

Rhetoric

INTRODUCTION

RHETORIC is traditionally regarded as one of the liberal arts. When the liberal arts are counted as seven, and divided into the three and the four—the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*—rhetoric is grouped with grammar and logic, not with the mathematical arts of arithmetic and geometry, astronomy and music. The implication of this grouping seems to be that rhetoric, like grammar, has something to do with language or discourse; and that, like logic, it is concerned with thought, with reasoning or argument. But if grammar is the art of writing or speaking correctly, and if logic is the art of thinking correctly, it may be wondered what rhetoric can add to these other arts, either on the side of language or of thought.

Logic by itself does not suffice to ensure that words are properly used to express thought; nor does grammar guarantee that discourse which is flawless in syntax also complies with the demands of rationality. Hence neither grammar nor logic seems to challenge the function of the other, as together they challenge the function of rhetoric.

Upon the way this challenge is met depends not only the definition of rhetoric, but also the value put upon it. In the tradition of the great books, rhetoric is both praised as a useful discipline which liberally educated men should possess, and condemned as a dishonest craft to which decent men would not stoop. Like the words "sophistical" and "dialectical," the epithet "rhetorical" carries, traditionally as well as currently, a derogatory implication. The three words sometimes even tend to merge in meaning, expressing the same reproach against trickery. Yet of the three, "sophistical" alone implies an unqualified rebuke.

We do not speak of good and bad sophistry. But dialectic has its defenders as well as its detractors; and even those who, like Plato, charge rhetoric with being an art of enchantment or a form of flattery also distinguish between a true and a false rhetoric, the one associated with dialectic as a wholly admirable pursuit, the other classed with sophistry as a vocation divorced from virtue. According to Francis Bacon, the aim of rhetoric is to support reason, "not to oppress it." Rhetoric may be misused, but logic also has its abuses. "Rhetoric can be no more charged," in Bacon's opinion, "with the coloring of the worse part, than logic with sophistry, or morality with vice."

THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE of rhetoric are capable of broad and narrow definitions. The broader view, which we shall consider subsequently, tends to merge rhetoric with poetics as together the art of eloquence in any sort of discourse. The narrower view tends to restrict rhetoric to the art of persuasion in the sphere of practical affairs. Rhetorical skill consists in getting others to embrace certain beliefs, to form the opinions or make the judgments which the speaker or writer wishes them to adopt. Usually action, not persuasion, is the ultimate goal. The rules of rhetoric are supposed to give one power not merely to move the minds of men to certain conclusions but, through persuasion of their minds, to move men to act or not act in a certain way.

The sphere of rhetoric, so conceived, is limited to moral and political problems. The things about which men deliberate before acting, the things on which they pass moral judgments or make political decisions, consti-

tute the subject matter of oratory, or what Hobbes calls "exhortation and dehortation," that is, "counsel accompanied with signs in him that giveth it, of vehement desire to have it followed."

In the narrower conception, rhetoric seems to be confined to *oratory*. It is with oratory and orators that Socrates seems to be concerned when he discusses rhetoric with Phaedrus or with Gorgias. Gorgias, who was a teacher of rhetoric, praises the power of the orator to persuade "the judges in the courts, or the senators in the council, or the citizens in the assembly, or at any other public meeting." In view of this Socrates asks him whether he will accept the definition of rhetoric as "the artificer of persuasion." When Gorgias admits that "persuasion is the chief end of rhetoric," Socrates goes on to ask whether rhetoric is "the only art which brings persuasion, or do other arts have the same effect? Does he who teaches anything persuade men of that which he teaches or not?" If so, "then arithmetic as well as rhetoric is an artificer of persuasion."

Gorgias reminds Socrates of his initial point about the orator, that "rhetoric is the art of persuasion in courts of law and other assemblies . . . about the just and unjust." But Socrates is still not satisfied that rhetoric has been sharply defined. He introduces the distinction between knowledge and belief or opinion, and gets Gorgias to agree that, whereas there cannot be false knowledge as well as true, beliefs and opinions may be either true or false. Persuasion can, therefore, be of two sorts—"one which is the source of belief without knowledge, as the other is of knowledge."

Gorgias is willing to limit rhetoric to that form of persuasion "which only gives belief," to which Socrates adds the emphatic negative that "the rhetorician does not instruct the courts of law or other assemblies about things just and unjust, but creates beliefs about them." If an assembly wishes to learn about matters connected with medicine or shipbuilding, it consults the physician or shipwright, not the orator. But, says Gorgias, "when a decision has to be given in such matters, the rhetoricians are the advisers; they are

the men who win their point." He confirms this by reminding Socrates that the speeches of Themistocles and Pericles, not the suggestions of the builders, determined the Athenian assembly in the construction of the harbor, the docks and walls.

By way of further illustration, Gorgias tells of occasions when he has succeeded in getting patients to do what they would not do on the advice of their physicians. "I have persuaded the patient," he says, "to do for me what he would not do for the physician, just by the use of rhetoric." Similarly, in a contest for public office between a rhetorician and a man of any other profession, "the rhetorician more than any other would have the power of getting himself chosen, for he can speak more persuasively to the multitude than any of them, and on any subject. Such is the nature and power of the art of rhetoric!"

In comparing it with dialectic, Aristotle seems to have a different conception of the function of rhetoric. "Neither rhetoric nor dialectic," he says, "is the scientific study of any one separate subject; both are faculties for providing arguments." Both also are concerned with arguments which fall short of scientific demonstration, that is, with matters of opinion concerning which something probable can be said on either side of the issue.

Though for Aristotle rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic, in that both deal with arguments on any subject, his differentiation between the two disciplines seems to indicate that rhetoric is limited to the consideration of oratory in the familiar sense of public speaking. The rhetorician is concerned with persuading an audience, not, as the dialectician is, with carrying on a dispute in which two individuals may be privately engaged. The persuasion, furthermore, is directed to obtaining a certain response from that audience—not merely agreement, but either action, or a decision to act, or approval which, charged with emotional force or enthusiasm, has practical significance.

The divisions of rhetoric, according to Aristotle, are determined by the kinds of oratory, as these, in turn, are determined by the types of audience to be addressed. "Of the three

elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed,” Aristotle writes, “it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech’s end and object. The hearer must be either a judge with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides about future events, a jurymen about past events; while those who merely decide on the orator’s skill are observers.

“From this it follows that there are three divisions of oratory: (1) political, (2) forensic, and (3) the ceremonial oratory of display”—or, as these three are sometimes named, deliberative, legal, and epideictic. “Political speaking urges us either to do or not do something . . . Forensic speaking either attacks or defends somebody . . . The ceremonial oratory of display either praises or censures somebody. These three kinds of rhetoric refer to three different kinds of time. The political orator is concerned with the future; he tries to persuade men about things to be done or not done hereafter. The party in a case at law is concerned with the past; one man accuses the other, and the other defends himself, with reference to things already done. The ceremonial orator is, properly speaking, concerned with the present, since all men praise or blame in view of the state of things existing at the time, though they often find it useful also to recall the past and to make guesses about the future.

“Rhetoric has three distinct ends in view, one for each of its three kinds. The political orator aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action . . . Parties in a lawsuit aim at establishing the justice or injustice of some action . . . Those who praise or attack a man aim at proving him worthy of honor or the reverse.”

THIS CONCEPTION OF rhetoric as concerned with oratory or public speaking gives one answer to the question of what rhetoric adds to grammar and logic as arts of discourse. In oratory more is involved than the communication of ideas, the marshaling of arguments, the making of proofs. Discourse, whether written or spoken, has an effect upon the emotions as

well as upon the mind, and disposes a man to act as well as the mind to assent.

“The communicating of ideas by words,” Berkeley observes, “is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition—to which the former is in many cases barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted . . . I entreat the reader to reflect with himself, and see if it doth not often happen, either in hearing or reading a discourse, that the passions of fear, love, hatred, admiration, disdain and the like, arise immediately in his mind upon the perception of certain words, without any ideas coming between.”

Engaged in the oratorical task of persuading the people of New York to ratify the federal constitution, the writers of the Federalist papers are aware that “a torrent of angry and malignant passions will be let loose” in the debate of that issue. They realize that arguing for the adoption of certain political principles or conclusions is not like teaching geometry, the objects of which are “entirely abstracted from those pursuits which stir up and put in motion the unruly passions of the human heart.”

Hamilton admits at once, in the opening paper, that “the plan offered to our deliberations affects too many particular interests, innovates upon too many local institutions, not to involve in its discussion, a variety of objects foreign to its merits, and of views, passions, and prejudices little favorable to the discovery of truth.” Nevertheless, he tries to persuade his audience to judge the issue on the merits of the argument alone.

The opponents of the Constitution, he says, “may be actuated by upright intentions.” The opposition may “spring from sources, blameless at least, if not respectable—the honest errors of minds led astray by preconceived jealousies and fears. So numerous indeed and so powerful are the causes which serve to give a false bias to the judgment, that we, upon many occasions, see wise and good men on the wrong as well as on the right side of questions of the first magnitude to society.”

To recognize this, Hamilton tells his audi-

ence, is to be on guard "against all attempts, from whatever quarter, to influence your decision . . . by any impressions other than those which may result from the evidence of truth." He wishes them to consider him as relying upon nothing but the merits of his case. "I frankly acknowledge to you my convictions," he writes, "and I will freely lay before you the reasons on which they are founded . . . My motives must remain in the depository of my own breast. My arguments will be open to all, and may be judged by all. They shall at least be offered in a spirit which will not disgrace the cause of truth."

We can detect here another element in the art of rhetoric. The orator seems to be concerned, not only with the strength of his arguments and with the passions of the audience which he hopes to move by these arguments, but also with the impression he makes upon that audience as a person of good character and honest intentions, devoted to the truth and, above all, to the best interests of those whom he addresses.

The great speeches reported—or perhaps polished, if not invented—by Thucydides exemplify this effort on the part of the orator, as do also the orations written by Shakespeare for his characters, of which the speeches of Brutus and Antony in *Julius Caesar* are among the most notable as well as the most familiar. The point is also illustrated by the *Communist Manifesto*, which is denounced as "propaganda" by those who mistrust the writers, but to those who trust them is powerful and persuasive oratory. The great books abound with examples of great oratory, such as the hellfire sermon in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and the speech in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* that the narrator reports as giving him "the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence. It made me tingle with enthusiasm. This was the unbounded power of eloquence—of words—of burning noble words."

Not all examples of oratory have the nobility of Conrad's narrator. In Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the pig Squealer is a master of diverting attention from the tyranny of Napoleon and the other pigs: "When he was arguing

some difficult point he had a way of skipping from side to side and whisking his tail which was somehow very persuasive. The others said of Squealer that he could turn black into white." Squealer is not merely a totalitarian propagandist; he exemplifies Orwell's overall view, as written elsewhere, that "political language . . . is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind."

Separating the use of witnesses and documents by the forensic orator from what he calls the strictly artistic means of persuasion—*i.e.*, the means intrinsic to the art of rhetoric—Aristotle divides the latter into the three elements already noted. Persuasion, he says, depends "on the personal character of the speaker . . . on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind . . . [and] on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself. Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible . . . Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers when the speech stirs their emotions . . . Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question."

These being the three technical means of effecting persuasion, Aristotle concludes that rhetorical skill must consist in the ability "(1) to reason logically, (2) to understand human character and goodness in their various forms, and (3) to understand the emotions . . . to know their causes and the way in which they are excited." The art of rhetoric, therefore, involves more than training in grammar and logic. It requires the study of ethics and psychology—particularly knowledge of the types of human character and knowledge of the passions.

The same consideration of the conditions of oratory seems to lead Socrates to tell Phaedrus that Thrasymachus or anyone else who teaches rhetoric ought "to give an exact description of the nature of the soul," to explain "the mode in which it acts or is acted upon." The rhetorician, he goes on, "having classified men and

speeches, and their kinds and affections, and adapted them one to another," will be able to "tell the reasons of his arrangement, and show why one soul is persuaded by a particular form of argument, and another not."

THIS FACT ABOUT rhetoric—that it must adapt speech to persons as well as to subject matters—seems to occasion Socrates' definition of oratory as "the art of enchanting the soul." It is not, he tells Phaedrus, confined to courts and public assemblies. Whether this art is a good or evil thing depends on whether it requires the speaker to know—more than the nature of the person he is addressing—the truth about the matters spoken of. To engender probabilities in the minds of the many by the likeness of the truth, it is necessary, says Socrates, to know the truth. "He who knew the truth would always know best how to discover the resemblances of the truth." Such a man might be able, not only to please and so to persuade his audience, but also, perhaps, he might "be able to say what is acceptable to God."

The issue about rhetoric then—at least so far as that issue concerns its being an art consistent with virtue—seems to turn on the admixture of pleasure and truth. The question is whether, given a particular sort of audience to persuade, the orator does not have to choose between pleasing them and telling them the truth. Does the art of rhetoric extend to the persuasion of bad men as well as good? Is the skill of the orator to be measured by his success in persuading, without regard to the character of the audience he has persuaded and the means he has been forced to use? Does the goodness of the orator—and of his speech—depend upon his being morally virtuous as well as rhetorically skillful?

One view of rhetoric seems to identify persuasion with pleasure and to divorce it from truth. Pascal, for example, in his essay *On Geometrical Demonstration*, speaks of "two methods, the one of convincing, the other of pleasing." In order to persuade, he writes, "one must consider the person with whom one has to deal, whose spirit and heart one must know, the principles he accepts, the things he

loves." In view of such considerations, Pascal holds that "the art of persuasion consists more in pleasing than in convincing, to such an extent is it true that men are controlled more by whim than by reason." He does not doubt that "there are rules which are as reliable with respect to pleasing as there are for demonstrating"; nor does he seem to condemn rhetoric for being such an art, unless he writes with irony when he says that "pleasing is incomparably more difficult, more subtle, more useful, and more admirable."

Rhetoric so conceived appears to Locke to be a "powerful instrument of error and deceit"; and to Plato to be no art at all, but a form of flattery. As cookery tries to please the palate without caring what is good for the health of the body, so rhetoric, according to Plato, aims to delight without caring what is good for the soul or the state. Cookery and rhetoric are shams or simulations of the genuine arts of medicine and politics, which aim at the good, not at pleasure. "This is the sort of thing," Socrates tells Callicles, "which I term flattery, whether concerned with the body or the soul, or whenever employed with a view to pleasure and without any consideration of good and evil."

Socrates then asks Callicles whether he knows rhetoricians who "aim at what is best . . . and seek to improve the citizens by their speeches," or whether all "are bent upon giving them pleasure, forgetting the public good in the thought of their own interest, playing with the people as with children, and trying to amuse them, but never considering whether they are better or worse for this."

When Callicles replies that he thinks "there are some who have a real care for the public in what they say," Socrates says that he is "contented with the admission that rhetoric is of two sorts: one, which is mere flattery and disgraceful declamation; the other, which is noble and aims at the training and improvement of the souls of the citizens, and strives to say what is best, whether welcome or unwelcome, to the audience." But, he asks Callicles, "have you ever known such a rhetoric; or if you have, and can point out any rhetorician of this stamp, who is he?"

SOCRATES MAY NOT be asking a rhetorical question. He may be presenting the defenders of rhetoric with this critical dilemma: *either* the orator adheres to the truth and aims at the good, even if such high-mindedness defeats his efforts at persuasion with an audience whom he thus displeases; *or* the orator takes persuasion as his end and subordinates everything else to the rhetorical means for succeeding with any sort of audience.

Bacon rises to the defense by rejecting the dilemma as ungenune. "The duty and office of rhetoric," he writes, "is to apply reason to the imagination for the better moving of the will." He admits that rhetoric is controlled by other considerations than the truth. Though "logic handleth reason exact and in truth," and though "the proofs and demonstrations of logic are toward all men indifferent and the same . . . the proofs and persuasions of rhetoric ought to differ according to the auditors."

Nevertheless, Bacon thinks "it was great injustice in Plato, though springing out of a just hatred for the rhetoricians of his time, to regard rhetoric as a voluptuary art, resembling it to cookery that did mar wholesome meats, and help unwholesome by a variety of sauces to please the taste. For we see that speech is much more conversant in adorning that which is good than in coloring that which is evil; for there is no man but speaketh more honestly than he can do or think; and it was excellently noted by Thucydides in Cleon, that because he used to hold on the bad side in causes of state, therefore he was ever inveighing against eloquence and good speech knowing that no man can speak fair of courses sordid and base."

Aristotle's defense of rhetoric seems to be implied in the remark that "its function is not simply to succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each case allow." Just as, for him, the sophist differs from the dialectician not in the skills of argument or dispute, but in moral purpose or respect for truth, so the name "rhetorician" may be applied to two sorts of men. Rhetoric may signify "either the speaker's knowledge of his art, or his moral purpose." For want of separate

names, both the honest and the sophistical orator are called and can claim to be "rhetoricians," and it is this which confuses the issue.

IN THE TRADITION of the great books, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* occupies a place comparable to that which, as noted in the chapter on POETRY, his *On Poetics* unquestionably fills. It seems to be not merely the first but the standard treatise on oratory. It divides rhetoric into three parts—the first concerned with invention, the second with the disposition or order of a speech, the third with problems of expression. To the last of these belongs the analysis of the orator's use of language and his style in speaking; to the second, the analysis of the structure of an oration into such parts as proem, statement, argument, and epilogue; and to the first, under the head of invention, belongs the consideration of the means of persuasion.

As we have already noted, the artistic means of persuasion are, according to Aristotle, threefold—emotions, character, and argument. The orator must consider how to arouse and use the passions of his audience, as well as calculate how far to go in displaying his own emotions. He must consider the moral character of the audience to which he is appealing, and in this connection he must try to exhibit his own moral character in a favorable light. Finally, he must know the various types and sources of rhetorical argument—not only what sorts of argument are available for a particular purpose, but also how to employ each argument most persuasively. In this last respect, Aristotle distinguishes rhetorical proof from rhetorical induction—the use of what he calls the "enthymeme" as opposed to the use of examples—and he relates this distinction to the difference between dialectical proof and induction which he treats in the *Topics*.

Cicero and Quintilian may extend Aristotle's analysis in certain directions, but neither they nor modern writers like George Campbell and Richard Whately depart far from the framework Aristotle sets up for the discussion of oratory. Even those who reject Aristotle's authority in logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics pay him the tribute of following (as does Hobbes) his treatment of

oratory, or of approving (as does Bacon) his contribution to rhetoric. In the case of this science, as with few others, Bacon finds no serious deficiencies in the accepted tradition. He calls rhetoric "a science excellent and excellently well labored," and places "the emulation of Aristotle" first among the causes why later writers "in their works of rhetorics exceed themselves."

Yet by another standard Aristotle's *Rhetoric* may be judged deficient. Because he confines his attention almost exclusively to oratory, Aristotle's discussion leaves rhetoric in a larger sense almost untouched. This limitation of rhetoric to the subject matter of oratory does not go unexplained. "Every other art," Aristotle writes, "can instruct or persuade about its own particular subject matter; for instance, medicine about what is healthy and unhealthy, geometry about the properties of magnitudes, arithmetic about numbers, and the same is true of the other arts and sciences. But rhetoric," he says, "we look upon as the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us."

This last statement would seem to give rhetoric complete generality. Aristotle qualifies it, however. "People fail to notice," he says, "that the more correctly they handle their particular subject the further they are getting away from pure rhetoric." So far as knowing good arguments and knowing how to use them are concerned, the physicist and the mathematician need no help from rhetoric. The art of rhetoric is necessary only in dealing with such topics as do not fall within the subject matters or systems of the established arts and sciences. Such topics are precisely those with which the orator must deal. "The duty of rhetoric," Aristotle writes in summary, "is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning." This is his answer to those who have given rhetoric "a far wider subject matter than strictly belongs to it."

But Aristotle's explanation of his limitation of rhetoric is itself limited to only one of its major parts, namely, the construction of argu-

ments. As contrasted with the mathematician, the physician, and the philosopher, whose mastery of the subject matter of their arts or sciences gives them a command of the relevant principles and methods of argument, only the orator needs the special art of rhetoric to provide him with the topics from which examples and enthymemes can be drawn and to give him skill in the use of such arguments. But it is not only the orator who must consider the character and emotions of his audience. It is not only the orator who must consider the best way in which to order the parts of an elaborate discourse. Above all, it is not only the orator who is faced with the problem of using language more or less effectively in the expression of thought, and especially in its communication to others. All these considerations and problems are common to the orator and the teacher. They are considerations and problems which must be faced not merely by the public speaker who tries to move an audience to action, but by anyone—poet, philosopher, or scientist—who tries to write whatever he has to say as effectively as possible.

Competence in a particular art or science may give a man competence with respect to arguments in the field of his particular subject matter, but it does not seem to give him competence with respect to these other considerations and problems, which he faces when he tries to communicate his knowledge or thought. Here, then, is the possibility of a broader conception of the art of rhetoric—an art concerned not merely with being persuasive in the sphere of action, but with eloquence or effectiveness in the expression of thought.

We find this view of rhetoric reflected in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. In his Prologue, the Franklin says, "I beseech / You to excuse me my untutored speech"; for, he explains,

They never taught me rhetoric, I fear,
So what I have to say is bare and clear.
I haven't slept on Mount Parnassus, no,
Nor studied Marcus Tullius Cithero.

The Squire also apologizes for the inadequacy of his English, when he tries to describe the beauty of Canace:

To tell her beauty is too much for me,
Lying beyond what tongue of mine can sing;
I dare not undertake so high a thing.
My English too is insufficient for it,
It asks a rhetorician to explore it,
A poet in the colours of that art,
To give a fair account of every part.

Though Aristotle's *Rhetoric* for the most part neglects this broader conception of rhetoric in order to expound the rules of oratory, the third book of his treatise, which deals with the use of language, indicates that problems of style are common to oratory and poetry and to other types of discourse as well.

Kant seems to hold this broader conception of rhetoric when he says that "the arts of speech are *rhetoric* and *poetry*." In the tradition of western thought, the two arts tend to become identified when each is separated from any particular subject matter. As appears in the chapter on POETRY, poetry like rhetoric has a broader and a narrower meaning. In the narrower meaning, it is the art of the narrative, just as in its narrower meaning, rhetoric is the art of oratory. The other sense in which poetics as an art can be understood is, according to Bacon, with respect to words, not matter. "In this sense," he writes, "it is but a character of style, and belongeth to arts of speech."

In this sense the poetic art is hardly distinguishable from the rhetorical art. The problems involved in composing a good speech are not the same as those involved in writing a good poem (or what Bacon calls a "feigned history"). But when poetics and rhetoric are each separated from such problems to become the arts of writing or speaking well about anything, then, in becoming as general as discourse itself, they tend to become one and the same art—an art of style or expression, an art of preaching or teaching the truth about any matter on which one mind seeks to communicate with another.

Nietzsche expatiates on the mastery of style in antiquity. "In those days," he writes, "the rules of written style were the same as those of spoken style; and these rules depended in part on the astonishing development, the refined requirements of ear and larynx, in part on the strength, endurance, and power of

ancient lungs . . . Periods such as appear with Demosthenes or Cicero, rising twice and sinking twice and all within a *single* breath: these are delights for men of *antiquity*, who knew from their own schooling how to value the virtue in them, the rarity and difficulty of the delivery of such a period—we have really no right to the *grand* period, we moderns, we who are short of breath in every sense!" In Nietzsche's view, the ancients "were one and all themselves dilettantes in rhetoric, consequently connoisseurs, consequently critics—and so they drove their orators to extremes."

IN THE TRADITION of the great books, no book does for the art of rhetoric in general what Aristotle's *Rhetoric* does for that art in the limited sphere of oratory. But Augustine's treatise *On Christian Doctrine* engages in a general rhetorical analysis that is in a way comparable to Aristotle's analysis of oratory. In this work Augustine brings his own professional training as an orator to bear on the problems of reading, interpreting, and expounding Sacred Scripture. The fact that he is dealing with Sacred Scripture and hence, in his view, with the teaching of the most fundamental truths, lifts him above the limited concerns of the orator; but the fact that he limits himself to Sacred Scripture also prevents him from formulating his rules of interpretation and exposition with the complete generality they would have to possess in order to be the rules of a general art of rhetoric.

At the opening of the fourth book of *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine declares that, having considered in the preceding books "the mode of ascertaining the proper meaning" of Scripture, he will now treat "the mode of making known the meaning when it is ascertained." He disclaims any intention "to lay down rules of rhetoric"; he wishes merely "to engage it on the side of truth." To this end he tries to show how Scripture itself, and such holy men as Saint Cyprian and Saint Ambrose in commenting on Scripture, have employed the art of rhetoric.

"It is' the duty," Augustine writes, "of the interpreter and teacher of Holy Scripture . . . both to teach what is right and refute

what is wrong; and in the performance of this task to conciliate the hostile, to rouse the careless, and to tell the ignorant both what is occurring at present and what is probable in the future. But once his hearers are friendly, attentive, and ready to learn, whether he has found them so, or has himself made them so, the remaining objects are to be carried out in whatever way the case requires." The first rule of a general rhetoric would thus seem to be one of creating a receptive frame of mind in the persons being addressed. This accomplished, the teacher must proceed with various alternatives in mind.

"If the hearers need teaching," Augustine writes, "the matter treated of must be made fully known by means of narrative. On the other hand, to clear up points that are doubtful requires reasoning and the exhibition of proofs. If, however, the hearers require to be roused rather than instructed, in order that they may be diligent to do what they already know, greater vigor of speech is needed. Here entreaties and reproaches, exhortations and upbraidings, and all the other means of rousing the emotions, are necessary."

In Scripture and its great commentators, Augustine finds "wisdom not aiming at eloquence, yet eloquence not shrinking from wisdom." He also finds examples of the three kinds of style which Cicero had distinguished—the eloquence of those "who can say little things in a subdued style, moderate things in a temperate style, and great things in a majestic style." These three styles Augustine connects with the three ends which Cicero had assigned to eloquence—teaching, giving pleasure, and moving. The subdued style, he says, should be used "in order to give instruction," the temperate style "in order to give pleasure," and the majestic style "in order to sway the mind."

"In elegance and beauty, nay, splendour," Calvin writes, "the style of some of the prophets is not surpassed by the eloquence of heathen writers." In his view, their writings "rise far higher than human reach. Those who feel their works insipid must be absolutely devoid of taste."

The great books of history, science, and

philosophy provide additional materials for general rhetorical analysis. They offer us the light of examples at least, even if they do not, like Augustine's commentary on Scripture, give us the guidance of rules. Such historians as Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, and Gibbon exhibit a diversity of styles in the writing of history. The diversity is not only on the grammatical level of the use of language, but also on the logical level of order and argument. Rhetorical principles control the way in which the language and the organization of the parts are suited to each other and to the historian's purpose—to the effect he wishes to produce upon his reader.

The way in which Euclid writes the *Elements* is a style of exposition, having rhetorical as well as logical features. In its rhetorical (if not its strictly logical) form it is applicable to other subject matters. This may be seen in Spinoza's adoption of it in his *Ethics* and in Newton's adaptation of it in his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. The dialogue form which Plato seems to have invented for writing philosophy appears to recommend itself rhetorically not only to other philosophers, but also to a scientist like Galileo in the composition of his *Concerning Two New Sciences*. If the doctrines of the *Summa Theologica* or of *The Critique of Pure Reason* were separated from the very special styles of these two works, they would probably not have the same effect upon the reader; and as they are written, they affect different readers differently, as differently as do the styles of Dante, Milton, Melville, Dostoevsky, Adam Smith, and Marx.

Some methods of exposition may be more appropriate than others to certain subject matters. "There is a great difference in the delivery of mathematics," says Bacon, "and of politics." But in every subject matter or field of learning, there is the common problem of how to make language serve most effectively to enlighten or convince in the communication of thought. The problem arises in the writing of a single sentence as well as in the organization of a whole discourse.

THE CHOICE OF WORDS and the formation of new words, the invention and employment of

figures of speech, by which abbreviation or amplification of discourse may be achieved and the imagination freshened—these are some of the considerations of style which Aristotle discusses (both in his *Rhetoric* and in his *On Poetics*) and which Augustine illustrates in his analysis of Scripture. They suggest the rules of a general rhetoric, founded on principles as universal as Pascal's insight that "words differently arranged have a different meaning, and meanings differently arranged have a different effect."

This observation indicates a further answer to the question raised much earlier, namely, why the art of rhetoric is needed over and above the skills of grammar and logic. For oratory the question has been answered by reference to those rules of rhetoric which deal with the passions and with moral character. But for a more general rhetoric, concerned with all discourse, the answer must be in terms of rules of style of the sort Pascal's observation suggests.

If there were never more than one grammatically and logically correct way of saying anything, then grammatical and logical standards would suffice for the regulation of sound discourse. But if there are always several ways of stating something and if each of them satisfies the rules of grammar and logic, but differs in the impression it makes on the mind, then criteria other than those of grammar and logic will be needed to determine our choice of which to use.

Such criteria may take the passions and the imagination into account, but they may also look primarily to the manner in which the mind itself naturally works. The fact that there are several ways of presenting the same truth to the mind—and usually several ways in which the mind can interpret the same statement—defines the scope of a general rhetoric and the relation of its rules to those of grammar and logic.

Nevertheless, some of the great authors seem to doubt the worth of rhetoric in science or philosophy. Locke, for example, admits that "in discourses where we seek pleasure and delight rather than information and improvement, such ornaments"—as "fig-

urative speeches and allusion in language"—"can scarce pass for faults. But," he adds, "if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and so, indeed, are perfect cheats . . . and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or person that makes use of them."

Descartes also declares that "those who have the strongest power of reasoning, and who most skilfully arrange their thoughts in order to render them clear and intelligible, have the best power of persuasion even if they can but speak the language of Lower Brittany and have never learned rhetoric." Yet he qualifies this severity somewhat by identifying dialectic with rhetoric and granting its "possible use . . . to serve to explain at times more easily to others the truths we have already ascertained."

Plato for the most part tends in the opposite direction, keeping dialectic and rhetoric poles apart. But if there were a true as opposed to a false rhetoric, a rhetoric concerned with knowledge and truth, not merely opinion and pleasure, he would be willing, it seems, to admit it to the company of dialectic, and regard it as an aid in the teaching, if not the discovery, of the truth. The pedagogical utility of rhetoric as well as dialectic appears in the summary which Socrates gives to Phaedrus, after they have finished examining the speeches about love.

"Until a man knows the truth of the several particulars of which he is writing or speaking," Socrates says, "and is able to define them as they are, and having defined them again to divide them until they can no longer be divided, and until in like manner he is able to discern the nature of the soul, and discover the different modes of discourse which are adapted to different natures, and to arrange and dispose them in such a way that the simple form of speech may be addressed to the simpler nature, and the complex and the composite to the more complex nature—until

he has accomplished all this, he will be unable to handle arguments according to rules of art . . . either for the purpose of teaching or persuading."