THE RHETORICAL TRADITION

Readings from Classical Times to the Present

Second Edition

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GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

In parturition begins the centrality of the nervous system. The different nervous systems, through language and the ways of production, erect various communities of interests and insights, social communities varying in nature and scope. And out of the division and the community arises the "universal" rhetorical situation. — KENNETH BURKE

Rhetoric has a number of overlapping meanings: the practice of oratory; the study of the strategies of effective oratory; the use of language, written or spoken, to inform or persuade; the study of the persuasive effects of language; the study of the relation between language and knowledge; the classification and use of tropes and figures; and, of course, the use of empty promises and half-truths as a form of propaganda. Nor does this list exhaust the definitions that might be given. Rhetoric is a complex discipline with a long history: It is less helpful to try to define it once and for all than to look at the many definitions it has accumulated over the years and to attempt to understand how each arose and how each still inhabits and shapes the field.

This general introduction offers an overview of the historical development of rhetoric divided into conventional chronological periods: the Classical (from the birth of rhetoric in ancient Greece to about 400 C.E.), the Medieval (to about 1400), the Renaissance (to about 1700), the Enlightenment (from the late seventeenth through the eighteenth century), the Nineteenth Century, and the Modern and Postmodern (the twentieth century). The introductions to each of the six parts of *The Rhetorical Tradition* provide a more detailed historical and theoretical picture of the development of rhetoric.

THE ORIGINS OF RHETORIC

Rhetoric in its various incarnations has been a powerful force in public affairs and in education for most of its existence since the fifth century B.C.E., when it developed in Greek probate courts and flourished under Greek democracy. Rhetoric was, first and

foremost, the art of persuasive speaking. In civil disputes, persuasion established claims where no clear truth was available. Persuasive speech, too, could depose or empower tyrants, determine public policy, and administer laws. Public speaking was inseparable from the business of government and civil affairs, and early on some enterprising orators turned to teaching the art of persuasive speech as well as practicing it. Speeches required arguments that would convince and stories that would move. Speeches could be divided into parts, the parts had strategies, the strategies varied with the occasion and the audience, and the finished speech had to be memorized and finally delivered. Rhetoric thus came to designate both the practice of persuasive oratory and the description of ways to construct a successful speech.

Rhetoric selects, from the vast realm of human discourse, occasions for speaking and writing that can be regarded as persuasive in intent. Rhetoric categorizes the types of discourse it has selected, analyzes each of those types in terms of structure and purpose, and identifies the means for successfully constructing each type. In pursuing these goals, rhetoric comes to endorse codes for linguistic correctness and to make taxonomies of artful ways to use language. It suggests resources for evidence and argument and gives rules for accurate reasoning. And it divides the mind into faculties to which persuasive appeals, both logical and psychological, can be addressed.

The study of rhetoric dominated formal education in most of Europe and the United States until well into the nineteenth century. To study rhetoric was, for much of its history, to study Greek and Latin grammar, classical literature and history, and logic, as well as to practice the composition and delivery of speeches. But by and large, rhetoric has not been a form of inquiry seeking to extend its scope by looking into the various uses of discourse that might be considered persuasive. Rather, it has been chiefly prescriptive, intended to teach a practical art and to provide guidelines for discourse in several well-defined social, political, and artistic arenas. Nonetheless, a vital art inevitably produces a body of theory—some of it implicit in its practical systems, some of it abstract and speculative—that investigates philosophical underpinnings in addition to techniques and effects. So it is with rhetorical theory, which seeks to penetrate the complexities of communication and persuasion.

At its very inception, the study of rhetoric generated not only an elaborate system for investigating language practices but also a set of far-reaching, theoretical questions about the relationship of language to knowledge. The system of classical rhetoric was too powerful to be limited to the few forms of public speaking to which it was originally applied, and the questions about language and knowledge raised by classical rhetoricians were never to be put to rest. After the classical period, the bounds of rhetoric expanded, until today they encompass virtually all forms of discourse and symbolic communication. Yet the classical system remained the basis of rhetoric throughout its history and in large measure remains so today.

CLASSICAL RHETORIC

Late in the fourth century B.C.E., Aristotle reduced the concerns of rhetoric to a system that thereafter served as its touchstone. To speak of classical rhetoric is thus to speak of Aristotle's system and its elaboration by Cicero and Quintilian.

Types of Rhetorical Discourse

The classical system of rhetoric defines three principal kinds of public speech: the legal or forensic speech, which takes place in the courtroom and concerns judgment about a past action; the political or deliberative speech in the legislative assembly, concerned with moving people to future action; and the ceremonial or epideictic speech in a public forum, intended to strengthen shared beliefs about the present state of affairs. In the classical system, these three situations constitute the entire domain of rhetoric. Later rhetoricians expanded this list to include sermons, letters, and eventually all forms of discourse, even conversation, that could be seen as persuasive in intent.

Psychology and Audience Analysis

The rhetorical occasion always includes an audience, and the speaker must consider the motives that are likely to influence audiences of the three types of speech. Classical rhetoric accordingly examines the psychology and moral assumptions of the different kinds of people who may comprise an audience. Aristotle assumes that people always seek to serve their own self-interest and that different people perceive their self-interest differently; he thus compares young men and old, the rich and the poor, and rulers of democracies and of oligarchies. He treats most psychological attributes as human nature, common to all people in all circumstances (all young men have hot tempers and strong appetites, for example). Even for those attributes that are conditioned by social class, political interest, and history, he seeks the most general explanation. Audience analysis helps chiefly to determine the kinds of emotional appeals that might be used, for logical appeals (as we shall see) are not supposed to be subject to such vagaries.

The Preparation of a Speech

Classical rhetoric divides the process of preparing a persuasive speech into five stages:

1. Invention, the search for persuasive ways to present information and formulate arguments
2. Arrangement, the organization of the parts of a speech to ensure that all the means of persuasion are present and properly disposed
3. Style, the use of correct, appropriate, and striking language throughout the speech
4. Memory, the use of mnemonics and practice of the speech
5. Delivery, the use of effective gestures and vocal modulation to present the speech

This five-part composing process remains a cornerstone of the study of rhetoric.

The speaker is supposed to produce a discourse by proceeding stepwise through the stages. Although the speaker's specific choices in each stage of the process

depend on the occasion for his (or, rarely, her) speech, the five-part process is taken to be appropriate for composing any kind of speech. All of the parts are necessary to ensure production of a full range of appeals. The classical system assumes that there are three forms of persuasive appeal: to reason (*logos*), to emotion (*pathos*), and to the speaker's authority (*ethos*). We shall see how these forms are included in a speech as we examine each stage of the process.

Invention. In the classical system, the first stage of composing, invention, is the most important, because here rational arguments—appeals to *logos*—are devised. Logical appeals are regarded as superior to the other two. Aristotle assumes that rationality is the most uniform and universal of the human mental abilities, or faculties, and so logical arguments will presumably have the widest currency. At the same time, he argues that emotional appeals are needed in the effective speech, though he and his successors lament the fact that rational appeals alone are not enough. Classical rhetoric emphasizes *logos* as if in recognition that human beings respond most strongly to rational appeals, though this idea may be more a hope than a fact, an attempt to increase the power of rational appeals by valorizing them.

Classical rhetoric offers several methods of generating rational appeals. One is to consider the common topics, or *topoi* (commonplaces or *loci* in Latin), to see whether arguments can be developed in terms of any of them. The topics are stock formulas in which arguments may be cast. They include comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and argument a fortiori; they also include such seemingly nonrational appeals as puns on proper names. In addition to the universally applicable topics are special topics for particular kinds of speech or subject matter—the rules of evidence in criminal law, for example. When employing any of these heuristic devices, the rhetorician "invents" arguments in the sense of finding ways to combine and present evidence persuasively.

Rational appeals in classical invention are not designed to be equivalent to scientific demonstration. Aristotle draws important distinctions among demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric and the type of knowledge found in each. Demonstration reveals unalterable truths about the physical world. Dialectic uses rigorous syllogistic logic to approach probable truths in questions about human affairs and philosophy that do not lend themselves to absolute certainty. Rhetoric also seeks probable truth in the realm of human affairs, relying on knowledge produced by demonstration and dialectic, along with traditional or received wisdom and the various means of finding persuasive connections, such as those suggested by the common topics.

Another form of rational appeal is the enthymeme, which, like the syllogism used in dialectic, deduces a conclusion from a general premise. But whereas the general premise of a syllogism is supposed to be true and its deduction therefore necessary, the general premise of an enthymeme is merely probable, leading to a tentative conclusion. Often this premise is not stated explicitly but is assumed to be part of the audience's common knowledge.

The rhetorician constructing an argument must draw on sources of knowledge that lie outside the domain of rhetoric. To ensure access to these sources, the rhetorician must be learned in philosophy, history, law, literature, and other fields of

study, a point heavily stressed by Cicero and Quintilian. Given the scope of rhetoric, however, the distinctions between *inside* and *outside* can blur, making unclear the nature of the rhetorician's activities with respect to knowledge. This problem is a continuing theme of rhetorical theory. In the classical view, rhetoric manages knowledge, conveying but not creating it; the rhetorician's activities are subordinate to the truth-seeking of the scientist and the philosopher. But people have not always agreed that philosophy or science has access to true knowledge. If, as some philosophers maintain, all knowledge is uncertain and constructed by argument, then rhetoric has all the more value because it studies the ways in which argument and persuasion create conviction, and because it creates the provisional agreements and shared values on which human community depends.

In Aristotle's day, the position that all knowledge is contingent was defended most ardently by the Sophists, who saw themselves as both philosophers and rhetoricians. In modern parlance, the Sophists treat rhetoric as epistemic, as making knowledge. Moreover, they tend to see all language use as rhetorical—that is, persuasive in intent. Through language, people collectively construct a value-laden worldview (the only kind of worldview available) and reach agreement on how to act together for their mutual benefit in light of that worldview. Different communities may see things differently because of their cultural traditions and historical circumstances. For the Sophists, there are no privileged nonrhetorical discourses and no privileged nonrhetorical knowledge.

The Sophists' position was attacked and discredited by Aristotle's teacher Plato. In traditional histories of rhetoric, the Sophists are often slighted, but their epistemic vision of rhetoric haunts the subject to the present day. Even Plato, who condemned the Sophists, came to see rhetoric as an essential component in the search for true knowledge. And in other eras the Sophistic view of rhetoric has reasserted itself. Today, philosophical skepticism about true or foundational knowledge has sparked renewed interest in Sophism.

Arrangement. In the stage of arrangement, the arguments devised through invention are placed in the most effective order. Aristotle says that all speeches have four parts: the introduction, the statement of the issue, the argument, and the conclusion. Logical appeals should go into the statement and argument, while appeals to pathos and ethos should appear in the introduction and conclusion. Cicero spells out a five-part structure with a more precise distribution of appeals: The introduction should contain ethical and pathetic appeals; the narration of the facts of the case, while ostensibly logical, should also be an occasion for pathetic appeals; the statement of position should hold the logical arguments in favor of the position; the refutation should make logical arguments against the opponent's position; and the conclusion should embody further pathetic and ethical appeals.

Emotional appeals are something of an embarrassment in the classical system. They are generated by a kind of invention process that examines the nature of emotions, the kinds of stimuli that may excite them, and the motives and inclinations of the different types of people to whom the emotional appeals might be directed. In the classical system, this process of formulating nonlogical appeals is distinguished

from logical invention, and it shifts by default from the invention stage to the arrangement stage. In the arrangement stage, the speaker considers the kind of discourse to be presented, the nature of the subject, and the characteristics of the audience, all of which guide decisions about the relative weight and placement of logical and emotional appeals. Arrangement itself is thus a form of nonlogical appeal, as later rhetoricians acknowledged. From the seventeenth century on, philosophers paid increasing attention to psychology, which put both arrangement and emotional appeals on a new footing. Psychological theories offered a "natural" sequence of mental operations leading from reasoning to belief to action. Psychology also confirmed in new ways the classical observation that reason could rarely persuade by itself.

Style. Style is separate from invention and arrangement in the classical five-part scheme. It dresses up previously formulated ideas in attractive verbal garb. Aristotle tends to treat style as decoration, a sop to the base human desire for sensual enticements. Nevertheless, he begins what would become the habitual, not to say obsessive, practice among rhetoricians of cataloging and illustrating large numbers of verbal figures. Several times in its long history, the study of rhetoric has contracted to little more than the study of style. Rhetoric in the schools has often consisted of memorizing long lists of figures of speech. In the Renaissance, for example, stylistic rhetoric texts filled with such lists abounded. Highly ornamented styles have often been valued for their beauty and ingenuity, and stylistic rhetoric came in time to be as closely allied with poetry as it was with oratory.

Stylistic rhetoric does not typically address the question of generating ideas, which is the province of invention. But for some rhetoricians, the search for effective figures is akin to invention. The rhetorical figures, like the topics of invention, can be seen as parallel to human thought processes. Hence, formulating ideas in figures and ornamenting arguments will make them structurally more understandable, memorable, and convincing. At the same time, the process of stylistic formulation can be seen as a heuristic method, in which ideas are discovered by the search for figurative expression. Metaphor in particular has been regarded as generative. The Sophists made this connection between style and generative thought and have been chastised for it. Renaissance stylistics would be denounced in turn. More recently, though, deconstructive critics have been working to rehabilitate this insight into the inventive power of style.

The sensual power of word magic to create belief was perhaps most potently felt while rhetoric was still employed largely in oral genres, and response to this power may have dwindled as rhetoric increasingly moved to written forms. Certainly the last two stages of the five-part composing process, memory and delivery, dwindled in importance with the turn to print, though they did not disappear entirely.

Memory. Classical rhetoric adopted the notion that memory could be improved by treating it as a system of visualized locations, somewhat similar to the way the commonplaces are imagined to reside in actual mental locations that one tours dur-

ing the invention process. The speaker memorizes the sequence of rooms in a building, assigns a vivid image to each section of the speech, and then associates the image with a location in the memorized building. This approach means memorizing two things rather than one, but there were those who found it workable.

For Plato, memory is a link not just with earthly places but with those heavenly places where ideal forms and true knowledge reside. The right method of cultivating memory, then, might give one access to these remote, transcendent realms of knowledge. Neoplatonists until well into the Renaissance sought to devise memory systems sufficiently sensitive to the supposedly parallel structures of mind and world to facilitate the acquisition of vast amounts of new knowledge. Hence the presence of memory in the system of rhetoric raises in yet another form the question of how knowledge is represented in the mind.

Delivery. For Aristotle, delivery is an art akin to acting, which he despises. Like memory, delivery has often received rather perfunctory treatment, even by Quintilian and others who take a brighter view than Aristotle and acknowledge its importance. The Roman rhetoricians understand that voice, gestures, and facial expressions materially affect the impact of all that has gone into a speech. Delivery is a system of nonverbal signs that has enormous power, a power recognized by eighteenth-century elocutionists and by twentieth-century electronic media analysts, among others.

The Influence of Classical Rhetoric

Rhetoric has frequently been treated as if it were chiefly a succession of reformulations of the classical system outlined above. There is some justice in this view. The fundamental concerns of rhetoric in all ages appear to be those defined in the classical period: purpose, audience, composition, argumentation, organization, and style. Not only do the classical categories of rhetorical study persist, but so do many of the particulars. In every period we find discussions of the common and special topics, the steps in composing, the figures of speech, and so on. And with respect to larger questions of theory, the status of knowledge as true or contingent continues even today to be unsettled. Yet for all the continuity of the rhetorical tradition, rhetoric has grown and changed. Classical rhetoric may name many of the fundamental concerns, but it does not exhaust the possibilities for understanding the nature of persuasive discourse, as a review of the history of rhetoric will suggest.

Late Classical Rhetoric in Rome

Roman rhetoricians (such as Cicero and Quintilian) draw largely on the Greeks (chiefly Gorgias, Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle). Much of the work by the Roman writers is prescriptive, providing guidelines for employing the techniques arrayed in the five-part composing process. But Cicero and others also went beyond considerations of structure to speculate about the ways in which persuasion shaped belief and

action. Oratory in Cicero's time (the first century B.C.E.) was a powerful political weapon—one Cicero himself wielded—and rhetoric, however derivative its theory, was an art that helped organize civilized communal life. By the time of Quintilian (the first century C.E.), Rome was an empire and political oratory was suppressed. Rhetoric was still used in the law courts, but it also became a form of entertainment, focused on stylistic extravagance. Yet Quintilian envisions the creation, through rhetorical training that includes broadly humane learning, of a "good man speaking well" who might save the state.

MEDIEVAL RHETORIC

Early Christianity

If Quintilian's good speaker were to be found in early medieval times, perhaps he would be a member of the new faith, Christianity. But many of the Church fathers doubted that pagan rhetoric could serve the needs of the new religion. They saw rhetoric as part of the hated Greco-Roman culture, imbued with the hopeless moral corruption of the pagan world. Moreover, rhetorical invention generates probable knowledge through the commonplaces and the enthymeme, but Christian knowledge is absolute. Similarly, whereas rhetoric (and classical philosophy generally) relies on reason to produce knowledge, Christian knowledge comes from revelation. Augustine, at the turn of the fifth century C.E., makes at last a practical decision in favor of rhetoric by focusing on the issue of persuasion: Christianity cannot afford to eschew a powerful tool for defending and expounding its principles and beliefs.

The Later Middle Ages

Augustine's accommodation of rhetoric and Christianity did not result in much new work on rhetoric in the Middle Ages, however. Not long after Augustine's death, Boethius, one of the last scholars with classical training in Greek and Latin, wrote a brief summary of classical rhetoric. His summary, more widely available than the originals, reduced thousands of pages of theory and practical advice to a few lines on each of the most general points. This kind of work is typical of the treatment of rhetoric—and most other branches of learning—for almost eight hundred years after the times of Augustine and Boethius. Classical texts were rare, and the Church, while preserving them, also wished to preserve their rarity.

Rhetoric in the Middle Ages did produce sets of rules for the art of preaching and for the legal letters through which the far-flung Church and secular governments were administered. Manuals of preaching and of letter writing began to appear in great numbers after the twelfth century. Also persisting through the medieval period was the study of style, generally separated from other rhetorical concerns and associated with the composition of verse. The uses of rhetoric by both men and women in more informal kinds of political interaction—for example, in negotiations at a royal court—were also increasingly recognized, as in the work of Christine de Pizan.

THE RENAISSANCE

Stylistic Rhetoric

The study of figures gave names to every sort of phrase and sentence, a practice that became more widespread in the fifteenth century. The emphasis on style was stimulated by renewed interest in classical learning. It was not possible, in the Renaissance, to speak without "using" rhetoric, and a great occupation of clever rhetors in this period was amplification of the names of figures and copious demonstrations of their use for the delectation of other experts. Many rhetorical terms, too, found their way into the new science of vernacular grammar: colon, comma, apostrophe, and parenthesis. For stylistic rhetoric texts in the Renaissance, the idea that all language use could be treated rhetorically was confined for the most part to style, to the forms of statements and not to the social situations of their utterance.

Private Discourse in Rhetoric

Private discourse, however persuasive, had hitherto remained outside the boundaries of rhetoric. Now the art of letter writing, in the hands of the Renaissance humanists, grew to include private as well as public communications. By the late seventeenth century, private conversation, too, came to be seen as rhetorical, in guides such as Madeleine de Scudéry's that placed rhetoric at the site of considerable political power in a society increasingly governed by monarchs and their advisers. Scudéry was well known both for her influence at the court of Louis XIV and for the high literary quality of the dialogues in which she explained and exemplified the art of courtly conversation.

Public Discourse by Women

Women's literacy increased in the Renaissance, and although few women received instruction in rhetoric and almost all women were forbidden to speak in public, more women ventured into public forums. Often their motive was to promote their religious views, but always they found themselves forced to defend their very right to read, write, and speak. In the late seventeenth century, an early leader of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, Margaret Fell, was one of the first women to publish an aggressive defense of these rights. She attacked prevailing interpretations of such pronouncements against women's speaking as are found in the writings of the Apostle Paul, which were frequently cited to silence women. Ironically, this sort of defense had to be mounted repeatedly over the next two centuries, as women's arguments, even those well known at the time, like Fell's, tended to go out of print rapidly and to be lost to later women writers. In this way the defense of the right to speak becomes almost a trope in women's rhetoric, from the writings of Fell's contemporary Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in the late seventeenth century to Sarah Grimké's defense of women abolitionists in the nineteenth century. While the scope of classical rhetoric was narrowing in the work of late Renaissance male theorists, women were enlarging their claims on rhetoric's traditional powers.

Ramus

In the sixteenth century, the classical approach to rhetoric was assailed by the French philosopher Peter Ramus, who proposed a popular reform of the allied arts of dialectic and rhetoric. Dialectic sought to perfect the syllogism as a way of examining statements about the world. Logically perfect statements, as long as they were not inconsistent with divine revelation, were presumably true. Dialectic would thus grasp the truth (through the syllogism), while rhetoric would offer it to the public. Ramus, however, formally separates invention (and arrangement as well) from rhetoric and assigns it to dialectic. Ramus believes that contiguous fields of study should not overlap, especially where one field possesses a clearly superior method—as in this case, where dialectic is, he says, superior. Rhetoric in Ramus's scheme is confined to style, memory, and delivery. Ramistic rhetoric, taken up almost entirely with matters of style, flourished well into the seventeenth century, though it was vigorously opposed by Ciceronians, who argued for the continued importance of all five parts of the classical composing process.

Science, Epistemology, and Rhetoric

The Ramistic conception of dialectic was overturned by the inductive orientation of the new approach to science. Francis Bacon, at the turn of the seventeenth century, argues that the syllogism cannot discover anything new. The proper distinction to draw, Bacon says, is between inquiry, as the work of science, and recovery, as the work of rhetorical invention. Even though Bacon supports a rhetoric that includes all its traditional parts, one consequence of the new scientific movement of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the further estrangement of rhetoric from the source of knowledge. Some of Bacon's followers attack rhetoric as an unreliable tool for handling knowledge. And not only rhetoric but language itself comes under this attack.

But if language is unreliable, how is truth to be known? Can words and sentences, even if purged of ornament, stand for mental representations? Can language be purified for science or philosophy? Bacon addresses the problem this way: Human knowledge must be regarded as only a version of the objective truth, a version warped by prejudices, preconceptions, and imprecise language. Verbal representations of this knowledge introduce distortion because they are signs that may lose their definition, their link to the signified. Bacon hopes that careful observation and skeptical induction will overcome these epistemological limitations and reveal the truth of things, a truth that rhetoric may then disseminate. But by the very fact of elaborating the nature of mental and verbal "distortion," he reopens the possibility that the processes of thought and language are never neutral conveyors of truth.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

John Locke also struggled with this problem. Human language must make use of generalizations, Locke contends, or else words will proliferate along with the multitude of things in the world until language becomes too cumbersome to use conve-

niently. Generalities don't actually exist: They are ideas, similarities perceived by human observers. But while Locke seems certain that the general idea comes first, he also suggests that it is in some sense created by language. In any case, there is no guarantee that the generality signified by a word will convey the same idea to all users of the language. This is a serious problem, and Locke and his successors blame rhetoric for making it worse. If only stylistic extravagance were curbed, they say, language might be closer to the things it names—if not to things out in the world, then at least to people's clear and distinct ideas about them.

For a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rhetoricians, these complaints were a call for reform. Rhetoric was out of step with the times, it seemed, because invention relied on outdated deductive methods and stylistic rhetoric impeded the already difficult search for truth. Rhetoric ought to moderate its reliance on the topics for invention because those topics depend on received wisdom rather than observed fact. Furthermore, syllogistic reasoning should be limited, as in Bacon's scheme, to avoiding fallacies. And clearness (or "perspicuity") should of course be preferred to an ornamented style. These reforms proved to be widely influential and later allowed for the development of a more epistemologically sophisticated rhetoric.

The Eighteenth Century

Giambattista Vico, an Italian professor of rhetoric of the early eighteenth century, was one of the few in his day to challenge science's claim of epistemological superiority. Responding to the philosophy of René Descartes, Vico objects that the famous philosopher's method relies, no less than rhetoric does, on probability and belief rather than demonstration of absolute truth. Vico even sees rhetoric as superior to the Cartesian method, for rhetoric takes probability seriously, understands the ways in which argument produces belief, and trains young people for responsible civic action, while Cartesianism does not. An honest analysis of the function of language, Vico argues, will reveal the ways in which knowledge is actually formed, in contrast to the Cartesians' claims to have the real truth. Vico's ideas, however, had little influence in his own day. His elaboration of the epistemological doubts hinted at in Bacon conflicted with the positive thrust of the new theory of knowledge, a thrust that was supported by the growth of empirical scientific learning. Vico was seen as a reactionary, an opponent of scientific and philosophical progress.

But Bacon had already suggested an obvious and less contentious connection that rhetoric could make with epistemology—namely, through psychology. Rhetoric could observe the structure of the mind and thereby enhance communication. Rhetoric, after all, addresses the faculties of the mind. Should it not study the ways of making this address most efficient and effective? By taking a scientific attitude toward the study of language, rhetoric could ally itself with a power that would otherwise remain a dangerous enemy. Thus eighteenth-century rhetoricians endorse clarity as an ideal of style, support "natural" arrangement, and favor a rhetorical theory that follows "human nature" in appealing to reason and emotions. Moreover, they regard the classical authors as excellent observers of human nature. According to Locke's theory of uniform psychology, human nature presumably has not changed

since the classical authors' day; therefore, studying these writers' works could not conflict with the new "scientific" standards of psychology.

Bacon identifies along with each mental faculty a genre that especially addresses it: philosophy for Reason, history for Memory, and literature for Imagination. George Campbell, writing late in the eighteenth century, extends Bacon's taxonomy of faculties and genres. Scientific demonstration is but one form of communication, says Campbell, appealing to one faculty, Reason, through a preferred style, perspicuity or clarity. Campbell even steers close to Vico's argument here, pointing out that demonstration relies on belief in previous demonstrations, proofs, and axioms. Between science and rhetoric, then, Campbell sees a range of probabilistic reasoning, not a difference in kind. Rhetoric will give the best account not only of reason but also of the other faculties of the human mind, Campbell argues, for rhetoric studies human sentiments, passions, dispositions, and purposes in order to affect them.

Though Bacon, Campbell, and others repeat the traditional definitions of occasions for oratory — at the bar, in the pulpit, and in the legislature — one effect of the psychological turn was to be the emphasis on "universal" modes of discourse, modes that address not audiences but mental faculties. Thus rhetoric moves toward a more "scientific" theory and takes a proprietary interest in psychology.

Rhetoric and Psychology

Psychology had been a concern for rhetoric since the time of Aristotle. Indeed, Aristotle has more care for psychology than most of his rhetorical descendants do. Most rhetorical systems focus on reasoning, discourse structures, and style but have little to say about appealing to a variety of audiences, beyond the rather obvious advice to adjust style and learning to their capacities. Ironically, perhaps, the new approach to psychology in the eighteenth century does not focus attention on audiences at all. Instead, it treats all minds as essentially the same. This approach conforms to Locke's influential idea of universal psychology; it is democratic (in the sense of being uniform, hence egalitarian), and it is expedient for an expanded theory of communication. The scene of psychological rhetoric, in its textbooks and theories, is a mind, not a public forum.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY RHETORIC

So closely connected were rhetoric and psychology by the nineteenth century that the influential psychologist Alexander Bain taught rhetoric and wrote a textbook on written composition. Bain argues that figures of speech reflect the mental operations of comparison, contrast, and association and that the modes of discourse — description, narration, exposition, argument, and poetry — correspond to mental faculties. For Bain, invention and arrangement are more or less determined by the nature of the modes of discourse: That is, description presents an object whose parts must be set forth in some convenient order, narrative is the presentation of a chronological sequence of actions, and so on. For argument, invention combines knowledge of the

subject and syllogistic reasoning. As for style, clarity is still the standard, except, of course, for imaginative literature.

Challenges to Rhetoric and Psychology

The comfortable notion promoted by Bain's faculty psychology that all audiences were essentially the same was disrupted in the nineteenth century, as public speakers and their audiences became increasingly diverse. White women, who had begun to claim a public voice in the Renaissance, now mounted the speaker's platform in increasing numbers to agitate for a variety of social reforms. In doing so, they still had to defend their right to speak, and often they did so by drawing on religious authority. Women and men of color also addressed new audiences, although, as Maria Stewart learned, African American women sometimes faced stiff resistance to their public speaking even within the black community; and as Frederick Douglass experienced, white audiences often attempted to impose racist stereotypes on African American speakers. But no longer would the typical rhetorical situation in the West be one in which speaker and audience were all the same race and sex, and rhetorical theory, though slowly, began to take this diversity into account.

Though still seeking universals, psychology changed radically at the close of the nineteenth century, largely through the work of Sigmund Freud. The patient's speech is at the heart of psychoanalysis, but Freud and his followers were interested in what was hidden in this speech — in its source in nonverbal experiences and unconscious drives — not in its persuasive effects. Psychoanalysis pointed to mental realms apparently beyond the reach of verbal persuasion, and so rhetoric continued to rely for the structure of its appeals upon the older psychology of Bain. Yet the inadequacy of Bain's system was demonstrated not only by changes in the science of psychology but also by changing rhetorical situations.

In the nineteenth century, too, schools and colleges added a vast number of new subjects, responding at last to the demands of science, technology, and business as well as to the pressure for mass education. Rhetoric had had the lion's share of the curriculum, but competition from other disciplines now forced rhetoric into one- or two-semester courses. Narrowed in compass, rhetoric focused more and more on written composition. Soon written composition became an adjunct of newly formed departments of English literature, and separate departments of speech communication arose to take over instruction in oral delivery and the study of rhetoric's history. Moreover, education beyond the elementary level became increasingly available to white women and to men and women of color, and the traditional curriculum designed for a white male elite would not meet these new students' needs.

But if science, self, and society all escaped the domain of the rhetorical — at least for a time — they have returned in the modern era. In the late nineteenth century, philosopher and one-time rhetoric teacher Friedrich Nietzsche challenged the self-satisfied assumptions on which scientific knowledge appeared, to its defenders, to rest. What we are pleased to call Truth, says Nietzsche (echoing the Sophists), is a social arrangement, not a glimpse of ultimate reality. Scientists and philosophers delude themselves in thinking otherwise. They construct the world they wish to

believe in, using a language that is far from objective and neutral. Language can never be so, says Nietzsche: It is always partial, value-laden, intentional—in short, rhetorical. Nietzsche's ideas, so dissonant in his own time, have made their mark in ours.

MODERN AND POSTMODERN RHETORIC

The Twentieth Century

A number of twentieth-century rhetoricians have offered rhetorically grounded theories of meaning, value, intention, and knowledge. I. A. Richards, for example, sees in rhetoric an approach to meaning that can correct the "proper meaning fallacy"—the idea (already attacked by Nietzsche) that there is a direct link between words and the things or ideas they represent. Rhetoric shows, for Richards, that meaning is a function of context. Words are meaningful only in discourse (not, that is, in dictionaries), and discourse is meaningful to people who understand language by relating its present use to their previous experience of it. Richards thus defines rhetoric broadly, as the study of communication and understanding.

Kenneth Burke follows a similar path in his work. Discourse of all kinds, he says, seeks to motivate people in some way, so we should seek meaning in intentions and effects. Language is a form of human action: It requires an agent with a purpose, a scene of action, a rhetorical strategy, and an actual speech or text. Seeing discourse this way, "dramatistically" as Burke calls it, is to see all language as motivated, hence as rhetorical. Burke also searches discourse for its ideological function of promoting identification with communities and their beliefs. In his analyses, rhetoric merges with political, psychological, sociological, religious, and aesthetic investigations of human behavior.

For Chaim Perelman, rhetoric is a powerful and necessary alternative to formal logic for the study of practical reasoning. Indeed, he says, formal logic is useless outside its own tiny, abstract realm. Echoing Vico, Perelman objects to the Cartesian implication that probabilistic argument is not rational and therefore not worthy of development because it does not produce absolute truth. But probabilistic arguments are the basis of legal, ethical, and practical decisions that guide our lives. Rhetoric can tell us, says Perelman, about the way that knowledge and belief are formed by arguments based on probable reasoning, experience, and established custom. Moreover, a rhetorical view of knowledge serves as a warning against the claim, often advanced in illiberal causes, that some knowledge is absolute and beyond argument. Even in science, as modern philosophers of science admit (or at least debate), knowledge arises through argument within communities that share assumptions and beliefs.

Rhetorical theory, following these lines of development, has come to focus today on the question of the source and status of knowledge. Philosophers like Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, who do not work in the rhetorical tradition, nonetheless contribute to modern rhetorical theory through their important studies of language and its relation to knowledge. Foucault, for example, follows Nietzsche in attacking the idea that language is the passive conveyor of knowledge.

Discourse, he says, is part of the network of knowledge and power, shaped by disciplines and institutions with their complex interactions and motivations. Authority to speak about certain kinds of knowledge (*ethos*, we might say) comes from institutional certification; reasoning is a function of accepted modes of reference and discipline-specific processes of validation; and the persistence of institutions and their prerogatives depends upon power that is maintained and exercised through discourse itself. In thus regarding language as intentional, powerful, caught up in the creation of knowledge and its uses, Foucault offers a theory that is entirely in line with the modern approach to rhetoric.

Concern about the status of knowledge and its relationship to language is by no means limited to the fields of rhetoric and philosophy. Scientific knowledge now appears to progress not by rational observation and the accumulation of facts but by argument. The unconscious mind produces a kind of persuasive discourse, from the modern point of view, making psychoanalysis a form of rhetorical criticism. Such conclusions are echoed in virtually every field of knowledge: Our learning comes from interpretation, our disciplines grow by argument, our communities cohere through discourse, our ideologies are structures of persuasion. Reality itself is a function of the way we use language.

The epistemic questions raised by the human sciences and even the natural sciences point to the need to study speech acts and speech genres, discursive formations and discourse communities, the dramatic scenes of communication, the linguistic construction of consciousness, and the rhetorical construction of knowledge. And indeed, this is the program put forward by the rhetoricians of our age. For rhetorical theory now, language is always persuasive in intent, always imbued with ethics and ideology. Language, as Richard Weaver puts it, is sermonic. It is not first a mental system but a social one, founded on dialogue, not linguistics. Rhetoric is synonymous with meaning, for meaning is in use and context, not in words themselves. Knowledge and belief are products of persuasion, which seeks to make the arguable seem natural, to turn positions into premises—and it is rhetoric's responsibility to reveal these ideological operations. Such are the new concerns of rhetoric.

New Rhetorics

In examining its own ideological operations, rhetoric is looking critically at its own canon and its own exclusions. As white women and women and men of color have increasingly participated in public forums, they have begun to theorize the differences race and gender make in language use. This work parallels other contemporary theory that investigates the epistemic nature of rhetoric, since women's rhetorics and rhetorics of color typically find that language use is constitutive of gender and racial identities. Virginia Woolf was one of the first to forthrightly address the social and economic barriers to women's use of the full range of the powers of language. She argued that, because of these barriers, what women can really do with language is not yet known—a sister to Shakespeare, she notes, has not yet been published—but she suggests in the form of her own essays what distinctively feminine writing might be like. Later twentieth-century writers, following Woolf's

lead, have explicitly searched for language and rhetoric specific to women. Hélène Cixous describes an *écriture féminine* that draws its sensually expressive fluidity, she argues, from the nature of female sexuality. At the same time, characteristics specific to African American language and rhetoric have begun to be studied. Among theorists of rhetorics of color, Gloria Anzaldúa presents the most searching challenge, perhaps, to classical rhetorical models, in that she envisions, and enacts, communication across linguistic as well as cultural and ideological borders. For her, the full use of all her linguistic resources is crucial both to her sense of self and to her ability to communicate a complex cultural viewpoint to diverse audiences.

The epistemological and ideological orientation of rhetoric is not an entirely new development. Rhetoric has always been concerned with political action and the search for knowledge. The history of rhetoric is the story of a long struggle to understand the relationships between discourse and knowledge, communication and its effects, language and experience. Thus the latest theories of rhetoric recover its earliest and most abiding concerns and build on a long tradition that is now, more than ever, worthy of our close attention.