

# THE WESTERN SPEECH ASSOCIATION

## Executive Council — 1956

MILTON DICKENS . . . . .	President
University of Southern California	
KATHLEEN PENDERGAST . . . . .	First Vice-President
Seattle Public Schools	
GALE RICHARDS . . . . .	Second Vice-President
University of Washington	
JOHN W. WRIGHT . . . . .	Executive Secretary
Fresno State College	
DON GEIGER . . . . .	Editor of "Western Speech"
University of California, Berkeley	
EMMETT T. LONG . . . . .	Speech Activities Co-ordinator
Pepperdine College	
W. ARTHUR CABLE . . . . .	Custodian of Records
University of Arizona	
DONALD E. HARGIS . . . . .	University and College Council
University of California at Los Angeles	
JOHN GRASHAM . . . . .	Junior College Council
Los Angeles City College	
DAY HANKS . . . . .	High School Council
John Marshall High School, Los Angeles	
ADAH MINER . . . . .	Elementary Council
Seattle Public Schools	
HERMAN COHEN . . . . .	Public Address Council
University of Oregon	
FRED HARRIS . . . . .	Drama and Interpretation Council
University of California, Berkeley	
VERNA BRËINHOLT . . . . .	Speech Correction Council
Orange County (California) Schools	
OWEN RICH . . . . .	Radio and Television Council
Brigham Young University	
WAYNE C. EUBANK . . . . .	Immediate Past President
University of New Mexico	

WHITLOCK, S. J.  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

## Victoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Decline of Everything Else

HUGH NIBLEY\*

THE DECLINING years of ancient civilization were beset by a feverish preoccupation with rhetoric which suggests nothing so much as a hopeless alcoholic's devotion to the bottle. Everywhere the ancients give us to understand that rhetoric is their poison, that it is ruining their capacity to work and think, that it disgusts and wearies them, and that they cannot let it alone, because it pays too well and, having destroyed everything else, it is all they have left of remembered grandeur. It should be immediately apparent that this arresting phenomenon may have more than an academic interest for our own age; nevertheless, from this point on the reader, if there be such, must draw all his own parallels and conclusions. Our bemused and saddened gaze is directed to the ancient scene alone.

But was rhetoric a specific thing that we should make such wild charges against? That is a question the ancients themselves often asked. "It is often named," says Cicero, "that there is no such thing as an art of speaking." People protest, he explains, that the greatest orators never took a lesson, that the subject matter of rhetoric is *dubia et incerta* since an orator can speak on anything, and that public speaking is an essential part of many professions other than a monopoly of one. Hence, fine speech may be a gift or talent, but not a science or art.<sup>1</sup> To these objections our Tully gives the stock answer which in his opinion outweigh them: the "great orators" in question are not really in the common report of the vulgar and by proper standards do not deserve the name of orator at all; it is true that the orator's discipline is nature but nature's gifts can always be made into something by discipline;<sup>2</sup> as to vagueness of substance, if you want to insist on the vagueness of science "then it seems to me that there is no such thing as *ars oratoria*," but are we bound by such rules? What difference does it make whether it is an *ars* or not, so long as it does something that no other discipline can do? After all is said, the orator remains a specialist unique in his kind, and he who has been briefed on any subject "can speak on it far more elegantly (*grate*) even than the man who taught him about it."<sup>3</sup>

\* Hugh Nibley is Professor of History and Religion at Brigham Young University.  
 † Because of heavy documentation footnotes to this article will be found on Page 76.

By far the commonest ancient definition of rhetoric (Quintilian concludes after a survey of the field) is simply *vis persuadendi*, the power or faculty or skill of persuading.<sup>4</sup> Corax, the father of the art, called it that; Dio Chrysostom calls it "the technique or skill of persuading the many." "The goal of the orator's trade is to persuade," says the great Augustine, the business of rhetoric is to move people, to make an impression.<sup>5</sup> That is also the business of music, poetry, and drama, and Cicero duly observes that the orator has much to learn from the masters in those fields, and as they have their props and instruments so he has his: he works with the spoken word and must know not only how to make words ring with conviction but also what words will convince.

Neither the definition nor the nature of rhetoric changed throughout the long centuries of classical antiquity. Compare a description of the rhetoric of the fifth century B.C. with that of the fifth century A.D.:

The rhetorical art of the Old Sophistic (writes Schmid) aimed at convincing the thinking man by compelling arguments or veiled and misleading pseudo-arguments, by undeniable truth or its substitute, by a carefully worked-out probability made indistinguishable from truth itself, to the point of winning his assent to the speaker's proposition; it sought to inspire confidence in the speaker as a solid and irreproachable citizen, hence the emphasis on a blameless public life — even if it was so only in appearance . . .<sup>7</sup>

St. Augustine has given (says Father Combes) a rigorous and convincing (*achevee*) analysis of all the parts, all the powers, and all the seductions of the rhetorical art, showing that it is necessary, in order to inspire the soul of one's hearers with the *frisson sacre*, to seize upon that soul by means of a learned dialectic, to charm it by a cunning oratory, draw it along by a moving eloquence and, before everything, to multiply the prestige of the spoken word by that of a virtuous life.<sup>8</sup>

In almost a thousand years all that changed was the nature of the audience which had become under the tutelage of rhetoric less intellectual and more emotional.

Ancient rhetoric achieved its perfection in three rapid steps. The first is represented by the untutored eloquence of the great statesmen of the Periclean age, with Pericles himself as the classic example, the second by the conned and written speeches of the next generation, and the third, which overlaps the others in time but survives them by many centuries, by the activities of the professional orators, beginning with the Sophists.<sup>9</sup>

Philosophy plus rhetoric produces Sophistry. "The Old Sophistic," says Philostratus, "considered rhetoric necessary to Philosophy."<sup>10</sup> The man who first most successfully promoted the formal study of rhetoric was that same Gorgias whom the Sophists hailed as the father of their art.<sup>11</sup> By mixing rhetoric with philosophy he turned it to Sophistry, for which offense Plato takes him grimly to task. The charge is that he is turning his talents from the honest search for truth to the business of cultivating appearances.<sup>12</sup> That is

exactly what his teacher, Empedocles (whom the younger Aristotle calls the inventor of rhetoric)<sup>13</sup> had done: fretting like Dr. Faustus at the limitations of the mind and despairing of arriving at truth in the short span of a human life.<sup>14</sup> Empedocles found satisfaction in pretending before the public that he had already achieved all knowledge and power.<sup>15</sup> He became the most magnificent of quacks and the father of a long line of skillful impostors whose success depended wholly on their adroit and irresistible sales talk.

Gorgias was as disillusioned as his teacher; he wrote three famous books to prove (a) that nothing exists, (b) that if it did we could not know it, (c) that if we could we could not communicate our knowledge to another, and having thus thoroughly debunked the program of searching for truth the hard way, cultivated a new and wonderful art of finding success the easy way. He worked out a technique, says Philostratus, which enabled him to speak offhand on any and all subjects, and to prove or disprove any point on demand, thereby bringing against himself the shocked and scandalized charge of "making the worse appear the better reason."<sup>16</sup> Traveling everywhere, he proved to the world that "nothing could stand up to the arts of the rhetor"; his playing with words, which captivated the fancy of the rising generation and all that followed, was actually a philosophical nihilism, Schmid points out, that made a hash of all values, including the sacred *nomos* — the moral order of society — itself.<sup>17</sup>

Gorgias shares with his friend Protagoras the glory and guilt of selling rhetoric to the world. Protagoras concluded that he was wasting his time trying to sound the secrets of the universe in a short lifetime, burned his books in the market-place, and turned to teaching rhetoric, achieving the immortal fame of being the first man to make a hundred minas at the trade.<sup>18</sup> His famous dictum that man is the measure of all things led only too easily to the rhetorical gospel that anything goes, "the Philistine morality" which in time destroyed Greek civilization.<sup>19</sup> Among a long list we cite only the first and greatest of the Sophists; in proportion as their art became more sophisticated than the masters, they were less scrupulous. With the rise of the Second Sophistic the rhetorical schools, having won over the philosophers, took over the city and thereby gained control of public education, and in the process refused to continue the old lip-service to science and philosophy, but rather sought to bested them at every turn. "A host of men possessing small knowledge of the world and skill," says one observer, completely captivated the public by substituting sounds for ideas; issues gave way to personalities, the most popular speaker being the best entertainer.<sup>20</sup> The Second Sophistic aimed at nothing but selling the public exactly what it wanted; the freshness and cockiness of the Old Sophistic that had enabled its key figures to match wits and words with a Socrates, a Plato, or an Anaxagoras in a brilliant tussle of ideas was gone, and in its place was only a shrewd and studious striving to please.<sup>21</sup> The Sophists had outbrazened the old reproaches and by a generation of calculated charm

and magnanimity made the name of Sophist an honorable and envied one — "the confidence and self-satisfaction of these men show that they were entirely unaware of the utterly decadent nature of their accomplishment."<sup>22</sup>

To the ancient mind the apex of human success, the highest prize to which any man could attain, was to be a *Sophos*, one of those heroes of the mind typified by the Seven Sages, who, after giving wise laws and examples to their own cities, wandered free of earthly passions and attachments through the universe, selfless and aloof, as spectators of God's works, seeking only knowledge and carrying with them the healing blessing of true wisdom, especially of statesmanship, for all who sought or needed it.<sup>23</sup> Hailed by adoring multitudes — who often saw the aura of divinity around them — humbly petitioned by great cities and magnificent potentates, these incorruptible wise men represented the pinnacle of real human attainment.<sup>24</sup> This matchless success, the very essence of success, was from Empedocles on the particular objective of rhetoric, the Sophists fancying themselves as true successors of the Sophoi.<sup>25</sup> Like them, they sought to give laws to cities, reconcile warring factions, advise governors and emperors, instruct communities on matters of public health and economics and serve as commentators and guides in world affairs.<sup>26</sup>

The very first Sophists had found vast captive audiences waiting for them, whole nations assembled at the great games and convocations of cities to which they were sent as ambassadors.<sup>27</sup> In the later period from the heart of Asia to the Pillars of Hercules we behold great cities assembled in the breathtaking splendor of the theater, hanging on the words of the great traveling orator — between the elephant act and the great rape scene.<sup>28</sup> He tells them funny stories and improving homilies, he boldly rebukes their defects and excesses, orders the huge throng like a child to behave itself, or commends it on its good order and fine appearance. He delights the city with an outsider's praise of its size and shining beauty, or pours withering scorn on its luxury and immorality. He flatters his hearers' intelligence with his confidential manner as the great news-commentator who knows the inside stuff, discussing big world issues in clever, conceited, short-winded discourses. And they listen to him for centuries on end because he represents civilization and saves them from boredom. "All I ask," cries the great Chrysostom to the people of Alexandria, "is to be counted among your diversions."<sup>29</sup> So they shouted themselves hoarse and paid cash on the line.

And the Sophist, unlike the *Sophos*, took the cash. The classic test of the early Christians by which one distinguished between a true and a false prophet was, whether the man took money or not. The same test marked the Sophist from the *Sophos*, according to Plato. The teaching of rhetoric, says Dio Chrysostom, should raise up a generation of orators to be "saviors of their cities" — only unfortunately he must report that the prospective demigods are wholly absorbed in the quest for fame and money.<sup>30</sup> "People thought Hippias, Polu-

and Gorgias were real *Sophoi*," he says. "I can't put on a show like they did, either mantic, sophistic, rhetorical, or flattering."<sup>31</sup> It is plain what they were after and how they intended to get it.

The key to the Sophist-rhetorical technique of persuasion is probability. By clever syllogisms the trained rhetor could turn any proposition into a probability, which he could in turn build into a certainty by high-powered emotional appeal. That was the orator's one-two punch that nothing could stand up to — first to the head, then to the solar plexus — the characteristic Sophist combination of genuine mental adroitness with unabashed hamming.<sup>32</sup> The main thing was to establish the probability. The first Sophists showed the way to do this by breaking down the thing that made the Greeks uniquely great, the high moral wall between seeming and being.<sup>33</sup> Seeming is as near as you can ever get to being, Protagoras and Gorgias argued — *doxa*, appearance, is all we ever have to go by anyway; we can never really say that a thing is so, but only that it *seems* so — "Man is the measure of all things." The best training for the orator, Cicero declares, is to "dispute about everything, taking both sides of every question and picking out whatever appears probable in every proposition."<sup>34</sup> The less truth there is in an orator's cause, his Brutus declares, the better the job he must do from the probability angle.<sup>35</sup> "The aim of rhetoric," says Celsus, "is to speak with persuasion on dubious subjects of public interest."<sup>36</sup> Clement of Alexandria has given an interesting analysis of rhetorical argument, its starting point, its method of procedure, and its final goal. The beginning, he says, is the probable, an opinion or an appearance; the process is that of feeling one's way (*epicheirema*), taking cues from the opposition, adroitly shifting back and forth between logic and emotion (when the opponent gets emotional call him down to earth, when he appeals to reason ask where his heart is); and the goal is to cause a sensation, pull off a personal triumph, and become an object of wonder and admiration.<sup>37</sup> In every case the probable is the little handful of stuff on which the orator goes to work; his business is to build it up into something great. "The highest merit of eloquence," writes Cicero, "is to amplify the object of discussion . . . to exaggerate and amplify by speech."<sup>38</sup> "The rhetorical trade makes small things great and great things small," says Plato.<sup>39</sup> A classic illustration of this is Lysias' famous oration on the Figtree: it is apparent from the beginning and conclusion of the oration that it had been proved to everyone's satisfaction that the man who owned the fig tree that Lysias' client was charged with having destroyed had not done so — there had been a mistake. One would think that would settle the case — but that is the point where Lysias takes up his argument: it is not the facts about the fig tree that interests him but the probabilities of the case: would his client be the type of man to do such a thing if there *had* been a fig tree? That for him is the whole issue. It is not surprising that the orator lives in a world of high-sounding intangibles — *res, humanitas, honores, suavitas, officia, gratiae*,

*laus, commendationes, admiratio*, etc. — which on every page of Cicero's letters turn out to be but a verbal screen for a hard and sordid game of exploitation and survival played without scruples and without loyalties. "We must allow the rhetor to make false, daring, somewhat misleading and captious statements," Gellius smugly observes, "providing he keeps within the bounds of probability," and he disarmingly explains that the rhetor must be permitted that latitude since it is his business to stir people up, his gravest offense being not the championing of falsehood but any refusal to defend it in a client's interest.<sup>40</sup>

Such statements as that, meant to be a defense of the profession but actually a rather damaging indictment of rhetoric, proclaim the uneasiness that is never far from the surface of ancient treatises on oratory, the awareness that there is something basically wrong about the thing. No one denied, of course, that rhetoric could be abused — "cannot any good thing be misused?" asks Antony,<sup>41</sup> but the question was whether it was bad as such, by nature. That was a disturbing question which could hardly be asked of an honest trade and the rhetoricians hurt their case by protesting too much, constantly calling attention to the billowing smoke by insisting that the fire was not a serious one. Everywhere the defenders of ancient rhetoric give the thing away by unconsciously damaging statements: the Sophists, for example, claimed to be proud of their calling, yet the worst thing one Sophist could call another was a Sophist.<sup>42</sup> Themistius, a dean of Sophists and rhetoric, protested to his university colleagues that he deserved to be called a philosopher rather than a rhetorician, since he spoke the *truth*.<sup>43</sup> Gellius claims the Metellus's speeches are so honest that they actually deserve to be read by philosophers, and that his honesty is so great that he never has to avail himself of every orator's rightful prerogative of lying.<sup>44</sup> It is usual to call any very clever man a rhetor, according to Philostratus, "even if he is honest."<sup>45</sup> St. Augustine is no doubt reflecting the same popular sentiment when he concludes a letter, whether unconsciously or in jest, "But I must restrain myself, lest I be thought by you to be engaging in rhetorical rather than truthful activities."<sup>46</sup> Certainly he like the other great fathers of his century, admitted that rhetoric was a false and mendacious art, even while confessing that he found it a very useful and attractive one.<sup>47</sup> Cicero's very proper assurance that a rhetor will not hesitate to speak the truth when it serves his purpose<sup>48</sup> is more damaging than any long catalogue of charges brought against rhetoric by its enemies: And how he gives himself away in his impatience with the philosophers' manner of delivery! The philosophical style, he says with distaste, is much too soft, it lacks popular appeal, it is not ear-catching, has nothing punchy about it, no emotional fireworks — no volcanic rage, fierce accusations, pathetic appeals, nothing sharp and cunning: "It is chaste and upright," he concludes, "an uncorrupted virgin, so to speak."<sup>49</sup> And what was his rhetoric by contrast?

The final plea of the orators in defense of their art was the protest that

inscrupulous and unqualified men had misrepresented it inside the profession and out. Rhetoric is a terrible instrument in the hands of the wrong man, we are assured; it is often necessary to defend things like murder which, though bad in themselves, are under certain circumstances innocent and praiseworthy — the orator can make them seem good or bad at will, and so the most important qualification for every orator to have is honest intent, without which nothing is more pernicious in public or private affairs than eloquence.<sup>50</sup> So we get the constant refrain that the orator must be a paragon of virtues; his is the most difficult and demanding of all arts, requiring qualities of character and brain that are virtually non-existent in this imperfect world.<sup>51</sup> Rhetoric is the art of perfection itself; if it is not perfect it is nothing, for nothing is sadder than a great attempt that falls short.<sup>52</sup> There is no excuse for stupidity here, let alone immorality; rhetoric should be left strictly alone by those not properly endowed for it.<sup>53</sup> But who is properly endowed? To that question the experts threw up their hands in despair and declared in a single voice that the perfect orator simply does not exist. The choice was between perfection and a fiasco — and perfection was out of the question!

If nothing is rarer than a good orator, nothing is commoner than bad ones. The rewards of rhetoric are tremendous; are such rewards to be left lying about unclaimed until the perfect orator comes along? As might be expected, the worst people took to rhetoric like ducks to water.<sup>54</sup> For rhetoric preached the gospel of success. The chance for everyone to "succeed" was, Mommsen declares, the soul and essence of the principate, its justification for being, and its driving power.<sup>55</sup> It was the school of rhetoric under the benign patronage of the Good Emperor that offered this plum to every ambitious youth in the Empire, and "people of every class became inflamed with a desire to achieve the new 'success.'"<sup>56</sup> The orator's philosopher, says Cicero, is not Aristotle (who loathed rhetoric), but Carneades, because he was always successful: "He never supported a cause that didn't win or opposed one that did not fail."<sup>57</sup> Lucian illustrated the spirit of rhetorical education in his story of the young man who came to Harmodes, the greatest flute player of the time, to take lessons, with the specification that he was not interested in becoming a good flautist, but only in becoming a *successful* one.<sup>58</sup> Which is a reminder that Isocrates, the founder of the first real school of rhetoric, ruled against the flute as a waste of time — it didn't pay off.<sup>59</sup>

From the time of Isocrates on, wrote Wm. Schmid, "naked self-interest ruled in the rhetorical schools."<sup>60</sup> Success meant getting ahead; all else was eliminated. Cicero simply cannot understand those Greeks who actually like to talk about things that are both hard and impractical in the school; "these people have no word for 'inept,'" he says with scorn, but probably for their own sake; that for him is against the whole spirit of the school, which aims to get results and no funny stuff —

from such studies, he cautions.<sup>61</sup> Why study anything but rhetoric? is Seneca's challenge.<sup>62</sup> What good is astronomy except for fixing horoscopes and keeping appointments? "Mathematics teaches me to make of my fingers organs of avarice,"—that is as far as Seneca can see; music is no good, he says, because it will not stop fears or still appetites, as rhetoric will; "geometry teaches me to measure a field, how much better to know how to measure a man?"—human engineering is what pays; and who cares about the niceties of grammar when you can sell people without them?<sup>63</sup> Seneca's interest in things went only so far as they would support his case; but even the case concerned him wholly and simply as a pretext for pushing his own career: *cupit enim se approbari, non causam* was his slogan—"it is yourself you are selling after all."<sup>64</sup>

For the rhetor success meant three things: fame, wealth, and power. Fame came first; it is the one thing every orator wants. The rhetorical brotherhood glamorized their success with great skill, both because they enjoyed doing so and because it helped business, and the youth of the world became easily obsessed by an *insanis gloriae studium*. Praise and glory are what everyone wants in this life without exception, Cicero insists; for his own part, whatever he does has just one object: "To plant in the world an everlasting memorial of myself."<sup>65</sup> Let no one bring prudish charges of vanity or selfishness against this, for "even the philosophers inscribe their names on those very books which they write against love of fame!"<sup>66</sup> Even the rhetors who affected intellectual superiority to such things sulked terribly when people failed to recognize and applaud them in public places.<sup>67</sup>

People admire rhetors, Philostratus reports, much as they admire skillful doctors, seers, musicians, and even artisans, but in this particular case their admiration is mixed with caution—they distrust the admired orator as a man who is out to promote himself and will use any means to do it.<sup>68</sup> The rewards of rhetoric were great in polite society, the business world and politics.<sup>69</sup> The government sponsored the rhetorical schools as "nurseries for statesmen," from which it could always replenish the ranks of high government officials.<sup>70</sup> Pathetically eager to recognize even the feeblest signs of talent with "\$50,000 grants for \$100 ideas," the state actually cut the sinews of true statesmanship by confining the training of its gifted citizens to the make-believe world of the schools—a toy world of toy ideas.<sup>71</sup> Still, however poorly trained, "the high officials," Philo observed, "are simply overwhelmed by an uncontrollable stream of wealth."<sup>72</sup> The orator was a pusher who never missed a chance to put individuals under obligation to him—*vobis honori et amicis utilitati et republicae emolumente esse*.<sup>73</sup> They kept careful track of personal credits like funds in a bank, a regular bookkeeping of honors and obligations (you find it in Cicero's letters) that could be incurred by words and paid off in the same coin. Words were legal tender, but the rates were not fixed. "Bassus brings you an empty purse and a speech," Libanius writes in a letter of recommendation.

... Thank God who has given us eloquence, and remember that you owe your own position as head of a province to your talent as a speaker . . . Reward Bassus and thereby you will encourage others to study rhetoric."<sup>74</sup>

In its vagueness and all pervasiveness the term rhetoric came very close to our own "business," or better, "public relations." No one could say exactly what it was, yet no one had the slightest doubt about its real nature or its absolutely predominant place in the world. The rhetorician was a general promoter, ingratiating himself with powerful individuals or groups to run off with a handsome cut of the profits from clever deals engineered by himself, handling other people's affairs in the law courts, guiding political opinion, generally flattering and running errands for the great—the god Mercury, the winged messenger and factotum with the money-bags, Hermes the thief, with the ready tongue and winning manner, shows how established the type really is. The rhetor is "a pushing, driving, money-chasing operator," says Lucian, "who leaves any sense of decency, propriety, moderation, and shame at home when he goes to work."<sup>75</sup> "I do not make money," Dio protests, "I am not interested in crooked deals . . . I do not promote things in the market place—for I am not a rhetor!"<sup>76</sup> "During those years," Augustine confesses in lush rhetorical terms, "I taught the art of rhetoric, and, myself the victim of cupidity, trafficked in . . . loquacity."<sup>77</sup> "I hate to say it," another one of the greats confesses, "but *verecundia* (modesty, decency, restraint), in itself a most amiable trait, is a positive vice in an orator, since it will make him hesitate, change his mind, or even stop talking to think things over." The remedy for this infirmity is, he says, *fiducia*, complete self-confidence.<sup>78</sup> That was Gorgias' secret of success in the beginning: never lose your nerve—keep talking no matter what happens. Some of the most humane and sensitive men, like Libanius, Themistius, or the great bishops of the fourth century, showed uncanny skill and dexterity in trimming and double-talk that kept them in lucrative government positions under the utterly conflicting policies and tyrannical administrations of such emperors as Constantine, Constantius, Julius, and Theodosius. Theirs was the *flexanima atque omnium regina oratio*, the always-winner that could talk anybody out of anything.<sup>79</sup> On the lower level, the cities swarmed with fast-talking operators who could always get it for you wholesale and whose skill at making something super-colossal out of nothing was excelled only by their know-how in the art of smearing.<sup>80</sup>

As the Sophos was unattached and incorruptible, so the Sophist was unattached and irresponsible. As a speaker he was not held responsible for what he said in the heat of an address,<sup>81</sup> and as a politician he answered to no one but himself.<sup>82</sup> Critias was not responsible for wrecking Athenian democracy, Philostratus insists, for it was doomed anyway. So with a clear conscience he left his ruined city to spend years of plotting and intrigue in other cities, and finally retired in the odor of wealth and sanctity leaving a trail of wreck-

age behind him.<sup>83</sup> The Sophist who told a young man that he could get mentioned in all history books by killing Philip of Macedon felt no pangs of guilt when the fellow carried out the deed; had not Gorgias protested with wide-eyed innocence: "If a rhetor chooses to use his skill for evil ends, is that any reason for hating his teacher or expelling *him* from the cities?"<sup>84</sup> "Your mind is sick," Diogenes told a rhetor, "but your tongue feels nothing."<sup>85</sup> What is wrong with that? Isocrates asks with impatience, Is it a crime to want to get ahead in the world? Everybody works for money, what is wrong with *talking* for money? Doesn't everybody practice piety, justice, and other virtues for what they can get out of them?<sup>86</sup>

This unwillingness to accept responsibility which reaches its perfection in the great Christian orators of the fourth century,<sup>87</sup> went hand in hand with a cynical admiration for the clever ruse, the lie that was not a lie: the world recalled with delight how Protagoras was taken into court by one of his students who had promised to pay him a huge fee in case he won his first law suit. The complaint was that Protagoras was overcharging, and it was the young man's first case, so that if he lost he would not have to pay Protagoras anything, and if he won he would, of course, not pay. The same story was told of Corax and Tisias, the traditional founders of rhetoric.<sup>88</sup>

It was always recognized that there was a bad as well as a good side to rhetoric; but what was not recognized was a fatal Gresham's Law by which bad rhetoric, art, and education, like bad money, will always force the better product out of circulation.<sup>89</sup> There can be no truce between the two, since each is a standing rebuke to the other. Socrates made this clear when he declared no quarter with the half-truths of the Sophists, who were just as determined to settle his hash as he was theirs — and in the end succeeded, as he predicted they would. He explains how this Gresham's Law works when he assures Gorgias that a pastry cook prescribing only dessert to his foolish patients can always put an honest doctor out of business.<sup>90</sup> The teachers of rhetoric competed openly and brazenly for students, first against the philosophers, and then, once the state had guaranteed support of at least three Sophist teachers even in the smallest town, against each other.<sup>91</sup> The competition was terrific, with each professor, like Socrates' pastry cook, promising easier and shorter courses than anyone else, along with assurances of good jobs, big pay, and brilliant careers — "And you can do it all lying down!" said the prospectus.<sup>92</sup>

Just as no parent who could possibly afford it would deny his children decent clothing, so neither could he deny them the more essential adornments of the mind on which society placed an even greater value.<sup>93</sup> Everybody's children had to go to school — but not to study!<sup>94</sup> They came for fun and horseplay, "a spoiled and conceited generation, insistent on knowing all the answers overnight," impatient of any work or restraint, with

out reverence for anything but success.<sup>95</sup> Rhetoric, of course, was all they ever studied: "Parents don't want their children to study the hard way," Petronius complains, but "insist that *eloquentia* is the most important thing in the world, and expose them to it from infancy."<sup>96</sup> "We are not interested in making experts," the most successful educationist of his day announced, "all we intend to give the student is enough background to enable him to follow the authors."<sup>97</sup> This background was the *skopos* or *prothesis*, that is the "main idea" of each subject, the flimsy skeleton to which rhetoric would supply any desired amount of flesh. This was the ultimate development in rhetorical education, the final, Neoplatonic stage, which in time reduced all thought to impotence.<sup>98</sup>

In his discussion with Socrates Gorgias repeatedly confirmed the definition of a rhetor as one who addresses an *ochlos* — the "multitude" is the audience to whom he normally appeals in the interest of his clients. Accordingly the values of rhetoric are quantitative: How much? and How many? are the questions it always asks. *Gloria* like wealth is a function of size alone: the greater the cheering multitude the greater the glory and success of the one cheered. There is no exception to the rule, for all the fastidious and hypocritical protests of those scholarly rhetors who affected to despise the mob. Rhetoric, according to Augustine, is the art which, animated by necessity rather than "purity," scatters to the populace from its overflowing bosom (the Roman equivalent of pockets) an abundance of delights, thus leading them to comply with *his* interests.<sup>99</sup> You can get what you want out of people if only you give them what they want — without question and without hesitation. The rhetor, says Philo, is the slave of a thousand masters, the public is a whore and he is her minion and her lap-dog.<sup>100</sup> "What do you want me to do?" cries Dio Chrysostom to the people of his native city; "I'll do it!"<sup>101</sup> In Cicero's opinion Rutilius was the perfect orator in background, training, and native endowment, and yet he was a conspicuous failure because of one fatal defect: He could not sufficiently accommodate himself to popular taste.<sup>102</sup> No one who gets into this business has a right to be fastidious: *necesse est aut imitari aut oderis* — unless you are prepared to go all the way to please the mob you had better avoid it altogether.<sup>103</sup> When an anxious parent asked Antisthenes where he should educate his son, the philosopher answered, "If you expect him to spend his days among the gods make him a philosopher, but if he expects to live among people make him a rhetor!"<sup>104</sup>

The orator must stoop to conquer, and a quick and frightening rebuke awaits him if he does not stoop low enough. For all his toadying, Dio was punished for being unsociable, Libanius had to clear himself of the same terrible charge, and Apuleius was investigated time and again because he was suspected of being an introvert.<sup>105</sup> Go easy on philosophy, Cicero advises, don't talk over people's heads — they don't like orators who make them feel



stupid; best keep your books at home for private leisure.<sup>106</sup> He might have cited the case of Hermodorus, who was banished from the illustrious city of Ephesus because he was guilty of excelling in something: "If he must excel," they said, "let him go and excel over somebody else!"<sup>107</sup> Cicero's own opinion is that "an orator is pleasanter and more plausible to listen to" when he doesn't indulge in a lot of high-brow stuff. "Everything must be accommodated to the common judgment and popular intelligence," for the rhetor sells to everybody.<sup>108</sup> To find out exactly what people wanted was the hardest part of the rhetor's work, and the secret of his success; it was the canvass or survey, the careful trial-and-error game of *empeiria*, "to pick out just those things that appeal most to listeners, and not only delight them, but entertain without ever tiring them."<sup>109</sup> Once you had that, the rest was easy, simply "to scratch and tickle the ears of those who want to be tickled," taking care never to speak harshly to them.<sup>110</sup>

The landslide of vulgarization once started could not be stopped. Good men were intimidated and banished from the cities by mobs who could always count on finding orators that would never contradict them, society reserving its richest rewards for those who could justify, condone, and confirm its vices.<sup>111</sup> Even a strong-minded emperor who tried to stem the tide could wreck his cause by refusing to play along with the show-bred city crowds, and even risk his person if he dared to talk back to them.<sup>112</sup> The orating bishop who tried to introduce a fancy word or new idea into his sermon might find an angry congregation shouting back at him, or even have a riot on his hands.<sup>113</sup> There was only one thing to do, as St. Augustine observed: don't fight the stream—go with it: *vae tibi, flumen moris humani! Quis resistet tibi?*<sup>114</sup> "For all his intellectuality," McGiffert writes of the saint, "he was instinctively a conformist and could never be quite happy unless the majority agreed with him."<sup>115</sup> "What society as a whole believes," Augustine announces, "that we also believe and without an inkling of doubt, even though there is not the slightest evidence that it is true."<sup>116</sup> He would have been as nonplussed as was Polus, the ardent defender of rhetoric, when Socrates told him that though he bring all the important people in the world to support his cause, "I only am left alone and cannot agree, for you do not convince me; you only produce many false witnesses against me, in the hope of depriving me of my heritage, which is the truth."<sup>117</sup> That is the opposite pole from the rhetorical gospel, that the difference between true and false, right and wrong, good and bad, success and failure, is the difference between twenty and fifty decibels of applause.

To the pagan as to the Christian orator no sight is more thrilling, no authority more compelling, than that of the multitude assembled in the theater.<sup>118</sup> The favorite device of the great rhetor is the ecstatic peroration in which the whole human race is depicted as one magnificent congregation, praising, condemning, pleading, or acclaiming in a single thunderous voice.<sup>119</sup>

The speaker identified himself completely with his hearers: no orator can be eloquent without an audience, Cicero insists.<sup>120</sup> "Me too" (*in quo et me*) might be taken as St. Augustine's slogan and the secret of his success.<sup>121</sup> He frankly recommends a low, vulgar, and amusing style as the most valuable acquisition of the Christian orator, and wholeheartedly practices what he preaches in his tasteless, artificial, profuse, and immensely popular sermons.<sup>122</sup>

But rhetoric did more than bow before the storm: it worked hard to create and intensify it, beginning with the first political speakers who "systematically debauched" the people for their votes.<sup>123</sup> In the early days, according to Cicero, it was the good sense of the public that acted as a brake on the orators: *semper oratorum eloquentiae moderatrix fuit auditorum prudentia*; and one of the first reactions to the professional rhetors in Rome was to expel them from the city.<sup>124</sup> This "prudence of the auditors" had to be broken down, and was: when Galba tried to appeal to Roman "primitive inflexibility and excessive strictness" he only hurt his cause, says Tacitus, "for we cannot endure the excess of these virtues nowadays."<sup>125</sup> The same thing happened among the Greeks, where the first reaction to the Sophist techniques was one of shock and alarm, and only an intensive campaign of debunking established values, confounding common-sense conclusions, and turning on a vast amount of charm, wit, and synthetic sincerity succeeded in breaking down the general sales-resistance. But once it was broken the talkers, "the yokes of the empire," as Ammianus calls them, had it all their own way.<sup>126</sup> Theirs was the big-city world of late antiquity, a jazz world, hard, restless, and superficial, suffering from chronic *theatromania* and eternally jiving and jumping to the latest hit tunes.<sup>127</sup> Everywhere there is an insistence on the folksy, the easy, and the commonplace in this five-and-ten civilization that caters especially to the tastes of women.<sup>128</sup>

This easy-going partiality to the cheap and low-brow in no way reflected any real humanity or humility, for lowness of taste and morals was matched, as many an over-intellectual rhetor learned to his sorrow, by a fiercely arrogant insistence on stereotyped uniformity and a quick suspicion of any hint of independence or individuality. It was the day of the large urban crowd, the warm-weather, out-door Mediterranean crowd, healthy, excitable, superstitious, sweating and jostling at the games and shows.<sup>129</sup> It worshiped its fighters, its actors, and its orators.<sup>130</sup> Encouraged by the state to avoid serious thinking, the crowd became under the leadership of the experts not revolutionary or radical but stoutly conservative,<sup>131</sup> fond of rough-house but mushily sentimental; in time they even learned how to exchange spontaneous tears and laughter for the nicety and propriety of organized and directed applause.

The insatiable hunger of these people for entertainment was matched by "an unbridled passion for the spoken word."<sup>133</sup> There was nothing they would not pay for *suaviloquentia*, "pleasing speech," the top-selling novelty product

of the Second Sophist that caught on and stuck. The experts knew exactly what would sell and what would not; they had it all at their fingertips — formulae that could get a reaction as quick and predictable as a knee-jerk; even those who knew how it was done could not escape “the noose of *suaviloquentia*.” The general public didn’t have a chance — the rhetors simply get them drunk, says Lucian, and go to work on them; flesh and blood can no more resist the impact of a tried and tested rhetorical assault than it can take a cool appraising look at the Gorgon’s head — you are paralyzed before you know what hit you.<sup>134</sup> A properly trained rhetorician can make his audience clay in his hands, helpless automatons without a mind or will of their own.<sup>135</sup>

Rhetoric did not apologize for hitting below the belt. Before an orator can stir an emotion in other people, the teacher would explain, he must first feel it in himself, and “the nature of oratory is such . . . that it moves the orator more than it does any of his hearers.”<sup>136</sup> Who, then, could be more sincere than the orator? Who will dare to say his tears are not real? His profession requires him to produce *real* tears. Is rhetoric artificial? they ask, but what could be more artificial than poetry, prose, or dramatic composition? If actors can pretend and imagine without shocking people, why can’t rhetors? Do not philosophers take either side of a question for purposes of discussion — why shouldn’t we?<sup>137</sup> The answer is, of course, that of all these practitioners the orator alone insists that he is not doing what he is doing, namely acting. As a crowning vindication of their ethics, the rhetors neatly converted the truism that a good orator must be a good man into the corollary that rhetorical skill is proof of a noble character.<sup>138</sup>

The effect of this sort of thing on serious thought and learning can be imagined, but it does not need to be: the whole history of the Empire is there to illustrate it, and to confirm in every detail all the charges that Plato had with unerring insight brought against rhetoric in the beginning.<sup>139</sup> Hippias, Gorgias, Polus, Prodicus, and the other great Sophists “achieved wonderful reputations,” Dio Chrysostom recalls, “and acquired great wealth in public activities from cities, dynasts, kings, and private individuals . . . they spoke a great deal, but were sadly lacking in intelligence,” and they confounded issues and destroyed philosophy.<sup>140</sup> It was in their interest to do so, for they confessed that public ignorance was their greatest ally, and that the less an audience knew about a subject the more convincingly an orator could handle it.<sup>141</sup> No one would ever guess, says Cicero with admiration, that his friend Antony does not know Greek: by his rhetorical art alone he can give the impression more perfectly than any real Hellenist can.<sup>142</sup> Isn’t the knowledge of such an art preferable to the piecemeal grubbing out of harder and less rewarding stuff?

With the introduction of the Second Sophistic the arts and sciences of the West entered upon a period of decline from which they were never to recover. At the same time the school entered upon a career of undreamed-of

expansion and splendor. As steadily as civilization sank in the scale the school mounted on high, until the one reached a peak of enduring glory and authority at the very moment, in the fifth century, when the other came to rest at its final and permanent bathos. The cause of this phenomenon, as Causer has noted, was the saturation of the Western mind: there came a day when the cultural deposit of the past had become too great for any mind to absorb, while in the face of what had already been done, all future creation lost heart.<sup>143</sup> From then on, learning the hard way had become just too hard, and the creative spirit was left with nothing to create. The only answer was rhetoric, the wonderful art by which an ordinary person could master all knowledge “in his sleep,” and bring forth new and original creations simply by rearranging the familiar rhetorical building blocks in any desired pattern. The very thing that stifled learning was pure oxygen to the schools of rhetoric. How easily they took over all the functions of scholarship may be seen in the case of the immortal Hermogenes. As a boy-wonder (it was an age of *precoci pueruli*) he had given exhibitions of his rhetorical skill before the Emperor at the age of 15; his sweeping and pretentious rhetoric convinced the world that he was its greatest thinker, and his writings on all subjects became compulsory textbooks for generations to come.<sup>144</sup> Yet his actual contribution to knowledge is exactly nil — he has nothing to say. As the brain that feels for the whole body is incapable of feeling itself or what is happening to it, so the antique school seems utterly incapable of judging of its own ineptness. The actual productions of the world’s most illustrious professors for centuries on end are incredibly imbecile; in reading them we blush for the authors, yet they in perpetrating these childish horrors are joyfully exhibitionistic of their very worst traits, totally unaware of what a shocking spectacle they make.<sup>145</sup> Rhetoric, like Mephistopheles, gave them success, but took away their brains in exchange.

By the fifth century the learning and arts of the West present a horrible spectacle. As rhetoric had broken the back of philosophy by systematic sabotage and absorption, so one by one it had occupied every field in which money and fame could be earned. Again it was Plato who had pointed out that it was in its nature to do just that. Others have told the story on which we need not linger here; the poetry utterly devoid of life, inane and permanently preoccupied with those abortive and fantastic devices so admired in the schools: computistic rhythms, acrostics, centos, picture poetry, neoteric verse, and the rest; the scientific writings reduced to mere displays of conventional forms of expression and studied obscurity; history and scholarship confined to translations, commentaries, summaries, and epitomes; everywhere the strangely monotonous and repetitious; striving to be stunningly different and impeccably respectable at the same time, to pile a humdrum Pelion on a conventional Ossa in violent and cumulative attempts to achieve the novel and sensational.<sup>146</sup>

It is no paradox that the gaudiest excesses of rhetoric have a familiar



ring. The rhetorician's business is to make an irresistible impression *immediately* on large numbers of people: his message must be grasped and his persuasion succeed on the first hearing — cool deliberation and the gathering of facts would be fatal to his profession.<sup>147</sup> He has no choice but to "pour it on" — *copia* is Cicero's favorite word. With satiation comes boredom — there must be no satiation.<sup>148</sup> Christianity gives rhetoric a new lease on life, according to Augustine, by providing the sore-pressed orator with a *materia grandis* in which exaggeration is impossible; from here on the orator can pour out Niagaras of superlatives and still not begin to do justice to an arsenal of absolutes. Moreover, it brings a new spice to the jaded appetites, and yet requires nothing new either of the speaker or the hearer, for the central theme is God, the one theme most familiar to the largest number of people: accordingly, one never has to tell his hearers anything they do not know already.<sup>149</sup> The matter, manner, and vocabulary of the Christian sermon was borrowed whole-cloth from the panegyric.<sup>150</sup> Enormous economy of mental effort was achieved by insisting on rigid stereotypes in the rhetor's techniques. When rhetoric became Christian, according to Norden, it bade a last farewell to ideas and concerned itself henceforth "only with the forms in which the idea had been clothed in the Hellenistic world."<sup>151</sup> Augustine compares the words of the pagan orators to precious ornamental vases which he values most highly — "only the wine of error they contain displeases me." The old rhetoric interested him only as an empty jar, devoid of content; as such he treasured it above all else.<sup>152</sup>

From the second century on the chief characteristic of every branch of science and art is "the inability to create new compositions."<sup>153</sup> The stereotype had abolished the need of that: "things that bad poets instinctively love to fashion," are the permanent legacy of rhetoric to literature. Instead, everywhere we meet with the mania for collecting, for cataloguing, for the pointless quizz, the irrelevant "believe it or not," the literary and historical tags that lead nowhere, the passion for merely stating information. Strangely enough real learning was ignored, even as a means of making an impression, and Ammianus can report in the greatest days of the schools that the libraries are shut up like tombs. In the rhetorical education sponsored by Augustine Marrou perceives "un echo, une influence du flechissement general des etudes de cet abaissement du niveau general de la civilization, qui deja tout autour d'Augustin, annonce les temps barbares."<sup>155</sup> As ever the rhetoricians themselves continued to protest against the scandalous artificiality and insincerity of their art — in the most artificial and rhetorical terms!<sup>156</sup>

Some years ago it became fashionable in informed circles to ascribe the emergence of the Medieval mind to a process of orientalizing. Now while it is true that the typically rhetorical is also the typically Oriental, and that the Rhetoric which conquered the Western World was "the thing that came from Asia,"<sup>157</sup> what happened was not a yielding to foreign pressure so much as

the running down of institutions to a point where they reach a dead level to which the East had sunk many centuries before and to which it had become perfectly adapted. With the triumph of rhetoric the West joins the fraternity of fallen civilizations that live a common, if not a congenial life and share a common mood. The Orient did not force itself on the West, but simply moved into a vacuum.<sup>158</sup>

Turning to the East we find that rhetoric has everywhere done its work and run its course in past ages, and so rules with uniform and undisputed sway from aeon to aeon. All that reaches us from the Pyramid Age of Egypt is a feeble and moralizing literature that has survived only because it was perpetuated and copied in the schools.<sup>159</sup> The papyri of the Old Kingdom already display the fatal rhetorical passion for saying the same thing in as many different ways as possible, and by the Tenth Dynasty all effort at creation seems to have ceased, the writings of the time consisting solely of endless learned citations from earlier writings. The characteristically Egyptian admonitions, the *seboyet* literature, laments, and letters are simply school pieces to serve as standards of form.<sup>160</sup> Always it is the *sesh*, the man trained in words, who sets the tone; he it is "by whose speech others are pleased," "who is rescued from the mouth of the vulgar and praised in the mouth of important people," he is the one "who will never go hungry," who will get ahead at court, who is assured of an easy and important career because he knows how to speak pleasingly and write by the book.<sup>161</sup> Insincerity and smugness mark the smooth copious, trite flow of phrases — *glatter Phrasenschulst*, Kees calls it — that means success in public and private life.<sup>162</sup> "Style soon outlived its freshness and gave way to an artificiality and bombast which submerge the content."<sup>163</sup> The famous Eloquent Pasant belongs right in our own Middle Ages with its exhausting parallels and wearisome display of rhetorical imagery.<sup>164</sup> From the Middle Kingdom on, according to Gardiner, "a florid and metaphorical style" was perpetuated as the "tales and semi-didactic treatises . . . were copied and recopied in the schools."<sup>165</sup> Finally with the Ramessid period we reach the mood commonly described as "typically Oriental," in which content vanishes and only spice, the exotic bloom of rhetoric, remains, while restraint and reason are thrown to the winds.<sup>166</sup> The next step is Alexandria, where the tradition continues without a break and where Dio Chrysostom found the city in his day given over body and soul to the rhetors.<sup>167</sup>

It is the same with the Babylonians. The student who learns the rules becomes an important official, and among his fellows "he shineth like the day."<sup>168</sup> From first to last the school is supreme, with the result that "no important addition appears to have been made in nearly two milleniums" to any branch of knowledge.<sup>169</sup> "The period of nearly 3,000 years through which the monuments carry us," writes Weber, "shows in all essentials an unvarying picture of intellectual life."<sup>170</sup> The vast heaps of tablets yield nothing but an

endless mechanical repetition of the same stock stories and figures; we look in vain for any sign of evolution in this sort of thing, the experts inform us — from century to century the precious game goes on: a poem on the 360 uses of the palm, a debate between summer and winter, a servant and a master, the palm and the tamarisk, between two rival cities, a tireless preoccupation with mere words, with bizarre and studied archaisms, the incredibly industrious but sloppy and inaccurate rehashing of the same materials with never a hint of originality or remorse.<sup>171</sup> The labors of the Babylonian mind as described by Professor Meissner are hardly to be distinguished from those of our own Middle Ages as Professor Raby describes them; they bear the same familiar stamp, the indelible stamp of rhetoric.

The literature of the Arabs presents the same appalling picture. Spengler's *magischer Geist* is but the thrall of rhetoric. From the beginning "a few mediocre textbooks . . . completely ruled the schools for centuries on end,"<sup>172</sup> and the schools ruled everything else, with their maxim that correct speech is more important than correct thought.<sup>173</sup> A thoroughly hackneyed panegyric to the prophet in which he displayed fifty-one rhetorical figures made al-Hilli the greatest man in Baghdad, exactly as a like panegyric to the Emperor had made Sidonius the greatest man in Rome six centuries before.<sup>174</sup> By the eleventh century the schools had brought the intellectual life of Islam to a complete standstill; the *'ulemah* could think of nothing to do but to be "continually rearranging and reordering the materials at hand into new and meaningless systems."<sup>175</sup> Heirs of the Sophist tradition through Edessa and Alexandria, the Arabs went the inevitable way of the rhetoric school, and by the thirteenth century had reached familiar ground: mathematics confined (as Seneca would have it) to the reckoning of inheritances, astronomy to the calculating of business and religious engagements, medicine to the study of astrology, philosophy and theology to fussy and pointless commentaries.<sup>176</sup> Top-notch scholars, utterly at a loss for ideas, spent their days like the Sophists of old traveling from university to university and from mosque to mosque to give public display to their wit and eloquence, or attending conventions and busily writing up their reports.<sup>177</sup> As in rhetorical schools in general, the most meticulous hair-splitting goes hand in hand with the most wild and undisciplined phantasy, but always the first prize goes to the Flowers of Eloquence.<sup>178</sup> The esthetic judgment of the schools "never pays any attention to a composition as a whole, but seeks poetic beauty only and always in the isolated verse."<sup>179</sup> The story of Kalilah and Dimnah, the oldest Arabic prose work and to this day the most popular school text in the East, is simply a sequel to the *Vita Sophistarum*, recounting the careers of two foxy rhetors who traveled about from court to court as teachers of political virtue and tutors to princes; a good deal of the text is taken up with their typically Sophistic and thoroughly rhetorical discourses on how to succeed in the world. Their slogan is, *li-kulli kalamatin*

*arabian*, "for every question there is an answer," the maxim, illustrated in so many Oriental tales, that a ready tongue is equal to any emergency.<sup>180</sup>

But if Hajji Baba is a faithful reincarnation of the clever Sophist, his type is far older than Gorgias or even wily Odysseus — it is the normal offspring of civilizations in collapse.<sup>181</sup> There is no geographical affinity between this sort of thing and the soil of the East. The mind of late antiquity was neither characteristically Eastern nor Western, but simply servile,<sup>182</sup> the product of "a world without moral foundations."<sup>183</sup> As Western civilization burnt out it came to look more and more like other burnt-out civilizations — exactly as they had visited Thebes-on-the-Nile in the fifth century B.C. the scholars of the fifth century A.D. visited Athens to enjoy its glamor and prestige — and the resemblance naturally facilitated all sorts of borrowings and exchanges.<sup>184</sup> However different the original structures may have been, one pile of ashes looks much like another. The most alarming aspect of such ash-heaps is their indestructibility — there is nothing left to destroy, and so the rhetorical tradition is as enduring as it is uniform. When all the arts and sciences have reached the Dead Sea of Rhetoric they simply stay there forever.

The much-debated "natural eloquence" of the Beduins raises the question to what degree the high-flown, rhetorical, and artificial style of various "barbaric" nations (e.g. the Norse kenning) is the result of contact with the decadent Greco-Roman civilization and to what degree rhetoric itself is "naturally barbaric." Whatever the answer, there is no question but that the barbarians recognized in the rhetoric of the schools an idiom very near to their own minds and hearts. The faults of bad rhetors, it was often noted, are conspicuously those of barbarian rhetors. If barbarians were most easily impressed by rhetoric, so were women, children, and slaves. East and West it was the school, the rhetoric school of late antiquity that won over the barbarians of another culture.<sup>185</sup> No matter how passionately they championed this or that religion — pagan, Catholic, Arian, Moslem — the kings of the tribes as one man went down on their knees in common devotion to the learning of the schools, and took to composing epigrams and inditing hollow epistles in the starry-eyed conviction that that was civilization. If the vices of barbarian oratory were not actually acquired from the schoolmen, they were certainly confirmed and perpetuated by them.<sup>186</sup>

Simplifying, shortening, and spicing, the trade secrets of the ancient rhetor's as of the modern journalist's success, do have absolute limits, and when these are reached the rhetorical process has done its work. The end-product is something once thought to be typically Oriental — the shadow theater of comic book. In the typical Oriental romance the labor of reading is supplanted by the efforts of the graphic story teller, whose American counterpart is a pen-and-ink artist capable, like his Eastern colleague, of mass-producing amazingly vivid illustrations at great speed. The skill of both these

craftsmen is readily explained by the fact that they are simply drawing the same pictures over and over again. The story is told in brief, repetitive episodes, all strangely alike and all richly spiced with sex and gore. A wanton and meaningless procession of extravagant images passes before us, exaggerated to the point of insanity yet hackneyed to the limit of dullness. In the old familiar recital of dangers by land, sea, and air we meet the same incredible monsters again and again, the same men of superhuman strength and women of sinister beauty, and especially are we regaled by the same routine declamations on the cruelty of life in general and the present situation in particular, with particular attention to the tribulations of parted lovers. Mind is supplanted by magic, the world becomes an uncensored day-dream full of wonderful transformations and melodramatic adventures.<sup>187</sup> The rhetoric that fostered this type of thinking ends up as "a wild jumble of words (that) . . . aims at dramatic vividness and merely succeeds in revealing his (the orator's own mental nullity." The world as it passed from ancient to medieval times "was in fact suffering from a sort of fatty degeneration of the intellect," expressed in nothing more clearly than "the gush and slobber" of its rhetoric.<sup>188</sup>

Pointing out the dangers and defects of rhetoric does not change the habits of rhetoricians. The young Hippocrates, in the beginning of the *Protagoras*, blushes when he admits to Socrates that he is taking up rhetoric — but that does not change his plans. Like the passions and appetites it feeds on, rhetoric is one of the great constants in human history. Because it is a constant, nothing can tell us better the direction in which a civilization is moving or how far it is along the way. Like the residue of certain radioactive substances, rhetoric, leaving an unmistakable mark on all that it touches, may yet prove to be the surest guide to the history of our own times.

## REFERENCES

- 1 Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, 20.
- 2 *Ibid.*, I, 21, 25.
- 3 *Ibid.*, I, 24; 14-15.
- 4 Quintilian, *De Institutione Oratoria*, II, xv; quoting among others Isocrates' famous definition, the peithous demiourgon, "maker or deviser of persuasion."
- 5 Corax is cited by Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, ix; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, xxxv, 7; St. Augustine, in Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, XXXII, Appendix.
- 6 *De Oratore*, I, 2, 10-11; III, 44, 174; *Orator*, 20, 68.
- 7 Wm. Schmid, *Die klass. Periode der griech. Literatur*, Vol. VIII of W. Schmid and O. Stahlin, *Gesch. der gr. Lit.* (Munich: Beck, 1940), pp. 56-57.
- 8 G. Combes, *Saint Augustin et la Culture Classique* (Paris, 1927), p. 126.
- 9 *Prolegom.* in *Aristid. Parathen.* (ed. Dindorf), III, 737.
- 10 Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum*, 480.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 482.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 483; Plato, *Gorgias*.
- 13 According to Diogenes Laertius, *De Vita . . . Philosophorum*, VIII, 63; 77.
- 14 His verses on the subject are quoted by Sext. Math., VII, 123f and given in H. Ritter and Preller, *Hist. Philos. Graecae* (7th ed., Gotha, 1888), pp. 126f, 150.
- 15 Diogenes Laertius, *op. cit.*, VIII, 62; 77, and Ritter and Preller, *op. cit.*, pp. 125f.
- 16 Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum*, 482-83.

- 17 Schmid, *op. cit.*, III, 77f.
- 18 Diogenes Laertius, *op. cit.*, IX, 50-52.
- 19 *Ibid.*, III, 78.
- 20 Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum*, 511; 507. For the best general treatment, Wm. von Christ, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Uebersarb. von Schmid u. Stahlin, Munich: Beck, 1924), II, 689ff.
- 21 Christ, *op. cit.*, II, 690.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 691.
- 23 Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum*, 485, 487; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, xlix, 6ff. Barkowski's article in *Paulys Real-Encyclopaedie*, Zweite Reihe, 2. Bd., 2242ff, hardly does justice to the theme, to which a better introduction is Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* or the speeches of Dio Chrysostom.
- 24 Philostratus *op. cit.*, 487-490. The endless ramifications of the theme of the Seven Wise Men carry one all over the East and back to very early times; it was an ancient and established concept that the Greeks adopted as a mainstay of their own social order: "The sixth century, the most critical period in the mental development of the Greeks, came to be known afterwards as the age of the Seven Sages . . ." Thus see J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece* (Macmillan, 1929), p. 321.
- 25 Barkowski, *op. cit.*, 2262, could have made a much stronger case.
- 26 Most of the 33 Sophists in Philostratus' *Vitae Sophistarum* engage in these activities; his Apollonius engages in all of them. See below note.
- 27 Lucian, *Herodotus*, c.36; Isocrates, *Panathanaicus*; Apuleius, *Florida*, c.9; Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum*, 493, for a few illustrations. The first Roman orators were "ambassadors sent to kings and nations by the Roman people to represent our republic," being chosen for their skill as speakers, according to Festus, *s.v. Oratores*.
- 28 The picture is drawn from Dio, Libanius, Eunapius, the Roman Panegyricists, Philostratus, Philo, etc. Apuleius praises the people who have come to hear him that "if there is to be a mime you will laugh; if a tightrope-walker you will tremble . . . if a comedian applaud . . . if a philosopher learn." *Florida*, c.5.
- 29 Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* xxxii, 5.
- 30 *Ibid.*, xxx, 3; 19; xiii, 11; xxii, 1.
- 31 *Ibid.*, xii, 14-15.
- 32 The same combination was the secret of Euripides' matchless success. Professor Jaeger sees in Euripides "the two Janus faces of Sophistry." See W. Jaeger, *Paideia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), I, 329.
- 33 A. Norden, *Die Antike Kunstprosa* (Leipzig, 1898), II, 508; cf. Epictetus IV, 8; Plato's Antiphon was determined to tear down the wall, Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* 498.
- 34 *De Oratore*, I, 34; II, 7, 30 . . . *oratoris autem omnis actio opinionibus, non scientia continentur. On doxa*, Schmid, *Op. cit.*, III, 38, n.7.
- 35 Cicero, *De Clarib. Oratorib.*, 27; *Epist.* (to Brutus), XI, 22.
- 36 Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, II, xv, 22.
- 37 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata VIII*; cf. *Paedagog.* I, iii, x.
- 38 *Summa autem laus eloquentiae est amplificare rem ornando . . . The orator seeks what is ad exaggerandam et amplificandam orationem accomodatum . . . De Orat.* III, 26f, 104-5.
- 39 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 267A.
- 40 Gellius, *Noct. Att.* I, 6, contrasting the integrity of Metellus with this commonly held idea of rhetoric.
- 41 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I, i, 13; Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, II, 36; *non est ipsa culpabilis sed ea male utendum perversitas*.
- 42 Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, 491.
- 43 Von Christ, *op. cit.*, II, 1006-7.
- 44 Gellius, *loc. cit.*
- 45 Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, 499.
- 46 Augustine, *Epist.* xvii; *Sed me cohibeo, ne a te rhetorice potius quam veridice agere existimer.*
- 47 Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, II, 623f; E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman* (Berlin, 1900), p. 348.
- 48 *Pro Cluent.* 51, 142; cf. Pliny the Younger's insistence that his famous Panegyric to Trajan is a sincere, not a rhetorical, discourse, *liv, lxxii-lxxiv*.
- 49 . . . *nihil iratum habet, nihil invidum, nihil atrox, nihil miserabile, nihil astutum; casta, verecunda, virgo incorrupta quodam modo. Orator*, 19, 64.
- 50 Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, XII, incip.; 27ff, 34ff; II, xv; xx.

- 51 Cicero, *Orator*, I, 3; 4, 14; 5, 17; *De Orat.*, I, 2-5, 7, 18, 28, 50; *De Clar. Orat.*, 25; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, XII.
- 52 *De Orat.*, I, 6; 26-28; III, 22, 84.
- 53 *Loc. cit.* and not 50 above.
- 54 Petronius, *Satyr.*, I, 1-4; Lucian, *Nigrinus*, *Rhet. Praecept.*, a common theme of satire. Tacitus, *Dial.*, c.30.
- 55 T. Mommsen, *Ges. Werke*, V, 617.
- 56 Rohde, *Gr. Roman*, p. 315.
- 57 Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, 38, 160. Quintilian XII, i, 35, calls him an unjust man because he spoke on succeeding days and with equal facility both for and against Justice.
- 58 Lucian, *Harmodes*.
- 59 Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, p. 506.
- 60 Schmid, *op. cit.*, II, 78.
- 61 *De Oratore*, II, 4.
- 62 Seneca, *Controv.*, i, 2.
- 63 Seneca, *Epist.*, I, 88, 4; 10; 14; 20; 39.
- 64 Seneca, *Controv.*, ix, praef. 1.
- 65 *Pro Archia*, XI, 28; XII, 30.
- 66 *Ibid.*, XI, 26.
- 67 Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, 511 (on Nicetas in Smyrna); Libanius, *Orat.*, 40, is comfort for a friend who failed to be applauded in the streets. Cicero's anxious attention to the volume and direction of applause when he entered the theater, as depicted in the letters, is typical.
- 68 Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, 499.
- 69 Taking the form of *gratia*, *opes*, and *dignitas*, respectively, Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, 4, 15.
- 70 J. B. Bury, *The Late Roman Empire*, I, 46; Rohde, *Gr. Roman*, p. 324.
- 71 Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 310, 362; M. Schanz, *Gesch. der römischen Literatur* (Munich Beck, 1914), IV, 546f.
- 72 Philo, *De Spec. Leg.*, II, 20.
- 73 Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, 8, 34.
- 74 Libanius, *Epist.*, clxxv.
- 75 Lucian, *Rhet. Praecept.*, pp. 14-15.
- 76 Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, XLIII, 6; cf. Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, 497.
- 77 Augustine, *Conf.*, IV, 2.
- 78 Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, XII, iv.
- 79 Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2, 44, 187. That orator was "made" who could speak fluently and ingeniously on any and all subjects: *qui de omnibus rebus possit copiose varieque dicere*, *idem*, 1, 13, 59.
- 80 Dio Chrysostom, LXXIV, 3; XXXII, 12; XLIII, 6; Lucian, *Reviviscentes* (*Piscator*) c. 35. The most vivid account of the depredations of these people is found in the letters of St. Basil.
- 81 Isocrates, *Panathenaicus*, c. 95; cf. Rohde, *Gr. Rom.*, pp. 348-49.
- 82 Schmid, *op. cit.*, III, 37; the attitude was both unsocial and irreligious.
- 83 Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.*, 501-02; a like case was Antiphon's, *idem*, 498.
- 84 Plato, *Gorgias*, 457b. The case of Hermodes the Sophist and Pausanias the assassin is discussed by A. Thysius in his edition of Val. Max. (*Iugd. Batav.*, 1670), I, viii 9, p. 120.
- 85 Lucian, *Vitarum Auctio*, c. 9.
- 86 Isocrates, *Nicocles*, c. 1. The same frank confession of self-interest may be found in Cicero, *Epist.*, III, 10, 9; Augustine, *De Discipl. Christ.*, c. 11f.
- 87 Finely expressed in John Chrysostom's harangue against marriage, in *Migne, Patrol. Graec.*, 48, 580-87; celibacy is easier, less complicated, does not raise so many problems, etc. ". . . it is pleasanter to walk than to ride a mule."
- 88 Apuleius, *Florida*, c. 18.
- 89 Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, II, 16, 1-10, illustrates this strikingly when he compares the bad uses of rhetoric to the good: the former are all lively and profitable, the latter all stuffy and ornamental, i.e., rhetoric gives courage to mighty armies, guides great cities, teaches moral precepts, and sets man apart from the beast.
- 90 *Gorgias*, 646d-e.
- 91 They even paid students to come to them, Libanius, *Orat.*, I, 43, 45, 61, 64, 76; cf. III, 252ff.
- 92 Lucian, *Somnium*; *Nigrinus*; *Rhet. Praecept.* On the pampering of students with

- easy courses, see Alb. Muller, "Studentenleben im 4. Jh. n. Chr.," *Philologus*, LXIX (1910), pp. 303ff.
- 93 Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2, 28, 24.
- 94 Augustine, *Conf.*, I, 10; *De Util. Credend.*, VI, 16. For an excellent discussion, F. X. Eggersdorfer, *Der hl. Augustinus als Pedagog* (Freiburg, 1/3, 1907), pp. 106f. Cf. Dio Chrysostom, XXXII, 69; XXXV, 8; 15.
- 95 *Statim sapiunt, statim sciunt omnia, neminem verentur, imitantur neminem atque ipsi sibi exempla sint*, Pliny, *Epist.* XVIII, xxiii. The same in Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, XXXIII, 22. Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, 4, 14, says that every fame-hungry kid in Rome insists on becoming an orator; cf. *Epist.* II, 4-5; Augustine, *Conf.*, I, 17-18.
- 96 Petronius, *Sat.*, 4, 1ff.
- 97 Procius, *Chrestom.* (ed. Hiller), p. 16, cited in F. Schemmel, "Die Hochschule von Athen," etc., in *Neue Jahrb. f. Pädagogik*, XI (1908), pp. 507, 512.
- 98 Schemmel, *Loc. cit.* Rohde, *op. cit.*, p. 387; says rhetoric ended up in the drunken *Taumel neuplatonischer Phantastik* . . .
- 99 Augustine, *De Ordine*, II, 13.
- 100 Philo, *De Joseph*, XIII, 61; XIV, 67; cf. XII, 35; 59.
- 101 Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, XLVII, 19.
- 102 Cicero, *De Claribus Oratoribus*, XXX, 114.
- 103 Seneca, *Epist.*, I, 7, 6.
- 104 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, V, 714, cited by Ritter and Preller, *Hist. Phil. Gr.*, p. 220.
- 105 Libanius, *Orat.*, 2F; 41; 63F; Apuleius, *Apologia*, 6; 9.
- 106 *De Orat.*, I, 51, 221; 52.
- 107 Heraclitus, in Diels, *Fragmenta der Vorsokr.*, No. 121; cf. Cicero, *De Clar. Orat.*, XXII, 81; *Sed mos hominum, ut nolint eundem pluribus rebus excellere*.
- 108 *De Oratore*, 2, 36 and 136; 41, 177; *Orator*, 33, 117-18.
- 109 *De Oratore*, 25, 97f; on trial and error, 25, 98; 26, 103.
- 110 Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, iii; cf. Augustine, *Epist.*, I, 22. The actual operation of rhetorical technique is extremely easy, according to Cicero, *De Oratore*, 3, 16, 176; it is the most pliable of tools.
- 111 Thus Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, XXXII, 6-13; 18ff; 31; 34.
- 112 Julian's *Misopogon* is the classic illustration, but Constantius and even Constantine had the problem on their hands, as we see from the letters of Lucifer of Calaris and the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius. Cf. Ammianus, XVII, 9, 1ff. The Emperor was expected to declaim and be acclaimed in the strictly conventional manner of the rhetorical schools, for which see Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict.*, I, 26, and Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*, I, 148.
- 113 Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.*, I, xi; Theophanus, *Chron.*, An. 437; Michael Attel, *Chron.*, An. 1042 (Bonn ed., p. 14); Manassas, 3361. We have a great many notes on this and related subjects, but it is hard to believe that the reader wishes to see them.
- 114 Augustine, *Conf.*, I, 16, speaking expressly of the rhetorical schools.
- 115 A. C. McGiffert, *History of Christian Thought*, II, 112; cf. 114.
- 116 Augustine, *De Util. Credend.*, xli; cf. *Contra Donat.*, XII, 31ff in Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 43, 413ff.
- 117 Plato, *Gorgias*, 471d-472a.
- 118 E. Gilson, *Introduction a l'Etude de Saint Augustin* (1929), pp. 220f; Augustine, *De Doct. Christ.*, I, 29f. For some interesting examples, cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, XXXII, 4; Joseph., *Antiq.*, XIX, 8, 2; Chron. Paschal, 269 A. D. (in *Patrol. Graec.*, 92, 84-85).
- 119 The rhetorical panorama is best represented by the Panegyrics, culminating in Dante's *Paradiso*. See our article, "The Hierocentric State," in *The Western Political Quarterly*, IV (1951), 226-53.
- 120 Cicero, *De Or.*, 2, 83, 338: . . . *orator sine multitudine audiente eloquens esse non possit*. Quintilian (*Inst. Or.*, 1, 9) believes that even the degrading moral atmosphere of the rhetorical schools is out-balanced by the crowded and busy environment they provide, so necessary to the student of rhetoric.
- 121 Augustine, *Conf.*, XI, 2. "Steeped to the lips in vulgarity" is Professor Coulton's phrase.
- 122 Augustine, *De Catch. Rudib.*, c. 2; 6; cf. C. D., IV, 31; *Epist.* 125; 126; F. J. E. Babington, *Secular Latin Poetry* . . . (Oxford, 1934), I, 48f. A. Norden, *Ant. Kunstpro.*, II, 623.
- 123 C. Merivale, *History of the Roman Republic*, I, 42.
- 124 Cicero, *Orator*, 8, 24; the law is quoted in Gellius, XV, 10-11; it is against both

rhetors and philosophers, who were of course confounded.

- 125 Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 18.  
 126 Ammianus, XXX, 4. Codinus, *Incert.*, pp. 184-85 (ed. Bonn), says the Sophists were everywhere expected to criticize and tear down everything; cf. Val. Max., I, viii.  
 127 Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, XXXII, 44; 48; 51; 58-62; 69f; Philo, *De Agr.*, VII-VIII  
 Jerome, *Epist.*, 22, 10; *Ad Eustochium*, c. 13; Pliny, N. H., X, 60 (43); Augustine, *De Catech. Rudib.*, c. 16: the whole desire of the people is *gaudere et requiescere in theatris atque spectaculis* . . .  
 128 Cicero, *De Offic.*, 2, 16, 56-57; Dio Chrysostom, XXXII, 9.  
 129 Seneca, *De Ira*, III, 6; Apuleius, *De Mundo*, c. 35; S. Dill, *Roman Society* (London 1911), pp. 232ff.  
 130 For a recent treatment, Eleanor Clark, *Rome and a Villa*, (New York: Doubleday 1952), pp. 103-04.  
 131 For some examples, Dio Chrysostom, *Hist.*, LIV, 17; Philo, *De Ebrietate*, p. 19; *De Monarch.*, I, 8; Corippus, *Paneg. in Justin.*, II, 245-55; Cassiod., *Var.*, XII, 11; Augustine, *De Util. Jejun.*, c. 11; Runicman, *Byzantine Civilization*, p. 20; N. H. Baynes, in *History*, N. S., X, 294: ". . . it was precisely when you were strongest, when you were most alive, that you were most rigorously conservative."  
 132 The extinction of laughter is a striking phenomenon: Schmid, *op. cit.*, I, 17, n. 2; cf. Runicman, *op. cit.*, pp. 219ff; the permanent mood became one of "fickleness . . . bitterness, and uncharitable cynicism . . . It was not human life but human nature that they rated too low." W. G. Holmes, *The Age of Justinian and Theodora* (London, 1905-7), I, 86; Commodian, *Carm.*, xxv; Salvian, *Gub. Dei*, VII, 1 (on hollow laughter). The mob was shocked by the informal behavior of Antiochus, Athenaeus, *Deipn.*, V, 193ff. Directed applause is often mentioned; Malalas, XIV, 370-71; Corippus, *Justin*, 345f, 358 (Bonn ed.) Codinus, *Incert.*, p. 171; cf. Acts, XIX, 34.  
 133 Raby, *op. cit.*, I, 92.  
 134 Lucian, *Nigrinus*, 5-6; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, LXVI, 61 (the Gorgon's head); Philo, *De Ebrietate*, p. 198. "Noose of suaviloquentia" is Augustine's expression, *Conf.*, V, 3, though he advises that *dictionis suavitas pro ratione argumenti procuranda est*, in *De Doct. Christ.*, XIV (102), *Patrol. Lat.*, 34, 101.  
 135 Augustine, *De Doct. Christ.*, IV, *passim*; see G. Combes, *Saint Augustin et la Culture Classique* (Paris, 1927), pp. 54f.  
 136 Cicero, *De Or.*, 2, 45, 189f; 46, 191.  
 137 *Ibid.*, 2, 46, 193-94; 47, 196; 48; 51; 1, 62, 262ff.  
 138 Cicero, *De Clar. Orat.*, 27; this is of a piece with the observation that an orator should be honest because that makes it easier for him to work on people (Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, XII).  
 139 ". . . a period of stagnation set in, tending gradually towards settled apathy and indifference to all purposive effort (by the third century) . . . an aimless abandonment to pleasure became the distinctive mark of the age," thus W. G. Holmes, *op. cit.*, II, 558-59.  
 140 Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, LIV, 1; XXXIV, 31.  
 141 Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 459.  
 142 Cicero, *De Orat.*, 2, 14, 59; cf. Lucian, *Rhet. Praec.*, 17.  
 143 P. Cauer, in *Neue Jahrb.*, III, 706ff.  
 144 Von Christ, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.*, (Schmid-Stahlin), II, 929ff.  
 145 M. Schanz, *Geschichte der romischen Litteratur* (Munich: Beck, 1914), IV Teil, 501ff, 514, 516-50; cf. Ed Norden, *op. cit.*, II, 643; by the middle of the fifth century the absolute *Geschmacklosigkeit* was achieved, *idem*, p. 652. "The new mentality was . . . not only indifferent but hostile to the intellectual achievements of the higher classes," says M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Econ. Hist. of the Rom. Empire* (1926), p. 479. G. Ferrero, *Characters* (1909), p. 227: "The picture of the Empire, so brilliant from the economic standpoint, is much less so from the intellectual: here we touch its great weakness . . ."  
 146 Schanz, *op. cit.*, III, 238ff. J. K. Dockhorn, *Die Rhetorik als Quelle des vorromantischen irrationalismus in der Lit.—u. Geistesgesch.* (Goettingen Akad. Nachrichten, 1943, No. 5).  
 147 See the discussion by H. W. Garrod in his *Introduction to the Oxford Book of Latin Verse* (Clarendon Press, 1944), pp. xxxivff. Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 455.  
 148 "It was the essence of the rhetorical method from Ovid onward to treat of a given theme in detail until there was no more left to be said," thus Raby, *Secular Lat. Poetry*, I, 343.  
 149 Augustine, *De Doct. Christ.*, IV, 19.

- 150 Norden, *Ant. Kunstpr.*, II, 466; Schanz, *op. cit.*, IV, 507ff; Johann Zellinger, "Der Fall in d. altchristl. Predigt," *Festg. A. Knopfler* (Freiburg, 1917), pp. 403f.  
 151 Norden, *loc. cit.*; F. J. E. Raby, *Christian-Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 4ff; artificiality and a servile imitation . . . tended therefore to flourish. That scholar was far perfection who could compose in verse or prose according to the recognized rules; provided that the form was acceptable, the context was more or less indifferent." (p. 5).  
 152 Augustine, *De Doct. Chr.*, IV, 2; II, 50; *Epist.*, LXX, 2.  
 153 A. Alföldi, in *Cambr. Anc. Hist.*, XII, 225 (speaking of the plastic arts); cf. Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 469, on "the utter incapacity to invent anything new . . . typical of an age devoid of all creative power . . ."  
 154 Raby, *Secul. Lat. Poetry*, I, 351.  
 155 H. J. Marrou, *Saint Augustine et la Fin de la Culture Antique* (Paris: Boccard, 1938), pp. 517f; cf. p. 275.  
 156 F. X. Eggersdorfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5; Rohde, *Gr. Roman.*, pp. 345-46.  
 157 Quintilian, *Inst. Or.*, XII, 10, 16-17; Norden, *op. cit.*, I, 251ff.  
 158 C. Diehl and G. Marcais, *Hist. du Moyen Age* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1936), III, 113ff. The numbers of the Sophists and rhetors were recruited in steadily increasing proportions from men of Oriental blood, who by the fifth century completely dominated the field.  
 159 Max Pieper, *Die Aegyptische Literatur* (Berlin: Athenaion, 1927), p. 21.  
 160 *Ibid.*, pp. 34ff. A. Wiedemann, *Das Alte Aegypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), pp. 85ff.  
 161 Ad. Erman, *Aegypten u. aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tubingen, 1885-87), II, 112f.  
 162 Herman Kees, *Aegypten* (Munich: Beck, 1933), p. 284.  
 163 T. E. Peet, *A Comparative Study of the Literature of Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia* (London: Brit. Acad., 1931), p. 130.  
 164 A. Gardiner, in *Jour. of Egyptian Archaeology*, IX (1923), p. 6; Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 31ff.  
 165 A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), p. 2; cf. pp. 4-5, 17-24.  
 166 Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Kees, *op. cit.*, p. 79.  
 167 Kees, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Rohde, *Gr. Roman.*, p. 387.  
 168 E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur relig. Inhalts*, (Leipzig, 1914ff), Vol. I, no. 111.  
 169 B. Meissner, *Babylon u. Assyrien* (Heidelberg, 1920), II, 151-55.  
 170 O. Weber, *Die Literatur der Babylonier u. Assyrier* (Leipzig, 1907), I, 2; B. Meissner, *Die Babylonische-Assyrische Literatur* (Wildpark-Potsdam: Athenaion, 1927), p. 2; both cited in Peet, *op. cit.*, p. 8, n. 1.  
 171 Meissner, *Babylonien u. Assyrien*, Vol. II, pp. 155, 353f, 357-59, 335ff, 361f, 429f.  
 172 C. Brockelmann, *Gesch. der arab. Lit.* (Leipzig, 1909), p. 186.  
 173 P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (London: Br. Acad., Oxford, 1947), pp. 79-81, 94; Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 92ff; the literature was completely dominated by rhetoric from the first.  
 174 Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 201. Al-Bistami wrote a history of the world entirely in words of double meaning, *ibid.*, p. 209.  
 175 *Ibid.*, p. 179; cf. pp. 200, 227.  
 176 C. Brockelmann, *Gesch. der arab. Lit.* (Weimar, 1898), I, 245f, and the following section.  
 177 A. Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islams* (Heidelberg, 1922), pp. 162-180; an amazingly close resemblance to the ancient Sophists.  
 178 I. Goldzicher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Heidelberg, 1925), p. 67; Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, (Leipzig), p. 90 (on Mutanabbi).  
 179 Brockelmann (Weimar), I, 15; Ibn Qutaiba, *Muqaddamatu Kitab-i-sh-Shi're* (ed. and trsl. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Paris, 1947), Pt. 23; cf. Goldzicher, *op. cit.*, p. 74.  
 180 The quotation is from p. 136 of the Beirut ed. of Kalilah and Dimnah (1927); cf. *ibid.* (Panegyric and praise of intelligence); p. 39 (assembly of the learned); p. 30 (fame and notoriety are all that count); pp. 42-44 (gloria the one object of life); p. 57 (four types of rhetoric); p. 132 (a formal disputation), etc.  
 181 A. Mez, *Abulkasim, ein bagdader Sittenbild* (Heidelberg, 1902); Abulkasim is the most celebrated Oriental version of the vagabond-rhetor. Mez's introduction is a good description of the rhetorical-mindedness of the decadent East.  
 182 Mommsen, *Werke*, V, 11, 383f; Libanius, *Orat.*, XXV, 1: the polarity of free and slave dominates every aspect of life; "a world of ants and camels without any true

equality," says Lucian, *Epist. ad Saturn.*, I; cf. Philo, *De Monarch.*, I, 8; Plutarch, *De Amore*, c. 26; Lucian, *Dial. Mort.*, (X), 25. "General servitude was, indeed, the distinctive feature of the age, but while there were different grades and shades of bondage there was no equality." M. Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

183 Jaeger, *Paideia*, I, 329.

184 This is seen in the translation literature, which was all from Eastern to Western languages, von Christ., *op. cit.*, II, 166, 315, 665, 542ff.

185 Diehl and Marçais, *Moyen Age*, III, 320f, 417. Speaking of Christians and barbarians alike, von Christ (*op. cit.*, III, 955) says, "der Hellenismus zwingt sie in seine Schule."

186 Norden, *Ant. Kunstprosa*, II, 631-32, notes that "Gaul, von jeher das land der Rhetorik," continued to be so and to act as "die Erhalterin der antiken Kultur während des ganzen Mittelalters."

187 One thinks immediately of the *Thousand-and-One-Nights* and of the degenerate Christian literature of the East, of which some good examples may be found in M. E. James, *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 49, 53ff, 58ff, 62ff, 70, 80ff, 337ff, etc. The Oriental Acts are public disputations in which the Apostles display their rhetorical skill to packed theaters, *idem*, p. 471. The pseudo-scientific element is lacking, e.g. in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, II, 38, the king sails under the sea in a glass vessel or flies through space, as in Lucian's trip to the moon sequence in the *Somma* cf. Lucian, *Zeuxis*. For comic-strip trivia, Seneca, *Controv.*, I, 7; 4; 5; V, 6; VII, 1; IX, 6; X, 3, etc.

188 H. Idris Bell, "The Déca of Civilization," *Journ. Eg. Archaeol.*, X (1924), 21.

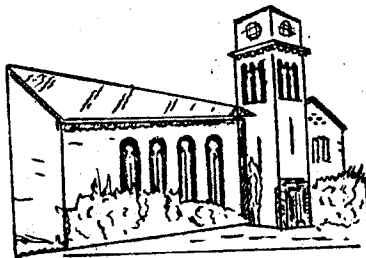
Modern Speech Training  
with an  
Unorthodox Approach

Fresno State College  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**SPEECH**

Located at the gateway to California's  
Playground of National Parks

Theory subordinated to a variety of useful experiences. Area majors obtainable in Theatre, Radio-TV, Public Address, Interpretation, and Speech Correction leading to A.B. and M.A. degrees, special and general teaching credentials.

**All programs attempt to develop skills and talents in all students rather than to exploit the talents of the few.**



The Department of Speech is unusually well-equipped: University-Street Playhouse, Arena Laboratory Theatre, Speakers' Bureau, Radio-TV Studios, Speech Correction Clinic, and seventeen competent staff members.

For information Address  
Dr. JOHN W. WRIGHT  
Chairman, Department of Speech  
Fresno State College, Fresno 4, Calif.

## Current Controversies in the Theory of Leadership

CHARLES W. MERRIFIELD\*

IT IS A commonplace that all human societies require "leadership." In a world now generally recognized to be one of continuous process and change, older arguments such as "Shall we place our reliance upon leaders *or* the people?" and "Shall we choose freedom *or* order?" make little sense. The eighteenth century of Rousseau and Godwin to the contrary, our modern problem of leadership is not *whether* we shall have it or not, but what kind it shall be and what purposes it shall serve. It would appear that the stimulation and guidance of human groups through some kind of leadership to make up their accounts with the facts and conditions of life is, quite literally, a price to be paid for all group survival.

But questions of what kind of leadership, and for what purposes, immediately focus attention upon the fact that the phrase "better leadership" is one of those glib symbols which flow smoothly over the tongue and which, without an effort at precise definition, may mean one thing to the speaker and a wholly different thing to the listener. Both may be satisfied that they are conferring about the same thing. But much of the current controversy over theories and practices of "leadership" appears to involve different understandings, and even misunderstandings, about referents for the term. Until we are sure of the meanings imputed to or inferred from the leadership concept, our discussions will continue to be non-communicative and, therefore, time-wasting.

There appear, in fact, to be at least three clusters of meanings which are often attributed to the term "leadership" in the literature of social analysis. Behind each of them lies a unique body of assumptions or pre-supposals—fundamental human beliefs—about such things as: (a) the character of Reality, (b) the nature of Knowledge, (c) an acceptable theory of Human Nature, and (d) the consequent meaning of Leadership. The hypothesis implicit in the foregoing is that "leadership" as a concept can hardly exist apart from its context among a cluster of underlying assumptions, which themselves reveal different penetrating interpretations of human life and value. It would also appear that, without at least a brief understanding of the

\*Dr. Merrifield (Ph.D., Claremont, 1952) is Associate Professor of Social Science at Denver University, and is serving this year as Staff Associate, Director of Research and Appraisal, Washington International Center, American Council on Education.