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BOOK I

**Rhetoric As It Concerns
the Speaker (The Three
Types of Speech)**

Lesson I: The Scope and Purpose of Rhetoric



WEEK 1

Reading Exercise: Read and mark *How to Read a Book*, Chapter 5, "How to Make a Book Your Own" and "The Three Kinds of Note-making."

☐ Read and apply Adler's marking rules to this and all subsequent readings in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

Exercises for Day 1. Read and mark Chapter I, section 1354a. Here Aristotle identifies rhetoric as an art and discusses its boundaries. He also explains how it is distinct from its coordinate discipline: dialectic.

1. What is rhetoric? See definition at the beginning of Chapter 2.

As defined by the dictionary, rhetoric is the art of oratory, especially the persuasive use of language to influence the thoughts and actions of listeners. Aristotle defines rhetoric simply as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.

2. What is dialectic? You might need to look this up in a good dictionary.

Dialectic is the art of discussion or reasoning.

3. How does Aristotle justify his statement that everyone makes use of dialectic and rhetoric?

Aristotle says that all men attempt to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others.

4. How does Aristotle justify his belief that rhetoric is an art?

Some people use rhetoric unintentionally and some purposefully and since it would be possible to determine systematically the reason for success behind both of these, Aristotle defines rhetoric as an art.

5. What is an art? An encyclopedia would be helpful on this question. Does Aristotle use the term in the same sense as we normally use it? If not, how does it differ?

An art is a specialized field, usually, but not always, related in some way to the senses and beauty. Aristotle's definition of an art is more broad. He sees any subject whose success can be studied and learned as an art. He seems to use the term to refer to a kind of systematic and objective discipline, with rules and an internal order.

6. What does Aristotle think is the chief defect of the way rhetoric was taught by the teachers of the time?

Pay attention here to all the comments Aristotle makes about "these writers" or the "current treatises."
He believes that the teachers of the time place too much emphasis on the non-essential manipulation of emotions and too little on enthymemes.

Exercises for Day 2: Read Chapter I, section I354b. Aristotle distinguishes between forensic and legal oratory by distinguishing the role of the judge from that of the legislator.

7. What is the role of a judge, according to Aristotle, and how does it differ from that of a legislator?

The judge must decide whether or not the alleged facts have occurred in a particular case without being swayed by emotional considerations such as anger or pity. The legislator, on the other hand, should survey a wide sweep of time and frame laws based on what is probable and general.

8. According to Aristotle, why do writers of rhetoric textbooks generally ignore political oratory?

Aristotle says that in forensic oratory there is more inducement to talk about non-essentials, whereas in political oratory there is less. In deliberative speaking, the listener is assessing his own interests; it is only necessary to demonstrate that the situation is as the giver of advice is claiming. In forensic speaking, on the other hand, it is necessary to capture the hearer's sympathy since his judgment concerns the affairs of other men.

9. Which form of oratory, forensic (legal), or political, does Aristotle think is nobler? Why?

Aristotle thinks that political oratory is nobler because it is less given than forensic oratory to unscrupulous practices, since it is given to wider issue.

Exercises for Day 3: Read Chapter I, section I355a. Aristotle discusses demonstration and enthymeme: the manifestation of demonstration in rhetoric. He also lists the four uses of rhetoric.

10. What form does demonstration take in rhetoric?

Rhetorical proof takes the form of enthymemes.

11. What is an enthymeme?

An enthymeme is a sort of syllogism. (Students who have taken traditional logic will know that, more specifically, an enthymeme is a syllogism in which one of the premises is implicit.)

12. What are the four uses of rhetoric given by Aristotle?

1. Truth and justice are naturally superior to their opposites so that, if the event of judgments is unseemly, then they must be self-defeating, which merits reproof.
2. It is also useful because, with some audiences, even if we should possess the most precise understanding of the question, we would more easily achieve persuasion by speaking rhetorically.
3. It is also necessary to be able to argue contradictory positions, not that we may adopt either of the two, but that we should be aware how the case stands.
4. Although the use of rhetoric can do great harm, it can also produce great benefits.

13. If a judge rules improperly, who is at fault, according to Aristotle?

Those at fault are the speakers (or advocates).

14. What reason does Aristotle give for the necessity in rhetoric of being able to argue both sides of a question?

In order to allow us to see our opponent's arguments better so that we may refute them

Exercises for Day 4: Read Chapter I, section I355b. Aristotle discusses the function of rhetoric and the double meaning of the term "rhetoric."

15. How does Aristotle differentiate the function of rhetoric from the function of dialectic?

Aristotle once again describes the function of rhetoric as discovering real and apparent persuasiveness in subject matter, whereas the purpose of dialectic is to detect real and apparent syllogisms.

16. What was Aristotle's chief purpose in this first chapter?

Aristotle's chief purpose was to give a brief introduction to the concept of rhetoric and explain its position as an art.

17. What does he say he is going to do in the next section?

Aristotle says that he will define rhetoric and proceed from there in discussion of proper methodology.

Outline: Outline all sections of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* from this lesson according to the outlining rules indicated in Appendix C.

Answers will vary. Here is a sample.

I. Purpose and Scope of Rhetoric

A. General, no definite science.

B. But can be handled systematically.

C. Why do some succeed through practice and other fail?

II. Previous Authors

A. Leave out enthymemes; deal with non-essentials.

B. Arousing emotion not essential.

C. What if the laws forbid such non-essentials?

D. Persuading Judges

1. Decisions of judges and juries versus laws.

2. But the former can be misled by emotion.

3. As little left to the judge as possible.

4. But they are still necessary.

5. Hence, matters beyond those necessary for persuading the judge in these previous authors is non-essential.

E. Political Versus Forensic Oratory

1. Same principles apply.

2. Political is more noble.

3. Political less given to non-essentials or unscrupulous practices.

4. One's own rather than another's interest.

III. Defining Scope

A. Definition: Study concerned with the "modes of persuasion."

1. Persuasion is a kind of demonstration.

2. Orator's persuasion is an enthymeme.

3. Enthymeme is a kind of syllogism.

4. Syllogism is the subject of dialectic.

5. Apprehending the true versus the approximately true.

B. Usefulness of Rhetoric

1. Bad speakers are enemies who harm the true and the just in judges' decisions.
2. Relies on general knowledge possessed by the audience.
3. Capacity to argue both sides of the question.
4. Capacity for self-defense with words and reason.

IV. Conclusions

- A. Universal.
- B. Useful.
- C. Function to come as near to success in persuading as the particular circumstance allows.
- D. Like the other arts.
- E. Discerning real versus apparent.

WEEK 2

Figures of Speech

Asyndeton (a-syn'-de-ton): An omission of a conjunction.

Example: Jane could not take her eyes from her mother's hands. They had a way of doing things, peeling apples, sprinkling salt, counting pennies, that fascinated her. (*The Moffats* by Eleanor Estes)

Polysyndeton (pol'-y-syn'-de-ton): The repetition of the word "and" at the beginning of successive phrases.

Example: Near them, on the sand, / Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, / And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, / Tell that its sculptor well those passions read. ("Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley)

- ☐ Read *Figures of Speech*, pp. 1-13
- ☐ Complete the Figures of Speech Worksheet (Appendix A)