

# A NEW HISTORY OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC

AND

*Greek Rhetoric under  
Christian Emperors*

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AN EXTENSIVE REVISION AND  
ABRIDGMENT OF

*The Art of Persuasion in Greece*

*The Art of Rhetoric in the  
Roman World*

WITH ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION OF  
LATE LATIN RHETORIC

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction: The Nature of Rhetoric

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The English word "rhetoric" is derived from Greek *rhetorike*, which apparently came into use in the circle of Socrates in the fifth century and first appears in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias*, probably written about 385 B.C. but set dramatically a generation earlier. *Rhetorike* in Greek specifically denotes the civic art of public speaking as it developed in deliberative assemblies, law courts, and other formal occasions under constitutional government in the Greek cities, especially the Athenian democracy. As such, it is a specific cultural subset of a more general concept of the power of words and their potential to affect a situation in which they are used or received. Ultimately, what we call "rhetoric" can be traced back to the natural instinct to survive and to control our environment and influence the actions of others in what seems the best interest of ourselves, our families, our social and political groups, and our descendants. This can be done by direct action—force, threats, bribes, for example—or it can be done by the use of "signs," of which the most important are words in speech or writing. Some concept of rhetoric, under different names, can be found in many ancient societies. In Egypt and China, for example, as in Greece, practical handbooks were written to advise the reader how to become an effective speaker.

Classical writers regarded rhetoric as having been "invented," or more accurately, "discovered," in the fifth century B.C. in the democracies of Syracuse and Athens. What they mean by this is that then, for the first time in Europe, attempts were made to describe the features of an effective speech and to teach someone how to plan and deliver one. Under democracies citizens were expected to participate in political debate, and they were expected to speak on their own behalf in courts of law. A theory of public speaking evolved, which developed an extensive technical vocabulary to describe features of argument, arrangement, style, and delivery. In recent years, the term "metarhetoric" has been coined to describe a theory or art of rhetoric in contrast to the practice or application of the art in a particular discourse. The first teachers of rhetoric were the itinerant lecturers of fifth-century Greece known as "sophists," to be discussed in the next chapter; beginning with Isocrates in the fourth century, regular schools of rhetoric became common, and throughout the Greco-Roman period the study of rhetoric was a regular part of the formal education of young men.

Classical rhetoricians—that is, teachers of rhetoric—recognized that many features of their subject could be found in Greek literature before the "invention" of rhetoric as an academic discipline, and they frequently used

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rhetorical concepts in literary criticism Conversely, the teaching of rhetoric in the schools, ostensibly concerned primarily with training in public address, had a significant effect on written composition, and thus on literature All literature is "rhetorical" in the sense that its function is to affect a reader in some way—"to teach and to please," as the Roman poet Horace and many other critics put it—but beginning in the last three centuries

much Greek and Latin literature is overtly rhetorical in that it was composed with a knowledge of classical rhetorical theory and shows its influence.

In the third chapter of his lectures *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle distinguished three "species" of rhetoric. An audience, he says, is either a judge or not a judge of what is being said. By this he means that an audience either is or is not being asked to make a specific decision on an issue presented to it. If the audience is a judge, it is either judging events of the past, as in a court of law, in which case the speech is classified as "judicial," or it is judging what action to take in the future, in which case the speech is "deliberative." If the audience is not being asked to take a specific action, Aristotle calls the speech "epideictic" (i.e., "demonstrative"). What he has in mind are speeches on ceremonial occasions, such as public festivals or funerals, which speeches he characterizes as aimed at praise or blame. These three categories—judicial, deliberative, epideictic—remained fundamental throughout the history of classical rhetoric and are still useful in categorizing forms of discourse today. The concept of epideictic rhetoric, however, needs to be broadened beyond Aristotle's definition. In later antiquity, some rhetoricians included within it all poetry and prose. Perhaps epideictic rhetoric is best regarded as any discourse that does not aim at a specific action but is intended to influence the values and beliefs of the audience.

In its fully developed form, as seen for example in writings of Cicero in the first century and of Quintilian a century later, classical rhetorical teaching consisted of five parts that parallel the act of planning and delivering a speech. Since a knowledge of how to speak in a law court was probably the skill most needed by most students, classical rhetorical theory primarily focused on judicial rhetoric. Rhetoricians, however, usually also gave attention to deliberative and epideictic forms, and from the time of the Roman Empire some treatises describe epideictic forms in considerable detail.

The first of the five parts of classical rhetoric is "invention" (Gk. *heuresis*, Lat. *inventio*). This is concerned with thinking out the subject matter: with identifying the question at issue, which is called the *stasis* of the speech, and the available means of persuading the audience to accept the speaker's position. The means of persuasion include, first, direct evidence, such as witnesses and contracts, which the speaker "uses" but does not "invent"; second, "artistic" means of persuasion, which include presentation of the speaker's character (*ethos*) as trustworthy, logical argument (*logos*) that may

convince the audience, and the *pathos* or emotion that the speaker can awaken in the audience. The artistic means of persuasion utilize "topics" (Gk. *topoi*, Lat. *loci*), which are ethical or political premises on which an argument can be built or are logical strategies, such as arguing from cause to effect. A speaker can also use topics, many of which became traditional, to gain the trust or the interest of the audience. The importance of the case can be stressed, not only for the speaker, but as a precedent for future decisions or for its effect on society.

The second part of classical rhetoric is "arrangement" (Gk. *taxis*, Lat. *dispositio*). "Arrangement" means the organization of a speech into parts, though the order in which arguments are presented, whether the strongest first or toward a climax, is sometimes discussed. Rhetoricians found it difficult to separate discussion of arrangement from discussion of invention and often merged the two into an account of the inventional features of each part of a speech. The basic divisions recognized by the handbooks and applying best to judicial oratory are (1) introduction, or prooemium, (Gk. *proimion*, Lat. *exordium*); (2) narration (Gk. *diegesis*, Lat. *narratio*), the exposition of the background and factual details; (3) proof (Gk. *pistis*, Lat. *probatio*); and (4) conclusion, or epilogue, (Gk. *epilogos*, Lat. *peroratio*). Each part has its own function and characteristics: the prooemium, for example, aims at securing the interest and good will of the audience; the narration should be clear, brief, and persuasive; the proof supplies logical arguments in support of the speaker's position and also seeks to refute objections that might be made against it; the epilogue is often divided into a recapitulation and an emotional appeal to the audience. Some rhetoricians added other parts. At the beginning of the proof often a "proposition" and a "distribution" of headings is discussed. Sometimes there is what is called a "digression" or "excursus," which is not so much a true digression as a discussion of some related matter that may affect the outcome or a description of the moral character, whether favorable or unfavorable, of those involved in the case. Deliberative speeches usually have a prooemium, proof, and epilogue and can often omit a narration. Epideictic speeches have a structure of their own; for example a speech in praise of someone may take up the "topics" of his or her country, ancestry, education, character, and conduct.

Once the speaker has planned "what" to say and the order in which to say it, the third task is to decide "how" to say it, that is how to embody it in words and sentences. This is "style" (Gk. *lexis*, Lat. *elocutio*). It is characteristic of classical rhetoric to regard style as a deliberate process of casting subject into language; the same ideas can be expressed in different words with different effect. There are two parts to style: "diction," or the choice of words; and "composition," the putting of words together into sentences, which includes periodic structure, prose rhythm, and figures of speech. Discussion of style is usually organized around the concept of four "virtues" (*aretai*) that were first defined by Aristotle's student Theophrastus: correctness (of grammar

and usage), clarity, ornamentation, and propriety. Ornamentation includes "tropes," literally "turnings" or substitutions of one term for another as in metaphor; figures of speech, or changes in the sound or arrangement of a sequence of words, such as anaphora or asyndeton; and figures of thought, in which a statement is recast to stress it or achieve audience contact, as in the rhetorical question. Styles were often classified into types or "characters," of which the best known categorization is the threefold division into "grand," "middle," and "plain."

Invention, arrangement, and style are the three most important parts of classical rhetoric, applicable equally to public speaking and written composition. The earliest recognition of them as three separate actions seems to be in Isocrates' speech *Against the Sophists* (section 16), written about 390 B.C. Aristotle discusses all three subjects in his lectures *On Rhetoric*, which in its present form dates from around 335 B.C., but in the first chapter of book 3 he suggests that a fourth part might be added, "delivery." By the first century B.C. in fact two more parts had been added. Fourth in the usual sequence comes "memory." Once a speech was planned and written out, the student of rhetoric was expected to memorize it word for word for oral delivery. A mnemonic system of backgrounds and images had been developed for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> The best ancient discussion is found in the third book of the *Rhetoric* for *Herennius*, written in the early first century B.C. Fifth and last came "delivery," as Aristotle had proposed. This is divided into control of the voice—volume, pitch, and so on—and gesture, which includes effective control of the eyes and limbs. The best ancient discussion is found in Quintilian's *Education of the Orator*, book 11.

Classical metarhetoric, as set out in Greek and Latin handbooks from the fourth century B.C. to the end of antiquity, was a standard body of knowledge. Once fully developed, it remained unaltered in its essential features, though constantly revised and often made more detailed by teachers who sought some originality. Was the teaching of rhetoric ever called into question in antiquity? The answer is "yes." Just as today "rhetoric" in popular usage can have negative connotations as deceitful or empty, so it was viewed with hostility or suspicion by some in classical times.

The earliest context in which this criticism explicitly appears is the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, a comic play originally staged in 423 B.C. at the height of the activity of the older sophists.<sup>1</sup> The play includes a debate (lines

The beginnings of the mnemonic system were traditionally attributed to the sixth-century Greek poet Simonides (Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.360); that some techniques were known in the fifth century can be seen in *Dissoi Logoi* 9 (Sprague, *The Older Sophists*, 292-93).

The text we have is a revision by the poet made a few years later.

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889-1104) between "Just Speech" and "Injust Speech," in which injustice acknowledges itself the "weaker" but triumphs by verbal trickery over justice, the "stronger." In Plato's *Apology* (18b8) Socrates, imagined as

speaking at his trial in 399 B.C., says he is accused of "making the weaker argument the stronger." Aristotle (*On Rhetoric* 2.24.11) identifies "making the weaker cause the stronger" with the use of argument from probability as described in fifth-century rhetorical handbooks and says the phrase was used against the sophist Protagoras. The phrase reflects the frustration of those unskilled in the new techniques of debate when traditional ideas of morality and truth were undermined by verbal argument and paradoxical views that seemed wrong to common sense were seemingly demonstrated. Examples might include not only the comic debate in the *Clouds* but Zeno's argument that Achilles could never overtake a tortoise in a race or the argument attributed to Lysias in Plato's *Phaedrus* that it is better to accept as lover a person who does not love you than one who does. To make the weaker argument the stronger can certainly be open to moral objections, but historically the discovery in the fifth century of the possibilities of logical argument, and thus the willingness to ask new questions, proved fundamental to scientific progress and social and political change. That the earth is round and circles the sun had long seemed absurd to most people, and to argue that blacks should be equal to whites had long seemed to many the "weaker cause."

The most important and most influential of the critics of rhetoric was Plato, especially in the dialogue *Gorgias*.<sup>3</sup> The word *rhetor* in Greek means a public speaker, but it often had the more dubious connotation of a "politician"; the abstraction *rhetorike* could then be represented as the morally dubious technique of contemporary politicians in contrast to the nobler study of philosophy with its basis in "truth." Socrates in the *Gorgias* certainly criticizes fifth-century political orators as having corrupted the people, but his criticism is more immediately addressed to Gorgias and Gorgias' follower Polus for teaching a form of flattery and for their ignorance of the subjects on which they spoke. Gorgias was one of several traveling lecturers, called "sophists" (literally "wise men"), who sought to teach techniques of success in civic life, including what came to be called rhetoric. The sophists as a group were philosophical relativists, skeptical about the possibility of knowledge of universal truth. The earliest of the sophists, Protagoras, had begun a treatise with the famous words "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are in so far as they are and of things that are not in so far as they

Schiappa, in "Did Plato Coin Rhetorike?" has argued that Plato actually coined the word *rhetorike*, which does not occur in any earlier text, but the dramatic date of the dialogue is in the late fifth century, and both Gorgias and Polus are represented there as accepting the term without objection.

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are not." One of the surviving works of Gorgias, entitled *On Nature*, argues in outline form that nothing exists, that if it does exist it cannot be known, and that if it could be known knowledge could not be communicated by one person to another.<sup>1</sup> The consequence of this position is that the value of opinions about what is true, right, or just should be judged from the circumstances as understood by individuals at a particular time; courses of practical action can best be determined by considering the advantages of the alternatives. This opens up a place for rhetoric in debate and a need to argue hot h sides of an issue as persuasively as possible, but it also opens up a place for skill in -making the weaker the stronger cause.<sup>2</sup> Socrates in the *Gorgias*, and elsewhere in Plato's dialogues, contends that there is such a thing as absolute truth and universal principles of right and wrong. In the *Gorgias* (463a-b) he describes rhetoric as a form of flattery and a sham counterpart of justice. But in a later dialogue, *Phaedrus*, Socrates is made to describe a valid, philosophical rhetoric that would be based on a knowledge of truth, of logical method, and of the psychology of the audience. As we shall see, Isocrates and others attempted to answer Plato's objections, and Aristotle eventually provided the best solution to the argument by showing that rhetoric, like dialectic, is a morally neutral art, which can argue both sides of an issue but which draws on knowledge from other disciplines in the interests of determining what is advantageous, just, or honorable and employs a distinct method of its own.

Although criticisms of rhetoric were occasionally voiced by others in the fourth and third centuries B.C., the utility of the study of rhetoric for civic life and for writing became generally recognized. The question was, however, reopened in the middle of the second century B.C. by teachers of philosophy, who seem to have been threatened by the number of students flocking to rhetoricians for advanced study rather than to the philosophical schools, traditionally the source of higher education in antiquity. These students included Romans interested in acquiring a knowledge of Greek culture. Cicero (*On the Orator* 1.46) says that the philosophers in Athens in the late second century B.C. "all with one voice drove the orator from the government of states, excluded him from all learning and knowledge of greater things, and pushed down and locked him up in courts of justice and insignificant disputes as though in a mill." Cicero's dialogue *On the Orator*, written in the middle of the first century B.C., is an eloquent and thoughtful response to criticisms of rhetoric, which are blamed in the first instance on Socrates' division between tongue and brain (3.61). In books I and 3, Crassus, the character in the dialogue with whom Cicero clearly most identified,

<sup>1</sup>For discussion of this statement as well as "making the weaker the strong cause" as applied to Protagoras, see Schiappa, *Protagoras and Logos*, 103-33.

<sup>2</sup>For English translations of the surviving writings of the sophists, see Sprague, *The Older Sophists*

describes an ideal orator trained in rhetoric, philosophy, law, history, and all knowledge. Such an orator should be morally good and an active participant in public life. The more practical process of rhetoric is substituted for the more theoretical goal of philosophy, but with a deeper basis of knowledge than could be derived solely from the study of rhetorical rules.

Hostility between rhetoric and philosophy existed throughout the period of the Roman Empire. The problem was acerbated by Stoic and Cynic philosophers who criticized the emperors as autocratic. The emperor Domitian, toward the end of the first century after Christ, expelled philosophers from Rome, and the rhetorician Quintilian, who enjoyed Domitian's patronage, scorned them as antisocial dissidents. The emperor Marcus Aurelius in the second century had studied with the rhetorician Fronto but increasingly turned to the attractions of philosophy. That Plato's criticisms of rhetoric were still regarded as forceful is seen in the fact that Aelius Aristides in the mid-second century composed an extended reply to Plato entitled *In Defense of Oratory*. Later in the century the skeptical philosopher Sextus Empiricus in *Against the Rhetoricians* dismissed the study of rhetoric as a waste of time. Rhetoric was a problem for early Christian thinkers. Saint Paul in first Corinthians (2:4) rejects the "wisdom of this world": "My speech and my proclamation are not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, in order that your faith may not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." Radical early Christians often scorned rhetoric as worldly, but Paul was, within his own faith, a skilled rhetorician, and the Apologists of the second century found traditional rhetorical skills useful in presenting the new faith to larger audiences. With the toleration and official establishment of Christianity in the fourth century, Christian leaders show a greater openness to the study of rhetoric. Saint Augustine began his career as a teacher of rhetoric; though he abandoned that on his conversion, he eventually worked out a synthesis of the place of rhetoric in interpretation of the Bible and in preaching as described in *On Christian Doctrine*.

Some modern readers sympathize with philosophy in its dispute with rhetoric. In the former discipline they see devotion to truth, intellectual honesty, depth of perception, consistency, and sincerity; in the later, verbal dexterity, empty pomposity, triviality, moral ambivalence, and a desire to achieve self-interest by any means. The picture is not quite so clear cut. Rhetorical theorists such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian are not unscrupulous tricksters with words. Furthermore, rhetoric was at times a greater liberalizing force in ancient intellectual life than was philosophy, which tended to become dogmatic. The basic principle of humane law—that anyone, however clear the evidence on the other side seems to be, has a right to present a case in the best light possible—is an inheritance from Greek justice and Roman law. Political debaters under democracy in Greece and

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republican government in Rome recognized the need to entertain opposing views when expressed with rhetorical effectiveness. Finally, linguistic, philosophical, and critical studies in the twentieth century have pointed to the conclusion that there is no such a thing as nonrhetorical discourse; even ostensibly objective scientific and philosophical writing contains social and political assumptions that may be questioned and uses rhetorical techniques that carry ethical and emotional connotations to argue its case. In the first chapter of *On Rhetoric* Aristotle presents reasons for concluding that rhetoric is useful; we can go beyond that to say it is necessary and inevitable. In speaking, writing, hearing, and reading, we are better off if we understand the process.

# Aristotle: Art of Rhetoric

(Book 1, Chapters 1-3)

Translated by W. Rhys Roberts

## BOOK ONE

### I

**R**HETORIC is the counterpart of Dialectic. Both alike are concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all men and belong to no definite science. Accordingly all men make use, more or less, of both; for to a certain extent all men attempt to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others. Ordinary people do this either at random or through practice and from acquired habit. Both ways being possible, the subject can plainly be handled systematically, for it is possible to inquire the reason why some speakers succeed through practice and others spontaneously; and every one will at once agree that such an inquiry is the function of an art.

Now, the framers of the current treatises on rhetoric have constructed but a small portion of that art. The modes of persuasion are the only true constituents of the art: everything else is merely accessory. These writers, however, say nothing about enthymemes, which are the substance of rhetorical persuasion, but deal mainly with non-essentials. The arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing to do with the essential facts, but is merely a personal appeal to the man who is judging the case. Consequently if the rules for trials which are now laid down some states-especially in well-governed states-were applied everywhere, such people would have nothing to say. All men, no doubt, think that the laws should prescribe such rules, but some, as in the court of Areopagus, give practical effect to their thoughts and forbid talk about non-essentials. This is sound law and custom. It is not right to pervert the judge by moving him to anger or envy or pity-one might as well warp a carpenter's rule before using it.

Again, a litigant has clearly nothing to do but to show that the alleged fact is so or is not so, that it has or has not happened. As to whether a thing is important or unimportant, just or unjust, the judge must surely refuse to take his instructions from the litigants: he must decide for himself all such points as the law-giver has not already defined for him.

Now, it is of great moment that well-drawn laws should themselves define all the points they possibly can and leave as few as may be to the decision of the judges; and this for several reasons. First, to find one man, or a few men, who are sensible persons and capable of legislating and administering justice is easier than to find a large number. Next, laws are made after long consideration, whereas decisions in the courts are given at short notice, which makes it hard for those who try the case to satisfy the claims of justice and expediency. The weightiest reason of all is that the decision of the lawgiver is not particular but prospective and general, whereas members of the assembly and the jury find it their duty to decide on definite cases brought before them. They will often have allowed themselves to be so much influenced by feelings of friendship or hatred or self-interest that they lose any clear vision of the truth and have their judgment obscured by considerations of personal pleasure or pain. In general, then, the judge should, we say, be allowed to decide as few things as possible. But questions as to whether something has happened or has not happened, will be or will not be, is or is not, must of necessity be left to the judge, since the lawgiver cannot foresee them. If this is so, it is evident that any one who lays down rules about other matters, such as what must be the contents of the 'introduction' or the 'narration' or any of the other divisions of a speech, is theorizing about non-essentials as if they belonged to the art. The only

question with which these writers here deal is how to put the judge into a given frame of mind. About the orator's proper modes of persuasion they have nothing to tell us; nothing, that is, about how to gain skill in enthymemes.

Hence it comes that, although the same systematic principles apply to political as to forensic oratory, and although the former is a nobler business, and fitter for a citizen, than that which concerns the relations of private individuals, these authors say nothing about political oratory, but try, one and all, to write treatises on the way to plead in court. The reason for this is that in political oratory there is less inducement to talk about nonessentials. Political oratory is less given to unscrupulous practices than forensic, because it treats of wider issues. In a political debate the man who is forming a judgement is making a decision about his own vital interests. There is no need, therefore, to prove anything except that the facts are what the supporter of a measure maintains they are. In forensic oratory this is not enough; to conciliate the listener is what pays here. It is other people's affairs that are to be decided, so that the judges, intent on their own satisfaction and listening with partiality, surrender themselves to the disputants instead of judging between them. Hence in many places, as we have said already, irrelevant speaking is forbidden in the law-courts: in the public assembly those who have to form a judgment are themselves well able to guard against that.

It is clear, then, that rhetorical study, in its strict sense, is concerned with the modes of persuasion. Persuasion is clearly a sort of demonstration, since we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated. The orator's demonstration is an enthymeme, and this is, in general, the most effective of the modes of persuasion. The enthymeme is a sort of syllogism, and the consideration of syllogisms of all kinds, without distinction, is the business of dialectic, either of dialectic as a whole or of one of its branches. It follows plainly, therefore, that he who is best able to see how and from what elements

a syllogism is produced will also be best skilled in the enthymeme, when he has further learnt what its subject-matter is and in what respects it differs from the syllogism of strict logic. The true and the approximately true are apprehended by the same faculty; it may also be noted that men have a sufficient natural instinct for what is true, and usually do arrive at the truth. Hence the man who makes a good guess at truth is likely to make a good guess at probabilities.

It has now been shown that the ordinary writers on rhetoric treat of non-essentials; it has also been shown why they have inclined more towards the forensic branch of oratory.

Rhetoric is useful (1) because things that are true and things that are just have a natural tendency to prevail over their opposites, so that if the decisions of judges are not what they ought to be, the defeat must be due to the speakers themselves, and they must be blamed accordingly. Moreover, (2) before some audiences not even the possession of the exactest knowledge will make it easy for what we say to produce conviction. For argument based on knowledge implies instruction, and there are people whom one cannot instruct. Here, then, we must use, as our modes of persuasion and argument, notions possessed by everybody, as we observed in the Topics when dealing with the way to handle a popular audience. Further, (3) we must be able to employ persuasion, just as strict reasoning can be employed, on opposite sides of a question, not in order that we may in practice employ it in both ways (for we must not make people believe what is wrong), but in order that we may see clearly what the facts are, and that, if another man argues unfairly, we on our part may be able to confute him. No other of the arts draws opposite conclusions: dialectic and rhetoric alone do this. Both these arts draw opposite conclusions impartially. Nevertheless, the underlying facts do not lend themselves equally well to the contrary views. No; things that are true and things that are better are, by their nature, practically always easier to prove and easier to believe in. Again, (4)

it is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with speech and reason, when the use of rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs. 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.

It is clear, then, that rhetoric is not bound up with a single definite class of subjects, but is as universal as dialectic; it is clear, also, that it is useful. It is clear, further, that its function is not simply to succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow. In this it resembles all other arts. For example, it is not the function of medicine simply to make a man quite healthy, but to put him as far as may be on the road to health; it is possible to give excellent treatment even to those who can never enjoy sound health. Furthermore, it is plain that it is the function of one and the same art to discern the real and the apparent means of persuasion, just as it is the function of dialectic to discern the real and the apparent syllogism. What makes a man a 'sophist' is not his faculty, but his moral purpose. In rhetoric, however, the term 'rhetorician' may describe either the speaker's knowledge of the art, or his moral purpose. In dialectic it is different: a man is a 'sophist' because he has a certain kind of moral purpose, a 'dialectician' in respect, not of his moral purpose, but of his faculty.

Let us now try to give some account of the systematic principles of Rhetoric itself of the right method and means of succeeding in the object we set before us. We must make as it were a fresh start, and before going further define what rhetoric is.

## II

Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. This is not a function of any other art. Every other art can instruct or persuade about its own particular subject-matter; for instance, medicine about what is healthy and unhealthy, geometry about the properties of magnitudes, arithmetic about numbers, and the same is true of the other arts and sciences. But rhetoric we look upon as the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us; and that is why we say that, in its technical character, it is not concerned with any special or definite class of subjects.

Of the modes of persuasion some belong strictly to the art of rhetoric and some do not. By the latter I mean such things as are not supplied by the speaker but are there at the outset—witnesses, evidence given under torture, written contracts, and so on. By the former I mean such as we can ourselves construct by means of the principles of rhetoric. The one kind has merely to be used, the other has to be invented.

Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself. Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others: this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided. This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak. It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses. Secondly,



persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgments when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile. It is towards producing these effects, as we maintain, that present-day writers on rhetoric direct the whole of their efforts. This subject shall be treated in detail when we come to speak of the emotions. Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question.

There are, then, these three means of effecting persuasion. The man who is to be in command of them must, it is clear, be able (1) to reason logically, (2) to understand human character and goodness in their various forms, and (3) to understand the emotions—that is, to name them and describe them, to know their causes and the way in which they are excited. It thus appears that rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and also of ethical studies. Ethical studies may fairly be called political; and for this reason rhetoric masquerades as political science, and the professors of it as political experts—sometimes from want of education, sometimes from ostentation, sometimes owing to other human failings. As a matter of fact, it is a branch of dialectic and similar to it, as we said at the outset. Neither rhetoric nor dialectic is the scientific study of any one separate subject: both are faculties for providing arguments. This is perhaps a sufficient account of their scope and of how they are related to each other.

With regard to the persuasion achieved by proof or apparent proof: just as in dialectic there is induction on the one hand and syllogism or apparent syllogism on the other, so it is in rhetoric. The example is an induction, the enthymeme is a syllogism, and the apparent enthymeme is an apparent syllogism. I call the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism, and the example a rhetorical induction. Every one who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way. And since every one who proves anything at all is bound to use either

syllogisms or inductions (and this is clear to us from the *Analytics*), it must follow that enthymemes are syllogisms and examples are inductions. The difference between example and enthymeme is made plain by the passages in the *Topics* where induction and syllogism have already been discussed. When we base the proof of a proposition on a number of similar cases, this is induction in dialectic, example in rhetoric; when it is shown that, certain propositions being true, a further and quite distinct proposition must also be true in consequence, whether invariably or usually, this is called syllogism in dialectic, enthymeme in rhetoric. It is plain also that each of these types of oratory has its advantages. Types of oratory, I say: for what has been said in the *Methodics* applies equally well here; in some oratorical styles examples prevail, in others enthymemes; and in like manner, some orators are better at the former and some at the latter. Speeches that rely on examples are as persuasive as the other kind, but those which rely on enthymemes excite the louder applause. The sources of examples and enthymemes, and their proper uses, we will discuss later. Our next step is to define the processes themselves more clearly.

A statement is persuasive and credible either because it is directly self-evident or because it appears to be proved from other statements that are so. In either case it is persuasive because there is somebody whom it persuades. But none of the arts theorize about individual cases. Medicine, for instance, does not theorize about what will help to cure Socrates or Callias, but only about what will help to cure any or all of a given class of patients: this alone is business: individual cases are so infinitely various that no systematic knowledge of them is possible. In the same way the theory of rhetoric is concerned not with what seems probable to a given individual like Socrates or Hippias, but with what seems probable to men of a given type; and this is true of dialectic also. Dialectic does not construct its syllogisms out of any haphazard materials, such as the fancies of crazy people, but out of materials that call for

discussion; and rhetoric, too, draws upon the regular subjects of debate. 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.

It is possible to form syllogisms and draw conclusions from the results of previous syllogisms; or, on the other hand, from premises which have not been thus proved, and at the same time are so little accepted that they call for proof. Reasonings of the former kind will necessarily be hard to follow owing to their length, for we assume an audience of untrained thinkers; those of the latter kind will fail to win assent, because they are based on premises that are not generally admitted or believed.

The enthymeme and the example must, then, deal with what is in the main contingent, the example being an induction, and the enthymeme a syllogism, about such matters. The enthymeme must consist of few propositions, fewer often than those which make up the normal syllogism. For if any of these propositions is a familiar fact, there is no need even to mention it; the hearer adds it himself. Thus, to show that Dorieus has been victor in a contest for which the prize is a crown, it is enough to say 'For he has been victor in the Olympic games,' without adding 'And in the Olympic games the prize is a crown,' a fact which everybody knows.

There are few facts of the 'necessary' type that can form the basis of rhetorical syllogisms. Most of the things about which we make decisions, and into which therefore we inquire, present us with alternative possibilities. For it is about our actions that we deliberate and inquire, and all our actions have a contingent character; hardly any of them are determined by necessity. Again, conclusions that state what is merely usual

or possible must be drawn from premises that do the same, just as 'necessary' conclusions must be drawn from 'necessary' premises; this too is clear to us from the Analytics. It is evident, therefore, that the propositions forming the basis of enthymemes, though some of them may be 'necessary,' will most of them be only usually true. Now the materials of enthymemes are Probabilities and Signs, which we can see must correspond respectively with the propositions that are generally and those that are necessarily true. A Probability is a thing that usually happens; not, however, as some definitions would suggest, anything whatever that usually happens, but only if it belongs to the class of the 'contingent' or 'variable.' It bears the same relation to that in respect of which it is probable as the universal bears to the particular. Of Signs, one kind bears the same relation to the statement it supports as the particular bears to the universal, the other the same as the universal bears to the particular. The infallible kind is a 'complete proof' (*tekmerhiou*); the fallible kind has no specific name. By infallible signs I mean those on which syllogisms proper may be based: and this shows us why this kind of Sign is called 'complete proof': when people think that what they have said cannot be refuted, they then think that they are bringing forward a 'complete proof,' meaning that the matter has now been demonstrated and completed (*peperhasmeuou*); for the word 'perhas' has the same meaning (of 'end' or 'boundary') as the word 'tekmarh' in the ancient tongue. Now the one kind of Sign (that which bears to the proposition it supports the relation of particular to universal) may be illustrated thus. Suppose it were said, 'The fact that Socrates was wise and just is a sign that the wise are just.' Here we certainly have a Sign; but even though the proposition be true, the argument is refutable, since it does not form a syllogism. Suppose, on the other hand, it were said, 'The fact that he has a fever is a sign that he is ill,' or, 'The fact that she is giving milk is a sign that she has lately borne a child.' Here we have the

infallible kind of Sign, the only kind that constitutes a complete proof, since it is the only kind that, if the particular statement is true, is irrefutable. The other kind of Sign, that which bears to the proposition it supports the relation of universal to particular, might be illustrated by saying, 'The fact that he breathes fast is a sign that he has a fever.' This argument also is refutable, even if the statement about the fast breathing be true, since a man may breathe hard without having a fever.

It has, then, been stated above what is the nature of a Probability, of a Sign, and of a complete proof, and what are the differences between them. In the Analytics a more explicit description has been given of these points; it is there shown why some of these reasonings can be put into syllogisms and some cannot.

The 'example' has already been described as one kind of induction; and the special nature of the subject-matter that distinguishes it from the other kinds has also been stated above. Its relation to the proposition it supports is not that of part to whole, nor whole to part, nor whole to whole, but of part to part, or like to like. When two statements are of the same order, but one is more familiar than the other, the former is an 'example.' The argument may, for instance, be that Dionysius, in asking as he does for a bodyguard, is scheming to make himself a despot. For in the past Peisistratus kept asking for a bodyguard in order to carry out such a scheme, and did make himself a despot as soon as he got it; and so did Theagenes at Megara; and in the same way all other instances known to the speaker are made into examples, in order to show what is not yet known, that Dionysius has the same purpose in making the same request: all these being instances of the one general principle, that a man who asks for a bodyguard is scheming to make himself a despot. We have now described the sources of those means of persuasion which are popularly supposed to be demonstrative.

There is an important distinction between two sorts of enthymemes that has been wholly overlooked by almost

everybody-one that also subsists between the syllogisms treated of in dialectic. One sort of enthymeme really belongs to rhetoric, as one sort of syllogism really belongs to dialectic; but the other sort really belongs to other arts and faculties, whether to those we already exercise or to those we have not yet acquired. Missing this distinction, people fail to notice that the more correctly they handle their particular subject the further they are getting away from pure rhetoric or dialectic. This statement will be clearer if expressed more fully. I mean that the proper subjects of dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms are the things with which we say the regular or universal Lines of Argument are concerned, that is to say those lines of argument that apply equally to questions of right conduct, natural science, politics, and many other things that have nothing to do with one another. Take, for instance, the line of argument concerned with 'the more or less.' On this line of argument it is equally easy to base a syllogism or enthymeme about any of what nevertheless are essentially disconnected subjects-right conduct, natural science, or anything else whatever. But there are also those special Lines of Argument which are based on such propositions as apply only to particular groups or classes of things. Thus there are propositions about natural science on which it is impossible to base any enthymeme or syllogism about ethics, and other propositions about ethics on which nothing can be based about natural science. The same principle applies throughout. The general Lines of Argument have no special subject-matter, and therefore will not increase our understanding of any particular class of things. On the other hand, the better the selection one makes of propositions suitable for special Lines of Argument, the nearer one comes, unconsciously, to setting up a science that is distinct from dialectic and rhetoric. One may succeed in stating the required principles, but one's science will be no longer dialectic or rhetoric, but the science to which the principles thus discovered belong. Most enthymemes are in fact based upon these

particular or special Lines of Argument; comparatively few on the common or general kind. As in the therefore, so in this work, we must distinguish, in dealing with enthymemes, the special and the general Lines of Argument on which they are to be founded. By special Lines of Argument I mean the propositions peculiar to each several class of things, by general those common to all classes alike. We may begin with the special Lines of Argument. But, first of all, let us classify rhetoric into its varieties. Having distinguished these we may deal with them one by one, and try to discover the elements of which each is composed, and the propositions each must employ.

### III

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. The hearer must be either a judge, with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides about future events, a jurymen about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator's skill are observers. From this it follows that there are three divisions of oratory--(1) political, (2) forensic, and (3) the ceremonial oratory of display.

Political speaking urges us either to do or not to do something: one of these two courses is always taken by private counselors, as well as by men who address public assemblies. Forensic speaking either attacks or defends somebody: one or other of these two things must always be done by the parties in a case. The ceremonial oratory of display either praises or censures somebody. These three kinds of rhetoric refer to three different kinds of time. The political orator is concerned with the future: it is about things to be done hereafter that he advises, for or against. The party in a case at law is concerned with the past; one man accuses the other, and the other defends himself, with reference to things already

done. The ceremonial orator is, properly speaking, concerned with the present, since all men praise or blame in view of the state of things existing at the time, though they often find it useful also to recall the past and to make guesses at the future.

Rhetoric has three distinct ends in view, one for each of its three kinds. The political orator aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action; if he urges its acceptance, he does so on the ground that it will do good; if he urges its rejection, he does so on the ground that it will do harm; and all other points, such as whether the proposal is just or unjust, honorable or dishonorable, he brings in as subsidiary and relative to this main consideration. Parties in a law-case aim at establishing the justice or injustice of some action, and they too bring in all other points as subsidiary and relative to this one. Those who praise or attack a man aim at proving him worthy of honor or the reverse, and they too treat all other considerations with reference to this one.

That the three kinds of rhetoric do aim respectively at the three ends we have mentioned is shown by the fact that speakers will sometimes not try to establish anything else. Thus, the litigant will sometimes not deny that a thing has happened or that he has done harm. But that he is guilty of injustice he will never admit; otherwise there would be no need of a trial. So too, political orators often make any concession short of admitting that they are recommending their hearers to take an inexpedient course or not to take an expedient one. The question whether it is not unjust for a city to enslave its innocent neighbors often does not trouble them at all. In like manner those who praise or censure a man do not consider whether his acts have been expedient or not, but often make it a ground of actual praise that he has neglected his own interest to do what was honorable. Thus, they praise Achilles because he championed his fallen friend Patroclus, though he knew that this meant death, and that otherwise he need not die: yet while to die thus was the nobler thing for

him to do, the expedient thing was to live on.

It is evident from what has been said that it is these three subjects, more than any others, about which the orator must be able to have propositions at his command. Now the propositions of Rhetoric are Complete Proofs, Probabilities, and Signs. Every kind of syllogism is composed of propositions, and the enthymeme is a particular kind of syllogism composed of the aforesaid propositions.

Since only possible actions, and not impossible ones, can ever have been done in the past or the present, and since things which have not occurred, or will not occur, also cannot have been done or be going to be done, it is necessary for the political, the forensic, and the ceremonial speaker alike to be able to have at their command propositions about the possible and the impossible, and about whether a thing has or has not occurred, will or will not occur. Further, all men, in giving praise or blame, in urging us to accept or reject proposals for action, in accusing others or defending themselves, attempt not only to prove the points mentioned but also to show that the good or the harm, the honor or disgrace, the justice or injustice, is great or small, either absolutely or relatively; and therefore it is plain that we must also have at our command propositions about greatness or smallness and the greater or the lesser-propositions both universal and particular. Thus, we must be able to say which is the greater or lesser good, the greater or lesser act of justice or injustice; and so on.

Such, then, are the subjects regarding which we are inevitably bound to master the propositions relevant to them. We must now discuss each particular class of these subjects in turn, namely those dealt with in political, in ceremonial, and lastly in legal, oratory.