

ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC

BOOK I

RHETORIC is the counterpart of Dialectic,—since both are **1354 a**
 concerned with things of which the cognizance
Rhetoric is, in a manner, common to all men and belongs
is an Art. to no definite science. Hence all men in a manner use both;
 for all men to some extent make the effort of examining and
 of submitting to inquiry, of defending or accusing. People **2**
 in general do these things either quite at random, or merely
 with a knack which comes from the acquired habit. Since
 both ways are possible, clearly it must be possible to reduce
 them to method; for it is possible to consider the cause why
 the practised or the spontaneous speaker hits his mark; and
 such an inquiry, all would allow, is the function of an art.

Now hitherto the writers of treatises on Rhetoric have **3**
 constructed only a small part of that art; for
 proofs form the only artistic element, all else
 being mere appendage. These writers, however,
 say nothing about enthymemes, which are the
 body of proof, but busy themselves chiefly with
 irrelevant matters. The exciting of prejudice, of **4**
 pity, of anger, and such like emotions of the soul, has nothing
 to do with the fact, but has regard to the judge. So that if
 trials were universally managed, as they are at present
 managed in some at least of the cities, and for the most part
 in the best governed, such people would have nothing to say.
 All the world over, men either admit that the laws ought **5**
 so to forbid irrelevant speaking, or actually have laws

which forbid it, as is the case in the procedure of the Areiopagos; a wise provision. For it is a mistake to warp the judge by moving him to anger or envy or pity; it is as if a man, who was going to use a rule, should make it
 6 crooked. Further, it is clear that the litigant's part is simply to prove that the fact is or is not, has occurred or has not occurred. Whether it is great or small, just or unjust, in any respects which the lawgiver has not defined, is a question, of course, on which the judge must decide for himself, instead of being instructed upon it by the litigant.
 7 Now it is most desirable that well-drawn laws should, as far as possible, define everything themselves, leaving as few points as possible to the discretion of the judges; first, because it is easier to get a small than a large number of men
 1354 b qualified by their intelligence to make laws and try causes; next, because legislative acts are done after mature deliberation, whereas judgments are given off-hand, so that it is hard for the judge to satisfy the demands of justice and expediency. Most important of all, the decision of the lawgiver concerns no special case, but is prospective and general; when we come to the ekklesiast and the dikast, they have to decide actual and definite cases; and they are often so entangled¹ with likings and hatreds and private interests, that they are not capable of adequately considering the truth, but have
 8 their judgment clouded by private pleasure or pain. On all other points, then, we say, the judge ought to be given as little discretionary power as possible; but the question whether a thing has or has not happened, will or will not be, is or is not, must perforce be left in his hands; these things
 9 the lawgiver cannot foresee. If, then, this is so, it is manifest that irrelevant matter is treated by all those technical writers who define the other points,—as what the proem, the narrative and each of the other parts should contain; for they busy themselves here solely with creating a certain mind in the judge,—but teach nothing about artificial proof, that

¹ *συνήρηται*, printed in the text of the Venice ed. and preferred by Muretus. With the manuscript reading, *συνήρηται*, the sentence could only mean: 'and, in their case, likings etc., are often *taken into account*'.

1355 a] *Nature and Definition of Rhetoric* 3

is, about the way in which one is to become a master of enthymemes.

It is for this reason that, though the same method applies 10
 to public and to forensic speaking, and though
 the Deliberative branch is nobler and worthier
 of a citizen than that which deals with private
 contracts, they ignore the former, and invariably

aim at systematizing the art of litigation. In public speaking
 it is less worth while to talk about things beside the subject.
 Deliberative oratory is less knavish than Forensic, and embraces
 larger interests. In a public debate, the judge judges in his
 own cause, so that nothing more is needful than to prove that
 the case stands as the adviser says. In forensic speaking
 this is not enough; it is important to win over the hearer.
 The judge's award concerns other men's affairs; and if he
 views these in reference to his own interest, and listens in a
 partial spirit, he indulges the litigant instead of deciding the
 cause. Hence it is that in many places, as we said before¹, 1355 a
 the law forbids irrelevant pleading: in the public assembly,
 the judges themselves take care of that.

It is manifest that the artistic Rhetoric is concerned 11
 with proofs. The rhetorical proof is a sort of
 demonstration, for we entertain the strongest
 persuasion of a thing when we conceive that it
 has been demonstrated. A rhetorical demon-

stration is an enthymeme,—this being, generally speaking,
 the most authoritative of proofs. The enthymeme again is
 a sort of syllogism, and every kind of syllogism alike comes
 under the observation of Dialectic, either generally or in one
 of its departments. Hence it is clear that he who is best able
 to investigate the elements and the genesis of the syllogism
 will also be the most expert with the enthymeme, when he
 has further mastered its subject-matter and its differences
 from the logical syllogism. Truth and the likeness of truth
 come under the observation of the same faculty. (It may
 be added that men are adequately gifted for the quest of truth
 and generally succeed in finding it.) Hence the same sort of

¹ § 5 *supra*.

man who can guess about truth, must be able to guess about probabilities.

It is plain, then, that the mass of technical writers deal with irrelevant matter ; it is plain, too, why¹ they have leaned by choice towards forensic speaking.

- 12 Rhetoric is useful, first, because truth and justice are naturally stronger than their opposites ; so that, when awards are not given duly, truth and justice must have been worsted by their own fault². This is worth correcting. Again, supposing we had the most exact knowledge, there are some people
- (a) instructive : whom it would not be easy to persuade with its help ; for scientific exposition is in the nature of teaching, and teaching is out of the question ; we must give our proofs and tell our story in popular terms,—as we said in the *Topics*³ with reference to controversy with the many.
- (3) suggestive : Further,—one should be able to persuade, just as to reason strictly, on both sides of a question ; not with a view to using the twofold power—one must not be the advocate of evil—but in order, first, that we may know the whole state of the case ; secondly, that, if anyone else argues dishonestly, we on our part may be able to refute him. Dialectic and Rhetoric, alone among all arts, draw indifferently an affirmative or a negative conclusion : both these arts alike are impartial. The conditions of the subject-matter, however, are not the same ; that which is true and better being naturally, as a rule, more easy to demonstrate and more convincing. Besides it would be absurd that, while
- 1355 b (4) defensive. incapacity for physical self-defence is a reproach, incapacity for mental defence should be none ; mental effort
- 13 being more distinctive of man than bodily effort. If it is objected that an abuser of the rhetorical faculty can do great mischief, this, at any rate, applies to all good things except virtue, and especially to the most useful things, as strength,

¹ διότι = ὅτι, 'that' (Cope).

² If those who have truth and right on their side are defeated, *their defeat must be due to themselves*, to their own neglect of Rhetoric (Cope).

³ *Topica*, i 2.

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health, wealth, generalship. By the right use of these things a man may do the greatest good, and by the unjust use, the greatest mischief.

It appears, then, that Rhetoric is not concerned with any single or definite class of subjects but is parallel to Dialectic: it appears, too, that it is useful; and that its function is not to persuade, but to discover the available means of persuasion in each case, according to the analogy of all other arts. The function of the medical art is not to cure, but to make such progress towards a cure as the case admits; since it is possible to treat judiciously even those who can never enjoy health. Further it is clear that it belongs to the same art to observe the persuasive and the apparent persuasive, as, in the case of Dialectic, to observe the real and the apparent syllogism. For the essence of Sophistry is not in the faculty but in the moral purpose: only, in the case of Rhetoric, a man is to be called a rhetorician with respect to his faculty, without distinction of his moral purpose; in the case of Dialectic, a man is 'sophist' in respect to his moral purpose; 'dialectician' in respect, not of his moral purpose, but of his faculty.

Let us now attempt to speak of the method itself—the mode, and the means, by which we are to succeed in attaining our objects. By way of beginning we will once more define the art, and then proceed.

ii. Let Rhetoric be defined, then, as the faculty of discerning in every case the available means of persuasion. This is the function of no other art. Each of the other arts is instructive or persuasive about its proper subject-matter; as the medical art about things wholesome or unwholesome,—geometry, about the properties of magnitudes, arithmetic, about numbers,—and so with the rest of the arts and sciences. But Rhetoric appears to have the power of discerning the persuasive in regard (one may say) to any given subject; and therefore we describe it as having the quality of Art in reference to no special or definite class of subjects.

Summary:—
 The province
 of Rhetoric.

Its fallacious
 branch—how
 related to the
 fallacious
 Dialectic.

Definition of
 Rhetoric.

2 Proofs are either artificial or inartificial. By 'inartificial'

I mean such things as have not been supplied
Proofs:
 I. Inartificial: by our own agency, but were already in existence,—such as witnesses, depositions under torture, contracts, and the like: by 'artificial' I mean such things as may be furnished by our method and by our own agency; so that, of these, the 'inartificial' have only to be used; the 'artificial' have to be invented.

3 Of proofs provided by the speech there are three kinds;
 1356 a one kind depending on the character of the speaker; another, on disposing the hearer in a certain way; a third, a demonstration or apparent demonstration in the speech itself.

Artificial Proofs—
 (1) ethical,
 (2) pathetic,
 3) logical.

4 Ethical proof is wrought when the speech is so spoken as to make the speaker credible; for we trust good men more and sooner, as a rule, about everything; while, about things which do not admit of precision, but only of guess-work, we trust them absolutely. Now this trust, too, ought to be produced by means of the speech,—not by a previous conviction that the speaker is this or that sort of man. It is not true, as some of the technical writers assume in their systems, that the moral worth of the speaker contributes nothing to his persuasiveness; nay, it might be said that almost the most authoritative of proofs is that supplied by character.

1. Ethical proof.

5 The hearers themselves become the instruments of proof when emotion is stirred in them by the speech; for we give our judgments in different ways under the influence of pain and of joy, of liking and of hatred; and this, I repeat, is the one point with which the technical writers of the day attempt to deal. This province shall be examined in detail when we come to speak of the emotions.

2. Pathetic proof.

6 Proof is wrought through the speech itself when we have demonstrated a truth or an apparent truth by the means of persuasion available in a given case.

3. Logical proof.

case.

1356 b] *Proofs, artificial or inartificial* 7

These being the instruments of our proofs, it is clear that 7
 they may be mastered¹ by a man who can
 reason; who can analyse the several types of
 Character and the Virtues, and thirdly, the
 Emotions—the nature and quality of each
 emotion, the sources and modes of its production. It results
 that Rhetoric is, as it were, an offshoot of Dia-
 lectic and of that Ethical science which may
 fairly be called Politics. Hence it is that
 Rhetoric and its professors slip into the garb
 of Political Science—either through want of education, or
 from pretentiousness, or from other human causes. Rhetoric
 is a branch or an image² of Dialectic, as we said at the be-
 ginning. Neither of them is a science relating to the nature
 of any definite subject-matter. They are certain faculties of
 providing arguments.

The faculty
 of Rhetoric
 has two
 elements,

answering to
 (1) Dialectical
 skill; (2) Poli-
 tical Science.

Enough has perhaps been said about the faculty of Dia-
 lectic and of Rhetoric and about their relation to each other.

3. Logical With regard to those proofs which are wrought 8
 proof: by demonstration, real or apparent, just as in
 Dialectic there is Induction on the one hand, and Syllogism 1356 b
 or apparent Syllogism on the other, so it is in Rhetoric. The
 Example is an Induction. The Enthymeme is a Syllogism;
 the Apparent Enthymeme is an Apparent Syllogism³. I call
 the Enthymeme a Rhetorical Syllogism⁴ and the
 Example a Rhetorical Induction. All men effect
 their proofs by demonstration, either with ex-
 amples or with enthymemes; there is no third
 way. Hence, since universally it is necessary to
 demonstrate anything whatever either by syllogism or by

either (a) de-
 ductive, by
 Enthymeme;
 or (b) induc-
 tive, by
 Example.

¹ ταύτας [τὰ τρία] ἐστὶν λαβεῖν.

² ὁμολωμα, the reading of the inferior MSS: ὁμολα, that of the best MS (retained by Spengel and Roemer).

³ Spengel's addition of these words is confirmed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ad Ammaeum*, c. vi.

⁴ "By *enthymeme*, Aristotle meant a rhetorical syllogism: that is, a syllogism drawn, not from the premisses (*ἀρχαί*) proper to any particular science—such, for instance, as medicine—but from propositions relating to contingent things in the sphere of human action, which are the common property of all discussion; propositions which he classifies as general (*εἰκότρα*) and particular (*σημεῖα*); and accordingly

induction (and this we see from the *Analytics*¹), it follows that Induction and Syllogism must be identical respectively with
 9 Example and Enthymeme. The difference between Example and Enthymeme is manifest² from the *Topics*³. There, in reference to syllogism and induction, it has already been said that the proving of a proposition by a number of like instances, is, in Dialectic, Induction—answering to the Example in Rhetoric; and that, when certain things exist, and something else comes to pass through them, distinct from them but due to their existing, either as an universal or as an ordinary result, this is called in Dialectic, a Syllogism, as in Rhetoric
 10 it is called an Enthymeme. It is clear that the Rhetorical branch of Dialectic commands both these weapons. What has been said in the *Methodica* holds good here also; some rhetorical discourses rely on Example, some on Enthymeme; and so, likewise, some rhetoricians prefer the one and some the other. Arguments from Example are not the less persuasive; but arguments in the form of Enthymeme are the
 11 more applauded. The reason of this, and the way to use either, will be explained by and by⁴. Now let us define the things themselves more clearly.

First, the notion of persuasion is relative; some things being at once persuasive and credible in themselves, other things because they are supposed to be demonstrated by persons who are so. Again, no art considers the particular; thus the medical art considers, not what is wholesome for Sokrates or Kallias, but what is so for a certain sort of man

defines an enthymeme as ‘a syllogism from probabilities and signs.’ A misapprehension of Aristotle’s meaning had, as early as the first century B.C., led to the conception of the enthymeme as not merely a syllogism of a particular subject-matter, but also as a syllogism of *which one premiss is suppressed*” (*Attic Orators*, ii 289 f, *g.v.*). Cope supported the former view in the text of *Introd.* 102 f, and reverted to the latter view in the note.

¹ *An. Pr.* ii 23; *An. Post.* i 1.

² ‘Is manifest’ (*φανερὸν*)—*i.e.* may be inferred from the definitions of Induction and of the Syllogism in the *Topics*. Nothing is said in the *Topics* about Example or Enthymeme specially.

³ *Top.* i 1, p. 100 A. 25 (syllogism): i 12, p. 105 A. 13 (induction).

⁴ The cause and origin of them (so Victorius), and the mode of their employment, we will describe hereafter (ii 20–24). Cope, *Introd.* p. 155.

1357 a] *The subjects of Rhetoric contingent* 9

or a certain class. This is characteristic of an Art, whereas
 particulars are infinite and cannot be known.
 Hence Rhetoric, too, will consider, not what is
 probable to the individual, as to Sokrates or
 Hippias, but what is probable to a given class,
 just as Dialectic does. Dialectic does not reason for *any*
 premisses—dotards have notions of their own—but from
 premisses which require discussion. So does Rhetoric reason
 only upon recognised subjects of debate. Its
 concern is with subjects on which we deliberate,
 not having reduced them to systems; and with
 hearers who cannot grasp the unity of an argu-
 ment which has many stages, or follow a long chain of reason-
 ing. We debate about things which seem capable of being
 either thus or thus. Matters which admit of no ambiguity,
 past, present, or future, are debated by no one, on that sup-
 position: it is useless.

Now, one may construct a syllogism and draw a con-
 clusion either from facts already reduced to
 syllogisms or from facts which have not been
 proved syllogistically, but which need such proof,
 because they are not probable. The former of these pro-
 cesses is necessarily difficult to follow owing to its length;—
 the umpire being assumed to be a plain man. Reasonings of
 the latter kind are not persuasive, because drawn from pre-
 misses which are not admitted or probable. Hence both the
 enthymeme and the example must deal with things which are
 (as a rule) contingent—the example, as a kind of induction,
 the enthymeme as a syllogism, and as a syllogism of few
 elements,—often, of fewer than the normal syllogism. Thus,
 if one of these elements is something notorious,
 it need not even be stated, as the hearer himself
 supplies it. For instance, to prove that Dorieus
 has been victor in a contest, for which the prize
 is a crown, it is enough to say that he has been victor in the
 Olympic games. It is needless to add that in the Olympic
 contests the prize is a crown; every one is aware of
 that.

Rhetoric
 must address
 itself to
 classes, not
 individuals.

Its subjects
 are contingent
 things which
 men can
 influence.

Its premisses
 must be pro-
 babilities.

One premiss
 of the enthy-
 meme may be
 suppressed.

- The premisses of rhetorical syllogisms seldom belong to the class of necessary facts. The subject-matter of judgments and deliberations is usually contingent; for it is about their actions that men debate and take thought; but actions are all contingent, no one of them, one may say, being necessary. And results which are merely usual and contingent must be deduced from premisses of the same kind, as necessary results from necessary premisses:—this, too, has been shown in the *Analytics*¹. It follows that the propositions from which enthymemes are taken will be sometimes necessarily true, but more often contingently true. Now the materials of the enthymeme are Probabilities and Signs. It follows that Probabilities and Signs must answer to the Contingent and the Necessary truths².
- 14 Every premiss of the enthymeme is a Probability or a Sign. the Probable is that which usually happens; (with a limitation, however, which is sometimes forgotten —namely that the thing *may* happen otherwise :) the Probable being related to that in respect of which it is probable as Universal to Particular.
- 15 The Probable defined. One kind of Sign is as Particular to Universal; the other, as Universal to Particular. The Infallible Sign is called *tekmêrion*; the Fallible Sign has no distinctive name. By Infallible Signs I mean those which supply a strict Syllogism. Hence it is that this sort of Sign is called *tekmêrion*, for when people think that what they have said is irrefutable, then they think that they are bringing a *tekmêrion* (a *conclusive* proof)—as if the matter had been demonstrated and *concluded* (*πεπερασμένον*); for *tekmâr* and *peras* mean the same thing ('*limit*') in the old language.
- 16 1357 b Signs. The Sign which is as a Particular to a Universal would be illustrated by saying, 'Wise men are just; for Sokrates was wise and just.' This is a Sign, indeed, but it can be refuted, even though the statement be a fact; for it does not make a syllogism. On the other hand, if one said—'Here is a sign that he is ill—he is feverish'; or, 'she is a mother, for
- 17 18

¹ *An. Pr.* i 8.² See Cope's *Introduction*, p. 159.