Excerpts from "SILVA RHETORICAE" – http://rhetoric.byu.edu/

WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Rhetoric is the study of effective speaking and writing. And the art of persuasion. And many other things. In its long and vigorous history rhetoric has enjoyed many definitions, accommodated differing purposes, and varied widely in what it included. And yet, for most of its history it has maintained its fundamental character as a discipline for training students 1) to perceive how language is at work orally and in writing, and 2) to become proficient in applying the resources of language in their own speaking and writing.

Discerning how language is working in others' or one's own writing and speaking, one must (artificially) divide form and content, *what* is being said and *how* this is said. Because rhetoric examines so attentively the *how* of language, the *methods* and *means* of communication, it has sometimes been discounted as something only concerned with style or appearances, and not with the quality or *content* of communication. For many (such as Plato) rhetoric deals with the superficial at best, the deceptive at worst ("mere rhetoric"), when one might better attend to matters of substance, truth, or reason as attempted in dialectic or philosophy or religion.

Rhetoric has sometimes lived down to its critics, but as set forth from antiquity, rhetoric was a comprehensive art just as much concerned with *what* one could say as *how* one might say it. Indeed, a basic premise for rhetoric is the indivisibility of means from meaning; *how* one says something conveys meaning as much as *what* one says. Rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language comprehensively, including its emotional impact (pathos), as much as its propositional content (logos). To see how language and thought worked together, however, it has first been necessary to artificially divide content and form.

PERSUASIVE APPEALS

Persuasion, according to Aristotle and the many authorities that would echo him, is brought about through three kinds of proof (*pistis*) or persuasive appeal:

- The appeal to reason: LOGOS
- The appeal to emotion: PATHOS
- The persuasive appeal of one's character: ETHOS

Although they can be analyzed separately, these three appeals work together in combination toward persuasive ends.

Aristotle calls these "artistic" or "intrinsic" proofs—those that could be found by means of the art of rhetoric—in contrast to "nonartistic" or "extrinsic" proofs such as witnesses or contracts that are simply used by the speaker, not found through rhetoric.

Sources: Arist. Rhet. 1.2.2-3

LOGOS

Logos names the appeal to reason. Aristotle wished that all communication could be transacted only through this appeal, but given the weaknesses of humanity, he laments, we must resort to the use of the other two appeals. The Greek term *logos* is laden with many more meanings than simply "reason," and is in fact the term used for "oration."

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **LOGOS**

When Descartes said, "I think; therefore, I am," his statement reflected in its pure concision and simple logical arrangement the kind of thought and being he believed to be most real. He did not claim, as Pascal would later do, that our being has as much to do with feeling as it does thinking. Descartes here equates pure rationality and pure being, persuading us of the accuracy of this equation by the simplicity of his statement. There is no room for the clouds of emotion in this straightforward formula; it makes a purely logical appeal.

Sources: Arist.1.2.6, 2.18-26

PATHOS

Pathos names the appeal to emotion. Cicero encouraged the use of pathos at the conclusion of an oration, but emotional appeals are of course more widely viable. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* contains a great deal of discussion of affecting the emotions, categorizing the kinds of responses of different demographic groups. Thus, we see the close relations between assessment of pathos and of audience. Pathos is also the category by which we can understand the psychological aspects of rhetoric. Criticism of rhetoric tends to focus on the overemphasis of pathos, emotion, at the expense of logos, the message.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **PATHOS**

Antony, addressing the crowd after Caesar's murder in Shakespeare's play, manages to stir them up to anger against the conspirators by drawing upon their pity. He does this by calling their attention to each of Caesar's dagger wounds, accomplishing this pathetic appeal through vivid descriptions combined with allusions to the betrayal of friendship made by Brutus, who made "the most unkindest cut of all":

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
See what a rent the envious Casca made;
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd,
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,
As rushing out of doors to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel.
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
—Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* 3.2.174-183

Sources: Arist.1.2.5, 2.1.8, 2.2-11

ETHOS

Ethos names the persuasive appeal of one's character, especially how this character is established by means of the speech or discourse. Aristotle claimed that one needs to appear both knowledgeable about one's subject and benevolent. Cicero said that in classical oratory the initial portion of a speech (its exordium or introduction) was the place to establish one's credibility with the audience.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **ETHOS**

In Cicero's speech defending the poet Archias, he begins his speech by referring to his own expertise in oratory, for which he was famous in Rome. While lacking modesty, this tactic still established his ethos because the audience was forced to acknowledge that Cicero's public service gave him a certain right to speak, and his success in oratory gave him special authority to speak about another author. In effect, his entire speech is an attempt to increase the respectability of the ethos of literature, largely accomplished by tying it to Cicero's own, already established, public character.

Sources: Arist.1.2.4, 2.1, 2.12-17

THE CANONS OF RHETORIC

Rhetoric, as an art, has long been divided into five major categories or "canons":

1. Invention
2. Arrangement
3. Style
4. Memory
5. Delivery

These categories have served both analytical and generative purposes. That is to say, they provide a template for the criticism of discourse (and orations in particular), and they give a pattern for rhetorical education. Rhetorical treatises through the centuries have been set up in light of these five categories, although memory and delivery consistently have received less attention. Rhetoric shares with another longstanding discipline, dialectic, training in invention and arrangement. When these disciplines competed, rhetoric was sometimes reduced to style alone.

Although the five canons of rhetoric describe areas of attention in rhetorical pedagogy, these should not be taken as the only educational template for the discipline of rhetoric. Treatises on rhetoric also discuss at some length the roots or sources of rhetorical ability, and specific kinds of rhetorical exercises intended to promote linguistic facility.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **CANONS OF RHETORIC**

Martin Luther King, Jr. was not the first to claim he had a dream. Some, such as Clayborne Carson and Keith D. Miller have recently shown that the civil rights leader's most famous speech is in fact largely lifted from the sermons of others. If King is not responsible for inventing the subject matter of this address, he can be credited with ordering and delivering it in a style appropriate to his very mixed audience. Speaking to a huge crowd both in Washington, D.C. and across television, King drew upon commonplaces of our country that lie deep in our cultural memory, and did so with a kind of sober charisma that made his own words memorable and above all, effective.

Sources:Cic. De Inv. 1.7; Cic. De Or. 1.31.142; Quint. 3.3; Melx A8v ("officia")

INVENTIO

Invention concerns finding something to say (its name derives from the Latin *invenire*, "to find."). Certain common categories of thought became conventional to use in order to brainstorm for material. These common places (places = *topoi* in Greek) are called the "topics of invention." They include, for example, cause and effect, comparison, and various relationships.

Invention is tied to the rhetorical appeal of logos, being oriented to *what* an author would say rather than *how* this might be said. Invention describes the argumentative, persuasive core of rhetoric. Aristotle, in fact, defines rhetoric primarily as invention, "discovering the best available means of persuasion." An important procedure that formed part of this finding process was stasis.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: INVENTION

In describing the state of humanity, Blaise Pascal aphoristically states

We desire truth, and find within ourselves only uncertainty. We seek happiness, and find only misery and death. We cannot but desire truth and happiness, and are incapable of certainty or happiness.

In these nicely parallel claims, Pascal follows a similar pattern of development based on the identification of an antecedent and its inevitable consequence. [antecedent/consequence is a common topic of invention]. We must ask ourselves, Are these the necessary antecdents to the stated consequences? Does his concision betray a larger complexity? Aren't these consequences the causes themselves for pursuing what he refers to as antecedents?

ARRANGEMENT

Arrangement (*dispositio* or *taxis*) concerns how one orders speech or writing. In ancient rhetorics, arrangement referred solely to the order to be observed in an oration, but the term has broadened to include all considerations of the ordering of discourse, especially on a large scale.

Sources: Arist. 3.13-19; Cic. De Inv. 1.7; Cic. De Or. 1.31.143

STYLE

Style concerns the artful expression of ideas. If invention addresses *what* is to be said; style addresses *how* this will be said. From a rhetorical perspective style is not incidental, superficial, or supplementary: style names how ideas are embodied in language and customized to communicative contexts.

Because of the centrality of style, rhetoricians have given great attention to every aspect of linguistic form—so much so that rhetoric has at times been equated with (or reduced to) "mere style," as though rhetoric were concerned only with superficial ornamentation.

But ornamentation was not at all superficial in classical and renaissance rhetoric, for to ornament (*ornare* = "to equip, fit out, or supply") meant to equip one's thoughts with verbal expression appropriate for accomplishing one's intentions.

Upon this basic principle of style there has been agreement, but less so respecting how matters of style have been mapped within the rhetorical tradition, especially with respect to categorizing the figures of speech. These are the major groupings of stylistic concerns within the rhetorical tradition:

1. Virtues of Style

Five encompassing concerns of style which relate style to grammar, audience, effective and affective appeals, the guiding principle of decorum, and the importance of ornamenting language through figurative speech. A comparable mapping of seven virtues of style has been laid out by Hermogenes.

2. Levels of Style

From the Roman tradition three levels of style have been laid out, each suited to one of three distinct rhetorical purposes.

3. Qualities of Style

A large descriptive terminology has been developed to critique the qualities of style. These are interpretive in nature, and overlap broadly with figures of speech or the virtues and levels of style.

4. Figures of Speech

Sometimes considered part of "ornateness" (one of the Virtues of Style), and sometimes taken to represent the whole of rhetoric, the rhetorical figures constitute a vast technical vocabulary naming ways that both ideas and language have been configured.

Style is often aligned with pathos, since its figures of speech are often employed to persuade through emotional appeals. However, style has just as much to do with ethos, for one's style often establishes or mitigates one's authority and credibility. But it should not be assumed, either, that style simply adds on a pathetic or ethical appeal to the core, logical content. Style is very much part of the appeal through logos, especially considering the fact that schemes of repetition serve to produce coherence and clarity, obvious attributes of the appeal to reason. There are also specific figures of speech that are based upon logical structures such as the syllogism.

Style is not an optional aspect of discourse, although those who take issue with rhetorical excesses maintain the fiction that there is a "plain" method of speech. Style is essential to rhetoric in that its guiding assumption is that the form or linguistic means in which something is communicated is as much part of the message as is the content (as MacLuhan has said, "the medium is the message").

Stylistic Analysis

The analysis of discourse in terms of style has a long history, one that stretches back long before the modern-day field of stylistics or contemporary linguistics came into being. Analysis in terms of style has taken two broad paths in the period from antiquity through the Renaissance. The first of

these was stylistic analysis in a pedagogical setting, a process continuous with and often identical to grammatical parsing. The second of these, an approach closer to the general literary sense of style in use today, involved identifying general characteristics of the prose involved, for which there was a technical vocabulary. Certainly these two approaches were not all-encompassing with respect to stylistic analysis up to the Renaissance, but they give a fair sense of the breadth of attention to style.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **STYLE:**

When Julius Caesar said "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came; I saw; I conquered") he communicated a lot with a little. In fact, the efficiency of this statement about his military conquest seems to mirror the efficiency of his campaign itself. Nothing is wasted in accomplishing the intended task. Through his use of asyndeton (the lack of conjunctions between independent clauses) he demonstrates that he is direct and to the point. We can only assume that this forthright characteristic of speech reflects his leadership as a general. Caesar's short saying also constitutes a perfect tricolon (three parallel clauses of identical length—at least in the Latin!). One can almost visualize the orderliness of a phalanx of soldiers, marching rank and file to battle, in the smooth orderliness of these parallel statements. The rhythm of the words in Latin, also, drums out a marching cadence that seems inescapable: VEni; VIdi; VIci. Caesar certainly reflected and probably augmented his credibility, or "ethos," in making this statement, one that seems completely appropriate for the report of a successful military campaign.

Sources: Arist. 3.1; Ad Herennium 4; Cic. De Inv. 1.7, 9

MEMORY

At first, Memory seemed to have to do solely with mnemonics (memory aids) that would assist a budding orator in retaining his speech. However, it clearly had to do with more than simply learning how to memorize an already composed speech for re-presentation. The *Ad Herennium* author calls memory the "treasury of things invented," thus linking Memory with the first canon of rhetoric, Invention. This alludes to the practice of storing up commonplaces or other material arrived at through the topics of invention for use as called for in a given occasion.

Thus, Memory is as much tied to the improvisational necessities of a speaker as to the need to memorize a complete speech for delivery. In this sense Memory is related to kairos (sensitivity to the context in which one may communicate) as well as to the concepts of copia and amplification.

Memory, it can be seen has had to do with much more than just memorization. It was a requisite for becoming *peritus dicendi*, well-versed in speaking, something only possible if one had a vast deal of information on hand to be brought forth appropriately and effectively given the circumstances and the audience.

The canon of Memory also suggests that one consider the psychological aspects of preparing to communicate and the performance of communicating itself, especially in an oral or impromptu setting. Typically Memory has to do only with the orator, but invites consideration of how the audience will retain things in mind. To this end, certain figures of speech are available to help the memory, including the use of vivid description (ecphrasis) and enumeration. Along with Delivery, Memory has often been excluded from rhetoric. However, it was a vital component in the training of orators in antiquity.

Example

Orators were encouraged to envision where they would be speaking as a preparation for memorizing their speech. Then, having completed the speech's composition, they were to divide it into manageable portions, each of which they would assign, in turn, to a different part of the room where the speech was to occur. Thus, by casting their eyes about during their speech, they would be reminded of the next part of their speech to give.

Rhetorical analysis in terms of MEMORY:

Because Memory differs widely in what it can mean as an aspect of rhetoric, rhetorical criticism in terms of Memory has equally broad possibilities.

- the degree to which a speaker successfully remembers a memorized oration

- the facility with which a speaker calls upon his memory of apt quotations and thoughts that effectively meet the rhetorical intention
- an analysis of the methods a speaker uses in order for the message to be retained in the memory of those hearing (mnemonics)
- assessment of direct appeals to memory or the mention of it or related terms

Sources: Cic. De Inv. 1.7; Cic. De Or. 2.86-2.88; Quint. 3.3.10

DELIVERY

Delivery, the last of the five canons of rhetoric, concerns itself (as does style) with how something is said, rather than what is said (the province of Invention). The Greek word for delivery is "hypokrisis" or "acting," and rhetoric has borrowed from that art a studied attention to vocal training and to the use of gestures.

In antiquity the way a speech was delivered was considered a crucial determinant of its meaning or effect, especially since delivery made use of the powerful persuasive appeal of pathos.

Delivery (along with Memory) has often been omitted from rhetorical texts; however, it has retained a strong place in rhetorical pedagogy . The importance of delivery was emphasized in discussions of *exercitatio* (practice exercises) and has been manifested in the progymnasmata and practice speeches (declamations) of a rhetorical education.

Delivery originally referred to oral rhetoric at use in a public context, but can be viewed more broadly as that aspect of rhetoric that concerns the public presentation of discourse, oral or written. In either case Delivery obviously has much to do with how one establishes ethos and appeals through pathos, and in this sense is complementary to Invention, which is more strictly concerned with logos.

The oral nature of rhetorical training and performance in antiquity made a closer association between rhetoric and literature than exists today. Aristotle identifies commonalities between the recitation of poetry and the delivery of speeches. Both involved matters of style and emotion in vocalizing words.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **DELIVERY**

Winston Churchill could never have stirred the British public as he did were it not for the grave, serious, and controlled tone of voice that he employed in his radio speeches. His faith in the allied powers rang out in stentorian cadences that by their very vibrations instilled belief in the masses. His message was often cliche, but his delivery was never anything but spell-binding. Had he had a feeble voice, perhaps Germany would have fared better.

Sources: Aristotle Rhet. 3.1.3-9; Cic. De Inv. 1.7; Cic. De Or. 3.11.40-3.12.46

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