

I. The history of the rhetorical tradition(s) can be approached and taught from a number of different perspectives. Trace the movement of the rhetorical tradition(s) from Corax to Augustine from THREE different perspectives. Which perspective is the best?

Perspectives provide broad, encompassing, yet focused approaches for discussing complicated involved topics. Studying the history of rhetorical tradition is a complicated topic that is facilitated by using a perspectives approach. I shall explore three perspectives for teaching the rhetorical tradition illustrating how each perspective facilitates teaching by focusing on distinctive characteristics. A general guideline for using perspectives involves knowledge of the audience to whom the perspective is intended. In the case of an instructor, this involves knowledge of the student audience. Such knowledge provides the an opportunity to match pedagogical rationale with student development.

One perspective on the rhetorical tradition I shall explore might be labeled "a survey of ancient rhetorical scholars in historical sequence." This perspective features the major personalities in the rhetorical tradition from approximately 470 B.C. to 100 A.D. The survey's main objective is to highlight the key personalities and their major works, looking primarily at the life details of these men and the content of their central works. In the following paragraphs, I shall trace a representative handling of this perspective by highlighting eight men and their major contributions.

Corax and Tisias (c. 465 B.C.) are credited with the invention of rhetoric (Murphy, 1983, p. 6). Corax of Syracuse, witnessed a revolution and the establishment of democracy on Sicily. Because

of the revolution, he watched local courts become inundated with conflicting property claims. Who owned what after the revolution? Corax observed that the best speakers in the courts most often obtained their claims. From his observations, Corax produced a manual called The Art of Rhetoric. His most important contribution is the notion of probability. He believed speakers should argue from general probabilities to establish probable conclusions when matters of fact cannot be demonstrated with certainty (Smith, 1921, pp. 13-42). Tisias, Corax's student, introduced Corax's notions to mainland Greece (Foss, 1985, p. 2). Corax and Tisias should be remembered as teachers who introduced the notion of arguing from probability.

Protagoras of Abdera (481-411 B.C.) was an eloquent teacher and is considered the father of debate (Smith, 1918, p. 196). He is credited with saying "Man is the measure of all things," as well as "On every question there are two speeches that oppose each other." He taught his students to debate both sides of a question, while his critics claimed he taught them "to make the worse appear the better cause" (Murphy, 1983, p. 9). Protagoras should be remembered as the father of debate.

A third rhetor in this sequence of historical highlights is Gorgias of Leontini (485-380 B.C.). He emphasized the poetic aspects of speech and is known for his ornate oral style. He was a teacher in Athens and authored On Not Being or On Nature--though none of his works survived (Murphy, 1983, p. 12). Gorgias should be remembered for his poetic style of speech and as the originator

of impromptu speaking (Thonssen, Baird & Braden, 1970, pp. 44-45).

Isocrates (436-338 B.C.) was one of the greatest, if not the greatest teacher of rhetoric (Benoit, 1984, p. 109). John Milton, the great English poet called him Old Man Eloquent. Isocrates wrote several famous speeches, among the most eloquent in the rhetorical tradition, two of which, Against the Sophists and Antidosis, contain most of the aspects of his theory of speech. In the former he shows his reverence for speech, in the latter his tripartite philosophy of educating rhetors which is talent, education, and practice.

Isocrates was born in Athens. His father was a successful flutemaker, providing his son with an excellent education (Benoit, 1984, pp. 109-110). The Peloponnesian Wars resulted in the loss of the family fortune. This misfortune precipitated Isocrates' career as a logographer and rhetorical educator (Benoit, 1984, pp. 190-110). Isocrates should be remembered for his eloquent speeches, his reverence toward speech and its role in expressing cultural virtues, and finally, his reputation as a great teacher of rhetoric.

Plato (427-347 B.C.) wrote two works that contain his primary thoughts on rhetoric--Gorgias and Phaedrus. In the former he denounces rhetoric as mere flattery. In the latter he moves from his earlier harsh opinions to explore the nature of true or ideal rhetoric. Some argue that Plato hated rhetoric--others that Plato saw rhetoric as a power that could be harnessed in the

service of truth. The tension between these two perspectives on Plato's rhetorical theory has been disputed for centuries (Kauffman, 1982, p. 353). Plato's life was that of an aristocrat, intellectual and teacher. He taught in the Academy, having as one of his students, Aristotle. Plato should be remembered for his own eloquent style of rhetoric, while at the same time distrusting rhetoric. He believed true rhetoric speaks to the soul and is a difficult art, but worth practicing (Murphy, 1983, p. 18).

The central personality in the rhetorical tradition from a contemporary vantage point, is Aristotle (394-322 B.C.). He was born in Macedonia, the son of a physician, and he moved to Athens when he was eighteen to study at Plato's academy. He was a student and teacher with only one of his many academic interests being rhetoric and that only as a sideline to fill out his repertoire of relevant topics. His most influential work, that continues to influence rhetorical theory, is the Rhetoric. It is a highly structured work that emphasizes that rhetoric is the study of how and what persuades in each case (Aristotle, 1:1:1355b). Aristotle also is credited with outlining the essence of what came to be known as the five canons of rhetorical theory, though he never dealt with the fifth--memory. Aristotle should be remembered for his Rhetoric, a book that articulates most of the major aspects used in analyzing the process of influential speech.

Following Aristotle, no major rhetors in the rhetorical tradition emerged until Cicero of Rome (106-43 B.C.). His two major works are De Inventione (87 B.C.) and De Oratore (55 B.C.).

The former offers an outline for rhetorical works, and the latter an attempt to show the centrality of rhetoric in the political affairs of men. He was himself a great orator, statesman, and a member of Rome's upper class. Cicero should be remembered for his re-emphasis of traditional Greek rhetorical theory, especially its technical aspects, stasis theory, and his emphasis on style and delivery in speech. "Wisdom without eloquence has been of little help to states, but eloquence without wisdom has often been a great obstacle and never an advantage" (Cicero, De Inventione, 1:1-5).

The last rhetor who warrants comment in this perspective on the ancient rhetorical tradition is Quintilian (35-95 A.D.). His Institutes of Oratory present his plan for training the ideal orator. In this volume he builds on the works of those who preceded him such as Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Cicero. Quintilian is above all, a patient, moderate, reasonable man dedicated to good teaching, clear thinking, and natural expression (Kennedy, 1980, p. 101). Quintilian should be remembered as describing an orator as "a good man speaking well" (Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory, 12:1).

The first perspective traced the rhetorical tradition, highlighting rhetors in their historical sequence. The emphasis was on the rhetor as a person and those activities for which he should be remembered. This perspective provides a quick overview. Perhaps its most useful application is for beginning students because it emphasizes central details and biographical

information aiding student memory processes. The drawbacks of such a perspective involve exclusion of the interaction between these men, dryness, and its rhetor-centered emphasis.

The previous perspective focused on the rhetors and their accomplishments. The second perspective will focus on the rhetoric of these rhetors with the purpose of gleaning from them philosophical trends within the ancient rhetorical era. The guiding question of this perspective is, "What are the major ideas espoused in the representative rhetorics?" In this section I shall develop five major trends. These trends may be viewed as the clash of ideas with rhetors, only the symbol around which the idea(s) cluster. The ideas explored in this perspective are not necessarily exclusive from each other.

The first major trend to develop philosophical continuity is the notion of probability. Though Corax is credited with developing this trend, it emerged as a reaction to the political and legal issues surrounding the rise of democracy on the island of Sicily. Probability means arguing for premises that are most likely to occur, given the known events. For example, "if a physically weak man is accused of an assault, he is to ask, 'Is it probable that I should have attacked him?' If a strong man is accused, he is to ask, 'Is it probable that I should have committed an assault in a case where there was sure to be a presumption against me?'" (Thonssen, 1970, p. 41). Aristotle criticized Corax for what Aristotle called "making the worse appear the better cause" (Aristotle, Rhetoric,

2:24:1402a). Bromley Smith maintains that the idea of probability involves the likelihood that truth must always be present in order to be convincing (Smith, 1921, p. 38). The notion of probability removed the art of persuasion from the realm of a gift, given a special minority, to a skill many could learn (Thonssen, Baird, & Braden, 1970, p. 42).

Coupled with the notion of probability is the umbrella term "sophistry." As champions of probability came to Athens, they coupled probability with other notions of speech. They produced a finely honed art--called by Plato in a perjorative sense--sophistry (Grube, 1965, p. 15). The term sophist literally means "one who makes wise" or a teacher of wisdom. Numerous representative practitioners could be mentioned, though their names are not as important as what sophistry came to mean in the perjorative sense. Sophistry can be viewed as possessing two general characteristics: an emphasis on stylistic devices in rhetoric, and the relative nature of truth (Kennedy, 1963, p. 13). Though such a generalization smooths over the numerous variations within sophistry, the relative emphasis in sophistry was a primary force in the emergence of the next trend, "idealism."

Plato's attacks on sophistry, in the perjorative sense, have been argued as unjustified (Gronbeck, 1972, p. 27). John Poulakos argues that sophists privilege possibility while Aristotle privileged the probable in his rhetoric. Poulakos argues that Aristotle's approach is not superior, merely different (Poulakos, 1984, p. 215). Poulakos' observations raise the notion

that sophistry may be the rhetoric of the possible while Aristotle's is that of the probable. Before moving to the next major trend, mention of the second sophists is warranted. In the first century A.D., a display of oratory arise in the Greek sectors of the Roman Empire and Asia (Grube, 1965, p. 325). There was a reappearance of the magical elements of language celebrated by Gorgias (Kennedy, 1980, p. 38). In general, sophistry is the emphasis of the role of the speaker, imitation of models, the subliminal features of language, and that the orator should be a good man. ". . .their most consistent theme has not been how to make the worse seem the better cause, but celebration of enlightned government, the love of the gods, the beauty of classical cities, the value of friendships, the meaning of patriotism, the triumph of reason, and the artistry of speech" (Kennedy, 1980, p. 40).

Sophistry in a perjorative sense resulted in the emergence of the next major trend, philosophical rhetoric or idealistic rhetoric. Its major architect was Plato. This trend is largely responsible for the rift many eventually experienced between philosophy and rhetoric--truth and speech (IJsseling, 1976, p. 7). Within the idealistic trend the relationship between speech and truth is explored in depth. Generally, this trend argues that truth is experienced or discovered (Plato's "Cave" analogy, Republic, 7.1.514a) with rhetoric acting as the means of presenting the truth (Murphy, 1983, p. 18). The idealistic trend in rhetoric is a reactionary movement in response to "sophistry."

The result of this reaction produced a rift between speech and truth or perhaps the recognition that such a rift may exist.

Emerging from idealism, as well as a reaction to its extremes came a pragmatic rhetorical theory. Representative theories are those of Isocrates and Aristotle. Both represent an emphasis in rhetoric that is utilitarian in nature. Isocrates saw rhetoric as a practical art valuable for establishing virtue within the state. Aristotle viewed rhetoric as the study of the means of persuasion. They blended idealistic and sophistic notions producing a pragmatic direction to the study of rhetoric (Hunt, 1962, p. 3). The period between the Greeks and the Romans was marked by further refinement and adaptation of the notions of the pragmatic phase as illustrated in the text called the Ad Herennium (c. 100 B.C.).

The pragmatic tendency flourished in Rome and evolved into pragmatic idealism. Because of the political atmosphere of Rome, the Roman propensity for borrowing, and the predominant place of rhetoric in the empire, a merging occurred between pragmatic means of persuasion and idealistic notions. The merger--pragmatic idealism--espouses that rhetoric is an art used by the good man to produce the best political ends. Speech and political life are merged. A characteristic that marks the rhetorical notions of this trend is captured in the word "technical." Pragmatic idealism provides rules for proper speech (Kennedy, 1980, p. 106).

I labeled this second perspective, used to explore the ancient rhetorical tradition, the philosophical perspective. The guiding

principle was not "Who said what," so much as what was said, and how does that probability or possibility lead to the next major idea expressed? The philosophic perspective blurs details while searching for general patterns of thought in language. However, though there is a tendency to blur details, this perspective does reveal the interrelationship of the major rhetorical theories.

The third perspective that will be used to trace the development of rhetorical tradition is called the language perception perspective. The major tenet of this perspective is that language is perception. Working from this tenet, the various trends of the rhetorical tradition are perused noting how the symbol used by the rhetors and their rhetoric reflected the way reality was perceived. This perspective is not exclusive of the others, rather it assumes the necessity of the information provided by these other perspectives in working its own unique insights. The notion that language itself is a lens through which the world is perceived is expressed in the Sapir-Whorf hypotheses. Edward Sapir says,

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Sapir, as quoted by Whorf, 1956, p. 134).

How can Sapir's notions operate as a perspective on the ancient rhetorical tradition? In applying the language-perception perspective, a focus is placed not on the rhetor or rhetoric alone, but on the interaction between the two and what generalizations can be drawn from such a focus. I shall make three observations using the language-perception perspective on the ancient rhetorical tradition.

First, this perspective reveals the pre-eminent place of language in the ancient rhetorical tradition. Homer, for the early Greeks, represented the whole mass of epic poetry (Murray, 1916, p. x). Homer, as a representation of Greek oral tradition, provided a framework for later developments in the rhetorical tradition. Even after this oral tradition gave way to more widely accepted technical manuals, the presuppositions inherited from their language heritage remained. For example, (1) dualistic assumptions concerning the nature of reality, (2) the tendency to use words to dominate, (3) the use of words in ad nosium -- wordiness, and (4) the lack of a feminine voice. These tendencies among others were part and particle of the oral tradition and the ancient Greek world view (Kennedy, 1980, p. 10). Quintilian captures the essence of a male dominated society when he equates rhetoric with a good man speaking well.

A second development related to language and perception involves the split in perception that occurred with Plato's reaction to sophistry. The inherent dualism of the rhetorical tradition may be part of the reason Plato was able to distinguish

a split between speech and truth. His inherited language predisposed him to perceive good and evil. Such dualism implies distrust, explaining perhaps, why Plato perceived deception in the sophists' declamations. Such a dualism is not readily perceived in other language heritages. Harmony is emphasized, not polarization (Kennedy, 1980, p. 10). Plato's rhetoric and philosophy developed in the direction of a choice he made that was predetermined by the language in which he lived. His language system caused him to enact a "repressive" force as well, for there was no room in his language system for all he experienced (Kauffman, 1982, p. 366). The Homeric origins of the ancient rhetorical tradition are reflected in the rhetoric of Plato as he struggles with an inherent dualism, thus revealing the perception-forming and consequential nature of language.

Third, the rhetoricians of the rhetorical tradition recognized, though perhaps only partially, this perception-forming power of language. This is evident in their development of stasis theory and Aristotle's initial formations of the five canons of rhetoric. Both these systems reveal the subtle changes that can alter an audience's perception regarding crucial issues. The rhetoricians of the rhetorical tradition recognized the reality-creating power of language. Through the lens of the language-perception perspective, the ancients can be seen struggling with the constitutive and constituting characteristics of language worlds (Stewart, 1986, p. 55).

The language-perception perspective suggested looking at the

interaction between rhetor and rhetoric. Though this approach may be so general as to produce questionable connections between the rhetors and their rhetoric, it does produce for the student an experience similar to that which the earlier Greek and Roman rhetor must have experienced. They, too were struggling to make their language accommodate their patterns of experience. In the process their language used them as well as their using it. To study the rhetorical tradition from the language perception perspectives affords the students and/or scholars the opportunity to reflect on the subtle constitutive and constituting qualities of their own language systems. Which of these perspectives is the best? They all have strengths and weaknesses--some of which have been alluded to within each section. As articulated in the introduction, each perspective has its own focus which reveals its own unique patterns of knowledge. Applying the perspective or approach to the situation intended is best. With a pedagogical purpose in mind, the first perspective corresponds well to a freshman or sophomore undergraduate course, the second perspective to an upper level class, and the third to the graduate level.

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