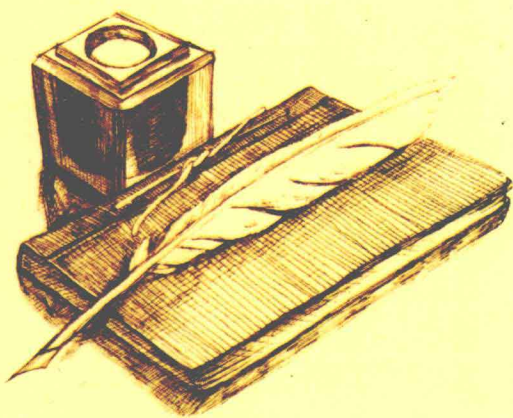


西方修辞学丛书

# 西方修辞学经典文选

Readings in Western Rhetoric

袁影○编注



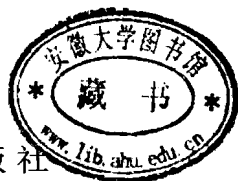
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READINGS IN WESTERN RHETORIC

袁 影 编注



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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION<sup>①</sup>

*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 CE),

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① 此篇完整选自西方目前规模最大并且广受好评(已出第2版)的一部修辞学文选,即:Bizzell, Patricia & Bruce Herzberg. (eds). *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001: 1-16. 编者的总导言对“修辞”概念的理解、修辞的起源、西方修辞学的六大历史阶段以及主要核心范畴等都作了简明扼要的概述,语言清晰流畅,便于读者对西方修辞学的传统与研究旨趣有一较全面、系统的认识。

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 Post-Modern ( 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 BC, 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 BC, 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:

- ❶ Invention, the search for persuasive ways to present information and formulate arguments
- ❷ Arrangement, the organization of the parts of a speech to ensure that all the means of persuasion are present and properly disposed
- ❸ Style, the use of correct, appropriate, and striking language throughout the speech
- ❹ Memory, the use of mnemonics and practice of the speech
- ❺ 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 during 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 BC) 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 CE), 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 CE, 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