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## The Place of the Enthymeme in Rhetorical Theory\*

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### I.

#### *Some Introductory Considerations*

Aristotle has defined rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion."<sup>1</sup> Interpreting this definition for our purposes we may say that rhetoric is the art of discovering and using in those situations in which speaking and writing play a part, what are the most desirable means of oral and written persuasion. The term persuasion is here used in the broad sense to mean the influencing of human behavior through the use of written and oral symbols. The theory of rhetoric may be understood as the science which underlies this art, and to consist of a more or less organized system of concepts and principles, mostly philosophical and methodological in nature. These concepts and principles have been studied by countless scholars for many centuries as generalizations from examples of speaking and writing designed to improve practice in these arts.

Classical rhetoricians commonly divided their subject into five parts which they called *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *pronuntiatio*. *Inventio*, the phase with which we shall be primarily concerned here, is the art of exploring the material to discover the lines of reasoning suitable for discussion in any given case. It includes the study of kinds and methods of reasoning, refutation, and fallacies; and is that part of rhetoric most closely related to logic. Says Clark, "In the practice of rhetoric *inventio* was thus the solidest and most important element. It included all of what today we might call 'working up the case.'"<sup>2</sup>

The enthymeme is a concept developed in this field of *inventio* and has

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<sup>1</sup> Cooper, Lane, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1932, 7. References to *The Rhetoric*, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from Professor Cooper's translation.

<sup>2</sup> See Clark, D. L., *Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1922, 27-28.

specific reference to the problem of reasoning in speaking and writing. Ever since Aristotle the term "enthymeme" has been associated in some manner or other with the syllogism, the concept adduced by Aristotle to explain the nature of all reasoning and proof.<sup>3</sup> For Aristotle the enthymeme was the focal concept or element of all reasoned discourse. He speaks of it as "the very body and substance of persuasion."<sup>4</sup> Lane Cooper asks,

How for example shall we know what our author (Aristotle) means by the term Enthymeme? This question goes to the very heart of the *Rhetoric* since Aristotle tells us that enthymemes are the essential instruments of oratorical persuasion.<sup>5</sup>

J. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire says of the Aristotelian enthymeme in an appendix on the subject included with his French translation of the *Rhetoric*:

... it occupies in the art of speaking essentially the place that the syllogism holds in logic. If one does not know how to make Enthymemes, he can hardly flatter himself as being an orator.<sup>6</sup>

It is the purpose of this study to determine the place of the enthymeme in rhetorical theory. In the way of a justification of the inquiry, if such is necessary, I invite your attention to three propositions: (1) Contemporary rhetorical theory is essentially Aristotelian; (2) the enthymeme is the focal concept in the rhetoric of Aristotle; and (3) the enthymeme is seriously misunderstood today. For good or evil, depending upon one's point of view, our ideas about reasoned discourse in speaking and writing remain essentially Aristotelian. Even those who complain against the Aristotelian influence in this field, and seek new canons for these arts, will recognize the importance of this influence and should welcome interpretations. We have Aristotle's own word for the central place of the enthymeme in his rhetorical system. The respects in which this concept has been misunderstood, while the system of which it is a part remained relatively intact, will be developed as our study progresses. Suffice it to say here that the prevailing conception of the enthymeme as an elided syllogism is not the sense in which Aristotle used this term. As Saint-Hilaire puts it:

Aristotle attached great importance to the use of the Enthymeme, without which the art of rhetoric seemed to him almost impossible. Today the Enthymeme is relegated to a very secondary position; and

<sup>3</sup> While the term "enthymeme" was used before Aristotle by Isocrates and others to indicate rather loosely and generally the thoughts or sentiments with which a speaker embellishes his work, as a definitive logical and rhetorical concept in the sense in which we are investigating the term it originated with Aristotle. See Octave Navarre, *Essai Sur La Rhétorique Grecque Avant Aristote*, Paris, 1900, 255; Mansel, H. L., *Artis Logicae Rudimenta from the Text of Aldrich* (third ed.) Oxford, 1856, Appendix, note F, "On the Enthymeme," 216.

<sup>4</sup> *Rhetoric* I, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, xxv.

<sup>6</sup> Saint-Hilaire, J. Barthelemy, *Rhétorique d'Aristote*, Paris, 1870, Tome Second, 348.

this difference enables us to see the enormous interval which separates the point of view of the ancients from ours.<sup>7</sup>

## II.

### *The Enthymeme in Aristotle*

The works of Aristotle which set forth his logical and rhetorical system are *Categoriae*, *De Interpretatione*, *Analytica Priora*, *Analytica Posteriora*, *Topica*, *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, and *Rhetorica*. Aristotle is attempting in these treatises to set forth a system by which truth and certainty, in respect to human knowledge, may be ascertained and demonstrated verbally; by which truth may be sought through discourse; and by which people may be convinced and persuaded.

A. *The Enthymeme as a part of Aristotle's Logical and Rhetorical System as a Whole*: The diagram on the following page may be helpful in following the discussion in this section. It is of first importance to notice the fundamental distinction which Aristotle makes between two great provinces of knowing, that of scientific knowledge or apodeictic certainty and that of reasoning in the realm of probabilities or opinion. As Professor John Dewey puts it:

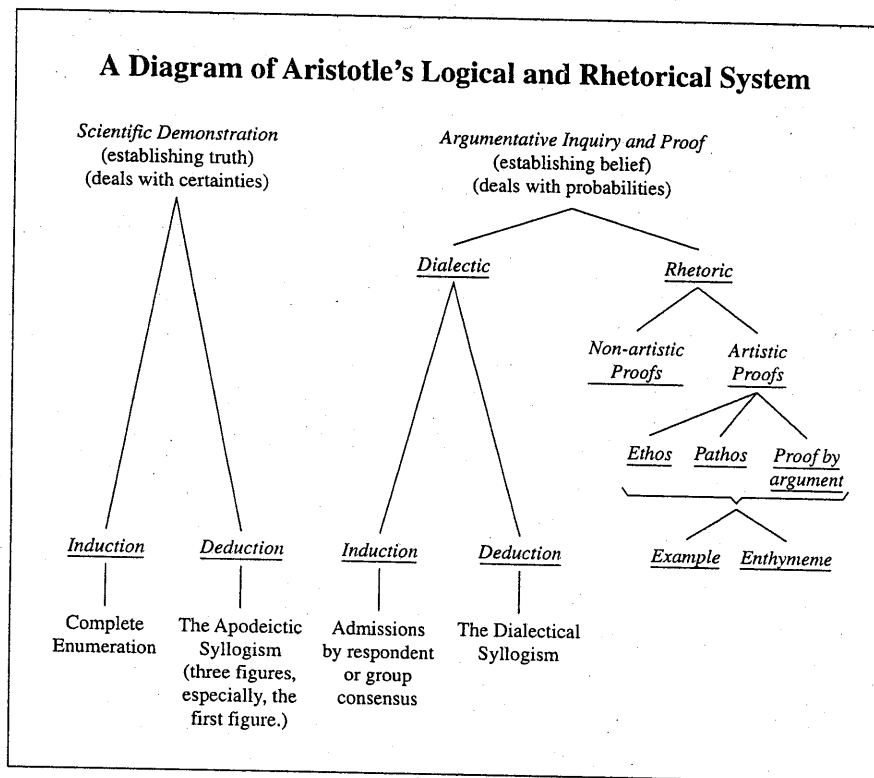
All philosophies of the classic type have made a fixed and fundamental distinction between two realms of existence. One of these corresponds to the religious and supernatural world of popular tradition, which in its metaphysical rendering became the world of highest and ultimate reality. . . . Over against this absolute and noumenal reality which could be apprehended only by the systematic discipline of philosophy itself stood the ordinary empirical, relatively real, phenomenal world of everyday experience. It was with this world that the practical affairs and utilities of men were connected. It was to this imperfect and perishing world that matter of fact, positivistic science referred.<sup>8</sup>

Aristotle distinguishes three separate but related methodologies for knowing and persuading, scientific demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric. Scientific demonstration is developed in the *Prior and Posterior Analytics* as the method of discovering and demonstrating truth; dialectic is explained in the *Topics* as a method of discovering what is probable truth through special forms of dialogue; and rhetoric is understood as the method of discovering what are the available means of persuasion. Both dialectic and rhetoric are differentiated from scientific demonstration in the fact that they deal with

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, 376.

<sup>8</sup> Dewey, John, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920, 22-23.

probabilities and do not attempt apodeictic proof in the sense that it appears in scientific demonstration.



Special forms of the syllogism are explained as the methodological instrument in each of these fields and the distinction between induction and deduction introduced in each case. In the *Prior Analytics* Aristotle analyzes the several figures and modes of the syllogism, explaining the first figure as the means of scientific demonstration *par excellence*. It is the only figure in which the syllogism is perfect without conversion or reduction; it is the only figure in which every variety of conclusion can be proved; and the only one in which the universal affirmative can be proved—the great aim of scientific research.<sup>9</sup> While Aristotle repeatedly contrasts deduction and induction, he does take the position that induction can be reduced to the syllogism.<sup>10</sup> He

<sup>9</sup> See *Prior Analytics* (in *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. I, translated into the English under the editorship of W. D. Ross), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928, I, 4-7; also I, 14, 79<sup>a</sup>. All references to the *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, and *Topics* in this study are to the Ross edition, vol. I, *The Works of Aristotle*.

<sup>10</sup> *Prior Analytics* II, 23, 68<sup>b</sup>.

believes further that induction “proceeds through an enumeration of all the cases.” In another connection Aristotle discusses induction as an intuitive process or an act of intellectual insight by which the particulars of our experience suggest to us the principles which they exemplify.<sup>11</sup>

The peculiar characteristic of scientific reasoning consists in its investigation of *causes* understood as *rationes essendi*, or the *reasons for the being of a fact* as distinguished from *rationes cognoscendi* or *reasons for acknowledging its being*.<sup>12</sup> Aristotle states:

We suppose ourselves to possess unqualified scientific knowledge of a thing, as opposed to knowing it in the accidental way in which the sophist knows, when we think that we know the cause on which the fact depends, as the cause of that fact and of no other, and, further, that the fact could not be other than it is.<sup>13</sup>

Assuming then that my thesis as to the nature of scientific knowledge is correct, the premises of demonstrated knowledge must be true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as effect to cause. . . . The premises must be the causes of the conclusion, better known than it, and prior to it; its causes, since we possess scientific knowledge of a thing only when we know its cause. . . .

Where demonstration is possible, one who can give no account which includes the cause has no scientific knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Dialectic constituted the art of discussion by question and answer, of attacking and defending a given thesis from principles of probability, such as the opinions of men in general, or of the majority, or of certain eminent authorities. For this purpose, Aristotle collected *topics*, or general principles of probability from which appropriate premises might be drawn. Nearly two hundred such topics are listed in his work of this name. Aristotle explains that so far as the forms and rules of the syllogism are concerned, these are alike applicable to both demonstration and dialectic. “In both the formal conditions are the same, and the conclusion will certainly be true, if the premises are true; in both the axioms of deductive reasoning are assumed,” says Grote.<sup>14</sup> Mansel points out that Aristotle would at least regard logical or formal accuracy as “salutary” in dialectical discussion.<sup>15</sup>

Concerning the method of dialectic it is important to notice that Aristotle specifically recognizes its function as an agency for inquiry and investigation.

<sup>11</sup> *Posterior Analytics* II, 19, 100<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> See Joseph, H. W. B., *An Introduction to Logic* (Second edition revised), Oxford, 1916, 305.

<sup>13</sup> *Posterior Analytics* I, 2, 71<sup>a</sup> and I, 6, 74<sup>a</sup>. On this point see also Mansel's *Aldrich*, *op. cit.*, note K. “On the Demonstrative Syllogism,” 241-242; Grote, George, *Aristotle* (ed. Alexander Bain and G. C. Robertson), London, 1872, vol. I, 315; and Joseph, H. W. B., *op. cit.*, 398-399.

<sup>14</sup> Grote, George, *op. cit.*, 383.

<sup>15</sup> Mansel, H. L., *op. cit.*, 213.

Its purposes are listed as "intellectual training, casual encounters, and the philosophical sciences."<sup>16</sup> He adds that "it has a further use in relation to the ultimate bases of the principles used in the several sciences . . . for dialectic is a process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries."<sup>16</sup> He distinguishes between dialectic as a competition and "those who discuss things together in the spirit of inquiry,"<sup>17</sup> and urges the importance of co-operative effort toward consensus. He states:

The principle that a man who hinders the common business is a bad partner, clearly applies to argument as well; for in arguments as well there is a common aim in view, except with mere contestants, for these cannot both reach the same goal; for more than one cannot possibly win.<sup>18</sup>

Without pausing to recapitulate at this juncture, we now turn to rhetoric, which, like dialectic, is differentiated from scientific demonstration in the fact that it draws its premises from probabilities. Rhetoric is concerned primarily with long, continuous discourse both spoken and written rather than the short question and answer method of dialectic. Cope emphasizes the additional point that while theoretically rhetoric is as universal as dialectic in the field of probabilities, practically it is limited for the most part to a particular class of phenomena with which its two most important branches, the deliberative and the judicial, almost exclusively deal, namely human actions, characters, motives, and feelings; and so it becomes closely associated with the study of Politics (including Ethics) which treats of moral, social, and political phenomena, of man as an individual and as a member of society.<sup>19</sup>

Aristotle distinguishes two great types of rhetorical proof, *artistic* and *non-artistic*; the non-artistic proofs, roughly comparable to what contemporary writers in argumentation call 'evidence,' are explained as "such as are not supplied by our own efforts, but existed beforehand, such as witnesses, admissions under torture, written contracts, and the like."<sup>20</sup> "By 'artistic' proofs [means of persuasion] are meant those that may be furnished by the method of Rhetoric through our own efforts."<sup>20</sup> Three modes of persuasion are explained in connection with artistic proof. "The first kind reside in the character [*ethos*] of the speaker; the second consist in producing a certain [the right] attitude in the hearer; the third appertain to the argument proper, in so far as it actually or seemingly demonstrates."<sup>20</sup>

In rhetoric, as well as scientific demonstration and dialectic, induction and deduction are introduced as the methods of reasoning. Here, however, the term "example" is assigned to induction and the term "enthymeme" to

<sup>16</sup>Topics I, 2, 101<sup>a</sup> and 101<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. VIII, 5, 159<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. VIII, 11, 161<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>19</sup>Cope, E. M., *An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1867, 9.

<sup>20</sup>Rhetoric I, 2, 1355<sup>a</sup> and 1356<sup>a</sup>.

deduction. Aristotle states:

'Enthymeme' is the name I give to a rhetorical syllogism, 'example' to a rhetorical induction. Whenever men in speaking effect persuasion through proofs, they do so either with examples or enthymemes; they use nothing else. Accordingly, since all demonstration (as we have shown in the *Analytics*) is effected either by syllogism [that is, deductively] or by induction, it follows that induction and syllogism [deduction] must be identified respectively with example and enthymeme.<sup>21</sup>

In the following section we shall investigate the relations of the enthymeme to the various types of rhetorical persuasion and to the syllogisms of scientific demonstration and dialectic. Thus far, it has been our purpose to present a broad perspective of the logical and rhetorical system of which the enthymeme is a part. This larger view will be found helpful, if not indispensable, in interpreting the enthymeme. The diagram on page 172 may be taken as a summary of the present section.

B. *An examination of the Aristotelian passages in which the Enthymeme is given special treatment.* The several passages in which the enthymeme is given special treatment in Aristotle's works present six points for investigation as follows: (1) The passages in which Aristotle explains that the materials of the enthymeme are probabilities (*eikota*) and signs (*sêmeia*); (2) the passages in which Aristotle declares example to be a form of the enthymeme; (3) the passages in which he discusses the relationship of the enthymeme to the topics or *topoi*; (4) those in which we may see the relation of the enthymeme to *ethos* and *pathos*; (5) the passages in which demonstrative and refutative enthymemes are distinguished; and (6) the passages relating to the suppression of a proposition in the enthymeme.

1. *The Enthymeme and Probabilities (eikota) and signs (sêmeia):* The passages with which we are here concerned are those in the *Prior Analytics* II, 27, and the *Rhetoric* I, 2. While these passages are admittedly difficult to interpret,<sup>22</sup> it is my conclusion that Aristotle meant by probabilities (*eikota*) what we have previously referred to as *rationes essendi*, and by signs (*sêmeia*), *rationes cognoscendi*. We may say again that by a *ratio essendi* we mean an argument which attempts to account for the fact or principle maintained, supposing its truth granted: it assigns a cause or a reason for the being of a fact. The *ratio cognoscendi*, on the other hand, is a reason for acknowledging the being of a fact; it attempts to supply a reason which will establish the existence of a fact without any effort to explain what has caused

<sup>21</sup>Rhetoric I, 2, 1356<sup>a</sup>; see also *Prior Analytics* II, 23, and *Posterior Analytics* I, 1, and I, 18; also II, 19.

<sup>22</sup>See Ernest Havet, *De La Rhétorique D'Aristote*, Paris, 1843, 64.

it. When Aristotle defines an enthymeme as "a syllogism starting from probabilities or signs," this, then, is the distinction he appears to have in mind.

The greatest difficulty arises in understanding what Aristotle means by a probability or *eikos*. His discussion is obscure and he does not give us a complete example. From the description given, however, we can collect the following information concerning an *eikos*: (1) It is a generally approved proposition or *ôs epi to polu*;<sup>23</sup> (2) It is "already probable" as distinguished from a sign which "affects to be, would be if it could," *bouletai einai*;<sup>24</sup> (3) as the probable it bears the same relation to that of which it is probable as a universal statement to a particular; (4) it is dichotomized with sign; and (5) examples are "the envious hate" and "love attends the objects of affection."

In other words *eikos* is a proposition expressing a general principle of probability which when applied in argument does not attempt to prove the existence of a fact, but rather (assuming its existence) attempts to account for the fact. It is a *ôs epi to polu* (meaning "to happen generally and fall short of necessity") *already probable*, whose application to *particular phenomena* accounts for their probability. By supplementing the fragmentary examples which Aristotle gives us of *eikos* we can see that when one concludes that Orestes loves his mother, because "love (usually) attends the objects of affection," the argument does not attempt to prove (to give a sign) that Orestes actually does love his mother; but rather (assuming it probable that he loves his mother) attempts to account for or explain this phenomenon. Similarly with the other proposition Aristotle cites, "the envious hate"—if one concludes that John hates by virtue of the *eikos*, "the envious hate," it has not been proved that John actually does hate; but rather, assuming that he hates, it has suggested a possible cause of his hating.

Aristotle fortunately is much clearer in his definition of signs. He distinguishes three types and gives us examples of each, the certain sign in the first figure, the fallible sign in the second figure, and the "example" in the third figure.<sup>25</sup> He states, "a sign affects to be, would be if it could, a demonstrative proposition necessary or probable: for anything that accompanies an existing thing or fact, or precedes or follows anything that happens or comes into being, is a sign either of its existence or of its having happened." This statement is in itself an excellent definition of a *ratio cognoscendi*, and that this is in fact what Aristotle means by *sêmeion* we can conclude with considerable assurance from his three examples. His example of a certain sign (*tekmêrion*) which "bears toward the statement it is to prove the relation of a universal to a particular" and which appears in the first figure, viz. that a

<sup>23</sup>See *Prior Analytics* I, 13, 32; also Freidrich Solmsen, "Die Entwicklung Der Aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik" (in *Neue Philologische Untersuchungen*), Berlin, 1929, 13-14.

<sup>24</sup>See Cope, E. M., *op. cit.*, 161.

<sup>25</sup>It may be noted here that Aristotle reduces "example," or what he has previously discussed as rhetorical induction, to a form of the enthymeme just as he explains scientific induction in terms of the syllogism.

woman is with child, because she has milk, is clearly a *ratio cognoscendi* (even if the physiology is bad). The having of milk is proof of the fact that a woman is with child (or has recently given birth to a child), but it can hardly be construed to be the *cause* of the pregnancy or the child. The same can be said of the other examples of sign given in the *Prior Analytics* and the *Rhetoric*. Those in the second figure, concluding from the observation that a woman is pale that she is pregnant, and that a man has a fever because he breathes hard, are just as clearly cases of *rationes cognoscendi*. In these instances both "paleness" and "hard breathing" are plainly signs as distinguished from causes. The cases cited of "example" in the third figure are also good instances of signs as we have interpreted the term.

Even in the absence of conclusive affirmative evidence that Aristotle means to define *eikos* as a *ratio essendi* (and I think the evidence is fairly conclusive here), we can be reasonably safe in implying from his clear definition of sign as a *ratio cognoscendi*, that he meant so to define *eikos*; and especially is this true, since the same distinction is made in the case of the scientific syllogism as we have previously noticed.<sup>26</sup> An enthymeme, then, may be defined as a syllogism, drawn from probable causes, signs (certain and fallible) and examples. As a syllogism drawn from these materials, it is important to add here, the enthymeme starts from probable premises (probable in a *material sense*) and lacks *formal validity* in certain of the types explained. We shall have more to say about this later. It may also be well to notice here that the interpretation we have placed on *eikota* and *sêmeia* has an important bearing on the contemporary division of argument into antecedent probability, sign, and example.

2. *Example as a form of Enthymeme*: The second group of passages which help us to understand the enthymeme are those which explain "example" as a species of enthymeme. We have already noticed that Aristotle usually contrasts enthymeme and example, comparing the former to the syllogism and the latter to induction. We have also noted that in the *Prior Analytics* Aristotle takes the position that induction can be reduced to syllogistic form. Thus, he is altogether consistent in likewise reducing example to an enthymematic form. The passages bearing on this point are *Prior Analytics* II, 24, and *Rhetoric* II, 25. The most complete discussion of example as a form of argument without direct reference to its relation to the enthymeme is *Rhetoric* II, 20. Here Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of example, "one consisting in the mention of actual past facts, the other in the invention of facts by the speaker. Of the latter, again, there are two varieties, the illustrative parallel and the fable." The cases of example which Aristotle

<sup>26</sup>For authorities on this point see especially Richard Whately, *Elements of Rhetoric* (Reprinted from seventh edition), Louisville, Ky.: Morton and Griswold, 1854, 47; also Douglas Maclean, *Reason, Thought, and Language*, London: Oxford University Press, 1906, 418-419.

cites in this connection are instances of what we today understand as analogical reasoning. The reasoning in these cases, as is always true of analogy if analyzed completely, consists in generalizing from one or more instances and then making a deduction concerning the case in question. Aristotle says here, "Enthymemes based upon Example are those which proceed by induction from one or more similar cases, arrive at a general proposition, and then argue deductively to a particular inference."<sup>27</sup> In actual speaking, I might add, this "general rule" of which Aristotle speaks is rarely stated, thus giving the appearance of arguing directly from one particular case to another particular case. Aristotle recognizes this point when he states:

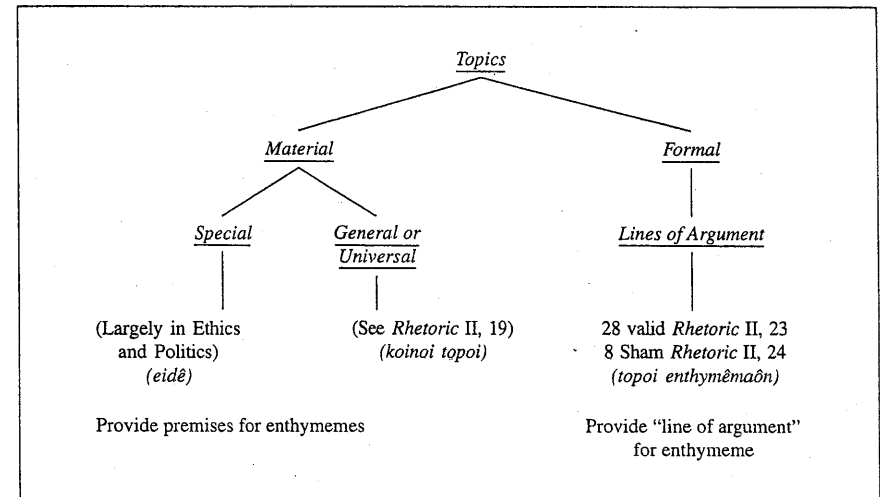
Clearly then to argue by example is neither like reasoning from part to whole, nor like reasoning from whole to part, but rather reasoning from part to part, when both particulars are subordinate to the same term and one of them is known. It differs from induction, because induction starting from all the particular cases proves that the major term belongs to the middle, and does not apply the syllogistic conclusion to the minor term, whereas argument by example does make this application and does not draw its proof from all the particular cases.<sup>28</sup>

3. *The Enthymeme and Topics*: The passages in which Aristotle discusses the relation of the enthymeme to the *topoi* or topics are especially helpful in clarifying the relations between dialectical and rhetorical reasoning on the one hand and scientific demonstration on the other. *Topoi*, understood roughly as sources or places from which arguments may be obtained, is a conception which appears all through classical and mediaeval rhetoric. While the several lists of topics given in the *Rhetoric* are difficult to interpret,<sup>29</sup> it appears that Aristotle meant to distinguish three kinds of topics as indicated in the following diagram:

<sup>27</sup> *Rhetoric* II, 25, 1402<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> *Prior Analytics* II, 24, 69<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Friedrich Solmsen, in his "Die Entwicklung Der Aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik," *op. cit.*, argues that Aristotle's logical thought underwent a change or development and that this change may be seen in two conflicting enthymematic theories in the *Rhetoric*. The two theories which he finds conflicting are the enthymeme defined as a syllogism drawn from causes and signs, and the enthymeme developed in relation to the topics in *Rhetoric* II, 22-24. This latter topical treatment Solmsen believes to be a remnant of Aristotle's earlier logical theory; the enthymeme as a syllogism he holds to be indicative of a later development in Aristotle's logical thought. Without arguing the point here, I wish merely to say that while this development in Aristotle's logical theory does appear to have taken place, I do not find it impossible to reconcile the allegedly inconsistent theories of the enthymeme in the *Rhetoric*. I have attempted in this section to unify the references to the enthymeme in relation to the topics and the passages in which it is defined as a syllogism drawn from probable causes and signs. See also in this connection Stocks, J. L., "The composition of Aristotle's Logical Works," in the *Classical Quarterly*, vol. 27, 1933, 115-124.



It is the distinction between special and general topics which helps to explain the relationships between the various specialized fields of knowledge and that of rhetoric and dialectic. Aristotle makes the point that the special topics may be looked upon as substantive items or propositions peculiar to the special discipline to which they belong; the general topics on the other hand, are general principles of probability, understood in a propositional sense, with application in all fields of knowledge. While he states that arguments drawn from the general topics are typically rhetorical (or dialectical, as the case may be) because of this universal application, he nevertheless makes the point that "enthymemes are mostly formed from these particular and special topics."<sup>30</sup> This seemingly paradoxical position may be explained as follows. Aristotle recognizes the autonomy of the various special disciplines and makes no claim that their subject matter is rhetorical or dialectical data *per se*. At the same time he feels strongly that so far as possible the speaker and the writer should draw their premises from the special data of whatever field they are discussing.<sup>31</sup> His conviction on this last point is evidenced, as every student of the *Rhetoric* knows, in his long treatment of politics and ethics in the *Rhetoric*, the two special disciplines with which the speaker is chiefly concerned. In other words, while rhetoric as a science is concerned generically with those broad principles of probability which can be adduced to lend cogency to an argument in any field, and, as a methodological science, cannot be expected to be conversant with the special topics of the various substantive fields with which it deals, nevertheless it is important that any speaker be as thoroughly informed as possible in the

<sup>30</sup> *Rhetoric* I, 2, 1358<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> See *ibid.* II, 22, 1396<sup>a</sup> and 1396<sup>b</sup>.

particular substantive area in which he chooses to speak; and especially is it important that a skilled speaker "have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the special sciences which mainly concern the art of rhetoric—that is, Ethics and Politics, above all, since they have to do with the conduct of men as individuals, and with men in groups."<sup>32</sup>

The topics as "lines of argument" we interpret as *methods of reasoning* rather than material propositions. Aristotle makes his transition to this list from a few concluding remarks which he has been making about special and general topics as follows:

Here, then, we have one principle, and the first for selecting enthymemes; and it refers to the choice of *materials* for them. Let us now pass on to their *elementary forms*: and by "elementary form" I mean the same thing as a class to which an enthymeme belongs.<sup>33</sup>

I think there is little question that we do have a list of methods of reasoning or types of inference in the topics discussed in *Rhetoric* II, 23-24. Aristotle appears to have intended that this long enumeration of lines of argument be correlated, roughly at least, with the causes, signs and examples which he discusses in another connection. The latter may be viewed as a careful, scientific statement of the kinds of enthymematic argument; the former, as a more or less random list of some of the more usual arguments from cause, sign, and example encountered in speaking and writing.<sup>34</sup>

In summary, then, we may say that whereas the speaker goes to the special or general topics for his premises, he may call upon these "lines of argument" for his mode of reasoning. The premises and the line of argument selected will together constitute an enthymeme. If the enthymeme combines these elements in such a way as to constitute a *ratio essendi*, it is then an *eikos*; if it combines them in such a way as to constitute a *ratio cognoscendi*, it is then an argument from sign, which may, as we have seen, appear in the first, second, or third figure of the syllogism.

4. *The Enthymeme and Ethos and Pathos*: A very common, and perhaps the usual interpretation of the *Rhetoric* is that enthymeme and example are the instruments of "rhetorical demonstration," and as such, are to be contrasted with those appeals which are evinced through the personality of the speaker (*ethos*) and those which make an emotional appeal (*pathos*). I wish to raise the question here: Does Aristotle mean to bring out this contrast to the extent of excluding the enthymeme from the realm of *ethos* and *pathos*?

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.* II, 22, 1395<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.* II, 22, 1396<sup>b</sup>. See also on this point Edward Poste, *Aristotle on Fallacies or the Sophistici Elenchi*, London, 1866, Appendix D, 204-207, especially 206.

<sup>34</sup>See Chaignet, A. E., *La Rhétorique et Son Histoire*, Paris, 1888, 134-5. See also Eng. Thionville, *De La Théorie des Lieux Communs dans les Topiques d'Aristote et des Principales modifications qu'elle a subies jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, 1855.

The answer to this question is of considerable importance because upon it hinges the relationship of logical and non-logical or emotional factors in speaking and writing. Are we to consider the logical structure of an argument something that is separate and distinct from the so-called emotional appeals? In other words, what part if any does the enthymeme play in that mode of persuasion which depends upon the personal character of the speaker and that which attempts to affect the emotional state of the listener?

To begin with we must recognize that the enthymeme is a rhetorical device and as such is dependent, so to speak, upon language symbols, i.e., terms and propositions in significant combinations. Persuasion arising from the personality of the speaker and other kindred factors (except as it finds its expression in terms and propositions) is therefore clearly outside the realm of the enthymeme. But what about the personality appeal and attempts to influence the emotional state of the listener (or reader) which are expressed in words and sentences? Here we have the real question: Is the enthymeme the controlling unit of expression in such persuasion, or is it a purely "logical" instrument of proof?

A careful analysis of Aristotle's system will reveal the superficiality of attempting to separate the enthymeme from these "non-logical" methods of persuasion. I submit that in Aristotle's rhetorical system the enthymeme is the element or unit of all persuasive discourse. The admission of "emotionally loaded" terms and propositions is in fact one of the important characteristics of the enthymeme; the premises which compose an enthymeme are usually nothing more than the beliefs of the audience which are used as causes and signs to secure the acceptance of other propositions. These premises, as we have seen, are drawn from the general and special topics or *topoi*. It is organized around lists of these topics that Aristotle gives us his semi-popular discussion of ethics and politics, virtues, vices, and emotions. In other words, Aristotle presents what he has to say about both ethical and pathological persuasion in the form of topics, and we are explicitly told that these topics are the sources to which we may turn for the propositions to compose our enthymemes.<sup>35</sup>

The order of treatment or sequence of the *Rhetoric* sustains the position here taken on the enthymeme in relation to *ethos* and *pathos*. Aristotle begins the *Rhetoric* by proclaiming the enthymeme to be the body and substance of all persuasion. In I, 2 he distinguishes among the three forms of artistic persuasion and explains the enthymeme in terms of causes and signs. He concludes the same chapter by explaining his topics or *topoi* as the places to which we turn for the premises of our enthymemes. Then in I, 3 he distinguishes the three great divisions of oratory, political, forensic or judicial, and epideictic or ceremonial, and states that he will organize his discussion

<sup>35</sup>See *Rhetoric* I, 2, 1356<sup>b</sup>; I, 9, 1366<sup>b</sup>; II, 12, 1388<sup>b</sup>.

of topics around this division of the kinds of oratory. This he does and he concludes I, 3 just before taking up this discussion by saying,

It is evident from what has been said that it is these three subjects, more than any others, about which the orator must be able to have propositions at his command. Now the propositions of Rhetoric are Complete Proofs, Probabilities, and Signs. Every kind of syllogism is composed of propositions, and the enthymeme is a particular kind of syllogism composed of the aforesaid propositions.

From I, 4 to I, 9 Aristotle gives the reader some practical politics designed to help the political orator in the selection of his enthymemes. In I, 9 he gives a discussion of virtues and vices designed to help the speaker in epideictic oratory. In I, 10 he turns to the topics of forensic oratory, stating: "We have next to treat of Accusation and Defense, and to enumerate and describe the ingredients of the syllogisms used therein." This discussion continues to I, 15 where we then are given a discussion of non-artistic proofs, with which Book I is closed.

Aristotle begins Book II by pointing out the importance of ethical and pathetic persuasion in the three types of oratory and from II, 1 to II, 19 gives us some practical psychology concerning human motives and emotions. It is with this that Aristotle concludes his discussion of special topics begun in I, 4. Having concluded his discussion of special topics, he devotes II, 19 to general topics. It will be remembered that the distinction between special and general topics in relation to the enthymeme was made in I, 3.

Upon concluding this discussion of the special and general topics from which the premises of our enthymemes must be drawn, he then in II, 20 takes up the study of the enthymeme in its various forms and concludes Book II in Chapter 26 with this material. Book III, of course, is devoted to style and delivery.

This view of the *Rhetoric* makes the organization of the work entirely logical and understandable. Aristotle first introduces us to the enthymeme as the element of rhetorical persuasion and gives us some preliminary definitions and classifications; second, he discusses the topics from which enthymemes are to be drawn, explaining that ethical, pathetic, and logical persuasion will be projected through these enthymemes depending upon our choice of propositions; and third the enthymeme is carefully analyzed in its several forms. Books I and II treat *inventio* and Book III considers mainly *elocutio*, to a limited extent, *pronunciatio* and *dispositio*, with little or no mention being made of *memoria*. My point is that if we view the enthymeme as the "body and substance of rhetorical persuasion" as Aristotle tells us to, we have no difficulty in understanding the organization of the *Rhetoric*. On the other hand, if the enthymeme is to be considered the instrument solely of logical proof with ethical and pathetic persuasion existing outside this concept, it is exceedingly difficult to understand the organization of the *Rhetoric*. There seems to me, however, to be no justification for this latter position except as we accept superficial impressions which might be gotten from a failure really

to analyze and understand Aristotle's system of rhetorical invention.

5. *Demonstrative and Refutative Enthymemes*: Aristotle distinguishes between demonstrative and refutative enthymemes in *Rhetoric* II, 22 and 25. He discusses the two methods of refutation, "counter-syllogism" and refutation by "bringing an objection," and explains that refutative enthymemes are constructed from the same topics from which demonstrative enthymemes are built. Of special interest here, however, is his discussion of refutation in relation to *probable causes* and *signs*.<sup>36</sup> The point is clearly brought out that an argument drawn from probabilities cannot be refuted by showing that the conclusion is not necessary and that formal defects in an enthymematic argument do not necessarily destroy its claim to cogency. The *probable* nature of the enthymeme and its *formal* inconclusiveness are emphasized. One does not properly refute an enthymeme which reasons from a probable cause by showing that its premises are merely probable, because it is impossible to make these premises anything other than probable and probability is all that is claimed for the conclusion. Likewise to show that an argument from sign (in the second or third figures) is formally deficient does not necessarily refute the enthymeme; such an enthymeme "knows that it is formally deficient," so to speak, and it does not contemplate apodeictic certainty for its conclusion.

Perhaps no other passages in Aristotle bring out more forcibly the point that several forms of the enthymeme are *formally deficient* than these explanations dealing with the refutation of enthymemes. This is an exceedingly important point that is almost universally overlooked. Many rhetorical arguments which are perfectly legitimate in reasoned discourse and which may establish high degrees of probability, are formally deficient; i.e., they cannot be thrown into a formally valid syllogism. Many enthymemes which are wholly acceptable from the standpoint of cogent speech are formally deficient from the point of view of the apodeictic syllogism. As Mansel puts it:

In the *Prior Analytics* II, 27 Aristotle admits a sign in the second figure. . . . The *logical* value of two affirmative premises in the second figure is absolute zero. . . . For rhetorical purposes, however, the second figure is admissible; an accumulation of Enthymemes, all *logically* worthless, may amount to a *moral* certainty.<sup>37</sup>

6. *A Consideration of the Suppression of a Proposition in the Enthymeme*: We know from our examination of Aristotle's works thus far that the identification of the enthymeme with probable causes and signs is a necessary part of the definition of this concept. A cursory examination of the *Rhetoric*, to say nothing of almost any sample of reasoned discourse, will show that the

<sup>36</sup>*Rhetoric* II, 25, 1403'.

<sup>37</sup>Mansel, H. L., *op. cit.*, 214.



enthymeme very often appears with one (or more) of the propositions of a complete syllogism suppressed. The only question raised here, therefore, is whether or not the omission of one or more of the propositions of a complete syllogism is *necessary* in the enthymeme. This question assumes considerable importance because of the almost universal tendency among recent writers to define the enthymeme as an elided syllogism and to make this elision the only differentiation between the syllogism and the enthymeme. Hamilton points out that "the enthymeme was used by the oldest commentators on Aristotle in the modern signification, as a syllogism of one suppressed premise."<sup>38</sup> Jebb states:

A misapprehension of Aristotle's meaning had, as early as the first century B.C., led to the conception of the enthymeme as not merely a syllogism of a particular subject matter, but also a syllogism of which one premise is suppressed.<sup>39</sup>

Most of those who object to the contemporary notion of the enthymeme merely as a truncated syllogism hold that the characteristic thing about the enthymeme is its identification with probable causes and signs, and that the omission of a proposition is purely accidental. De Quincey enunciates this position as follows:

The enthymeme differs from the syllogism, not in the accident of suppressing one of its propositions; either may do this or neither; the difference is essential, and in the nature of the matter; that of the syllogism proper being certain and apodeictic; that of the enthymeme simply probable, and drawn from the province of opinion.<sup>40</sup>

The commentator who has contended for this conception most vehemently and argued the point most convincingly is Sir William Hamilton. He contends (1) that the enthymeme as a syllogism of a defective enunciation constitutes no special form of reasoning; (2) that Aristotle does not consider a syllogism of such a character as such a special form; and (3) that admitting the validity of the distinction, the restriction of the enthymeme to a syllogism of one suppressed premise cannot be competently maintained.<sup>41</sup>

There appears to be no place in Aristotle's writings where he defines the enthymeme as an elided syllogism, nor is there any satisfactory evidence that

<sup>38</sup>Hamilton, Sir William, *Discussions on Philosophy*, 154.

<sup>39</sup>Jebb, R. C., *Attic Orators*, London: Macmillan and Co., 1876, vol. II, 291.

<sup>40</sup>De Quincey, Thomas, *Essays on Style, Rhetoric and Language* (edited by Fred N. Scott, Allyn and Bacon), Boston, 1893, 145-146.

<sup>41</sup>See Sir William Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, New York: Sheldon and Co., 1876, vol. II, 276-278; *ibid.*, *Discussions on Philosophy*, 151-154; *ibid.*, "Recent Publications on Logical Science," in *The Edinburgh Review*, CXV, April, 1833, 221-222. See also Cope, E. M., *An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric*, *op. cit.*, 102-103, especially the footnote; H. L. Mansel's *Aldrich*, *op. cit.*, 211-212; Joseph, H. W. B., *Introduction to Logic*, *op. cit.*, 350-351; Jacobi Faccioliati, *Orationes XII* (Acraes and Patavii, 1729), 227; Chaignet, A. E., *La Rhétorique et Son Histoire*, *op. cit.*, 113-114.

he so understood it. In his discussion of *maxims* and in many other places, Aristotle recognizes the enthymeme with one or more of its propositions suppressed; as a matter of fact, I think we can safely interpret Aristotle to mean that the enthymeme *usually* lacks one or more of the propositions of a complete syllogism. On the other hand, it seems equally clear that there is no justification in interpreting him to mean that this is a necessary characteristic of the enthymeme. A syllogism drawn from probable causes and signs is an enthymeme without regard to the omission of a proposition.

From this study of the enthymeme as a part of Aristotle's logical and rhetorical system as a whole and our examination of the Aristotelian passages in which the enthymeme is given special treatment, I think that we can draw the following conclusions concerning the enthymeme in Aristotle: (1) The enthymeme is the syllogism of rhetoric, occupying in rhetoric essentially the same place that the syllogism occupies in logic; (2) the premises of the enthymeme are probable causes and signs; (3) these premises are drawn from topics varying in specificity and exactness from the particular facts of a given substantive field to the most general principles of probability; (4) these premises may be phrased in language designed to affect the emotional state of the listener, to develop in the audience a confidence in the speaker, or to establish a conclusion as being a probable truth; (5) the inferential process is formally deficient in several of the enthymematic types, and many enthymemes cannot therefore be stated in valid syllogisms; (6) the rhetorical example may be reduced to an enthymematic form just as scientific induction may be stated syllogistically; and (7) the enthymeme often (but not necessarily) appears with one or more of its three propositions suppressed.

For Aristotle the enthymeme is the element of reasoned discourse, constructive or refutative, demonstrative or "sham"; its persuasive force may be ethical, pathetic, or logical. In any case it draws its premises and line of argument from topics which combine to enunciate a *ratio essendi* or *ratio cognoscendi*; these take the form of probable causes, signs, and examples, and are usually expressed by a proposition with a reason, although they may appear in the complete syllogistic form.

### III.

#### *The Enthymeme After Aristotle*

We know from our examination of the enthymeme in Aristotle that there have been substantial deviations from the Aristotelian meaning of this concept in the many centuries which separate contemporary rhetorical invention from that of Aristotle. These changes assume considerable importance in view of the central place which the enthymeme occupies in Aristotle's system and the persistence of Aristotle's system as the essential basis of contemporary rhetorical theory. In this section, therefore, we shall attempt to see where, when, and why these changes took place.

A. *The Stoics*: The more important philosophical school following

Aristotle, at least from the point of view of this study, is that of the Stoics. The accuracy with which Aristotle's successor, Theophrastus, and the other early leaders of the Peripatetic school "passed on" Aristotle's teaching, and the availability of reliable Aristotelian manuscripts even to these early students of the school appears to be questionable.<sup>42</sup> In any event the early Stoic philosophers, Zeno (c. 336 B.C.), Cleanthes (331-232 B.C.) and Chrysippus, head of the stoic school from 232-206 B.C., either because they lacked ready access to Aristotle's writings or because they sought to develop an original logical and rhetorical system, do not appear to have maintained the enthymematic conception. The extant fragments of these writers reveal no reference to the enthymeme<sup>43</sup> despite the fact that they are known to have written treatises on rhetoric. Such information as we have concerning these treatises seem to indicate that the stoics were concerned with establishing truth rather than probability and devoted themselves, even as rhetoricians, to the subtleties of the logical syllogism.<sup>44</sup> While this predilection for logic can doubtless be explained by the very nature of the stoic philosophic creed, it seems certain that rhetorical invention suffered by their disposition to replace the enthymeme with the logical syllogism.

The most renowned rhetorician in the stoic school was Hermagoras (c. 110 B.C.) who, confining himself almost entirely to invention as opposed to style, elaborated on the basis of previous treatises a system of rhetoric which remained a standard work throughout the Graeco-Roman period. The rhetorical system of Hermagoras we must glean from a few fragments and the many references to him by later rhetoricians, especially Cicero and Quintilian, who are known to have been influenced profoundly by his work.<sup>45</sup> The influence of Hermagoras on Cicero, as reflected in Cicero's early work *De Inventione* (c. 85 B.C.), is in my opinion a factor of great importance in explaining the subsequent tendency to confuse the enthymeme and the logical syllogism. We shall examine the *De Inventione* with this point in mind.

B. *The Roman Doctrine*: Cicero divides argument into induction and ratiocination in the *De Inventione* and then subdivides ratiocination (deduc-

<sup>42</sup>See Shute, Richard, *An Essay on the History of the Process by Which the Aristotelian Writings Arrived at Their Present Form*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888, 19-45.

<sup>43</sup>Arnim, Joannes ab, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (Lipsiae MCMV) four volumes; see also Pearson, Alfred C., *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1891.

<sup>44</sup>Arnold, E. Vernon, *Roman Stoicism*, Cambridge: University Press, 1911, 73; Sandys, J. E., *A History of Classical Scholarship* (Second ed.), Cambridge: University Press, 1906, 149; Davidson, William L., *The Stoic Creed*, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1907, 63; Zellar, E., *The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics* (tr. by O. J. Reichel, Longmans, Green and Co.), London, 1870, 118-119; Stock, St. George, *Stoicism*, London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1908, 31-34. See also Laertius, Diogenes, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (tr. by R. D. Hicks, in Loeb Class. Lib.), London: William Heinemann and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925, VII, 42-43; Ciceronis, M. Tulle, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum, Libi Quinque* (tr. by James S. Reid), Cambridge: University Press, 1885, IV, III, 7-10; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On Literary Composition* (tr. by W. Rhys Roberts), 95-97.

<sup>45</sup>See Thiele, George, *Hermagoras: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Rhetorik*, Strassburg, 1893, for an attempted reconstruction of the rhetoric of Hermagoras.

tion) into five parts, *propositio*, *propositionis approbatio*, *assumptio*, *assumptionis approbatio*, and *complexio*. These five parts are related to the syllogism in the following manner: (1) Proposition (Major premise of syllogism); (2) Proof of Proposition; (3) Assumption (Minor premise of syllogism); (4) Proof of assumption; and (5) Summation (Conclusion of syllogism).<sup>46</sup> Thiele argues at some length that Cicero's five-part ratiocination (*epicheirema*), and the explanation which he gives of it, represents an attempt to accommodate the logical syllogism to the needs of rhetoric which fails to recognize the enthymeme and seriously perverts the purposes and methods of rhetorical invention.<sup>47</sup> Thiele traces this influence to Hermagoras.

Briefly, the chief objection to the logical syllogism as a rhetorical instrument lies in its apodeictic nature and formal rigidity. The materials with which the speaker and writer must constantly deal, and the type of reasoning in which they must engage, strongly militate against the application of the demonstrative forms of the logical syllogism. If an argument is considered unacceptable rhetorically because it falls short of material certainty or fails to achieve formal validity, the inevitable result must be a tremendous limitation of the lines of reasoning open to the speaker, to say nothing of the unfortunate effects on the style of the discourse. Cicero himself decries this mixing of logic and rhetoric in his later work *De Oratore*,<sup>48</sup> and Quintilian makes a point of it in his *Institutio Oratoria*.<sup>49</sup>

Both Cicero and Quintilian deal with the enthymeme; Cicero refers to it in his short work *Topica*, where he assigns a very special type of matter to this concept and appears not to have the Aristotelian meaning;<sup>49</sup> Quintilian observes the confusion which surrounds the enthymeme in his day and reviews some of the different meanings assigned to it.<sup>50</sup> While Quintilian does not take a final position on the form of the enthymeme, he appears to favor the idea that it is an elided syllogism. His discussion of the kinds and methods of rhetorical argument is comprehensive and generally Aristotelian although some departures traceable mainly to Cicero are noticeable.<sup>51</sup>

C. *The Mediaeval Doctrine*: Of first importance so far as rhetorical invention is concerned in the middle ages is the influence of Cicero's *De*

<sup>46</sup>Cicero's *De Inventione* (included with Cicero's *Orations*, tr. by C. D. Yonge, vol. IV, Bohn Class. Lib.), London, 1852, 241-380.

<sup>47</sup>Thiele, George, *op. cit.*, 131-137.

<sup>48</sup>Cicero's *De Oratore* II, 28; Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* V, 32.

<sup>49</sup>Cicero, *Topica* (included with Cicero's *Orations*, tr. by C. D. Yonge, vol. IV, Bohn Class. Lib.), London, 1852, 458-486. See also Saint-Hilaire, J. Barthelemy, *op. cit.*, 368.

<sup>50</sup>Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* V, 8, 9, and 10; V, 14.

<sup>51</sup>The enthymeme is treated by a number of the later Greek rhetoricians, Hermogenes (c. 170 A.D.), Apsines, Minucianus, Neocles and others in the second, third, and fourth centuries. Hermogenes assigns a wholly new meaning to the concept and the others make no contribution of note. While Hermogenes was followed by some later writers, for example, Georgius Trapezuntius in his *Rhetorica* (c. 1470), I shall not attempt to discuss the point here. See the several volumes of Leonardi Spengel's *Rhetores Graeci*, Lipsiae, 1885, and Christianus Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, London and Lutetiae, 1832, for these later Greek rhetoricians.

*Inventione* throughout this period. This work, together with the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (c. 85 B.C.),<sup>52</sup> is followed very closely by nearly every mediaeval rhetorician: As might be expected the confusion between the enthymeme and the syllogism which we found to exist in Cicero's epicheirematic conception is thereby transmitted to the middle ages. Unfortunately Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Cicero's *De Oratore*, and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* were almost wholly unknown during this period and were not recovered until the fifteenth century.

Examples of the influence of the *De Inventione* with respect to the applications of the syllogism in the field of rhetorical invention may be seen in the work of the fourth and fifth century writers, Fortunatianus, Victorinus, Julius Victor, and Cassiodorus.<sup>53</sup> All of these writers define the enthymeme as an "incomplete syllogism" and the epicheirema as a "broader following up of the rhetorical syllogism, differing by its breadth and extensiveness from dialectical syllogisms."

Two other important influences may be noted in the middle ages, that of Christian rhetoric with its beginnings in St. Augustine's (354-430) *De Doctrina Christiana*, and the writings of Boethius (c. 480-525). Rhetoric applied to the art of preaching constituted a strong current through this entire period. As Caplan puts it:

Were the modern student, fortified by a knowledge of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, to contend that the rhetorical enthymeme, not the syllogism, is proper to the art of rhetoric, the mediaeval preacher would perhaps reply that sacred eloquence differs from secular in that its subject matter lies not in the realm of opinion and probability, but in truth and divine science; that it is as sound a procedure to use a dialectical method in the demonstration of truth as in the investigation of it; and further, that in Aristotle and Cicero and Quintilian he had precedents for the policy of adapting to rhetorical purposes the methods of the allied arts of dialectic.<sup>54</sup>

Suffice to say here that the emphasis of these mediaeval "arts of preaching," in so far as they were concerned with the form of argument, was on the dialectical or logical syllogism. Furthermore, both the translations of Aristotle's *Organon* by Boethius and his own original writings carried

<sup>52</sup>The authorship of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, long attributed to Cicero, is unknown. The work resembles the *De Inventione* very closely, and was widely used as a text and reference. The author of the *Ad Herennium* explains a five step ratiocinative form which resembles that of the *De Inventione* superficially, but is in fact closer to the Aristotelian conception; like Cicero, he calls this form an *epicheirema*. The five parts are: *propositio*, *ratio*, *ratiōni confirmatio*, *exornatio*, and *complexio*. Cicero's epicheirema is the form which was almost universally cited by mediaeval rhetoricians, however. It should be noted that the *Ad Herennium* exerted a strong influence during the latter part of the middle ages and the early renaissance.

<sup>53</sup>See Halm, Carolus, *Rhetoris Latini Minores*, Lipsiae, 1863, 118-119, 242-243, 408-413, 498-500.

<sup>54</sup>Caplan, Harry, "Classical Rhetoric and the Mediaeval Theory of Preaching," in *Classical Philology*, vol. 28, No. 2, April, 1933: 87.

forward the conception of the enthymeme as an elided syllogism. Boethius translates the controversial passage concerning the enthymeme in the *Prior Analytics* II, 27, "*Enthymema ergo est syllogismus imperfectus ex elcotibus et signis*";<sup>55</sup> and states in his *De Differentiis Topicis*, "The enthymeme is an imperfect syllogism, that is, a form of speech in which a hurried conclusion is arrived at before all the propositions have been established. . . ."<sup>56</sup> Sir William Hamilton and others point out that *atelēs* (imperfectus) as found in this and other similar versions of the *Analytics* "is a manifest interpolation made to accommodate the Aristotelic to the common doctrine of the enthymeme."

With the authority of Aristotle thus apparently given to the conception of the enthymeme as an elided syllogism by his chief interpreter for the middle ages, it is not surprising that this doctrine persisted. Isidore of Seville (c. 570-636), following Cassiodorus almost word for word, discusses the enthymeme as "an incomplete syllogism" and the epicheirema as "a broader syllogism also in use among the rhetoricians,"<sup>57</sup> and Alcuin (735-804) adds nothing in his dialogues on rhetoric and dialectic. With the revival of Aristotle's logical works in the scholastic period we find much fuller discussions of syllogistic doctrine in such writers as Hugh of St. Victor, John of Salisbury, and Vincent of Beauvais, but little development is seen in the theory of the enthymeme. The concept is identified with probabilities somewhat more confidently and realistically, but it remains "the incomplete syllogism of the rhetoricians." Erasmus and Melancthon later discuss the enthymeme in much the same way.

In the sixteenth century, following the recovery of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*,<sup>58</sup> there appeared a large number of commentaries and reworkings of this treatise done chiefly by Italians. The first English work of any consequence, that of Leonard Cox (1530), remained largely in the mediaeval tradition and did little with invention. By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was well known in England and Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* and *Elements of Logic*, appearing at the turn of the eighteenth century, display a scholarly grasp of the best classical tradition. Whately's influence in the field of rhetorical invention is prominent in American writers, especially Henry Day and later writers on rhetoric and argumentation. Throughout this development to this day, however, the momentum gained by the conception of the enthymeme as an elided syllogism during the many centuries preceding has been sufficient to sustain this conception with but scattered dissent. While the rhetorical trilogy, antecedent probability, sign, and example, the basis of most contemporary classifications of argument,

<sup>55</sup>See Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 64, col. 711.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 64, col. 1184; see also col. 1050.

<sup>57</sup>Halm, Carolus, *op. cit.*, 511-512.

<sup>58</sup>The complete manuscript of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* was found at St. Gaul by Poggio in 1416, Cicero's *De Oratore* and *Brutus*, at Lodi in 1421, and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was published in the Latin version by George of Trebizond as early as 1478 and in the Greek in 1508; see Clark, D. L., *op. cit.*, 66.

preserves Aristotle's conception of the materials of the enthymeme with considerable accuracy, the formal relation of these arguments to the syllogism is very generally misunderstood.

IV.  
*The Place of the Enthymeme  
in Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*

The necessary limitations of this abstract will not permit me to discuss this subject in any detail. I do think that we can conclude with considerable assurance from the investigations here reported that to the extent that syllogistic logic is accepted as the basis of apodeictic proof, and Aristotle's system of rhetorical invention is retained as the essential basis of our theory of argument in speaking and writing, these interpretations of the enthymeme should be given serious consideration. On the other hand, to the degree that the syllogism is repudiated as an adequate concept in logical theory, there is at least a presumption established against the enthymeme which should lead to further investigations of its adequacy. Needless to say, however, a correct version of the enthymeme will be the necessary starting point of any significant attempt to evaluate this concept and the theory of argument of which it is a part.

Objections to the syllogism and its rhetorical applications have been raised as far back as Francis Bacon, John Locke, and George Campbell. These have continued to appear sporadically with growing frequency in recent years. The arguments of such writers as John Dewey, F. C. S. Schiller, Alfred Sidgwick, and Boris B. Bogoslovsky, while not generally rhetorical in the traditional sense, should be considered. I have argued in another connection that the conception of the enthymeme here set forth adapts the syllogism to the problems of ordinary speaking and writing in such a way as to remove, at least in part, what I understand to be some of the more important objections of these writers.