, but, of course, Athens found it offensive and condemned him.

Third, because rhetors are trying to persuade us of what will achieve the best decision for the audience's sake, it must believe that they have good will toward the audience, that they want what is best, not simply for themselves, but indeed for the members of the audience at hand. The rhetor can share benefits with an audience, but audiences are rightly disturbed if they discover a rhetor has more to gain in a decision than an audience does. In celebrating Athens in his funeral oration, Pericles knows that the nobility of the city will redound to all of them, himself as rhetor and the Athenians as audience. There is such a thing as civic friendship, and Aristotle understands that the rhetor must be a civic friend to his or her audience, wanting the audience's good for the audience's sake.

Of course, all three appeals can fail, and a sophist can always pretend to prudence, virtue and friendship, all the while undermining the audience for advantage improperly understood. (Much advertising is an appeal to reckless vice by those whose interests are often opposed to the audience's.) The appeal to ethos, however, is not



license to appear what one is not; rather, it is awareness to appear what one is. The prudent, virtuous and friendly often fail to exhibit all three out of a mistaken belief that doing so is somehow “showing off.” One should be careful to be humble. Even so, if one has these three ethical attributes—and if you do *not* have them, perhaps you should not be advising anyone until you do—the attributes must be exhibited to be persuasive, for audiences want to know that the reasons being given are given by a practical, good, well-meaning rhetor. That is a reasonable demand, even if relying on more than reason.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## THE RHETORICAL APPEALS, III: EMOTIONAL

Most readers of this book will not have found my defense of informal reason and evident character controversial, but the third appeal—the appeal to emotion—often impresses people as manipulative and thus beneath any rational, virtuous rhetor. Aristotle himself complains in his introduction to the *Rhetoric* that the emotional appeal can warp the audience's judgment rather than improve it (1.1.5). Why, then, does he devote ten chapters of Book 2 to discussing the emotions? Because human judgment is not exclusively rational and ethical; it is also emotional. In fact, *not* experiencing emotion toward some objects of judgment would indicate someone defective in both reason and virtue. Imagine someone who experienced no anger at injustice, or someone who felt no grief at the death of a parent. I would not call the person too calm in the face of injustice reasonable, but insensible; nor the person unmoved in the face of the death of a beloved a stoic, but a sociopathic. What, then, is an emotion, and how does the rhetor appeal to it?

Aristotle defines emotions as those pains and pleasures of soul which change our judgment, and each emotion is a state responding to another person for some reason (2.1.8-9). He then lists pairs of emotions—anger and calm, for example. Anger is a desire for retaliation against those who have treated one or one's own unjustly; calm, a settling down of anger either because the unjust have been retaliated against or because one has discovered that they did not behave unjustly. One's decisions are influenced by emotion—and should be. The question is not whether we decide under the influence of emotion; the question is whether the emotion experienced is the appropriate one to feel. Aristotle is opposed to inappropriate emotional appeals—which, for him, would be forms of sham enthymemes—but he is in favor of appropriate ones.





To see why this is the case and how the emotional appeal works, let's return to Pericles' funeral oration, which we already examined as ceremonial rhetoric. When speaking of the fallen soldiers, he appeals to his audience's grief, but also its gratitude:

It was by courage, a sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honor in action that men were enabled to win all this, and that no personal failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valor, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution that they could offer. (2.43.3)

To fail to grieve for those who die for one's city, to fail to experience gratitude: these would not indicate reason, but heartlessness and ingratitude. Notice that Pericles represents their service as an act of laying bravery at Athens' feet as a religious offering. During the moment of honoring their nobility, Pericles appeals to his audience's emotions, especially grief and gratitude. Pericles appeals to emotion to improve his audience's judgment, not to warp it, by stirring in his audience the distinct pain and pleasure of grateful grief which funeral orations arouse and direct.

Whether the rhetor's appeal is emotional, ethical or logical, whether his or her circumstances are ceremonial, legal or political, he or she is obligated to prove the best argument. Proof is not a matter of invention alone, though, since the proofs must be arranged and require sentences to communicate them. Let us move on to organization, then style.



**EXERCISE TWO**

## Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby"

Please re-read the following letter, and from the letter alone answer the discussion questions. You may find it helpful to review the Study Questions for Chapters 6-14 before doing so to make sure you have understood the material.

Executive Mansion,

Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,—

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln

Discussion Questions

1. What is the letter's argument?
2. What are its political, legal and ceremonial features? If you had to identify the one genre of the letter, which would you choose as primary? What one thing is the letter appealing to—goodness, justice or nobility?



3. What are its logical, ethical and emotional appeals? With respect to *logos*, can you discern its examples and/or reconstruct its enthymemes? What is Lincoln's *ethos* in the letter? Which specific emotions does he appeal to, and are they legitimate ones?
4. Should Mrs. Bixby have been persuaded by the letter?



**THE ART OF ORGANIZATION**



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### WHOLE AND PART, PART AND WHOLE

In the art of rhetoric, invention concerns the *what* of an argument, organization its *in-what-order*, and style its *how*. Another term for organization is arrangement: one's invention needs to be arranged well to be persuasive. When Aristotle wrote the *Rhetoric*, there already existed formulaic rules for arranging speeches, but he believed such rules not sufficiently dynamic for the contingencies of a rhetorical situation. He thought the single, universal principle of arrangement to be simply this: state your case and prove it (3.13.1). Today's rhetoricians have all been taught a principle of division that was unknown in the ancient world—the paragraph—and although it is an important unit of any written composition, the focus on it can obscure the rather more significant element of the part.

Every whole is composed of parts, and a part is always a part of a whole. A day has twenty-four hours, and each hour is a part of a day. As well, a whole can then be thought of as a part of an even greater whole: a week is a part of a month, a month a part of a year. And so on. This is true not only of natural objects—like time—but also artistic ones—like persuasions. The largest parts of a whole persuasion are three: its beginning, its middle, and its end. As Aristotle would have it, the beginning is that before which there is nothing, the middle is that which comes after the beginning and before the end, and the end is that after which there is nothing. The next three chapters will address the beginning, called the introduction; the middle, called the body; and the end, called the conclusion. They are essential parts of the whole of a persuasion, even if each can be sub-divided into smaller parts. A well-designed persuasion will always have at least three parts.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## BEGINNINGS

An introduction leads the listener or reader into the persuasion: it is, in Aristotle's metaphor, the "pioneer," the one making and showing the way forward—from nothing to the middle. It establishes the ethos of the rhetor, the subject-matter at hand, the argument to be defended, and, often, the parts of the middle.

Let's examine Socrates' introduction to his *Apology*:

How you, men of Athens, have been affected by my accusers, I do not know; but I, for my part, almost forgot my own identity, so persuasively did they talk; and yet there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said. But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told—when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me, because I was a clever speaker. For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed because they will immediately be convicted by me of falsehood by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be not in the least a clever speaker, unless indeed they call him a clever speaker who speaks the truth; for if this is what they mean, I would agree that I am an orator—not after their fashion. Now they, as I say, have said little or nothing true; but you shall hear from me nothing but the truth. Not, however, men of Athens, speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are, nor carefully arranged, but you will hear things said at random with the words that happen to occur to me. For I trust that what I say is just; and let none of you expect anything else. For surely it would not be fitting for one of my age to come before you like a youngster making up speeches. And, men of Athens, I urgently beg and beseech you if you hear me making my defense with the same words with which I have been accustomed to speak both in the market place at the bankers tables, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, not to be surprised or to make a disturbance on this account. For the fact is that this is the first time I have come before the court, although I am seventy years old; I am therefore an utter foreigner to the manner of speech here. Hence, just as you would, of course, if I were really a foreigner, pardon me if I spoke in that dialect and that manner in which I had been brought up, so



now I make this request of you, a fair one, as it seems to me, that you disregard the manner of my speech—for perhaps it might be worse and perhaps better—and observe and pay attention merely to this, whether what I say is just or not; for that is the virtue of a judge, and an orator's virtue is to speak the truth.

First then it is right for me to defend myself against the first false accusations brought against me, and the first accusers, and then against the later accusations and the later accusers. For many accusers have risen up against me before you, who have been speaking for a long time, many years already, and saying nothing true; and I fear them more than Anytus and the rest, though these also are dangerous; but those others are more dangerous, gentlemen, who gained your belief, since they got hold of most of you in childhood, and accused me without any truth, saying, "There is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a ponderer over the things in the air and one who has investigated the things beneath the earth and who makes the weaker argument the stronger." These, men of Athens, who have spread abroad this report, are my dangerous enemies. For those who hear them think that men who investigate these matters do not even believe in gods. Besides, these accusers are many and have been making their accusations already for a long time, and moreover they spoke to you at an age at which you would believe them most readily (some of you in youth, most of you in childhood), and the case they prosecuted went utterly by default, since nobody appeared in defense. But the most unreasonable thing of all is this, that it is not even possible to know and speak their names, except when one of them happens to be a writer of comedies. And all those who persuaded you by means of envy and slander—and some also persuaded others because they had been themselves persuaded—all these are most difficult to cope with; for it is not even possible to call any of them up here and cross-question him, but I am compelled in making my defense to fight, as it were, absolutely with shadows and to cross-question when nobody answers. Be kind enough, then, to bear in mind, as I say, that there are two classes of my accusers—one those who have just brought their accusation, the other those who, as I was just saying, brought it long ago, and consider that I must defend myself first against the latter; for you heard them making their charges first and with much greater force than these who made them later. Well, then, I must make a defense, men of Athens, and must try in so short a time to remove from you this prejudice which you have been for so long a time acquiring. Now I wish that this might turn out so, if it is better for you and for me, and that I might succeed with my defense; but I think it is



difficult, and I am not at all deceived about its nature. But nevertheless, let this be as is pleasing to God, the law must be obeyed and I must make a defense. (17A-19A)

Socrates uses his introduction to do two things: re-establish his ethos and outline his proofs, which turn out to be refutations of the accusations against him. Socrates' prosecutors have already spoken and tried to damage his ethos. Specifically, they have tried to credit him with being a clever speaker who will mislead the audience. If they have been successful, the audience is suspicious of Socrates.

So he addresses that accusation right away to ensure that his audience will listen to him by distinguishing between clever speakers and truthful ones, accusing them of being clever and characterizing himself as truthful. In doing so, he uses humor to deflate both his accusers, as sophists, and himself, as an awkward old man who is not very well informed about legal matters.

He then has an elaborate outline of proofs, based on the fact that, according to him, there are two sets of accusations: those who slandered Socrates in the past, such as slander influencing the way he is perceived by the jury members; and those, like Anytus, who are accusing him now, as well. Notice the outline comes out of the case at hand, and the listener/reader can expect that the middle of the defense will be composed of two parts, one for early slander and one for late accusation.

An interesting question arises here: Why does Socrates not provide the accusation against him, the one he will refute? He does not need to, of course, since, even though we do not have the speech for the prosecution, Socrates' audience just heard it. As well, he does not want to remind the jurors of the accusation until he has refuted the earlier slander still prejudicing them against him, so that, when he arrives at it, they will be less confident in it. That organizational move is powerful—provided, of





course, that Socrates is right that one of the reasons he is being tried in the first place is that Athenians thought him impious and corrupt.

Socrates makes a distinct path into his finely designed defense, and the end of the beginning arrives: “[L]et this be as is pleasing to God, the law must be obeyed and I must make a defense.”



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### MIDDLES

If every persuasion has a beginning, a middle and an end, then the middle is everything between the beginning and the end. Here, one states one's argument and proves it, providing where necessary a narration of events and refutations of counter-arguments. Aristotle is clear that proof and refutation are two parts of defending your case, and he would expect the rhetor to practice prudence in deciding whether to prove-then-refute, refute-then-prove, refute-prove-refute-prove, or prove-refute-prove-refute.

Whether one needs to narrate the events, providing background to the case at hand is a matter of one's audience: Is the audience familiar with the case at hand? If so, you probably do not need a narration. On the other hand, if one's opponent has distorted the case at hand, one might need to correct it by re-narrating it. In order to refute the earlier slander against himself, Socrates re-narrates the origin of his reputation for being wise, as I recounted in Chapter One.

The central question the rhetor must determine when designing the middle of his or her persuasion is this: In what best order shall I arrange my proofs of my argument? One notices that in his funeral oration, Pericles celebrates the city before he celebrates its defenders. Why does he do this? His outline in his introduction offers a hint:

But what was the road by which we reached our position, what the form of government under which our greatness grew, what the national habits out of which it sprang; these are questions which I may try to solve before I proceed to my panegyric upon these men; since I think this to be a subject upon which on the present occasion a speaker may properly dwell, and to which the whole assemblage, whether citizens or foreigners, may listen with advantage. (2.36)



Pericles will praise what the fallen soldiers fought to protect, their end or goal, before praising their courage and nobility in fighting. What they fought for is more important than the valor of how they fought since one may be courageous in a bad cause. Pericles, then, is praising them not for being soldiers *per se*, but for being *Athenian* soldiers. Their courage is made noble through the goodness of the city they protected. So he structures the middle of his speech as a two-part design:

- I. Introduction (2.35-6)
- II. Praise of Athens (2.37-41)
- III. Praise of Athenian Soldiers (2.42-5)
- IV. Conclusion (2.46)

If one wanted to judge whether this is the best design possible, given all of the variables of the rhetorical situation, one would need only to transpose Parts II and III and see how it works. In evaluating art, it is always helpful to imagine the piece of art otherwise than it is, since if we can do that, so too could the artist, and likely did and found the other wanting.

So a middle may include a narration of events, but it will certainly include the proofs in defense of one's argument, arranged in the best way possible. There is no formula for the best way possible since any abstract organizational scheme will fail to accommodate all of the distinct variables of any rhetorical situation. Like invention, design is a faculty, not a formula—a dynamic power of the mind to arrange proofs in a variety of forms, then choose the one best suited to the case at hand. The art of rhetoric is best practiced by artists.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

## ENDS

If the beginning is that before which there is nothing and the middle is that which is between the beginning and the end, the end is that after which there is nothing. Aristotle argues that the end or conclusion can do four things. First, it can dispose the audience to favor the rhetor and disfavor his or her opponent; second, it can amplify its better points and diminish its weaker ones; third, it can move the audience emotionally; and fourth, it can summarize the argument and its proofs.

At the close of his oration, Pericles does all four things:

My task is now finished. I have performed it to the best of my ability, and in words, at least, the requirements of the law are now satisfied. If deeds be in question, those who are here interred have received part of their honors already, and for the rest, their children will be brought up till manhood at the public expense: the state thus offers a valuable prize, as the garland of victory in this race of valor, for the reward both of those who have fallen and their survivors. And where the rewards for merit are greatest, there are found the best citizens. And now that you have brought to a close your lamentations for your relatives, you may depart. (2.46)

Indicating that he is concluding, Pericles appeals to his own ethos as one striving to do a difficult thing: "I have performed it to the best of my ability." He summarizes and amplifies his central argument that the honor the fallen receive is due to their deeds, not his words. And he moves the audience's emotion by reminding them of their grief. He does something Aristotle does not mention, as well: he turns from the present to the future by indicating that the city will care for the children of the fallen. This is an emotional appeal—if hope is an emotion—but it is also a new, deliberative proof: that a good city should care for the children of those who care for it. This was already the



law, yet stating it reinforces it. It also confirms that Athens is what Pericles earlier said it is: a great city.

The end of a persuasion must have the quality of fulfillment and completion. If the introduction is the path-maker and the body, the path, then the conclusion should provide the destination. One can think of organization as the design of a product of art or as the fashioning of an audience's process of persuasion. The audience travels the path pointed out and guided along by the rhetor until the end. Every rhetor is an artist and a leader. Indeed, rhetoric is the art that leads.



**EXERCISE THREE**

## Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby"

Please re-read the following letter, and from the letter alone answer the discussion questions. You may find it helpful to review the Study Questions for Chapters 15-18 before doing so to make sure you have understood the material.

Executive Mansion,  
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,—

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,  
A. Lincoln



Discussion Questions

1. Where is the beginning of the letter? The middle? The end?
2. What is Lincoln doing in his introduction?
3. How has he designed the middle?
4. What is he doing at the end?
5. What is the design-principle of the whole composition?



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### WHAT IS A GOOD STYLE?

If invention is the *what* of the persuasion, and organization its *in-what-order*, style is its *how*—the words and sentences carrying the audience through the ordered invention. What, then, is a good style? A good style is correct, clear, appropriate, and lively. Correctness governs all. Clarity and appropriateness result from word choice; liveliness results from rhythm and figuration. Rhythm comes from sentence-variety (Chapter 20); figuration, from schemes and tropes (Chapters 21-22). One warning before beginning: Aristotle's discussion of prose style is, of course, a discussion of *Greek* prose style. So I am lifting those principles of language from his discussion most apt for English prose style, even though English did not exist when Aristotle wrote the *Rhetoric*. Interestingly, though, critics of English prose style use many of the same terms Aristotle did. More than elsewhere, my discussion here is "Aristotelian," without always worrying about Aristotle. Let's begin with the four features of a good style.

In the medieval tradition, rhetoric is an art founded upon two others: grammar and logic. If the study of logic helps a rhetor fashion substantial enthymemes, the study of grammar helps him or her fashion a good style. It is necessary, but not sufficient: mere grammatical correctness is not enough for a good style. But it is vital. An incorrect style is unpersuasive, damaging both your ethos and your case. I will leave correctness to the side since it is the proper concern of the art of grammar.

An argument will only persuade as it should if the audience understands it, so clarity is required. And style should always be appropriate to the rhetorical situation at hand—neither more nor less elevated than the genre, audience and forum demand. Clarity and appropriateness come from choosing words well, which requires an extensive vocabulary and a rhetorical antenna sensitive enough to help you choose





among words. When defending himself against the accusation that he is a clever speaker, Socrates chooses his words very carefully:

I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told—when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me, because I was a clever speaker. For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed because they will immediately be convicted by me of falsehood by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be not in the least a clever speaker, unless indeed they call him a clever speaker who speaks the truth; for if this is what they mean, I would agree that I am an orator—not after their fashion. (17B)

The Greek for the adjective “clever” is *deinos*, a word whose meanings are rich and complicated. According to the *Liddell & Scott Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, *deinos* indicates the following four attributes: “fearful/terrible,” “mighty/powerful,” “wonderful/strange,” and “clever/skillful,” this last especially opposed to *sophos*, which means “wise.” Socrates accusers called him a *deinos* speaker, and he needs to refute the accusation before his audience will hear him out. He does so through a subtle refutation: he will show himself “to be not in the least a *clever* speaker, unless indeed they call him a *clever* speaker who speaks the truth.” They wanted to weaken his ethos by attributing to him sophistic powers of persuasion against which the audience should defend itself; he defends his credibility by indicating that he does not have such powers—unless, that is, they intend to accuse him of telling the truth, which they obviously do not. Socrates’ word choice here, during a highly complicated rhetorical moment, is correct, clear and appropriate.

It is also extremely lively, endowing the written text with distinct, as-if-being-spoken voice. A good style lives, endowing its argument and proofs with animation and its ethos with personality. That ethos or voice is achieved through both the rhythm of sentence pattern and variety and the energy of figuration, the subjects of our next chapters.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

## PROSE RHYTHM

Got rhythm? Know what rhythm is? Rhythm is a matter of movement, really—how the style *moves* the reader through the arranged invention. Rhythm in poetry is due to meter; rhythm in prose is due to pattern and variation of phrases, clauses and sentences. (Review the art of grammar if necessary.) The arranged invention is both expressed and limited by the style, and limit, for Aristotle, is a matter of number. Number influences both phrasing and clausuring.

Within any clause, phrases have a tendency to come in pairs or triplets. When Pericles outlines the first proof of his funeral oration, for example, he employs both:

But what was the road by which we reached our position, what the form of government under which our greatness grew, what the national habits out of which it sprang; these are questions which I may try to solve before I proceed to my panegyric upon these men since I think this to be a subject upon which on the present occasion a speaker may properly dwell, and to which the whole assemblage, whether citizens or foreigners, may listen with advantage. (2.36)

The questions are three:

- 1) what was the road by which we reached our position;
- 2) what the form of government under which our greatness grew;
- 3) what the national habits out of which it sprang?

The subject has two features:

- 1) upon which on the present occasion a speaker may properly dwell;
- 2) and to which the whole assemblage . . . may listen with advantage.

And the assemblage has two constituents, “whether citizens or foreigners.” Pericles has rhythm because, without being obvious, his phrasing falls into pairs and triplets.



Clausing is also influenced by number. There are four types of sentence, and only four, depending on how their clauses are related—simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex—all four of which will characterize a good style. Very broadly, though, a style will fall into a rhythm of coordination, subordination, or an alternation of the two, varied by simple sentences and combined with compound-complex ones. Add to this both another number—the relative length of different kinds of sentences—and the doubles and triplets of phrasing, and you have a subtly distinct movement of arranged invention. Let's examine Pericles' praise of the Athenians fallen in the city's defense, with the six sentences of its English translation numbered (this translation maintains the sentence numbering of the Greek):

- 1) So died these men as became Athenians [and] you, their survivors, must determine to have as unaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue, and not contented with ideas derived only from words of the advantages which are bound up with the defense of your country, though these would furnish a valuable text to a speaker even before an audience so alive to them as the present, you must yourselves realize the power of Athens, and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; and then when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honor in action that men were enabled to win all this, and that no personal failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valor, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution that they could offer.
- 2) For this offering of their lives made in common by them all they each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulcher, not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall fall for its commemoration.
- 3) For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb; and in lands far from their own, where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart.



- 4) These take as your model, and judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valor, never decline the dangers of war.
- 5) For it is not the miserable that would most justly be unsparing of their lives; these have nothing to hope for: it is rather they to whom continued life may bring reverses as yet unknown, and to whom a fall, if it came, would be most tremendous in its consequences.
- 6) And surely, to a man of spirit, the degradation of cowardice must be immeasurably more grievous than the unfelt death which strikes him in the midst of his strength and patriotism!

The rhythm of the passage of the English sentences above is this:

- 1) long, compound-complex;
- 2) medium, compound-complex;
- 3) medium/short, compound-complex;
- 4) short, compound;
- 5) medium/short, compound-complex;
- 6) medium/short, compound-complex.

The rhythm of the prose style here, once analyzed, reveals that Pericles saves the coordinated style in a short sentence for the one moment when he does not want his audience to miss the deliberative character of his ceremonial rhetoric: “These take as your model, and judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valor, never decline the dangers of war.”

The coordinated style is easier to see if one omits the participial phrase: “Take these as your model, . . . and never decline the dangers of war.” And notice that the participial phrase—“judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valor”—has a double within, one made possible by three figures of speech—*parallelism*, **anadiplosis** and ellipsis (. . .):

- |           |                     |              |                  |                   |     |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-----|
| [J]udging | 1) <i>happiness</i> | <i>to be</i> | <i>the fruit</i> | <i>of freedom</i> | AND |
|           | 2) <i>freedom</i>   | ...          | ...              | <i>of valor.</i>  |     |

Pairs are persuasive. I will discuss these figures of speech in the next chapter.



For now, it is enough to acknowledge that Pericles' funeral oration, even in English translation, has rhythm.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

## THE LIVELINESS OF FIGURATION, I: SCHEMES

Figures of speech are extraordinary uses of language that enliven prose, energizing the arranged invention. They are extraordinary because they vary standard syntax or usage: figures varying standard syntax or word-order are called schemes; those varying standard usage or meaning, tropes. Aristotle does not offer as systematic a presentation of the figures of speech as the Roman rhetoricians will, but two of his most important—antithesis (a scheme) and metaphor (a trope)—will dominate my presentation of the figures of speech. I will offer five schemes worth knowing immediately, even though Aristotle does not discuss them all: those involving symmetry (parallelism, antithesis and ellipsis) and those involving repetition (anaphora and anadiplosis).

Let's return to Pericles' sentence, translated into English above: "These take as your model, and judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valor, never decline the dangers of war." First, note its parallelism. Parallelism requires that similar ideas be put in similar grammatical units. The coordinated sentence provides a parallel (if slightly varied) structure for the two independent clauses: "These *take* . . . , . . . and never *decline* the dangers of war." Each verb in its respective clause is parallel, though notice that the object precedes its verb in the first clause, while the object follows its verb in the second. (Such a transposition of grammatical units is called chiasmus.) The participial phrase describing the implied you of "take"—"judging happiness to be the fruit of freedom and freedom of valor"—exhibits three figures of speech—*parallelism*, **anadiplosis** and ellipsis (. . .):

[J]udging	1) <i>happiness</i>	<i>to be</i>	<i>the fruit</i>	<i>of <b>freedom</b></i>	<i>AND</i>
	2) <i><b>freedom</b></i>	<i>...</i>	<i>...</i>	<i>of <b>valor</b>.</i>	



The two objects of the participle—"happiness" and "freedom"—are parallel, and then "freedom" is repeated at the end of one phrase and the beginning of the next. Once parallel syntax is laid down, one can omit words understood from context, the second "to be the fruit" not required since a reader or listener easily supplies it (like the missing premise of an enthymeme).

The scheme that most interests Aristotle is antithesis, the contrast of content in parallel form, since it is, according to him, uniquely suited to refutation, and refutation is crucial to proof: antithesis "is pleasing, because contraries are easily understood and even more so when placed side by side, and also because antithesis resembles a syllogism; for refutation is a bringing together of contraries" (3.8). Paul Woodruff's translation of Nicias' caution against Alcibiades' rashness brings out the refutational antithesis clearly, the antithesis even more compressed in the Greek: "Keep in mind that the least success comes by way of desire, and the most by planning ahead" (6.13). Let's break the **antithesis** down:

Keep in mind THAT

	<b>the least</b>	success	comes	by	<b>way of desire,</b>
and	<b>the most</b>	...	...	by	<b>planning ahead.</b>

Notice that the parallelism makes possible the antithesis, and the antithesis is sharpened by the ellipsis. Notice, as well, that the antithesis of desire and prudence is really an antithesis of Alcibiades and Nicias. The stylistic figure of antithesis turns our two rhetors into an allegory of Prudence and Desire struggling to win over Athens!

Plato gives Socrates parallelism, antithesis and ellipsis in his *Apology's* close: "But now the time has come to go away. I go to die, and you to live; but which of us goes to the better lot, is known to none but God" (42A). Can you explain how?

Anadiplosis is one form of repetition, but anaphora is another. Anaphora repeats words or phrases at the beginnings of successive clauses. Woodruff's



translation of Pericles' celebration of Athens employs anaphora by repeating "we" at the beginning of successive clauses:

*We* are free and generous not only in our public activities as citizens, but also in our daily lives: there is no suspicion in our dealings with one another, and *we* are not offended by our neighbor for following his own pleasure. *We* do not cast on anyone the censorious looks that—though they are no punishment—are nevertheless painful. *We* live together without taking offense on private matters; and as for public affairs, *we* respect the law greatly and fear to violate it, since *we* are obedient to those in office at any time, and also to the laws. (2.37, emphasis mine)<sup>1</sup>

Notice both that the repetition is rhythmic and that the "we" is suggesting a harmony between and among Athenians, even as Pericles indicates Athenian respect for the individual.

The figures of speech that are schemes enliven the arranged invention by bringing out likenesses and differences through syntax, the way words are arranged into phrases, clauses and sentences. Such likenesses and differences are a matter of the philosophical mind, of course, and one begins to suspect that separating invention from style, thought from language, may be a mistake. After all, what has one been inventing *with* if not language? Perhaps all three sub-arts—invention, organization and style—are three aspects of one art. Be that as it may, style animates thought through schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> *Thucydides on Justice, Power and Human Nature* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1993).





## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### THE LIVELINESS OF FIGURATION: TROPES

Style also animates thought through tropes to create vividness and motion: the listener or reader can *see* one's argument—and see it move! Remember that figures of speech vary ordinary language: if schemes vary word order, tropes vary usage. Although there are hundreds of tropes, I will concentrate on five: metaphor, simile, personification, the rhetorical question, and irony.

The two most common tropes are metaphor and simile, wherein one identifies or likens something to something else it resembles in an original way: X is Y, or X is like Y. Although the difference between the two is very important, Aristotle believes it to be only a matter of degree. In actual examples, it can be difficult to see whether a likeness is becoming an identity.

One of Aristotle's examples of metaphoric animation is from Pericles' Funeral Oration (although the exact example cannot be found in Thucydides). When describing the loss of the young men in the war, he said that they disappeared from the city as if the year had lost its spring. The argument that their loss is a calamity is an idea Pericles energizes by means of metaphor—the city is a year, and its young men are its spring; therefore, their death deprives the city of a very part of itself, the very season that signals the future. This Periclean metaphor is a refinement of perhaps the most famous simile in Homer's *Iliad*:

As is the generation of leaves, so is that of humanity.  
The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber  
burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning.  
So one generation of men will grow while another  
dies. (6.146-150)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. Richard Lattimore (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2011).



In this simile, Homer likens people to leaves, their deaths to leaves falling from the tree that creates new leaves again when spring returns. The dark force of Pericles' metaphor becomes even clearer when one notices the Homeric source: Athens lost its spring—that year certainly, maybe forever. The unnatural, revisionary character of the figure of speech is devastating, revealing as it does the disastrous consequences of the war to the city.

A particular form of metaphor is personification, in which something inanimate is described as animate, something non-human as human. In fact, one form of personification that is easy to miss in Pericles' oration is indicated by his personifying Athens as a woman (this is due, in part to gender in the Greek language, but only in part), as we see in Woodruff's translation: "For Athens is the only power now that is greater than *her* fame when it comes to the test" (3.41). Realistically, a city has no gender, yet we often personify cities as female—nurturing places that conceive, bear and raise their citizens, who are then expected to protect them. Whether in Pericles or Homer, metaphor, simile and personification enliven argument by endowing style with vivid motion.

Sometimes, the vividness is created through features of dialogue—even when the speech is not literally dialogic. Homer actually gives the simile above to a character, Glaukos, when his opponent in battle, Diomedes, asks him about his family. Glaukos asks a rhetorical question—that is, a question to which one does not actually expect an answer: "[W]hy ask of my generation?" (145). Sometimes, a rhetorical question expects no answer because the answer is quite evident; sometimes, as here, the questioner will supply an answer. Glaukos' question will be answered by his simile: You should not ask me who my relatives are since we are all mortal leaves. Even so, he then gives him his genealogy, and they part after a deal, without fighting—either because they now know they are related or because they have been made peaceful before the prospect of



universal mortality. The rhetorical question answered enlivens style with conversational sound.

As does irony. Irony comes in many forms, but in rhetoric, the most common is to say something an audience knows one does not actually believe. How does it know this? Through tone. Socrates is a master of irony; in fact, “Socratic irony” (a concept much larger than the form examined here) is an important philosophical topic. In Plato’s *Apology*, he often employs irony. As early as the introduction, trying to persuade the jurors to let him speak in his usual way—in great part, so he can question his accusers through dialectic—he tells them that he has to do so since he is ignorant of legal rhetoric: “I am . . . an utter foreigner to the manner of speech here” (17D). Now no one actually believes that Socrates is a rube without legal understanding. In numerous dialogues, Plato represents him as quite knowledgeable about judicial rhetoric. Socrates wants to be free to avoid the standard judicial appeals and, instead, to use his dialectical rhetoric, which he does. One needs to hear the tone of irony: “I am *an utter foreigner* to the manner of speech here.” “*Right*, Socrates: Do you expect us to believe that?”

Whether tropes or schemes, figures of speech enliven rhythmic prose so that the arranged argument comes alive during rhetorical performance, whether actually delivered or not (since print itself can have voice). Neither figuration nor rhythm should be too obvious, of course. Art should not make itself too evident. In fact, an Italian rhetorician, Castiglione, coined a term for art that hides itself *as* art so that it appears natural: *sprezzatura*. A dancer who counts his or her steps aloud is less graceful than one who does not. One should make it all look easy, even if it has taken a great deal of education and practice to make it all look easy.



**EXERCISE FOUR**

## Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby"

Please re-read the following letter, and from the letter alone answer the discussion questions. You may find it helpful to review the Study Questions for Chapters 19–22 before doing so to make sure you have understood the material.

Executive Mansion,  
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,—

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,  
A. Lincoln



Discussion Questions

1. Analyze Lincoln's style by identifying the length (yes, count words) and type of each sentence.
2. What words are most significant in the letter, and why?
3. In its phrases and clauses, does it tend toward doubles or triples? What is its rhythm?
4. What schemes does Lincoln employ? Where and why? (The last sentence is rich.)
5. What tropes does he employ? Where and why? (Again, the last sentence is rich.)



## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

## HOW TO REMEMBER

Style, organization and invention are sub-arts of the art of rhetoric, and those are the three that interest Aristotle—invention, first and foremost. Rhetoricians usually include two more: memory and delivery. Rhetors need to remember their speeches, and they need to deliver them. Although he does very briefly and reluctantly discuss delivery in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle does not discuss the art of memory in it at all. This sub-art may most be a matter of nature since a good memory is such a matter of genetic luck. But as with all natural talents, art helps, even if a poor memory will not become a photographic one through study. There are two fundamental characteristics of memorization: One is related to organization; one, to style.

There is an ancient story about a feat of memory: A man who was at a dinner at another man's home left, after which the building collapsed, killing all the remaining diners; the survivor was able to identify the bodies (which were crushed beyond recognition) by remembering where they were sitting at the table. Notice that identifying the subjects is assisted by their location in space. *Where* something is often helps us remember *what* it is. The art of memory requires ordering, which is why outlines are so important in study. In order to memorize something, you need a place for it. This leads to elaborate metaphoric structures for subjects in the medieval period—imagined palaces of memory in whose rooms medieval students located particular things to remember, going to those internal palaces to retrieve the things to be remembered. With so many powerful external tools for memory available to us in the contemporary era, we have begun to neglect internal ones, but that is a mistake since memory remains a means of persuasion. After all, those who remember things, unassisted by technology, are more persuasive than those who do not.



You do not need such structures if you can remember the organizational design of the text to be memorized. Outline its beginning, middle and end; within each of the three parts, discern sub-parts. Memorize the design of the structure, as far down to the sentence-level as you can go.

When you get to the sentence-level, use the second technique: repetition. Memorize the first sentence first, using its stylistic characteristics to help, reading it aloud and slowly. Then, recite the first and memorize the second; then, recite the first and the second, and memorize the third. And so on.

Before you know it, you will have memorized the text, incorporating it into yourself. Once you do so, it is always there to be retrieved. (This is one of the reasons it is such a good idea to memorize poetry, since you become an anthology of your own favorite poems.) Memorizing favorite pieces of rhetoric will also help you compose your own since you will automatically and unreflectively end up imitating your rhetorical heroes.



**EXERCISE FIVE**

## Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby"

Please re-read the following letter, and from the letter alone answer the discussion questions. You may find it helpful to review the Study Questions for Chapters 19-22 before doing so to make sure you have understood the material.

Executive Mansion,  
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,—

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,  
A. Lincoln





Discussion Questions

1. What is the structure of the letter, including every part?
2. What does the letter say? Memorize it.



**THE ART OF DELIVERY**



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### HOW TO SPEAK

Grammar, logic and rhetoric are the three fundamental arts of language, but there are four further ones: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The first two are usually silent affairs; the last two are not. The arts of listening and speaking involve *sound*. Rhetorical delivery involves gesture—in sum, be graceful—and sound. The rhetor must sound out what he or she has written to be audibly persuasive. Rhetorical delivery requires enunciation, rhythm and measure. Of course, a naturally good voice helps; even so, no matter how strong a voice you have, you can develop it through practice in the art of delivery.

Volume matters, so, if you are using a microphone, make sure your mouth is close to it; if not, speak slightly louder than seems natural to you. But volume is not enough; after all, we live in a loud culture, yet the art of delivery has all but disappeared. One must also *e-nun-ci-ate*. Enunciating a word means pronouncing its syllables correctly and distinctly: catching its consonants (including its consonant blends), attending to its vowels, and emphasizing its accented syllables. When pronouncing Lincoln's salutation, "Dear Madam," one must understand the sonic properties of the words. "Dear" is a one-syllable word; it has a consonant, then a vowel (a diphthong, technically), and a consonant. "Madam" has two syllables, the first stressed slightly more than the second: notice the word begins and ends with the same consonant ("m"); both syllables have the same short vowel. These sonic properties should be delivered.

If enunciation is distinctness of delivery, rhythm is its flow. Grammar and style help here. Identify its discreet words, phrases and clauses, and deliver them with their



grammatical integrity; where parallel structure is employed, deliver the parallel units in the same time period; where doubles and triples occur, do likewise. It helps to offer yourself visual cues in order to *see* what the rhythm should be.

This is true of measure, as well—the length of pause between phrases, clauses and sentences. Reading a text straight through with a uniform speed is painful to hear, and pained audiences are more difficult to persuade. Indicating in your prepared text the length of any pause ensures that you will not blah-blah-blah. If I were to deliver Lincoln's final proof, for example, I would mark it thus:

I pray that our Heavenly Father **may** *assuage* the anguish of your bereavement, / and *leave* you only the cherished memory of the *loved* and *lost*, // and the solemn pride that **must** be yours to have laid / so costly / a sacrifice / upon the altar of freedom. ///

I have underlined phrases to be delivered together, bolded the modal auxiliaries, italicized parallel units, and set backslashes for pauses—one for a slight pause, two for a medium one, and three for a long one. Any method of delivery is debatable, but you will need one.

For when one moves from written to spoken rhetoric, one's invention, organization and style will not be seen, only heard, and your voice will be a rhetorical handicap—or resource. The small rhetorical arts of enunciation, rhythm and measure will make it a resource.



**EXERCISE SIX**

## Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby"

Mark Lincoln's letter for enunciation, rhythm and measure; then practice delivering it:

Executive Mansion,  
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,—

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,  
A. Lincoln



## CONCLUSION



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

## RHETORIC AMONG THE OTHER ARTS AND SUBJECTS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

The Aristotelian art of rhetoric you have learned by reading this small book, and which I hope you will continue to study by reading both Aristotle's *Rhetoric* itself and books about it (see Appendices 2 and 3), is hardly a complete education. It is only a part of it—an important part, but only a part. To conclude, allow me to situate the art of rhetoric within both the trivium and liberal education itself in order to show you where you have arrived and where you might now go. Rhetoric is the consummate art of the arts of language, an important pedagogic means to the study of the various other subjects of any curriculum in a liberal education, and a subject worthy of study in its own right as an end of knowledge. I leave the quadrivium's concern with number aside to concentrate upon word, not because number is not important—it is—but because word, not number is my focus. I hope others, better versed in *both*, will take up their relationship.

In her wonderful book, *The Trivium*, Sister Miriam Joseph points out that grammar is the art of symbol, logic that of thought, and rhetoric that of communication. (Unfortunately, she does not do very much with the art of rhetoric.) Her broad point is right. Grammar symbolizes: through the parts of speech, the nature of predication and the kinds of sentences, it actualizes the potential for making symbols. Logic thinks: through defined terms, the nature of proposition and the forms of reasoning (inductive or deductive), it actualizes the potential for making thought. Rhetoric communicates or (preferably) persuades: through style, the nature of appeal and the kinds of discourse, it actualizes a potential for making persuasion. In any given moment of language, the three arts are really part of one art of language, and there is seldom a need to distinguish the three sub-arts, which are distinct, but so very related.



These arts have traditionally been taught sequentially in the above order because they are thought of teleologically: grammar is necessary for logic since one cannot propose until one can predicate; logic is necessary for rhetoric since one cannot appeal until one can propose. Yet one important distinction remains to establish rhetoric as the consummate art: its social character. One may practice grammar or logic alone, but rhetoric requires more than one person. Remember from this book's epigraph that Aristotle argues that language creates community, and community language:

[S]peech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city state. (*Politics*, 1.1.11)

The kinds of discourse in which we practice rhetoric turn out to be the very potentialities that distinguish us from the other animals and necessitate social life, whether in the family or the polity. The arts of language prepare us for human intercourse, the writing and speaking moments during which we are partners with others to achieve the good, the just and the beautiful, all three arguably thought of as aspects of the true. Rhetoric needs grammar to be correct in symbol, logic to be rational in thought. But correct symbol and rational thought need persuasive communication to be a social, not merely a linguistic, art. They need rhetoric.

All three are necessary, if not sufficient for the study of higher, more advanced subjects—if only because the arts of reading, writing, listening, and speaking that are essential to advanced study rest on them (in some form, no matter how attenuated or incomplete). The subjects of the humanities in “the circle of knowledge” (John Henry Newman's phrase from *The Idea of a University*)—Theology, Philosophy, Literature, History, Politics, for example—concern the great books we divide into those subjects, books which are made of the arts of language. The social sciences—for example,





Psychology and Economics—also do so, but draw upon the sciences and mathematics, respectively. The visual and performing arts do, as well, but are not limited to great books. The arts of language are prior to liberal learning; they come *before* and prepare the *way* for it. That is why they are called “propaedeutic”: they are the *paideia* or “education” which is *pro*, “before.” Rhetoric consummates the way of language as preparation for higher studies. It is an educational means.

Of course, a liberal education is an end in and of itself. One studies the subjects within the circle of knowledge since doing so is good before it is good *for* anything. Using Newman's language again, I would say that it only becomes a power later. He says that “prior to [liberal education's] being a power, it is a good; that is, not only an instrument, but an end” (84). A curriculum of subjects should have at least the pretense of wholeness; that is, the student should have universal knowledge to develop his or her mind such that the cosmos of learning is within. Rhetoric prepares one to make that cosmos dwell within through the arts of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, arts necessary to study the great books of the traditions that constitute a student's inheritance. Such study is eventually useful, even if not immediately so. Rhetoric is ancillary to liberal education, which, while good, will become powerful because, as Newman would have it, “Good is prolific”:

A great good will impart great good. If then the intellect is so excellent a portion in us, and its cultivation so excellent, it is not only beautiful, perfect, admirable, and noble in itself, but in a true and high sense it must be useful to the possessor and to all around him [or her]; not useful in any low, mechanical, mercantile sense, but as a diffusing good, or as a blessing, or a gift, or power, or as a treasure, first to the owner, then through him [or her] to the world. I say, then, if a liberal education be good, it must necessarily be useful too. (124)

Rhetoric is a means to the eventually useful good that is liberal education.

But it is also a good and an end itself. Like grammar and logic, rhetoric is an ancillary art that can become, later and in more advanced forms, a subject itself, whose



study is necessary to complete the circle of knowledge. You have studied rhetoric as an art. Yet it has a history, in theory and practice, as seen in the number of philosophers who examine it and the number of rhetors who practice it. Rhetoric as a subject includes the history and theory of rhetoric. It also includes the study of itself as an art—in Literature, in Rhetoric and Composition, in Forensics, and in Communications. In fact, most university students study rhetoric in an advanced specialized form before studying it as a more general art since rhetoric is usually dispersed throughout the curriculum and not located in any one department. Wherever encountered in the university curriculum, though, rhetoric is not only an art of making persuasion, but also a subject concerning the history and theory of it.

If liberal education is an end before it is a means (a good before it is a power), then rhetoric is a means before it is an end (a power to study before a good to be studied). But then, like all other subjects of liberal education, it becomes a power since the goodness of its study is prolific. Properly studied as *the* art of language or as a subject of liberal education, rhetoric is, finally, a blessing. Aristotle would not have put it that way, but I do so in order to indicate all that may be approached by Aristotle's rhetoric for everybody.



## APPENDIX ONE

### STUDY GUIDE

You should be able to remember your answers to the following questions, and, where it is an Aristotelian formulation, to repeat that formulation—if not in the exact words, at least in words which catch the exact meaning.

#### Chapter One

Questions: What is dialectic, and why is rhetoric its partner?

#### Chapter Two

Questions: What is an art, and how do we learn one? What art do you practice well, what one badly, and why?

#### Chapter Three

Questions: What are the five reasons rhetoric is useful? Which reason do you think is the strongest and why?

#### Chapter Four

Questions: What is a term, how does one define a term, and what does the term “rhetoric” mean? Explain it fully.

#### Chapter Five

Questions: What is a rhetorical situation, and what are its five variables? What are the five means of persuasion making up the art?



### Chapter Six

Questions: What is an argument, and what is a proof? What are the three genres of rhetoric? What are its three appeals?

### Chapter Seven

Questions: What does political rhetoric do, with respect to what time, and why—that is, what is its end? What five things does it argue about? What is happiness? What is a good? What is goodness? What is the central topic of invention in deliberative rhetoric? Why must the political rhetor be knowledgeable about the constitution of his or her form of government?

### Chapter Eight

Questions: What does legal rhetoric do, with respect to what time, and why—that is, what is its end? What are the two kinds of law? What does it mean to commit a wrongdoing “willingly,” and why is that important in legal rhetoric? Why do people do wrong; what are the two causes of wrongdoing? What is justice? What is equity? What is the central topic of invention in legal rhetoric?

### Chapter Nine

Questions: What does ceremonial rhetoric do, with respect to what time, and why—that is, what is its end? What is the most common instance of ceremonial rhetoric? What do we praise and what do we blame? Define each. What is the noble or the beautiful? Why/how are the three rhetorical genres discrete, yet related?

### Chapter Ten

What are the three appeals of rhetoric, and which, according to Aristotle, is the most important? What is a common topic of invention, and how is it distinct from a



special one? What are the five topics of invention discussed, and how does one see them at work in the examples provided from Plato's *Phaedrus*?

### Chapter Eleven

What is an example? What are the two kinds? What is the difference between rhetorical induction and scientific?

### Chapter Twelve

What is an enthymeme, and what is its relationship to the syllogism? What are the two distinguishing characteristics of the enthymeme? Does an enthymeme have to pass the same logical tests as a syllogism? Why is the enthymeme central to rhetorical proof? How is Jesus rhetorical in John 8:3–9?

### Chapter Thirteen

What is the appeal to ethos, and what three characteristics of a rhetor does an audience find appealing? How does the rhetor exhibit those characteristics?

### Chapter Fourteen

What is an emotion, and why is the emotional appeal allowed, even demanded, in rhetoric? How does one appeal to an emotion, and how does one evaluate a legitimate from an illegitimate emotional appeal?

### Chapter Fifteen

What is a whole, and what is a part? What are the three major parts of a persuasion?



### Chapter Sixteen

What is Aristotle's metaphor for an introduction? What four things might a rhetor do in his or her introduction?

### Chapter Seventeen

What *must* one do in the middle of one's persuasion? What *might* one do? What dictates the order of proofs in the middle, and why is a formula for organization probably inadequate for a particular persuasion?

### Chapter Eighteen

What is an end or conclusion, and what four things does Aristotle say it can do?

### Chapter Nineteen

What is style, and what are the four features of a good style? How does word choice influence style?

### Chapter Twenty

What is rhythm, and how is it achieved in prose rather than in poetry? Phrases tend to fall into two numbered patterns. What are they? What are the four kinds of sentence? How does one's sentence type and length establish rhythm of prose style?

### Chapter Twenty-One

What is a figure of speech, and what are the two kinds? What is a scheme? What are parallelism, antithesis, ellipsis, anaphora, and anadiplosis?



### Chapter Twenty-Two

What is a trope? What are metaphor, simile and personification? How do they achieve vividness? What are the rhetorical question and irony, and how do they achieve voice?

### Chapter Twenty-Three

What are the two techniques of memorization, and what sub-art of rhetoric is each related to?

### Chapter Twenty-Four

What is delivery, why does it matter, and what three features of it should be remembered?

### Chapter Twenty-Five

Why is the art of rhetoric the consummate art of language? What is the relationship between the arts of language and liberal education? What is liberal education? How can rhetoric be both a means and an end? Do you agree that rhetoric, properly understood, is a blessing?



## APPENDIX TWO

### STUDY GUIDE FOR ARISTOTLE'S *RHETORIC* ITSELF: OUTLINE, NOTES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### *Aristotle's Rhetoric*

#### BOOK ONE

#### Outline of 1.1-2

- I. Introduction (*prooemion*) to the *Rhetoric* (1.1-2)
  - A. Subject—rhetoric and its similarities with dialectic: both arts/methods are practiced by all upon a variety of subjects (1.1.1).
  - B. Rhetoric as an art, as opposed to an accident or an unreflective habit (1.1.2)
  - C. The deficiencies of previous arts: they neglect “proof,” esp. the enthymeme; overemphasize speaking outside the subject, esp. the appeal to emotion; misunderstand the relation of deliberative and judicial rhetorics; and underestimate the truth of probability (1.1.3-11).
  - D. The usefulness of rhetoric: for defending the truth; persuading in moments when teaching is impossible; arguing on both sides of a question; manifesting a higher human capability; and knowing a good thing (1.1.12-13).
  - E. The rhetor and the dialectician are distinguished from the sophist not by artistic capability, but by deliberate choice (1.1.14). Transition to 1.2
  - F. Definition of rhetoric: “an ability, in each case, to see the available means of persuasion” (1.2.1).
  - G. Rhetorical proof (1.2.2-20)
    1. Artistic and non-artistic proof (1.2.2)
    2. The three proofs of *êthos*, *pathos*, and *logos*: located in the speaker,





the audience and the speech itself, respectively (1.2.3-6)

3. Rhetoric in relation to dialectic and ethics/politics (1.2.7)
4. Dialectic's induction/syllogism is rhetoric's example/enthymeme (1.2.8-10)
5. Rhetoric concerns the debatable things (1.2.11-14)
6. Enthymemes are derived from probabilities and signs; examples from likenesses (1.2.14-20)

### Discussion Questions

1. What is rhetoric's relation to dialectic, and why?
2. What is art? Is rhetoric one? What is the relation between and among persuading by "habit," "at random," and through art?
3. What is wrong with contemporary rhetorics? What things are external to rhetoric, and what things internal? What is "proof"? What is the enthymeme, and how is it related to the syllogism? Why would Aristotle call it "the body of persuasion" (1.1.3)? What is Aristotle's metaphor for the deleterious effect that most "rhetoric" has upon a jury?
4. What is the relationship between the truth and that which resembles it, and, if, according to Aristotle, both are seen by the same capacity, what is that capacity?
5. Aristotle says that "humans have a natural disposition for the true and to a large extent hit on the truth" (1.1.11). Is that optimism warranted?
6. Aristotle argues that rhetoric is useful for five reasons. What are those reasons? Which do you find most compelling?
7. What is the difference between the rhetor and the sophist? Why does Aristotle end the first part of his introduction with this distinction?
8. What is rhetoric, according to Aristotle? What is the relationship between rhetoric as an "art" and rhetoric as an "ability"? Is rhetoric a productive, a practical or a theoretical study?
9. What is the difference between the "artistic" and "inartistic" proofs? Aristotle introduces the ethical appeal (character [*êthos*]) and the emotional appeal (disposition [*pathos*]): Where are *êthos*, *logos*, and *pathos* located? Notice that he argued earlier in 1.1 that the emotional



appeal is extrinsic, but now that it is intrinsic. Why does Aristotle appear to denigrate the emotional appeal in 1.1, then allow for it in 1.2, taking up a good deal of Book 2 (2.2-11) to discuss it?

10. Why does Aristotle think that rhetoric is an “offshoot” of both dialectic and ethics/politics? For help with the latter, see his discussion of “deliberation” (1.2.12-14).

11. If scientific reasoning works through rational and empirical means—deduction and induction—what does rhetorical reasoning work through? What two kinds of premises are employed in enthymemes? What is a “topic,” and what is the difference between a common and a special topic?

12. Throughout his introduction to the treatise, Aristotle both praises and dispraises rhetoric, and therefore argues both in favor of and against it. Judging from both, how highly does he esteem the art of rhetoric?

13. The subject of the *Rhetoric* is the art of rhetoric, obviously. Who is the speaker, judging only from what is written here? Who is/are the audience(s)? If this is a lecture at the Academy, what kind of men would be there? What is/are the end(s) of the work? Are some of the ends in tension with one another? What means will the speaker employ to achieve the end(s) for the audience(s)?

### Outline, 1.3-8

## II. The Kinds of Rhetoric

A. Introduction (1.3): Rhetoric’s genres come from the rhetorical situations—speakers, subjects, audiences, and ends, the art itself understood as the means; the three genres—deliberative, epideictic and judicial.

### B. Deliberative Rhetoric (1.4-8)

1. Subjects, general—“things within our power”—and specific (1.4.1-7):  
finances (1.4.8), war and peace (1.4.9), national defense (1.4.10), trade (1.4.10),  
and legislation (1.4.12)
2. The parts of happiness



- a. Definitions of happiness (1.5.1-3)
- b. Parts of happiness (1.5.4-18): good birth, good/numerous children, wealth, good reputation, honor, health, beauty, strength, stature, good old age, good/many friendships, good luck, and virtue.
3. Assumed goods as premises within proofs (1.6)
4. The topic of degree (1.7): more of a good and less of its opposite
5. Constitutions (1.8): democratic, oligarchic, aristocratic, and monarchical (1.8.1-4); *êthos* in relation to constitution (1.8.5-6)
6. Conclusion (1.8.7)

### Discussion Questions

1. At 1.3.1, Aristotle says that a speech has three things, but then mentions four. What are they? Cf. definition of rhetoric (1.2.1).
2. What are the three genres of rhetoric (1.3.2-5)? Each does two things: what are they? What is the time and end of each?

<u>Genre</u>	<u>Rhetorical Act</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>End</u>
Deliberative	persuade/dissuade	future	the good
Epideictic	praise/dispraise	present	the beautiful
Judicial	prosecute/defend	past	the just

3. These genres are not exclusive, though one is probably always prior in any speech act (1.3.6). Are they exhaustive: must *all* speech acts be classified as one of the three? Are they universal or historically contingent?
4. What are the four kinds of proposition (*protasis*) common to all three genres (1.3.7)?



Note

Aristotle may believe that rhetoric is artistic, practical and theoretical, but he does *not* believe that it is a form of knowledge: “Insofar as someone tries to make dialectic or rhetoric not just mental faculties [*dunameis*] but sciences [*epistêmas*], he unwittingly obscures their nature by the change, reconstructing them as forms of knowledge of certain underlying facts [*pragmatôn*], rather than only of speech [*logôn*]” (1.4.6). Why doesn’t he, though? After all, if there are universal facts about persuasive speech discerned within the art, why would that not constitute an object of knowledge? Why isn’t *logos* itself a subject? Aristotle must demand of an *epistemê* some degree of necessity he finds lacking in the art of rhetoric, yet he himself is arguably establishing rhetoric as achieving such a degree.

5. Deliberative rhetoric (*sumbouleutikon*) is the highest genre: “deliberative subjects are finer and more important to the state than private transactions” (1.1.10). Deliberative rhetoric persuades or dissuades about what general category of thing (1.4.3); why, exactly does it not debate nature or chance? What are its five most important subjects? Notice that he indicates that understanding these subjects requires the *Politics*.

6. All deliberative rhetoric aims at one human goal, happiness or “human flourishing”: *eudaimonia*. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he defines happiness as the good for human beings: “the good of man is the active exercise of his soul’s faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue [*to anthrôpinon agathon psukhês energeia ginetai kat’ aretên*]” (1.7.15). Here, he offers four definitions. What are they, and why does he order them as he does? Why does he not designate *the* form of happiness that is best, but instead allows that “happiness is pretty much one or more of these” (1.5.3)? What are the parts of happiness (1.5.4-18)?

7. What is “a good” (1.6.2), and what are the goods listed here? (Cf. parts of happiness.) Why must the rhetor know these “goods” when fashioning appeals (1.6.18)? What is the relationship between the good and the advantageous/expedient?

Example: If health is a good, then one might, during deliberation, persuade an audience through an enthymeme that not only presumed that health is a good, but also argued



that one's own policy would bring about health, or more health, or more health for the most people; of course, another might presume that health is a good, but dissuade the audience by arguing that that policy would bring about illness, or less health, or less health for more people.

Informal assignment: Take any one of the "issues" in a political campaign or debate—a real, not a fabricated one—and ask what good is being assumed in the exchange. When you discern the good, you will have an "Aha!" moment, during which you begin to become enthymematic.

8. Why must a deliberative rhetor grasp "the forms of constitution"? What are the four forms of constitution? Why should the rhetor remember the "end" of each constitution?
9. Explain the following Aristotelian ethical statement: "characters become clear by deliberate choice, and deliberate choice is directed to an end" (1.8.6). *Êthos* is disclosed by *prohairesis*, and *prohairesis*, by *telos*. Why might Aristotle be right that deliberative rhetoric is the most significant of the three genres?

### Outline, 1.9

## II. The kinds of rhetoric

### A. Introduction

### B. Deliberative rhetoric: persuade/dissuade with respect to the good/bad

### C. Epideictic rhetoric (1.9): praise/blame with respect to the honorable/shameful

1. The honorable/noble/beautiful (1.9.1-2)
2. Virtue as the honorable/noble/beautiful (1.9.3-4)
3. The parts of virtue (1.9.5-13): justice, courage, self-control, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and wisdom.
4. Signs of virtue (1.9.14-27)
5. How to praise and dispraise (1.9.28-34)
6. Relationship between epideictic and deliberative rhetoric (1.9.35-37)
7. Amplification (1.9.38-40)



## 8. Conclusion (1.9.41)

Discussion Questions

1. Just as the good (*agathos*) is the end of deliberative—those goods that constitute happiness—the honorable/noble/beautiful (*to kalon*) is that of epideictic. What is *to kalon*, and why is virtue (*aretê*) beautiful (1.9.3-4)?

2. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*), Aristotle says that virtue is “a settled disposition of the mind determining the choice (*hexis proairetikê*) of actions and emotions, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us, this being determined by principle, that is, as the prudent man (*ho phronimos*) would determine it” (2.6.15). The discussion of the virtues in *EN* is in Books 2-5 (not only 3-4, as Kennedy says). I cannot offer a full discussion here, but supplement the *Rhetoric* by providing the defect and excess of each mentioned. The parts of virtue in the *Rhetoric* (1.9.5-13):

<u>Part of moral virtue: a mean</u>	<u>between vices (defective and excessive)</u>
justice ( <i>dikaiosunê</i> )	injustice (too little) and injustice (too much)
courage ( <i>andria</i> )	cowardice and rashness
self-control ( <i>sôphrosunê</i> )	insensibility and licentiousness
magnificence ( <i>megaloprepeia</i> )	paltriness and vulgarity
magnanimity ( <i>megalopsukhia</i> )	smallness and vanity
liberality ( <i>eleutheriotês</i> )	niggardliness and prodigality
gentleness ( <i>praotês</i> )	spiritlessness and irascibility
<u>Part of intellectual virtue</u>	
prudence ( <i>phronêsis</i> )	imprudence and cunning
wisdom ( <i>sophia</i> )	

When Aristotle takes up the parts of virtue, he re-orders them somewhat (1.9.3-13), but the most significant omissions from the first list (1.9.5), relative to the fuller treatment in *EN*, is that he omits from such treatment both gentleness and wisdom. Why does he omit them?



3. "[I]t is clear that things productive of virtue are necessarily honorable (for they tend to virtue), as well as things that are brought about by virtue; and both the signs and works of virtue [*ta te semeia tês aretês kai ta erga*] are of such sort" (1.9.14). Remember that rhetoric is enthymematic, and enthymemes are based on probabilities and signs (probable or necessary) (1.2.14-18), so to represent a sign or work of a virtue (or a vice) persuades the audience that the praised (or blamed) has it. Are such signs and works likely to be certain or probable?
4. Why should the rhetor show that a virtuous act arose from "deliberate purpose" (1.9.32)?
5. How are deliberative and epideictic rhetorics related (1.9.35-37)?
6. What is amplification, and why is it especially useful in epideictic rhetoric (1.9.38-40)? What is Aristotle's metaphor for amplification (1.9.40)?
7. The *Rhetoric* is often called too elliptical. Notice that Aristotle discusses only praise, not blame (1.9.41). Why?

#### Outline, 1.10-15

## II. The kinds of rhetoric

### A. Introduction

### B. Deliberative

### C. Epideictic

### D. Judicial

1. Introduction (1.10.1-6): outline and definition of wrongdoing
2. Why people act (1.10.7-19): own initiative, chance, necessity (compulsion or nature), habit, reason, anger, or longing
3. The pleasurable things (1.11)
4. Topics of wrongness (1.12)
  - a. Those who wrong (1.12.1-16, 32-35)
  - b. Those who are wronged (1.12.16-31)
5. Topics of justice and equity (1.13)
  - a. Justice and injustice (1.13.1-10)



- b. Equity and inequity (1.13.11-19)
- 6. Common topic of magnitude applied to judicial rhetoric
- 7. Inartistic Proofs specific to judicial rhetoric (1.15):
  - a. laws
  - b. witnesses
  - c. contracts
  - d. tortures
  - e. oaths

### Discussion Questions

1. If deliberative rhetoric persuades toward the good and dissuades from the bad, and epideictic praises the beautiful and blames the ugly, then judicial accuses or defends against injustice in order to achieve justice (*dikaion*).
2. What is wrongdoing (*to adikein*) (1.10.4)? What are the two kinds of law, and why does Aristotle distinguish between them here? Notice that later (1.13.11-12) he distinguishes between two species of unwritten law, one of which appears to fall within cultural reproach, not within judicial proceedings.
3. People do wrong for seven reasons: What are they (1.10.7-19), and what does each mean? Notice that Aristotle says that people reason about goods and desire pleasures (1.10.19) so that the judicial rhetor needs to know the good as well as the just. What is judicial rhetoric's relation to deliberative and to epideictic?
4. What is pleasure (*hêdonê*) (1.11.1), and what are the varieties of pleasure? (Cf. the good and the beautiful as ends.) Notice that people break laws for goods and pleasures, but not (apparently) for beauties.
5. Who are those likely to wrong (1.12.1-16), and those likely to be wronged (16-34)?
6. In 1.13 Aristotle takes up a number of important issues related to law. The first is that there is "in nature a principle of the just and unjust [*phusei koinon dikaion kai adikon*] that all people in some way divine, even if they have no association or commerce with one another" (1.13.2).





What is the relationship between the common/universal/natural law and the specific—written or not?

7. The second is that equity (*epieikes*)—what Kennedy translates as “fairness”—goes beyond the written law (1.13.13-19). Why is equity so important in judicial rhetoric?

8. When Aristotle takes up the topics concerned with inartistic proofs, he appears to defend sophistry: Concerning laws, for example, he says that, if the specific, written law is “contrary to the facts [*enantios . . . tô pragmati*]” (1.15.4), then one should appeal to the specific, unwritten, to the common, or to equity; concerning a specific, written law that “applies to the facts [*pros to pragma*]” (12), though, then one should appeal to it alone. Both instances say they appeal to the “best understanding” of the juror. That sounds like sophistry. Is it?

9. When Aristotle takes up torture, is there any evidence that, while he argues “both sides,” he is actually disposed for or against torture?

10. Why does Aristotle present the kinds of rhetoric and their specific proofs and topics in the order he does—deliberative, epideictic and judicial?

### Outline, 2.1-11

#### I. Introduction (1.1-2)

#### II. Kinds of rhetoric (1.3-15)

#### III. The Proofs

A. Introduction: brief discussion of judgment and the influence upon judgment of both *êthos* (2.1.5-7) and *pathos* (2.1.8-9)

B. The emotions and the emotional propositions (2.2-11)

1. Anger and calm (2.2-3)
2. Friendship and enmity (2.4)
3. Fear and confidence (2.5)
4. Shame and shamelessness (2.6)
5. Kindliness and unkindliness (2.7)
6. Pity (2.8)



- 7. Indignation (2.9)
- 8. Envy (2.10)
- 9. Emulation (2.11)

### Discussion Questions

1. What is emotion, and, since “rhetoric concerns judgment [*krisis*]” (2.1.2), what is the relationship between emotion and judgment (2.1.8)? Earlier, Aristotle argues that emotion distorts judgment, “warping the jury” (1.1.5), but is that true here, as well?
2. What are the three headings under which one might understand any emotion (2.1.9)? *Nota bene*: He usually uses this to organize his examination of each emotion.
3. Aristotle provides fourteen emotions here, five pairs and four individual emotions. Using the anger-calm relation as paradigmatic, what is anger (*orgê*), what is calm (*praotês*), and what is the relationship between the two (2.2-3)?
4. How would the rhetor employ Aristotle’s discussion of an emotion to fashion an emotional proposition?
5. Aristotle indicates at 1.1 that the problem with most rhetorics is that they overemphasize the emotional appeal, distorting the audience’s judgment, yet here for a third to a half of the second book, he teaches his rhetor how to appeal to emotion. I am arguing that he disdains the emotional appeal early in order to indicate to one audience (the sophistic) that they won’t get here what they want, then discusses it for another audience (the rhetorical) so that they can appeal appropriately to emotions. What, though, is the distinction between the rhetorical and the sophistic emotional appeals? How would one tell between the two appeals?



**Aristotle's *Rhetoric*****BOOK TWO**Outline, 2.1, 2.12-17

- I. Introduction (1.1-2)
- II. Kinds of rhetoric (1.3-15)
- III. The Proofs
  - A. Introduction: brief discussion of judgment and the influence upon judgment of both *êthos* (2.1.5-7) and *pathos* (2.1.8-9)
  - B. The emotions and the emotional propositions (2.2-11)
  - C. The character of audiences
    - 1. Effects on character of age: The young (2.12), the old (2.13), and the prime (2.14)
    - 2. Effects on character of chance and birth (2.15), wealth (2.16), power (2.17)
    - 3. Conclusion

Discussion Questions

1. Aristotle says that there are “three reasons why speakers are themselves persuasive . . . [:] practical wisdom [*phronêsis*] and virtue [*aretê*] and good will [*eunoia*]” (2.1.5). He says the first two can be achieved by “analysis of the virtues” (2.1.8), sending us back to 1.9.5, where virtue is “an ability for doing good” [*dunamis eu-ergetikê*]. Notice that here it is a *dunamis*, but in the *EN* it is a *hexis* (2.6.15). “Practical wisdom” or prudence is “a virtue of intelligence whereby people are able to plan well for happiness in regard to the good and bad things” (1.9.13), so prudence appears to refer to the most rhetorically important intellectual virtue and virtue to virtue *per se*, to the moral virtues as a whole. On prudence in the *EN*, see 6.5. Aristotle relates *êthos* to epideictic rhetoric: One must appear to be what one would praise in another; of course, what



must also *be* that, or be a sophist. He then adds “good will and friendliness [*philia*],” which he appears to think of as synonymous. Notice that *philia* is an emotion in 2.4.2: “wanting for someone what one thinks are good things for him, not what one thinks benefits oneself, and wanting what is potentially productive of these things.” What is the relation between and among these three characteristics of persuasive ethos (2.1.6)? Is there need of any other characteristic, or do these exhaust the resources of rhetorical character?

2. When Aristotle takes up character again after his treatment of the emotions, he discusses not the character of the speaker, but that of different audiences. Why? What is the relationship between the character of the speaker and that of his or her audience (2.15.16)?

3. When he lists the kinds of character, he considers “emotion and habits and age of life and fortune” (2.12.1): It turns out that he is interested in the emotions and habits associated with either age (*êlikia*) or fortune (*tukhê*). Why does Aristotle concentrate on age and fortune as the distinguishing characteristics of different characters of audiences?

4. What is the relationship between *pathos* and *êthos*?

#### Outline, 2.18-26

- I. Introduction (1.1-2)
- II. Kinds of rhetoric (1.3-15)
- III. The Proofs
  - A. Introduction (2.1)
  - B. *Pathos*: Emotions and emotional propositions (2.2-11)
  - C. *Ethos*: Characters of audiences and ethical propositions (2.12-17)
  - D. *Logos*: Reasons and logical forms (2.18-26; cf. 1.2)
    - 1. Introduction (2.18)
    - 2. Common topics of possible/impossible, past/future fact, and degree of magnitude/importance (2.19)
    - 3. Proof of example (2.20)
    - 4. Proof of maxim (2.21)



5. Proof of enthymeme (2.22)
6. Common topics of enthymemes (2.23)
7. Real and apparent enthymemes (2.24)
8. Refutation (2.25-26)
9. Transition (2.26)

### Notes

1. In 2.18.1, Aristotle argues that *all* “persuasive speech is directed to a judgment [*hê tôn pithanôn logôn krêsis pros krisin esti*; lit., ‘the judging of persuasive arguments is for judgment’],” whether that is for an audience of many—as in speeches—or an audience of one—as in conversation: “a single individual is no less a judge; for a judge is . . . simply one who must be persuaded.” This confirms that rhetoric is not limited to public rhetoric, and it must presume, I think, that the deliberative, epideictic and judicial genres are *not* limited to speeches. The art of rhetoric is also a rhetoric of what we call private life, that of the household.
2. There are two major areas of Aristotle’s system of rhetorical logic: the example and the enthymeme. The “common *pisteis* are of two kinds: paradigm and enthymeme” (2.20.1). Notice that the common topics (2.23) are framed by a discussion of the enthymeme.
3. One of the most important features of rhetorical logic is “the probable [*to eikos*],” that which resembles and is “on the way to” truth (*hê alêtheia*): probability indicates what is true “for the most.” Since rhetoric addresses the human, and the human is a variable being, even if its ends—the good, the beautiful and the just—are unified and constant (questions, really, but not for now), its means are variable, as well: The rhetor will persuade from the audience’s beliefs (*endoxa*)—emotional, ethical and reasonable; as well, s/he will do so with reasoning with neither the certainty of science, nor the explicit exhaustiveness of dialectic. The premises of rhetoric are true for the most part (2.20.16-25):

One should not speak on the basis of all opinions but of those held by a defined group, for example, either the judges or those whom they respect, and the fact that what is said seems true should be clear to all or most people. And do not



draw the conclusion only from what is necessarily valid, but also from what is true for the most part. (2.22.3)

No policy will certainly lead to the good; no verdict is necessarily just; no praise is absolutely beautiful. Rhetoric, remember, concerns what can be otherwise. Welcome to the human things. One response to that situation is to retreat into the pursuit of certainty; another, to advance toward the human things equipped with probability; yet another, to oscillate between the two. Perhaps that last is why Aristotle allows for both the ethical/political and the philosophical life in the *EN*, not as two lives, one for each kind of person, but two modes for the same person. Households and polities must be founded, and they try—in imperfection and fragility during rhetorical moments about things as they appear to us—to achieve the good, the beautiful and the just. The example is the result of imperfect induction; the enthymeme, of imperfect deduction. The example appears subordinate to the enthymeme.

4. The example (*paradeigma*): “paradigm is similar to induction [*epagôgê*]” (2.20.2). By paradigm or example, Aristotle means analogy—historical or invented—in which the audience is asked to understand the matter at hand by means of a similar situation, both falling under the same category. (Notice that the paradigm chosen stipulates that category: Was the Iraq War WWII or Vietnam?) When one uses an example with an enthymeme, the example functions as a “witness” (cf. witnesses in judicial rhetoric [1.15.13-25]). Although fables are easier (since you just make them up), historical examples are “more useful in deliberation; for future events will generally be like those of the past” (2.20.8), but, of course, the question is, “Which part of the past and understood how?” Notice that, although deliberative rhetoric concerns the future, it draws on analogies from the past.

5. The enthymeme (“the body of persuasion [*sôma tês pisteôs*]”): the enthymeme is “a kind of syllogism [*sullogismos tis*]” (2.22.2). A syllogism is a form of reasoning in which there are two premises (which share a term, but altogether do not exceed three terms) which necessitate a conclusion; if premises are true and arranged in a valid form, the conclusion is true. There are categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms. Let me give an example of the categorical:

Major premise:	All human beings are mortal.
Minor premise:	Socrates is a human being.





Discussion Question

1. What is the relationship between and among *logos*, *êthos*, and *pathos*?





**Aristotle's *Rhetoric*****BOOK THREE**Outline, 3.1-12

- IV. Style (3.1-12)
  - A. Introduction with digression on delivery (3.1)
  - B. The virtue of prose style (3.2)
    - 1. Diction
    - 2. Metaphor
  - C. The vices (3.3)
  - D. Simile (3.4)
  - E. Grammatical correctness (3.5)
  - F. Copiousness and concision (3.6)
  - G. Appropriateness (3.7)
  - H. Prose rhythm (3.8)
  - I. Periodic style (3.9)
  - J. Vividness and metaphor (3.10-11)
  - K. Styles for kinds of rhetoric (3.12)
- V. Arrangement

Discussion Questions

1. In the beginning of Book 3, Aristotle explains that there are “three matters . . . of speech”: *pistis*, *lexis* and *taxis*; “proof,” “style” and “arrangement,” respectively (3.1.1). He dismisses “delivery,” *hupokrisis*, as a “vulgar matter” one attends to “not because it is right but because it is necessary” (3.1.5). And he does not discuss memory.

There are five canons of rhetoric, as outlined in the much later, pseudo-Ciceronian *ad Herennium*:



The speaker, then, should possess the faculties of Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory, and Delivery. Invention [*inventio*] is the devising of matter, true or plausible, that would make the case convincing. Arrangement [*dispositio*] is the ordering and distribution of the matter, making clear the place to which each thing is to be assigned. Style [*elocutio*] is the adaptation of suitable words and sentences to the matter devised. Memory [*memoria*] is the form retention in the mind of the matter, words and arrangement. Delivery [here *pronuntiatio*] is the graceful regulation of voice, countenance, and gesture. (1.2.3)

Aristotle discusses in any detail only the first three. Why does he limit his discussion thus, and why does he order his examination as he does; that is, why is style second, then arrangement third?

2. The two virtues of style are the clear (*saphê*) and the appropriate (*prepon*) (3.2.1). He defends the first by saying that *ho logos* is a *sêmeion*, or “sign,” one assumes of “thought,” *dianoia*, so, if the style obscures the proof, it is not a very good style. Clarity is difficult to achieve stylistically, but its need is obvious. The second virtue of style is more complicated—the appropriate. Using 3.7’s discussion, answer the following question: What makes style appropriate? Of the two virtues, which appears most relevant to which appeal(s)?

3. Aristotle says that “authors should compose without being noticed and should seem to speak not artificially but naturally [*mê dokein legein peplasménôs alla pephukotôs*]” (3.2.4). This is the art-that-hides-art argument, which Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier* will call *sprezzatura*. What is Aristotle’s own metaphor for this? (3.2.5)

4. Aristotle distinguishes between the virtue of poetry and that of prose. What are the two most important resources in prose (3.2.6), and what is Aristotle’s reason for this? (Cf. 1.1’s discussion of dialectic and rhetoric).

5. The rhetor must have grammatical correctness (3.5), and he or she must write sentences or periods with identifiable cola—phrases or clauses, in our understanding (3.9). He distinguishes between the “strung-on” and the “turned-down” styles: The former is the paratactic style of coordination; the latter, the hypotactic one of subordination. With respect to length of cola and periods, he says that they should be “neither stubby nor long” (3.9.5-6). Why, and what are his metaphors for the defect and excess of length?



6. At 3.9.7, Aristotle discusses antithesis, the opposition of parallel cola: "It is contrasted when in each colon opposite lies with opposite[,] or the same is yoked with its opposite" (3.9.7). How is the figure of speech of antithesis enthymematic?
7. In 3.11.5, Aristotle explains that "metaphors should be transferred from things that are related but not obviously so." "Metaphor" comes from *meta-pherein*, "to carry across." The rhetor carries across or transfers what is usually said of something from Category A to something from Category B. The principle of transference is the likeness between the two categories. Use his metaphor from Pericles (3.10.7) to explain how metaphor works. What are the three characteristics of metaphor (3.2.8)? Why are metaphors "like riddles" (3.2.12), why can't metaphor-making be taught (3.2.8), and why does metaphor most bring about learning (3.10.2)? What is the relationship between a metaphor and a simile (3.4.1-2)?
8. "Urbanity" of *asteia* is achieved through metaphor, antithesis and actualization (*energeia*) (3.10.6). Metaphor achieves a "bringing-before-the-eyes [*pro ommatôn poiein*]," and it actualizes the rhetorical potential. What is Aristotle's own metaphor for this (3.11.1-4)? What is actualization or *energeia* in style, and how is it related to the persuasive actualization or *energeia* that can result from the rhetorical potential/faculty or *dunamis* in general (cf. 1.2.1)?
9. What is the relationship between the style of something intended for oral delivery and the style for reading (3.12.2-3), and what does that indicate about the *Rhetoric* itself?
10. How do the different genres of rhetoric influence styles available to the rhetor (3.12)?

#### Outline, 3.13-19

#### V. Arrangement

- A. Introduction: the necessary parts of a speech (3.13)
- B. The introduction (3.14), including meeting prejudice (3.15)
- C. The narration (3.16)
- D. The proof (3.17)
- E. The interrogation (3.18)



## F. The conclusion (3.19)

## VI. Conclusion (3.19.6)

Discussion Questions

1. What are the two necessary parts of the speech (3.13.4), but what are the four he will allow? Why does Aristotle believe that current rhetoricians make “ridiculous divisions” (3.13.3 ff.)?
2. What is an introduction (*prooimion*), and what are Aristotle’s metaphors for it (3.14.1 and 3.14.8)? NB: Aristotle indicates that introductions serve different functions within different genres; that is, the rhetor looks, not to formulae, but to the faculty of seeing *in the particular case* what needs to be done. Why/how does one meet a prejudicial attack [*diabolê*] (3.13)?
3. What is narration (*diêgêsis*)? Since it “should occur in many places and sometimes not at the beginning” (3.16.10), does it properly belong to *pistis*? With what proofs is it most associated? Cf. discussion of narration in the *Poetics* (Ch. 3, 1448a18 ff.). NB: The rhetor, when narrating, is a poet, and, because narration is associated with *êthos*—both of narrator and agent of narrated action—then “narrative voice” is a function of rhetoric. To study narrative is to study rhetoric. This is true of lyric voice and character voice in drama, during both of which the “voice” is always revealing *êthos* by revealing “choice” (3.16.8).
4. *Nota bene*: in speaking of proof or *pistis*, Aristotle is conflating what and where; that is, the proof comes after the introduction and before the conclusion, so the only question of *taxis* is whether to refute-then-prove or prove-then-refute.
5. Interrogation (*erôtêsis*) is part of judicial rhetoric, but could, through the refutation and the rhetorical question, become part of the other two. Aristotle does not discuss the rhetoric of humor much (it will be a much larger portion of Roman and Renaissance rhetorics). But what is Gorgias’ advice, and does Aristotle approve of it (3.18.7)?
6. What are the four things a conclusion (*epilogos*) does (3.19.1)?
7. Organization apparently works “according to nature [*kata phusin*],” for “the growth of bodies [*sômatôn*] comes from the pre-existent” (3.19.2). What is the metaphor here:



organization: rhetoric :: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_? Cf. his discussion of enthymeme (1.1-2 and 2.22-24) and visualization (3.10-11).

8. How does the last sentence of the *Rhetoric* fuse proof, style and organization (3.19.6)? The last colon is made up of four cola: "I have spoken; you have heard; you have it; judge." Of course, the line is an illustration of the epilogue discussed (Aristotle as rhetorician); moreover, it functions as the epilogue of the *Rhetoric* itself. Aristotle has spoken; we have heard; we have his thesis and proofs; now, he tells us, "Judge [*krinate*]." If this is the case, by the way, we have a metaphor for reading: the speaker : listener :: the writer : the reader. If Aristotle is a rhetor and is asking us to judge, what has been his central case, and is it persuasive?



### APPENDIX THREE

#### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aristotle is both a detailed and a comprehensive thinker, so, when in one of his works, you find yourself pointed to others of them. There is a whole thought within which any particular thought resides. In addition to Mortimer Adler's *Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), Timothy A. Robinson's *Aristotle in Outline* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1995) offers an excellent introduction to the whole of Aristotelian thought, including his ruling categories and special vocabulary. I would recommend reading Adler first, then Robinson. After those, I would recommend Jonathan Lear's *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand*. There are two good Aristotle readers: the classic *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1947) and the new *Aristotle, Selections*, ed. Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1995), both of whose introductions are extremely helpful for a sense of the complete Aristotelian project.

On the *Rhetoric*, there is nothing like the treatise itself. There are a number of fine translations available. The W. Rhys Roberts' translation is available with a fine introduction by Eugene Garver (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2006); that translation is also available [online](#). Lane Cooper's *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* offers lucid explanatory notes and a broad range of more familiar illustrations (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1960). The most scholarly English edition is now George A. Kennedy's in his *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York and London: Oxford UP, 2006). Kennedy is a leading historian of rhetoric. For those with some Greek, the J.H. Freese Loeb ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1982) has both Greek and English.



The standard commentary for all three books was for many years Edward Meredith Cope's, ed. by John Edwin Sandys in three volumes (London: Cambridge UP, 1877), now available through Google Books. William M. A. Grimaldi's more recent, two volume commentary (New York: Fordham UP, 1980) is wonderful, but covers only the first two books.

The two best book-length studies are, to my mind, Larry Arnhart's *Aristotle on Political Reasoning: A Commentary on the "Rhetoric"* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 1981) and Eugene Garver's *Aristotle's Rhetoric: An Art of Character* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995). Read Arnhart first, then Garver. While reading Arnhart, a student would find the questions outlining the *Rhetoric* in the following very helpful: Martin Cothran's *Classical Rhetoric: Aristotle's Principles of Persuasion* (Louisville, Kentucky: Memoria P, 2009). The essays gathered in Amèlie Oksenberg Rorty's *Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1996) are especially fine. Arnhart's book is introductory; Garver's and Rorty's are advanced. The best long essay on the *Rhetoric* is William Grimaldi's "Studies in the Philosophy of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*" in *Landmark Essays on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, ed. Richard Leo Enos and Lois Peters Agnew (Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, 1998), 15-159.

On rhetoric generally, see the best modern introduction to the entire art: Edward P.J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors' *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998). For a good history of rhetorical thought and practice, see James Herrick's *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Pearson, 2008) and Raymond D. DiLorenzo's *The Human Word* (on the *Arts of Liberty* [site](#)). For individual topics and terms, see Thomas Sloane's *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) and Gideon Burton's [site](#), *The Forest of Rhetoric*, which is especially helpful for terminology.

On rhetoric in relation to writing, see my *The Office of Assertion: An Art of Rhetoric for the Academic Essay* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2005), Gregory L. Roper's *The*



*Writer's Workshop: Imitating Your Way to Better Writing* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2007), and John T. Gage's *The Shape of Reason: Argumentative Writing in College*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Longman, 2006)—in this order. Mine is more obviously Aristotelian, but Roper's conception of imitation is quite classically rhetorical, and Gage puts the enthymeme front and center in his treatment of writing. On the rhetoric of prose style, see *Prose Style: A Contemporary Guide* by Robert Miles, Marc F. Bertolasco and William Karns, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991). All American writers should have Bryan Garner's *Garner's Modern American Usage*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2009) since his book has replaced the traditional Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, available in a new edition edited by noted linguist David Crystal (New York: Oxford UP, 2003).

