

## COUNTER-STATEMENT

ral," since his desire could not possibly be anything other than natural; and if he finds the present categorical expectancies obstructive to his purposes, he may be justified in violating these expectancies and in allowing his procedures to be viewed as an oddity, as peripheral, on the chance that other men may eventually join him and by their convergence make such procedures the "norm."

## CURRICULUM CRITICUM

SINCE one can sometimes make a position clearer by showing its place in a "curve" of development, there is the possibility that this first book, on being reissued, might be placed in terms of later books written by the same author. Also, when one has been through changes in the mental climate, a graph of his responses to the veerings of history might be at least clinically of value. (Let the slogan be: Challenge none, apologize to none, explain to any who will listen.)

*Counter-Statement* shows signs of its emergence out of adolescent fears and posturings, into problems of early manhood (problems morbidly intensified by the market crash of '29). The rôle, or *persona* of the author seems not that of father, or even of brother, but of conscientiously wayward son (whom the Great Depression compelled to laugh on the other side of his face).

He had early decided that, ideally, for each of Shakespeare's dramatic tactics, modern thought should try to find the corresponding critical formulation. But he soon came to see that any such orderly unfolding of the past into the present would be greatly complicated, if not made irrelevant and even impossible, by the urgencies and abruptnesses of social upheaval.

After *Counter-Statement* came "Auscultation, Creation, and Revision," a short book or long essay still in manuscript. Half-analytically, half-dithyrambically, it sought to resist the mounting sociological emphasis in criticism, even while dealing with problems of "orientation" to which the author had been made uncomfortably sensitive by the brusque contrast between the beginning of Hoover's presidency and its end. As point of departure the work quarreled with the shift in Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle*—and it sought to reassert a kind of æsthetic mysticism that came to a head in a "manifesto-like" appreciation of Li Tai Po's lyric, "Drinking Alone in the Moonlight." (It clung to the thought that lunar poet and poetic moon are synthesized in the image of the poet's moon-cast shadow.) The title referred to three stages of production: (1) the heart-conscious kind of listening, or vigilance, that precedes expression; (2) the expression in its unguarded

Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric  
of Motives. U of California  
Press, 1969 [orig. 1950]

## II

### TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC

#### *Persuasion*

"SPEECH designed to persuade" (*dicere ad persuadendum accommodare*): this is the basic definition for rhetoric (and its synonym, "eloquence,") given in Cicero's dialogue *De Oratore*. Crassus, who is spokesman for Cicero himself, cites it as something taken for granted, as the first thing the student of rhetoric is taught. Three hundred years before him, Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* had similarly named "persuasion" as the essence and end of rhetoric, which he defined as "the faculty of discovering the persuasive means available in a given case." Likewise, in a lost treatise, Aristotle's great competitor, Isocrates, called rhetoric "the craftsman of persuasion" (*peithous demiourgos*). Thus, at this level of generalization, even rivals could agree, though as De Quincey has remarked, "persuasion" itself can be differently interpreted.

Somewhat more than a century after Cicero, Quintilian, in his *Institutio Oratoria* changed the stress, choosing to define rhetoric as the "science of speaking well" (*bene dicendi scientia*).<sup>\*</sup> But his system is clearly directed towards one particular kind of persuasion: the education of the Roman gentleman. Thus, in a chapter where he cites about two dozen definitions (two-thirds of which refer to "persuasion" as the essence of rhetoric), though he finally chooses a definition of his own which omits reference to persuasion, he has kept the *function* of the term. For he equates the perfect orator with the good man, and says that the good man should be exceptional in both eloquence and moral attributes. Rhetoric, he says, is both "useful" and a "virtue." Hence his notion of "speaking well" implies the moralistically hortatory, not just pragmatic skill at the service of any cause.

Add now the first great Christian rhetoric, the fourth book of St.

<sup>\*</sup>He used the word "science" loosely. This definition is in Book II, Chapter XV. At the beginning of Book III he says he has shown rhetoric to be an "art."

Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* (written near the beginning of the fifth century) and you have ample material, in these four great peaks stretched across 750 years, to observe the major principles derivable from the notion of rhetoric as persuasion, as inducement to action, *ad agendum*, in the phrase of Augustine, who elsewhere, in the same book, states that a man is persuaded if

he likes what you promise, fears what you say is imminent, hates what you censure, embraces what you commend, regrets whatever you built up as regrettable, rejoices at what you say is cause for rejoicing, sympathizes with those whose wretchedness your words bring before his very eyes, shuns those whom you admonish him to shun . . . and in whatever other ways your high eloquence can affect the minds of your hearers, bringing them not merely to know what should be done, but to do what they know should be done.

Yet often we could with more accuracy speak of persuasion "to attitude," rather than persuasion to out-and-out action. Persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a man only insofar as he is *free*. This is good to remember, in these days of dictatorship and near-dictatorship. Only insofar as men are potentially free, must the spellbinder seek to persuade them. Insofar as they *must* do something, rhetoric is unnecessary, its work being done by the nature of things, though often these necessities are not of a natural origin, but come from necessities imposed by man-made conditions, as with the kind of *peithanankē* (or "compulsion under the guise of persuasion") that sometimes flows from the nature of the "free market."

Insofar as a choice of *action* is restricted, rhetoric seeks rather to have a formative effect upon *attitude* (as a criminal condemned to death might by priestly rhetoric be brought to an attitude of repentance and resignation). Thus, in Cicero and Augustine there is a shift between the words "move" (*movere*) and "bend" (*flectere*) to name the ultimate function of rhetoric. This shift corresponds to a distinction between act and attitude (attitude being an incipient act, a leaning or inclination). Thus the notion of persuasion to *attitude* would permit the application of rhetorical terms to purely *poetic* structures; the study of lyrical devices might be classed under the head of rhetoric, when these devices are considered for their power to induce or communicate states of mind to readers, even though the kinds of assent evoked have no overt, practical outcome.

All told, traditionally there is the range of rhetoric from an "Art of

Cheating" (as systematically "perfected" by some of the Greek Sophists) to Quintilian's view of rhetoric as a power, art or science that identifies right doing with right speaking. Similarly Isocrates in his *Antidosis* reminds the Athenians that they make annual sacrifices to the Goddess of Persuasion (Peitho), and he refers to speech as the source of most good things. The desire to speak well, he says, makes for great moral improvement. "True, just, and well-ordered discourse is the outward image (*eidolon*) of a good and faithful soul."

Or, since "rhetoric," "oratory," and "eloquence" all come from roots meaning "to speak," you can have the Aristotelian stress upon rhetoric as *sheer words*. In this respect, by his scheme, it is the "counterpart" of dialectic (though "dialectic" itself, in such a usage, is to be distinguished from the modern "dialectic of Nature"). Some theorists may choose to look upon the rhetorician as a very narrow specialist. On the other hand, since one can be "eloquent" about anything and everything, there are Quintilian's grounds for widening the scope of rhetoric to make it the center of an entire educational system. He was here but extending an emphasis strong in Cicero, who equated the ideal orator with the ideal citizen, the man of universal aptitude, sympathies, and experience. And though Aristotle rigorously divided knowledge into compartments whenever possible, his *Art of Rhetoric* includes much that falls under the separate headings of psychology, ethics, politics, poetics, logic, and history. Indeed, according to him, the characteristically rhetorical statement involves "commonplaces" that lie outside any scientific specialty; and in proportion as the rhetorician deals with special subject matter, his proofs move away from the rhetorical and towards the scientific. (For instance, a typical rhetorical "commonplace," in the Aristotelian sense, would be Churchill's slogan, "Too little and too late," which could hardly be said to fall under any special science of quantity or time.)

As for "persuasion" itself: one can imagine including purely logical demonstration as a part of it; or one might distinguish between appeals to reason and appeals to emotion, sentiment, ignorance, prejudice, and the like, reserving the notion of "persuasion" for these less orderly kinds of "proof." (Here again we encroach upon the term "dialectic." Augustine seems to follow the Stoic usage, in treating dialectic as the logical groundwork underlying rhetoric; dialectic would thus treat of the ultimate scenic reality that sets the criteria for rhetorical persuasion.)

The Greek word, *peitho*, comes from the same root as the Latin



word for "faith." Accordingly, Aristotle's term for rhetorical "proof" is the related word, *pistis*. In his vocabulary, it names an *inferior* kind of proof, as compared with scientific demonstration (*apodeixis*). (See *Institutio Oratoria*, Book V, Chapter X.) But it is, ironically, the word which, in Greek ecclesiastical literature, came to designate the *highest* order of Christian knowledge, "faith" or "belief" as contrasted with "reason." While the active form of *peitho* means "to persuade," its middle and passive forms mean "to obey."

But the corresponding Latin word, *suadere*, comes from the same roots as "suavity," "assuage," and "sweet." And following these leads, one may want to narrow the scope of persuasion to such meanings as "ingratiation" and "delight." Thus Augustine often uses the term in this very restricted sense, preferring words like "move" and "bend" (*movere, flectere*) when he has the ultimate purpose of rhetorical utterance in mind. (In Sidney's statement that the end of speech is "the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the minde," one can discern the lineaments of "persuasion" behind "sweet utterance" when one appreciates the relation between English "sweet" and Cicero's stress upon the *suavitas* of oratory.)

More often, however, the ability of rhetoric to ingratiate is considered secondary, as a mere device for gaining good will, holding the attention, or deflecting the attention in preparation for more urgent purposes. Since persuasion so often implies the presence or threat of an adversary, there is the "agonistic" or competitive stress. Thus Aristotle, who looks upon rhetoric as a medium that "proves opposites," gives what amounts to a handbook on a manly art of self-defense. He describes the holds and the counter-holds, the blows and the ways of blocking them, for every means of persuasion the corresponding means of dissuasion, for every proof the disproof, for every praise the vituperation that matches it. While *in general* the truer and better cause has the advantage, he observes, no cause can be adequately defended without skill in the tricks of the trade. So he studies these tricks from the purely technical point of view, without reference to any one fixed position such as marks Augustine's analysis of the Christian persuasion. Even as Aristotle is teaching one man how most effectively to make people say "yes," he is teaching an opponent how to make them say just as forceful a "no."

This "agonistic" emphasis is naturally strong in Cicero, much of whose

treatise is written out of his experiences in the Senate and the law courts. It is weaker in Quintilian with his educational emphasis; yet his account of eloquence frequently relies on military and gladiatorial images. (Which reminds us that Cicero's dialogue *De Oratore*, is represented as taking place among several prominent public figures who *have left Rome* for the far suburbs *during the season of the Games*.)

Whatever his polemic zeal in other works, in the *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine is concerned rather with the *cajoling* of an audience than with the routing of opponents. Despite the disrepute into which pagan rhetoric had fallen in Augustine's day, he recognized the persuasiveness implicit in its forms. And though some Christians looked upon rhetoric as by nature pagan, Augustine (himself trained in rhetoric before his conversion) held that every last embellishment should be brought to the service of God, for the glory and power of the new doctrine.

The notion of rhetoric as a means of "proving opposites" again brings us to the relation between rhetoric and dialectic. Perhaps, as a first rough approximate, we might think of the matter thus: Bring several *rhetoricians* together, let their speeches contribute to the maturing of one another by the give and take of question and answer, and you have the *dialectic* of a Platonic dialogue. But ideally the dialogue seeks to attain a higher order of truth, as the speakers, in competing with one another, cooperate towards an end transcending their individual positions. Here is the paradigm of the dialectical process for "reconciling opposites" in a "higher synthesis."

But note that, in the Platonic scheme, such dialectic enterprise starts from *opinion*. The Socratic "midwifery" (*maieutic*) was thus designed to discover truth, by beginning with opinion and subjecting it to systematic criticism. Also, the process was purely verbal; hence in Aristotle's view it would be an art, not a science, since each science has its own particular extraverbal subject matter. The Socratic method was better suited for such linguistic enterprises as the dialectical search for "ideas" of justice, truth, beauty, and so on, than for the accumulating of knowledge derived from empirical observation and laboratory experiment. Dialectic of this sort was concerned with "ideology" in the primary sense of the term: the study of ideas and of their relation to one another. But above all, note that, in its very search for "truth," it began with "opinion," and thus in a sense was *grounded* in opinion.



The competitive and public ingredient in persuasion makes it particularly urgent that the rhetoric work at the level of opinion. Thus in a situation where an appeal to prejudice might be more effective than an appeal to reason, the rhetorician who would have his cause prevail may need to use such means, regardless of his preferences. Cicero says that one should answer argument with argument and emotional appeal by a stirring of the opposite emotions (goading to hate where the opponent had established good will, and countering compassion by incitement to envy). And Aristotle refers with approval to Gorgias' notion that one should counter an opponent's jest with earnest and his earnest with jest. To persuade under such conditions, truth is at best a secondary device. Hence, rhetoric is properly said to be grounded in opinion. But we think that the relation between "truth" and the kind of opinion with which rhetoric operates is often misunderstood. And the classical texts do not seem to bring out the point we have in mind, namely:

The kind of opinion with which rhetoric deals, in its role of inducement to action, is not opinion *as contrasted with truth*. There is the invitation to look at the matter thus antithetically, once we have put the two terms (opinion and truth) together as a dialectical pair. But actually, many of the "opinions" upon which persuasion relies fall outside the test of truth in the strictly scientific, T-F, yes-or-no sense. Thus, if a given audience has a strong opinion that a certain kind of conduct is admirable, the orator can commend a person by using signs that identify him with such conduct. "Opinion" in this ethical sense clearly falls on the bias across the matter of "truth" in the strictly scientific sense. Of course, a speaker may be true or false in identifying a person by some particular sign of virtuous conduct. You may say that a person so acted when the person did not so act—and if you succeed in making your audience believe you, you could be said to be trafficking in sheer opinion *as contrasted with the truth*. But we are here concerned with motives a step farther back than such mere deception. We are discussing the underlying ethical assumptions on which the entire tactics of persuasion are based. Here the important factor is opinion (opinion in the moral order of *action*, rather than in the "scenic" order

of truth). The rhetorician, as such, need operate only on this principle. If in the opinion of a given audience, a certain kind of conduct is admirable, then a speaker might persuade the audience by using ideas and images that identify his cause with that kind of conduct.

### Identification

"It is not hard," says Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, quoting Socrates, "to praise Athenians among Athenians." He has been cataloguing those traits which an audience generally considers the components of virtue. They are justice, courage, self-control, poise or presence (magnificence, *megalo-prepeia*), broad-mindedness, liberality, gentleness, prudence and wisdom. And he has been saying: For purposes of praise or blame, the rhetorician will assume that qualities closely resembling any of these qualities are identical with them. For instance, to arouse dislike for a cautious man, one should present him as cold and designing. Or to make a simpleton lovable, play up his good nature. Or speak of quarrelsomeness as frankness, or of arrogance as poise and dignity, or of foolhardiness as courage, and of squandering as generosity. Also, he says, we should consider the audience before whom we are thus passing judgment: for it's hard to praise Athenians when you are talking to Lacedaemonians.

Part of the quotation appears in Book I. It is quoted again, entire, in Book III, where he has been discussing the speaker's appeal to friendship or compassion. And he continues: When winding up a speech in praise of someone, we "must make the hearer believe that he shares in the praise, either personally, or through his family or profession, or somehow." When you are with Athenians, it's easy to praise Athenians, but not when you are with Lacedaemonians.

**Here is perhaps the simplest case of persuasion. You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his.** Persuasion by flattery is but a special case of persuasion in general. But flattery can safely serve as our paradigm if we systematically widen its meaning, to see behind it the conditions of identification or consubstantiality in general. And you give the "signs" of such consubstantiality by deference to an audience's "opinions." For the orator, following Aristotle and Cicero, will seek to display the appropriate "signs"



of character needed to earn the audience's good will. True, the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect; but he can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects. Some of their opinions are needed to support the fulcrum by which he would move other opinions. (Preferably he shares the fixed opinions himself since, "all other things being equal," the identifying of himself with his audience will be more effective if it is genuine.)

The so-called "commonplaces" or "topics" in Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* (and the corresponding *loci communes* in Latin manuals) are a quick survey of "opinion" in this sense. Aristotle reviews the purposes, acts, things, conditions, states of mind, personal characteristics, and the like, which people consider promising or formidable, good or evil, useful or dangerous, admirable or loathsome, and so on. All these opinions or assumptions (perhaps today they would be treated under the head of "attitudes" or "values") are catalogued as available means of persuasion. But the important thing, for our purposes, is to note that such types are derived from the principle of persuasion, in that they are but a survey of the things that people generally consider persuasive, and of methods that have persuasive effects.

Thus, Aristotle lists the kind of opinions you should draw upon if you wanted to recommend a policy or to turn people against it; the kind of motives which in people's opinion lead to just or unjust actions; what personal traits people admire or dislike (opinions the speaker should exploit to present himself favorably and his adversary unfavorably); and what opinions can be used as means for stirring men to rage, friendliness, fear, compassion, shame, indignation, envy, rivalry, charity, and so on. Reasoning based on opinion he calls "enthymemes," which are the rhetorical equivalent of the syllogism. And arguments from example (which is the rhetorical equivalent for induction) are likewise to be framed in accordance with his various lists of opinions. (Incidentally, those who talk of "ethical relativity" must be impressed by the "permanence" of such "places" or topics, when stated at Aristotle's level of generalization. As *ideas*, they all seem no less compelling now than they ever were, though in our society a speaker might often have to individuate them in a different *image* than the Greeks would have chosen, if he would convey a maximum sense of actuality.)

Aristotle also considers another kind of "topic," got by the manipulation of tactical procedures, by following certain rules of thumb for inventing, developing, or transforming an expression, by pun-logic, even by specious and sophistical arguments. The materials of opinion will be embodied in such devices, but their characterization as "topics" is got by abstracting some formal or procedural element as their distinguishing mark. Aristotle here includes such "places" as: ways of turning an adversary's words against himself, and of transforming an argument by opposites ("if war did it, repair it by peace"). Some other terms of this sort are: recalling what an adversary advocated in one situation when recommending a policy for a new situation ("you wanted it then, you should want it now"); using definitions to advantage (Socrates using his previous mention of his *daimonion* as evidence that he was not an atheist); dividing up an assertion ("there were three motives for the offense; two were impossible, not even the accusers have asserted the third"); tendentious selection of results (since a cause may have both good and bad effects, one can play up whichever set favors his position); exaggeration (the accused can weaken the strength of the accusation against him by himself overstating it); the use of signs (arguing that the man is a thief because he is disreputable); and so on. Among these tactics, he calls particular attention to the use of a shift between public and private orders of motivation. In public, one praises the just and the beautiful; but in private one prefers the test of expediency; hence the orator can use whichever of these orders better suits his purposes. Here is the paradigm for the modern rhetorician's shuttling between "idealistic" and "materialistic" motives, as when one imputes "idealistic" motives to one's own faction and "materialistic" motives to the adversary; or the adversary can be accused of "idealistic" motives when they imply ineffectiveness and impracticability.

Though the translation of one's wishes into terms of an audience's opinions would clearly be an instance of identification, this last list of purely formal devices for rhetorical invention takes us farther afield. However, it seems to be a fact that, the more urgent the oratory, the greater the profusion and vitality of the formal devices. So they must be *functional*, and not mere "embellishments." And processes of "identification" would seem to figure here, as follows:

Longinus refers to that kind of elation wherein the audience feels as

though it were not merely receiving, but were itself creatively participating in the poet's or speaker's assertion. Could we not say that, in such cases, the audience is exalted by the assertion because it has the feel of collaborating in the assertion?

At least, we know that many purely formal patterns can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us. For instance, imagine a passage built about a set of oppositions ("we do this, but they on the other hand do that; we stay here, but they go there; we look up, but they look down," etc.). Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation regardless of the subject matter. Formally, you will find yourself swinging along with the succession of antitheses, even though you may not agree with the proposition that is being presented in this form. Or it may even be an opponent's proposition which you resent—yet for the duration of the statement itself you might "help him out" to the extent of yielding to the formal development, surrendering to its symmetry as such. Of course, the more violent your original resistance to the proposition, the weaker will be your degree of "surrender" by "collaborating" with the form. But in cases where a decision is still to be reached, a yielding to the form prepares for assent to the matter identified with it. Thus, you are drawn to the form, not in your capacity as a partisan, but because of some "universal" appeal in it. And this attitude of assent may then be transferred to the matter which happens to be associated with the form.

Or think thus of another strongly formal device like climax (*gradatio*). The editor of Demetrius' *On Style*, in the Loeb edition, cites this example from *As You Like It*, where even the name of the figure appears in the figure:

Your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees they have made a pair of stairs to marriage.

Here the form requires no assent to a moot issue. But recall a *gradatio* of political import, much in the news during the "Berlin crisis" of 1948: "Who controls Berlin, controls Germany; who controls Germany controls Europe; who controls Europe controls the world." As a proposition, it may or may not be true. And even if it is true, unless people are thoroughly imperialistic, they may not want to control

the world. But regardless of these doubts about it as a proposition, by the time you arrive at the second of its three stages, you feel how it is destined to develop—and on the level of purely formal assent you would collaborate to round out its symmetry by spontaneously willing its completion and perfection as an utterance. Add, now, the psychosis of nationalism, and assent on the formal level invites assent to the proposition as doctrine.

Demetrius also cites an example from Aeschines: "Against yourself you call; against the laws you call; against the entire democracy you call." (We have tinkered with the translation somewhat, to bring out the purely linguistic structure as greatly as possible, including an element that Demetrius does not discuss, the *swelling* effect at the third stage. In the original the three stages comprise six, seven, and ten syllables respectively.) To illustrate the effect, Demetrius gives the same *idea* without the cumulative form, thus: "Against yourself and the laws and the democracy you call." In this version it lacks the three formal elements he is discussing: repetition of the same word at the beginning of each clause (epanaphora), sameness of sound at the close of each clause (homocoteleuton), and absence of conjunctions (asyndeton). Hence there is no pronouncedly formal feature to which one might give assent. (As a noncontroversial instance of cumulative form we recall a sentence cited approvingly in one of Flaubert's letters: "They proceeded some on foot, some on horse, some on the backs of elephants." Here the gradation of the visual imagery reinforces the effect of the syllabic elongation.)

Of the many "tropes" and "figures" discussed in the eighth and ninth books of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, the invitation to purely formal assent (regardless of content) is much greater in some cases than others. It is not our purpose here to analyze the lot in detail. We need but say enough to establish the principle, and to indicate why the expressing of a proposition in one or another of these rhetorical forms would involve "identification," first by inducing the auditor to participate in the form, as a "universal" locus of appeal, and next by trying to include a partisan statement within this same pale of assent.

### Other Variants of the Rhetorical Motive

When making his claims for the universality of rhetoric (in the first book of the *De Oratore*) Cicero begins at a somewhat mythic stage



when right acting and right speaking were considered one (he cites Homer on the training of Achilles). Next he notes regretfully the sharp dissociating of action and speech whereby the Sophists would eventually confine rhetoric to the verbal in a sheerly ornamental sense. And following this, he notes further detractions from the dignity of rhetoric caused by the dissociating of rhetoric and philosophy. (Cicero blames Socrates for this division. Thus, ironically, the Socratic attempt to make systematic allowance for the gradual increase of cultural heterogeneity and scientific specialization was blamed for the very situation which had called it forth and which it was designed to handle.) Rhetoric suffers by the division, Cicero notes, because there arises a distinction between "wisdom" and "eloquence" which would justify the Sophists' reduction of rhetoric to sheer verbal blandishments.

Later, philosophy and wisdom could be grouped under "dialectic," dialectic treated as *distinct from* the ingratiations of rhetoric (a distinction which the Stoics transformed into a flat opposition between dialectic and rhetoric, choosing the first and rejecting the second). Or dialectic could be treated as the ground of rhetoric, hence as not merely verbal, but in the realm of things, the realm of the universal order, guiding the rhetorician in his choice of purposes (as we noted with respect to Augustine). Cicero himself stressed the notion that, since the rhetorician must also be adept in logic and worldly knowledge, such universal aptitude is *intrinsic* to his eloquence.

Also (continuing our review) there is rhetoric as an art of "proving opposites"; as appeal to emotions and prejudices; as "agonistic," shaped by a strongly competitive purpose.

On this last score, we might note that Isocrates, responding to the element of unfairness in the war of words, chose to spiritualize the notion of "advantage" (*pleonexia*). While recognizing the frequent rhetorical aim to take advantage of an opportunity or to gain advantage for oneself, he located the "true advantage" of the rhetorician in *moral* superiority. He was thinking of an ideal rhetoric, of course, rather than describing the struggle for advantage as it ordinarily does take place in human affairs. But he here adds a very important term to our list: Among the marks of rhetoric is its use to *gain advantage*, of one sort or another.

Indeed, all the sources of "happiness" listed in Aristotle's "eudai-

monist" rhetoric, as topics to be exploited for persuasion and dissuasion, could be lumped under the one general heading of "advantage," as could the nineteenth-century Utilitarians' doctrine of "interest," or that batch of motives which La Rochefoucauld, in his 213th maxim, gave as "the causes of that valor so celebrated among men": love of glory with its corollaries (fear of disgrace and envy of others), desire for money (and its corollary, comfortable and agreeable living) (*l'amour de la gloire, la crainte de la honte, le dessein de faire fortune, le désir de rendre notre vie commode et agréable, et l'envie d'abaisser les autres*).

We think this term, "advantage," quite useful for rhetorical theory, in that it can also subsume, before we meet them, all possible "drives" and "urges" for the existence of which various brands of psychology and sociology may claim to find empirical evidence (terminologies with rhetorical implications of their own, as you can readily see by contrasting them, for instance, with the rhetorical implications of the Marxist terminology). Surely all doctrines can at least begin by agreeing that human effort aims at "advantage" of one sort or another, though there is room for later disputes as to whether advantage in general, or particular advantages are to be conceived idealistically, materialistically, or even cynically. Advantage can be individual, or the aim of a partisan group, or even universal. And that men should seek advantage of some sort is reasonable and ethical enough—hence the term need not confine one's terminology of rhetorical design to purely individualist cunning or aggrandizement, as with the rhetorical implications lurking in those "scientific" terminologies that reduce human motives to a few primitive appetites, resistances, and modes of acquisition ("post-Christian" terminologies in the sense that you could arrive at motivational orders of this sort, as La Rochefoucauld in his *Maxims* on the operations of self-love is said to have done, by merely deducting from the orthodox Christian version of human motives, until human behavior is but "*celle de la lumière naturelle et de la raison sans grâce*").

Perhaps we should make clear: **We do not offer this list as a set of ingredients all or most of which must be present at once, as the test for the presence of the rhetorical motive.** Rather, we are considering a wide range of meanings already associated with rhetoric, in ancient texts; and we are saying that one or another of these meanings may be uppermost in some particular usage. But though these meanings are



often not consistent with one another, or are even flatly at odds, we do believe that they can all be derived from "persuasion" as the "Edenic" term from which they have all "Babylonically" split, while "persuasion" in turn involves communication by the signs of consubstantiality, the appeal of *identification*. Even *extrinsic* consideration can thus be derived in an orderly manner from persuasion as generating principle: for an act of persuasion is affected by the character of the scene in which it takes place and of the agents to whom it is addressed. The same rhetorical act could vary in its effectiveness, according to shifts in the situation or in the attitude of audiences. Hence, the rhetorician's exploiting of opinion leads into the analysis of non-verbal factors wholly extrinsic to the rhetorical expression considered purely as a verbal structure.

Thus, if the Aristotelian concern with topics were adapted to the conditions of modern journalism, we should perhaps need to catalogue a kind of *timely topic*, such as that of the satirical cartoon, which exploits commonplaces of a transitory nature. The transitoriness is due not to the fact that the expressions are wholly alien to people living under other conditions, but to the fact that they are *more persuasive* with people living under one particular set of circumstances. Thus, even an exceptionally good cartoon exploiting the subject of unemployment (as with satire on federal "leaf-raking" and "boondoggling" projects during the "made work" period of the Franklin Roosevelt administration) would have a hard time getting published during a period of maximum employment, when a timelier topic might be the shortage of workers in general and of domestic help in particular (and when an editor would consider even a poor cartoon on labor shortage preferable to an exceptional one on unemployment).

When reduced to the level of *ideas*, timely cartoons will be found to exploit much the same list of universal commonplaces that Aristotle assembles. But topical shifts make certain *images* more persuasive in one situation than another. Quintilian touches upon such a narrowing down of the commonplaces when he notes how a general topic is made specific not merely by being attached to some individual figure, but also by a coupling with other particularizing marks, as "we make our adulterer blind, our gambler poor, and our profligate old." And Cicero, when discussing the function of *memory* in the orator, refers to a lost contemporary work on the systematic associating of topics and

images (*simulacra*). Thus, a statement about "timely topics" would seem to be, not an extension of the rhetorical motive to fields not traditionally considered part of it, but merely as the application of classical theory to a special cultural condition set by the modern press. We pass over it hastily here, as we plan to consider the two major aspects of it in later sections of this project (when we shall consider the new level of "reality" which journalistic timeliness establishes, and shall study the relation between transient and permanent factors of appeal by taking the cartoons in *The New Yorker* as test case).

Meanwhile, again, the thought of the timely topic reminds us that sociological works reviewing the rise and fall of slogans, clichés, stock figures of folk consciousness, and the like, impinge upon the rhetorical motive. Indeed, unless this is material for rhetoric, an aspect of *rhetorica docens*, a body of knowledge about audiences, pragmatically available for use when planning appeals to audiences, then such material lacks pragmatic sanction and must be justified on purely "liberal" grounds, in terms of literary or philosophic "appreciation," as knowledge assembled, classified, and contemplated not for use, but for its own sake. There is most decidedly no objection to such a motive, when it is recognized for what it is; but it is usually concealed by the fact that much "pure" science, cultivated without concern for utility, was later found to be of pragmatic value. The fact that anything *might* be of use has allowed for a new unction whereby an investigation can be justified, not for what it is, but for what it might possibly lead to. Nature is so "full of gods" (powers) that a systematic directing of the attention anywhere is quite likely to disclose a new one, some genius local to the particular subject matter. Hence, a cult of "fact-finding," with no order of facts considered too lowly for the collector. In itself, the attitude has much to recommend it. It is scientific humility in the best sense. But it should not be allowed to give specious justification for inquiries where the sheer *absence of intrinsic value* is assumed to imply the *presence of pragmatic value*.

Equivalent to the narrowing and intensifying of appeal by the featuring of timely topics, there is another aspect of address more characteristic of modern conditions, particularly the kind of canvassing shaped primarily by postal communication. Both Aristotle and Cicero laid stress upon the differences among audiences. Indeed, Aristotle's recipes that distinguish between the commonplaces as appealing to a

young audience and those appealing to an old one could serve as a playwright's formulas for the contrasted stock characters of "fiery youth" and timid age. For however strong Aristotle's bias towards science may have been, it was always modified by a highly dramatistic context. His rhetoric is thoroughly dramatist in its insights.

But Aristotle does not discuss varieties of audience with the systematic thoroughness which he brings to the classification of opinion in general. And both Aristotle and Cicero consider audiences purely as something given. The extreme heterogeneity of modern life, however, combined with the nature of modern postal agencies, brings up another kind of possibility: the systematic attempt to carve out an audience, as the commercial rhetorician looks not merely for persuasive devices in general, but for the topics that will appeal to the particular "income group" most likely to be interested in his product, or able to buy it. If immediacy or intensity of appeal is got by narrowing the topics and images to the group likely to be his best audience, he will seek to prod only these to action (if we could call it "active," rather than "passive," when a prospective customer is bent towards one brand of a commodity rather than another, though the brand he passes up may be a better buy than the one he purchases, a kind of conduct that may not be informed enough to be "rational" and "free," hence not rational and free enough to be truly an act, at least in the full philosophic sense of the term). In any case, here too would be a consideration of audiences; hence even by the tests of the classic tradition it would fall under the head of rhetoric, though it necessarily extended the range of the term to cover a situation essentially new.

Thus, all told, besides the extension of rhetoric through the concept of identification, we have noted these purely traditional evidences of the rhetorical motive: persuasion, exploitation of opinion (the "timely" topic is a variant), a work's nature as addressed, literature for use (applied art, inducing to an act beyond the area of verbal expression considered in and for itself), verbal deception (hence, rhetoric as instrument in the war of words), the "agonistic" generally, words used "sweetly" (eloquence, ingratiation, for its own sake), formal devices, the art of proving opposites (as "counterpart" of dialectic). We have also suggested that the "carving out" of audiences is new to the extent that there are new mediums of communication, but there is nothing here *essentially* outside the traditional concerns of rhetoric. As for the

recognition of nonverbal, situational factors that can participate in a work's effectiveness, the neatest statement we know of, for establishing this principle, is by the late Bronislas Malinowski. We refer to his article on primitive languages (published as a supplement in Ogden and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning*). His concept of "context of situation" establishes a principle which can, we believe, be applied in many ways for the New Rhetoric, most notably when considering the semiverbal, semiorganizational kinds of tactics one might classify as a "rhetoric of bureaucracy." - what of semiotics? reasons systems?

### Formal Appeal

As for the purely formal kinds of appeal which we previously mentioned when trying to show how they involve the principle of identification, their universal nature makes it particularly easy to shift them from rhetoric to poetic. Thus, viewing even tendentious oratory from the standpoint of literary appreciation rather than in terms of its use, Longinus analyzes "sublimity" of effect in and for itself. Where Demosthenes would transport his auditors the better to persuade them, Longinus treats the state of transport as the aim. Hence he seeks to convey the quality of the excitement, and to disclose the means by which it is produced. Indeed, might not his key term, that is usually translated "sublime," come close to what we mean by "moving," not in the rhetorical sense, of moving an audience to a decision, but as when we say of a poem, "How moving!"

Admittedly, the cataloguing of rhetorical devices was carried to extreme lengths. You can't possibly make a statement without its falling into some sort of pattern. Its formality can then be abstracted and named, without reference to any particular subject matter, hence can be looked upon as capable of "reindividuation" in a great variety of subject matters. Given enough industry in observation, abstraction, and classification, you can reduce any expression (even inconsequential or incomplete ones) to some underlying skeletal structure. Teachers of Greek and Latin rhetoric had such industry; and they amassed so many such terms that they had a name for the formal design in practically any expression possible to words. Thus, if a statement proceeds by the repeating of a conjunction ("this *and* that *and* the other"), it will be a *polysyndeton*. Drop the connectives ("this,