

## Rhetoric\* from a Classical Perspective

### I. Discovery (*heuresis/inventio*)

- A. Determining the rhetorical goal (formulation of thesis)
1. The Subject (beginning of all discourse)
  2. Narrowing to a topic and developing a thesis (a proposition that asserts or denies something about the topic)
    - a) questioning techniques
      - (1) journalist's questions: who, what, when, where, why, how
      - (2) "Status" questions (Latin rhetoricians' legal questions)
        - (a) **an sit?** ("is it?"—questions of fact)
        - (b) **quid sit?** ("what is it?"—questions of definition)
        - (c) **quale sit?** ("what kind is it?"—questions of degree or quality)
    - b) reference to a common topic list (historically referred to as "commonplaces," or "the rhetorical **modes**")
      - (1) definition
      - (2) classification
      - (3) comparison
      - (a) kind
      - (b) degree
      - (c) relationship
      - (4) circumstances/facts (possible/impossible)
      - (5) relationships
      - (a) cause-effect
      - (b) contraries
      - (c) contradiction
      - (6) testimony: precedent, authority, statistics
    - c) brainstorming/freewriting
  3. Stating the thesis
    - a) a single, declarative sentence, asserting or denying something about the subject
    - b) not a statement of incontestable fact
    - c) not a declaration of personal taste
- B. Employing the **means** of persuasion (*pisteis*)
1. rhetorical means (involving the art of rhetoric)
    - a) **logos**—appeals to reason
      - (1) inductive (usually by *example* without full induction)
      - (2) deductive (usually by *enthymeme* without full deduction)
    - b) **ethos**—appeals to character (writer's)[includes the Rogerian approach]
    - c) **pathos**—appeals to emotion (reader's)
  2. non-rhetorical means (evidence: witnesses, statistics, laws, experts, facts...)
- C. Understanding the **Kinds** of persuasive arguments
1. **Political** (deliberative, horatory, advisory)
    - a) kinds—exhortation and dissuasion
    - b) special topics—the expedient or inexpedient, the advantageous or injurious
    - c) time concern—the future
    - d) subjects—wars, taxes, alliances, community projects, public policy, laws, etc.
  2. **Forensic** (legal, judicial, judgmental)
    - a) kinds—accusation and defense
    - b) special topics—Justice and injustice
    - c) time concern—usually the past
    - d) subjects—crime, legal actions, contracts,

behavior

### 3. Epideictic-(demonstrative, declamatory, ceremonial, pangyrical)

- a) kinds—praise and blame
- b) special topics—honor and dishonor
- c) time concern—uncertain, often past/present
- d) subjects—various: funeral oratory, encouragement in crisis, celebrations, performance evaluations, letters of recommendation, etc.

### II. Arrangement (*taxis/dispositio*)

#### A. **Exordium** (introduction)

1. inquisitive
2. paradoxical
3. corrective
4. preparatory
5. narrative

#### B. **Narratio** (statement of the case)

#### C. **Partitio** (or *divisio*)—layout of the argumentative points

#### D. **Confirmatio** ("proof" of the case)—the BODY of the essay

#### E. **Refutatio**—anticipation and refutation of potential opposing arguments (if possible)

1. by *logos* (emphasis on revealing fallacies)
2. by *ethos*
3. by *pathos*
4. by wit

#### F. **Peroratio** (conclusion)—functions:

1. recapitulate (most common function)—restate in a summary way the facts, and arguments
2. rouse the appropriate emotions in audience
3. amplify the force of the points made and extenuate the points made by opposition
4. inspire the audience with a favorable opinion of ourselves and unfavorable opinion of opponents (without sacrificing *ethos*)

### III. Style (*Lexis/Elocutio*)—style and tone

#### A. diction (appropriate word choice and usage)

#### B. sentence effectiveness

1. length
2. kinds
3. variety of patterns
4. euphony

#### C. figures of speech

### IV. Memory (*Memne/Memoria*)—part of classical rhetoric not associated with writing

### V. Delivery (*Hypokrisis/Pronuntiatio*)—part of classical rhetoric not associated with writing

---

\* Rhetoric— "The faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle)