COM 31600: Prin. Of Persuasion

Chapter 3: Traditional, Artistic, and Humanistic Approaches to persuasion

One method of persuasion does not fit all situations. You will have to face **segmented audiences**.

Aristotle conceived of three contexts for persuasion and discourse

* **Forensic discourse**
  + Considers allegations of past wrongdoing in the legal arena
* **Epideictic discourse**
  + Ceremonial situations focusing on praise or blame
* **Deliberative discourse**
  + Dealt with future policy, like legislative and political ideas.

Context requires certain rituals or actions to be taken, specific levels of formality. These requirements will vary between cultures.

**Artistic Proofs** are appeals that a speaker can create and mold to their needs. Three major types defined by Aristotle.

* Ethos
  + Credibility of speaker goes even as far as the speakers appearance, behavior, and personality.
* Pathos
  + The emotions that a speaker attempts to employ or instill within an audience.
* Logos
  + Appeals using logic or the rational sense of a person. Relies on use of evidence or in some cases **enthymemes** or **syllogism**

**Enthymemes (Syllogism)** are a major premise which is then associated with some minor premise to build a conclusion.

Marketer’s attempt to build common ground with a consumer for persuasive purposes. Aristotle used the term **topoi** as a reference to places or topics of arguments or persuasion that would establish common ground.

* Arguments as to degree: Will A be more worthy than B?
* Past Fact: Has some event truly happened?
* Future likelihood: What is the chance something will happen?

Language used is instrumental in persuasion. Aristotle promoted emotional expressions to inspire feelings that can be shared between you and the audience. This allows the speaker to use more emotionally charged language.

**Metaphors** are phrases which attempt to draw some similarity or analogy between two objects. Aristotle noted their importance, but they can be useful for intensifying your own strengths or the opponent’s weaknesses.

These proofs and phrases or structures are not the entirety of persuasion. To some extent persuasion is a living thing.

Plato highlighted a **dialogue** or **dialectic method** for pursuing truth. Dialogues simply being a discussion between people. A dialogue normally involves a question which sets the ground rules, this is followed by all parties answering the question and then cross-examining the other.

Plato disliked rhetoric, he believed it to be a tool for deception or flattery. He depicted his ideal speaker in a dialogue between his teacher, Socrates, and Phaedrus. The ideal speaker is one who seeks the best interests of the listeners rather than ones own interests.

Plato consistently presents ideas of Truth, the capital T is important, where absolutes and certainties exist but are beyond our abilities to see at the moment.

Robert Scott objects to truth being objective, instead he suggests that truth isn’t certain but rhetoric is a tool for which to discovery a part of the human life in which truth has it’s own form. This is considered an **epistemic** approach, one concerned with a way of coming to know about things.

Truth is non-static, but is can be stable at some times.

Discoveries come during dialogues, in which our views are shifted, these are epiphanies or eureka moments.

Existential thinks believe that knowing is not merely holding facts but also living and doing.

**Persuasion is constant discovery**

**Quintilian** focused on the character of the speaker, rather than the truth of what they say.

Kenneth Burke developed the idea of the **dramatistic approach**. This approach focused on the act and performance behind persuasion. A notable feature of this approach is the **pentad** or the parts of the persuasive drama.

The pentad includes

* The act, the description of what takes place
* The scene, where the persuasion takes place
* The agent, the person who performs the act
* The agency, the means of accomplishing the act
* The purpose

This is not merely a tool.

Walter Fisher created the Narrative approach, challenging the **rational world paradigm** which postulated that humans are primarily reasoning beings, basing their beliefs and arguments on reasoning and evidence.

Instead, Fisher proposed that we could better understand persuasion in terms of a narrative. Fisher was motivated by the growing elitist and technical view of persuasion and returning to how humans naturally experienced the world.

Fisher says that a narrative will succeed or fail depending on two properties **Coherence** and **Fidelity**.

**Coherence** is how to story is formed and delivered, enabling it to have importance and value.

**Fidelity** relates to whether it touches the listeners and whether they can empathize.

Coherence relies on consistency. Fidelity relies on the realism of the story.

Human values, values that lead to positive outcomes, values that form some future. These three traits can make for good fidelity.

This narrative view is context-dependent, meaning it can be difficult to understand a given narrative with less background. Little is known about how to adopt this perspective to multicultural situations. Despite these imperfections, narrative paradigms are very powerful.

Power-Oriented Perspectives are aimed at gaining power for powerless groups.

Women’s movements and Feminist Criticism aim at integrating women into society with the same rights and position as men. Feminism criticizes the male focused discourse of persuasion.

Sonya Foss and Cindy Griffin birthed **invitational rhetoric** which promotes understanding rather than change. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell criticizes this method since just inviting others to speak doesn’t always get things done. A core idea to change is that it begins with listening and not telling.

Environmentalist ideas have begun to take hold since Al Gore’s *Inconvenient Truth*. However, there are debates on the veracity of climate change and other topics.

Marxist Theory focuses on inequitable economic system. Marxists address economic power as it exists in capitalist countries and powers.

Physical confrontation as used in persuasion, turns persuasion into coercion. This can occur when destructive acts are used to protest actions.