

BASIC ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC

Nicoletta Di Blas – Introduction

What is rhetoric?

- The “art of speaking”
- Ancient Greece, 5th century BC

“To a certain extent all men attempt to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others. Ordinary people do this either at random or through practice and from acquired habit. Both ways being possible, the subject can plainly be handled systematically, for it is possible to inquire the reason why some speakers succeed through practice and others spontaneously; and every one will at once agree that such an inquiry is the function of an art”

(Aristotle, Rhetoric, 4th cent BC)

The 5 parts of rhetoric:

- «Inventio» (invention): finding arguments
- «Dispositio» (arrangement): putting arguments in order
- «Elocutio» (style): choosing the right style/wording
- «Memoria» (memory): *just for public speaking* – learning the talk by heart
- «Actio» (delivery): *just for public speaking* – non verbal aids (how to move, how to change tone of voice...)

Part1: inventio

- Invention: Finding arguments
- Arguments can be related to:
 - The author/sender (ETHOS)
 - The addressee (PATHOS)
 - The thing under discussion (LOGOS)
- Arguments can anticipate objections
 - It is useful to think about at least 3 possible objections and be ready to answer

Examples from commercials

SENDER – ETHOS



“I’ve been making tortellinis for more than 50 years”
“My company is steadily growing”

ADDRESSEE – PATHOS



This is how you become if you use this perfume

SUBJECT – LOGOS



“Slow squeezing technology”

Step 2: dispositio / 1

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- Arrangement: how to organize the arguments
 - Best-weak-best (“Nestorian” order)
 - Avoiding two pitfalls: that our interlocutor does not pay attention from the beginning if we start with poor arguments, and that of leaving a bad impression if we finish up with poor arguments after having started with fireworks
 - Best-average-weak...
 - Television debate: start with your best arguments! (...and state how many they are going to be)
 - Weak –better – best
 - Face-to-face debate: to «have the last word»

Step 2: dispositio/2

- OPENING

Move the audience; gain their favor (*captatio benevolentiae*).

List the main points to come (*partitio*): «nothing is too long if you know when it ends» (Quintilian)

- NARRATION: description of FACTS

- ARGUMENTATION: where the speaker has to argue in favor of his/her thesis

- EPILOGUE: summing up of the arguments; move the audience.

Step 3: elocutio

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□ Elocutio

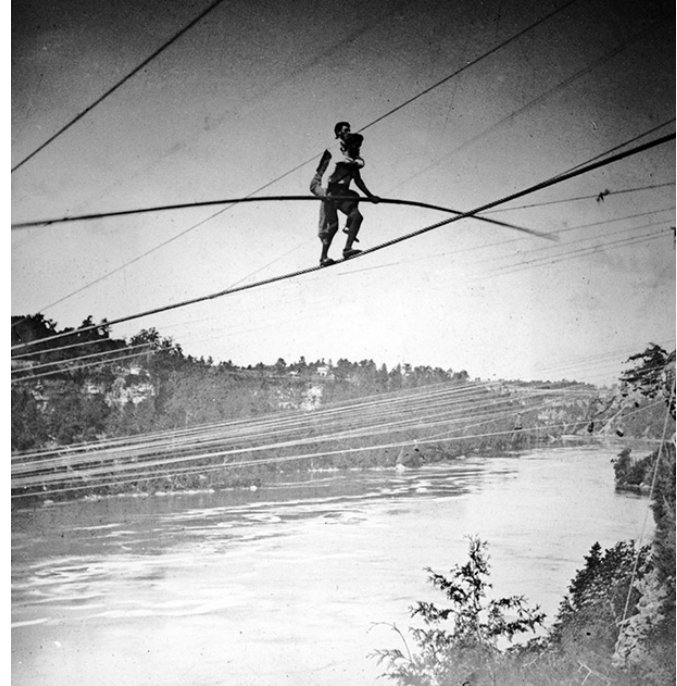
- «Dress» ideas in words
- Style does make a difference!
- Rhetorical figures
 - Of «thoughts» and «words»
 - E.g., metaphore is a figure of thought: «Louis is a lion»

Example 1

- American civil war (1861 to 1865)
- Abraham Lincoln addresses those who urged a change of commanders in the middle of the Civil War
- He is AGAINST a change of commanders

Example 1 – the speech

«Gentlemen, I want you to **suppose a case for a moment**. Suppose that all the property you were worth was in gold, and you had to put it in the hands of Blondin, the famous ropewalker, to carry across the Niagara falls on a tight rope. Would you shake the rope while he was passing over it, or keep shouting to him , ‘Blondin, stoop a little more! Go a little faster!’ No, I’m sure you would not. You would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safely over. **Now, the government is in the same situation**. It is carrying an immense weight across a stormy ocean. Untold treasures are in its hands. It is doing the best it can. Don’t badger it! Just keep still, and it will get you safely over.»



Example 2.1 – figure of words: anaphora

- “**We** shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.”

(Winston Churchill)

Example 2.2 – figure of words: anaphora

I have to confess that when we started our Food Security Initiative, I did not know that most food was grown by women. I remember once driving through Africa with a group of distinguished experts. And I saw women working in the fields and I saw women working in the markets and I saw women with wood on their heads and water on their heads and children on their backs. And I remarked that women just seem to be working all the time. And one of the economists said, ‘But it doesn’t count.’ I said, ‘How can you say that?’ He said, ‘Well, it’s not part of the formal economy.’ I said, ‘Well, if every woman who did all that work stopped tomorrow, the formal economy would collapse’

(H. Clinton, *Address to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women* delivered 12 March 2010, United Nations, New York).

Example 3

Draft ideas to convey (for a project proposal):

- We are talking about cultural heritage institutions
- For CH institution, “going digital” is inevitable
- Poor institutions: they can’t afford it!
- ... there is a digital divide!

GOAL:

- To convey how striking this gap is!

Example 3

- Countries like Italy for example, with “distributed” cultural heritage consisting of an incredible number of minute cultural “episodes” (little villages, tiny churches, small archaeological sites...) encounter a clear disadvantage: such scattered information is difficult to collect within a consistent global picture, especially with limited individual resources. Even larger “episodes”, such as the “National Museum of Damascus” (in Syria) or the “Galleria degli Uffizi” (in Florence, Italy) may be not adequately “visible”. The readers are encouraged to see for themselves the information provided over the Internet about these museums and how “culturally appealing” it really is, compared it with equivalent information provided by any average museum in USA. The divide is striking: over the Internet, giants of the cultural world may be dwarfed by institutions of medium relevance.

Step 4: memoria

□ Memory

- Keep in mind the arguments and their order
- Use «aides memoires»
 - E.g. associate the main arguments to the hand's fingers

Step 5: actio

- Voice
- Gestures
- Movements

TIPS:

- Rehearse! At least 4 times
- Prepare the first sentence you are going to say
- Use eye-contact, with single individuals

Things to pay attention to:

- Kind of speech/activity (lesson, conference, debate...)
- Audience/addressee (friends? foes? «captive» audience?)
 - Different arguments!
- Tools
- Unforeseen events
- Expectations
- Space
- TIME

Time: some tips

- If you are prolix :
 - Write down a list of the arguments YOU HAVE TO SAY and remember them by heart
 - Give yourself a time for each argument – train to stay within that time limit (or even less)
 - Keep a watch in sight
- If you are synthetic:
 - Train yourself to repeat the same concept in 2, 3 different ways
 - Find examples that clarify your arguments
 - Use some form of aid (e.g. slides) to remind you what to say

To summarize

- 3 are the things that will make you a good speaker:
 - ▣ Theory
 - ▣ Imitation
 - ▣ Practice

How should a good text be?

- Correct
 - Grammar – semantics – pragmatics
- Informative
 - «Mary has got two eyes»
- Relevant
 - Every good text answers to a question (have your question clear!)
 - > «Charity» principle

On reference & common ground

- Communication needs to be understandable – i.e. the addressee needs to be capable of «locating» what the sender is talking about
- Communication has to build upon a «common ground» (i.e. common knowledge) between the interlocutors
- Two mistakes:
 - Taking pieces of knowledge that are *not* shared for granted (the most common mistake)
 - Not taking for granted pieces of knowledge, beliefs and/or information that *are* shared. This kind of mistake, less common, originates verbose communications

Example

5G RADIO ACCESS

CAPABILITIES AND TECHNOLOGIES

The capabilities of 5G wireless access must extend far beyond previous generations of mobile communication. Examples of these capabilities include very high data rates, very low **latency**, ultra-high **reliability**, energy efficiency and **extreme device densities**, and will be realized by the development of **5G** in combination with new radio-access technologies. Key technology components include extension to higher frequency bands, access/**backhaul** integration, device-to-device communication, **flexible duplex**, flexible spectrum usage, multi-antenna transmission, ultra-lean design, and user/control separation.

(Ericsson White paper, Uen 284 23-3204 Rev C | April 2016)

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