

The One

Isocrates is viewed by Socrates as the only rhetorician who had a spark of a philosopher in him, who could bring up rhetoric to the level of a discipline. Isocrates possessed that ability to have control of his horses and appeared to be going toward a higher goal and would not be satisfied with mediocrity. Isocrates, though a rhetorician, did not appear to Socrates to be a Sophist, indeed Isocrates appeared to have the ability to transcend the ways of the Sophists.

Plato, speaking through Socrates, believed that Isocrates had exactly what was necessary to take rhetoric to a respectable level. He was a rhetorician but he cared for truth, without which Socrates felt rhetoric had no value. Rhetoric to Plato was nothing more than public opinion and in this work he exposes the techniques of the Sophists, while at the same time, thinking of what rhetoric could truly become. If anyone could truly redeem it, Isocrates would be the one. In the glimpse we get here of Isocrates we see that “a more divine impulse will lead him to greater things,” according to Socrates. Looking at Socrates’ previous speech on the charioteer, we may be able to gain an understanding of these words.

The metaphor of the charioteer is important in understanding the praise given to Isocrates. Socrates tells of a charioteer being in control of two horses, Sophrosyme and Hubris. Sophrosyme desires to fly upward to heaven while Hubris loves going downward to the earth. Isocrates can be compared to a charioteer in control of his horses and desiring Sophrosyme to lead him to the heights of heaven. Isocrates could control his rhetoric. He could guide it into the proper paths, that of making citizens better, of inspiring the rulers to truth and honesty, and of making bad men good. His

divine impulse was that of a philosopher. Isocrates was able to compose “his writings with knowledge of the truth, and is able to support them. . .” Isocrates pursued knowledge and truth while the Sophists did not. What Isocrates had was considered so divine by Socrates that the word he first considers for it, “wise,” is a word that “befits God alone.”

Socrates saw in the Sophists all that Isocrates was not. They desired money and had no objection to using their speeches for gain, whether material or political. They could argue lies and not be bothered by it. Sophists only desired to please the people, and would tell them, what they wanted to hear, no desire to control and tame their tongues for righteousness but rather they let go the reins and let Hubris do as he pleased. Isocrates was the opposite of that, he had self control and cared for truth and diligently searched for knowledge. Isocrates would not use his rhetoric for unjust gain as the Sophists, but for higher purposes. Socrates saw that and it gave him some hope for the future, that there might be some good in rhetoric.

Isocrates’ pursuit of knowledge is what set him apart from the Sophist rhetoricians of the time. He had self control and the desire for true learning while fellow rhetoricians did not care what they did, so long as they were well paid and the people were happy. Isocrates desired knowledge and truth and Socrates wanted to see him use them to bring rhetoric upward to a respectable and true discipline. Socrates disliked rhetoric, but because of Isocrates, he started thinking of what the true power of rhetoric was, if only used correctly.

The Contribution of Augustine

Augustine, with his *De Doctrina Christiana* was able to rescue rhetoric back from the Sophists of the Second Sophistic period, back to its Ciceronian “origins” and tailored to Christian ends. According to scholars such as Baldwin, Augustine ignores the sophistic and goes back “to the ancient idea of moving men to truth.” (Baldwin p. 188). Augustine reiterated the higher value of rhetoric, such as Cicero promoted, and wrote to convince others of the necessity of rhetoric as a useful tool for the Christian preacher during a time of questioning of its role in the new Roman Christian society.

Cicero believed that wisdom, knowledge and truth could be united with eloquence to inspire all men to utilize rhetoric in the best and most lofty way. That idea had been forgotten until the time of Augustine when Christianity had spread and was the most popular religion in the Roman world. With Christianity came a new system of ethics and values and debate quickly arose as to what role rhetoric would play in the world. Would it be utilized as a valid form of preaching the Scriptures or rejected altogether because of its pagan roots and usage? Many participated in this debate, including Augustine who took the position that rhetoric could be used for good. In Book IV of DDC, we see how Augustine revived some of Cicero’s ideas and even his vision to come to that conclusion.

Augustine rejected sophistic use of rhetoric as outright pagan and immoral. Though he, unlike Plato or Isocrates, did not write against the sophistic use of rhetoric, but rather ignored it. In book IV of DDC he has gotten to the point of not even wasting any time with refuting the Sophists but instead goes right on with trying to teach “sound rhetorical doctrine” (Baldwin p.189). The Sophists, just as at other times in rhetoric’s

history were all about pleasing the people by whatever means necessary rather than teaching the truth.

Augustine knew, however, that there was more to rhetoric than what the Sophists taught. Having read Cicero's works, he stated that rhetoric was a useful tool for the preaching of the truth of the Bible. He gives out a few examples, especially in the writings of Paul, that teaching how and what to speak is not wrong. Augustine quotes Bible verses such as 1 Timothy 4:11, 5:1 which show that even Paul taught Timothy how to speak, inferring that rhetoric is not much different (Augustine p. 107). He also quotes Romans 5:3-5 commenting that, "we recognize the figure called in Greek, *χλιμαξ*, in Latin, be some, *gradatio*," showing that Paul used rhetorical techniques in his letters though he may not have known what they were (Augustine p. 57). So he shows by the Scripture that rhetorical techniques are not bad in and of themselves. He then ignores the Sophists, and goes on to say that Christian preachers should focus first on teaching the truth of the Bible, then in attempting to persuade people, and lastly on pleasing the people. He does not deny the importance of eloquence, but strongly repudiates its wrong usage, saying that most important is the teaching of the truth. Augustine states, "the important thing now is that the instruction of which we speak, be made the business of one who, even though he has no powers of eloquence, does possess wisdom in arguing and speaking, so that he may do good to his audience, even though that be less than if he could at the same time use eloquence in speaking." (Augustine p. 47). Many of the details of being a rhetorician in book IV of DDC is a revival of Ciceronian ideas, who also, desired truth in rhetoric.

Through *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine significantly contributed to the field of rhetoric. In the background of a debate on the proper place of rhetoric in Roman Christian culture, he reworked rhetoric back from a place of immoral sophistic use to the Ciceronian idea of rhetoric being the interconnectedness of truth and eloquence. Cicero felt rhetoric had a civic value to improve Roman democracy. Augustine however felt that instead of civic value, rhetoric had a higher spiritual value to lead men to the truth of God and Jesus Christ. He revived Cicero's works and ideas to show that rhetoric can and should be used in a way that is pleasing to God to teach the truth of God's Word to the new Roman Christian culture. Though Augustine wrote this mainly to show that preachers could use rhetoric to teach the Bible more effectively, *De Doctrina Christiana* also had the effect of allowing the works of Cicero and other classical rhetoricians to remain in the hands of scholars for the study and education of future generations of rhetors.

The Ultimate Vision of Oratory as seen by Antonius and Crassus.

Cicero's *De Oratore* is almost like a Platonic dialogue between two characters, Crassus and Antonius, in which they discuss the ideal orator and the place of rhetoric in Roman society. Crassus felt that the orator should have a broad knowledge base in which to draw from and contribute to the growth of the Republic, while Antonius felt that rhetoric was practical and that knowledge should come mostly from experience in the courts. From their discussion about Orators and rhetoric we can gain a glimpse into their vision for the future of the Roman Republic.

Crassus felt that to be an Orator, one needed to be well read and studied in the liberal arts and all the fields of the humanities. He argued that an Orator needed to be able to argue on any subject with a little bit of eloquence. There had to be an innate talent in the person which could be brought out through broad areas of study. Antonius on the other hand felt that Crassus was placing too much of a burden on the future orators by requiring a broad knowledge of the humanities and philosophy. He felt that what really mattered was personal experience and practice in oratory that made one great. He agreed that a person needed talent to be a great orator but instead of a broad education, the education should be practical, focusing on reading and studying great orators as well as things in the judicial system itself such as laws. These differences lead to the main disagreement, what should rhetoric be really about?

Antonius desired to keep rhetoric in its place in the judicial system while Crassus had a grand view of rhetoric as being something great, integrated in all the realms of knowledge in the Romans empire. Antonius is very practical, his views are narrow and focus simply on the historical aspects of rhetoric and its use in the courts as a way of

influencing a decision. He has no problem with an Orator looking into works in areas other than law such as in the humanities but he believes that the Orator should mainly focus on the courts, that style and eloquence should be key. Crassus on the other hand believed in essentially uniting wisdom and eloquence to form great statesmen and citizens for the benefit of Rome. Those with a broad knowledge of all different aspects of life, along with great arguing skills help shape public policy in a fantastic way. The best arguments for and against a political choice would be made in the best possible way. By bringing up the quality of arguments from both sides by uniting eloquence and wisdom it would allow for the best of the younger generation to steadily improve the lot of Rome.

I sympathize with Crassus' idea of education bringing about a better society. It would be well if the smartest people with the broadest education would also be able to articulate their wisdom to all groups of people in the best possible way, but as Antonius would say, it is too heavy a burden to place on any one person. They both have good views, though Crassus' are idealistic and Antonius are more realistic. I would love to see Crassus' ideas come to reality, but I do not believe it possible and so I must side with Antonius' view of utilizing rhetoric to its fullest in the context provided, gaining wisdom to increase the effectiveness of rhetoric along the way.

Both Crassus and Antonius believe that rhetoric had a future in the Roman Republic, though they disagreed with each other as to what that was. Crassus felt that rhetoric would be what would advance the Republic into a state of universal knowledge and eloquence, so that all could be somewhat like a Platonic "Philosopher-King," rather than king. Antonius however believed that rhetoric had its place, and that rhetoric would have no place in the political arena higher than in the courts.

Plato and Isocrates: Ideal and Real

The views that Plato held on the subject of philosophy and rhetoric were different from that of Isocrates. Plato felt that the goal of man should be to discover the essence of things such as beauty and what makes justice, the philosophical, and despised the Sophists who used rhetoric in a pseudo-philosophical way. Isocrates too disliked the Sophists' use of rhetoric but he believed that a scholar should not invest so much in philosophy but in rhetoric which can be used practically and for good cause.

Plato in his *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* writes of his dislike for the Sophists and his love of Philosophy and the essences. He spent a lot of his life fighting against the Sophists with regard to rhetoric. They knew what to do to get the intended reaction out of people but they did not have an understanding of how what they did worked and did not care to learn it. As what we now consider a Philosopher, we can see how his emphasis on finding out the essence of certain traits such as beauty, plays out with his interaction with the Sophists. Plato wanted there to be an understanding of essences in rhetoric. He wanted the Sophists to understand why what they did worked and, as we read about in the *Phaedrus*, apply that for nobler and higher ends than that of gaining extreme wealth by simply pleasing the audience (which the Sophists were doing). Plato desired truth in rhetoric which the Sophists were not presenting to the audience. Since this was in the early days of rhetoric and was the only known usage of it, Plato rejected rhetoric altogether rather than accept its use for selfish goals.

Isocrates, similar to Plato disliked the Sophists for about the same reason, stating that they, specifically those professing to teach political discourse, had "no interest whatever in the truth." They only had a desire for making profit and pleasing the

people. However he also did not agree with Plato's emphasis on philosophy and on essences and absolute truth. He felt them to be useful but that it should not be the main focus of students of rhetoric. Isocrates was a Pan-Hellenic, wanting unity and cooperation between Greek city states. He desired to see rhetoric as the force that created great statesmen for Greece and to advance political causes. He did not consider himself a Sophist though Plato would have disagreed. Isocrates believed that rather than a rhetorician knowing abstract philosophy, he should be a generally good person who would use rhetoric in a practical way for the benefit of Greece. Isocrates probably sympathized with Plato's ideas but he focused on the here and now, rather than on the afterlife (such as we see in Plato's *Phaedrus*). So for the benefit of all in Greece, he promoted rhetoric as a feature of statesmanship, able to make good nations better. The moral person using rhetoric would be able inspire others and even himself to be better and to reach for the high lofty ideas that come with Pan-Hellenism.

Plato and Isocrates had some things in common and some things different. They both believed that the Sophists had gotten rhetoric wrong, saying whatever the audience wanted to hear, regardless of its truth, if it would fulfill their own selfish desires. But that is where similarities end. Since that was the only form of rhetoric around, Plato felt for the most part that rhetoric was unimportant and that the serious student should study philosophy and discover absolute truth. However Isocrates believed that rhetoric could be redeemed. He neither sought the absolutes of Plato, nor the pragmatic moral relativism of the Sophists, but for the middle ground in which a good person, could use rhetoric in a beneficial way for Greek society.

Real Rhetoric

Plato believed in the judgement and life after death. This was the basis against his arguing against rhetoric and the pragmatic approach to life that most people want to hear. Without this part of Plato's beliefs, there is no real reason for knowing anything conceptual such as justice, fairness or even beauty. What is justice if we determine it? What is beauty if we are the ultimate judge of it?

Socrates, speaking the mind of Plato in this dialogue speaks many things to Gorgias and his fellows. He points out that rhetoric is nothing but a pragmatic activity which serves only to persuade and secure agreement, right or wrong being irrelevant. He argues however that agreement does not equal truth, opinion does not equal right, and that Rhetoricians became wealthy and famous for persuading what the people wanted. Plato disliked poetry for the same reason, that it was pragmatic and was based on opinion (Havelock p280). You can give examples of what many people think of just judgement but what really is "just?" We can give examples of beauty, but what is beauty and how does our idea of beauty affect our actions toward the beautiful thing?

In the last section of Gorgias, we are told of a story of judgment given to two deities, with a higher one in case the two cannot judge the case justly. He says before telling it that he believes it is true, and not a myth. He goes on to state that they judge without having any knowledge or care as to the dead person's status here on earth. The point is that regardless of how much something works and brings success in life, if it is not abstractly right or true, then it will only cause suffering in the life to come. If whatever the Rhetoricians do is not truth, then it only causes harm to those involved.

Plato, without his view of a coming judgment, would have no reason to want to know any abstract qualities of anything. That is not to say that he was always motivated by it, but without it, none of it would matter. If he didn't believe in life after death or judgment for wrong doing then there would be no reason why he shouldn't go to the side of the sophist. If there was no judgment, why shouldn't one use rhetoric to better themselves and help others do what they want? There are no consequences for it, and it makes people happy. If we want to say that we want to kill babies and let murderers go free after five months in jail, who is to say if it is right or wrong besides us?

If there is no one, who in the end, lays down the law, then we are really the ones who make the law and determine truth and even beauty. If we are responsible to no one, except each other then we have no real basis for abstract "Forms" such as justice. Justice simply is what we feel is right or what others persuade us is right. It even extends to "Forms" such as beauty. If we want to say that only certain types of people are beautiful and in our opinion, are the only ones fit to live, then, if there is no judgment after death, who is to say whether our treatment of the "ugly" is right or wrong?

That is the power Plato sees in the persuasiveness and pragmatism of rhetoric, the ability to be a god, the ability to determine for ourselves what is right and wrong. His belief in judgment after death by gods allows the abstract "Forms" of truth and justice and even beauty to start to be thought about in and of themselves. If we are to be judged, will not judgment be based on truth? If it is based on truth, we need to find out what that truth is, abstract truth, not all of its manifestations in stories, but its essence. Without the foundational belief of judgment, all of Plato's arguments in Gorgias, are absolutely illogical, why argue against public opinion? The fact that he believes in life

after death is a necessary foundation for his criticisms of the Sophist use of Rhetoric in a subjective and pragmatic way.

The Development of Rhetoric in Rome

When considering the emergence and development of rhetoric in Rome we need to consider that its development was more complex than the Romans simply bringing Greek rhetoric back from Greece. We need to look at the social context of the Romans, the *kairos*, to be able to gain a better understanding of how rhetoric developed. Since people and events are not isolated from another we must understand that specifically the Etruscan culture, Greek settlements in lower Italy, and the popular use of rhetoric all impacted Rome to develop what we now know as Roman Rhetoric.

We do not need to have or understand the writings of the Etruscans to see that they had an impact on the development of rhetoric in Rome. We know that the Etruscans had large public buildings and a court system similar to ours. We can infer then that the Etruscans had some form of epideictic and judicial rhetoric. The last king of Rome, Tarquin the proud was an Etruscan. He was overthrown by the Romans who then established the republic. It would not be too much of a stretch to say that the Romans utilized the same kind of court system that the Etruscans had, which predisposed them to at least judicial rhetoric. The Romans also had large public structures in which they held public orations, which was, again, most likely borrowed from the Etruscans. What other use would there be for large public buildings except for the giving of speeches? We can infer by Etruscan buildings, their use and the influence that they may have had on the Romans with regard to the public sphere. Since they were the rulers of Italy before Rome, it is not hard to see the possibility of Etruscan ideas, especially the court system and judicial rhetoric, used in Rome. However the Greeks would play a much more visible role in developing rhetoric in Rome.

There is no doubt that Greek rhetoric influenced Roman rhetoric. One of the main influences came from Magna Graecia, lower Italy filled with Greek colonies, some of which had schools of rhetoric. These schools slowly diffused upward to Rome as Rome grew to be the dominant power of the area. Not many people could afford to go to Greece to learn rhetoric as Cicero did, nor did many sophists travel to Rome, but many from Magna Graecia migrated to Rome during its growth. As the city grew, the influence of Greek rhetoric grew as well.

If an equestrian or common person knew judicial rhetoric then it was possible for them to advance politically after they had successfully defended a Patrician in a court case. Rhetoric, at first used pragmatically as a way of winning in the judicial system soon became a common way for those of lower classes to advance into political positions. The harder route was if one became an advocate for the people, like Cicero was, then their popularity could put them right into the Consulship. So the power inherent in rhetoric itself within the Roman system, also led to its full and complete development in Rome.

Rhetoric in Rome emerged and developed from three different sources. The Etruscans provided the framework for which rhetoric could be used, Greeks from Magna Graecia diffused northward and brought formal rhetoric into Rome, and the rhetoric they brought worked in the boundaries of the Roman judicial system to allow for the advancement of the common man, which motivated more Romans to formally study rhetoric. Without these three factors, it is doubtful whether or not Roman rhetoric would have even grown to become a part of what is today called Classical rhetoric.

Argument via Aristotle

In book one of Aristotle's Rhetoric he declares two types of proofs that can be used in argumentation, artistic and non-artistic proofs. These are based on persuasion and evidence respectfully, with persuasion being the one most important to him. In Book two he discusses twenty-eight different topoi, or common topics that can be used in any kind of argument, and in book one shows examples of those topoi in use as well as show us particular arguments (idia) we can use in those special cases. Aristotle says in essence that if you understand the common topoi (in book two) you can then determine what is the best rhetoric to use in situations such as in a court of law or at a special event (as given in book one).

At the end of book one in chapter 15, Aristotle speaks a little about Non-artistic means of persuasion or proofs, such as the presence of witnesses in which one must simply interpret the evidence. Aristotle does not deny these exist, but here in the Rhetoric he focuses on artistic proofs in which the rhetorician is to construct the proof of his argument. Aristotle here is desiring to show us how to make logical and effective arguments. He does this first by looking at specific cases and instances, but later talks about the topoi under which, if they are known, one can create logical arguments in numerous different situations.

Aristotle's famous twenty-eight topoi are given in book two chapter 23. These topoi are common topics by which men reason. If a person knows and utilizes these, then they will be able to deliberate with any person on generally any topic. Aristotle says it is important to get the facts before starting (2.22.4) but after that, one can use the topoi to strategically argue on "many different subject matters in all three species of

rhetoric.” (Kennedy p172). In book one Aristotle says that these three species are political, epideictic or judicial rhetoric. When arguing in these three, a person can utilize topoi, which work in any area, or use the idia, a specific argument for that specie.

In book one, we are given the species of rhetoric: political (or deliberative), epideictic (or ceremonial) and judicial (or forensic). Aristotle gives definitions to terms when discussing these species in turn. He defines “happiness” when speaking on the political rhetoric (1.5.3), “praise” in 1.9.33 on epideictic and “wrongdoing” on judicial rhetoric (1.10.3). In book one he also tells the audience what they should remember when having to use rhetoric in these situations, giving not only theory, but idias, specific examples for each specie. For instance, he speaks of and tells how one should praise another as an example of epideictic rhetoric in 1.9.35-38 while also keeping in mind the topoi. Aristotle brings us down to the practicality of rhetoric by use of the idia in his first book, and the topoi in his second.

Aristotle knew that there are rhetorical arguments and techniques that transcend the subject being spoken about. He determined that there were twenty eight of them, which he called the topoi. But he also knew that each subject has their own idia, or specifics which cannot be used in rhetoric on other subjects. Aristotle determined, that in the three species of the logical realm of artistic proofs, there are some techniques that can be used for each one, and some that cannot. In book one of *On Rhetoric* he sets out the specifics, the idia, in the world of political, epideictic and judicial rhetoric. In book two he displays the techniques that can transcend the three species as well as many numerous subjects within them. This allows the student of rhetoric to be able to

argue in general on a variety of subjects and to be knowledgeable of what techniques may be used when the particulars arise.