

CLASSICAL RHETORIC: FUNCTIONS AND DIVISIONS

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The Five Canons of Rhetoric: 1) invention (finding the best means of persuasion for the case); 2) arrangement (making basic divisions: *exordium*, *narratio*, etc.); 3) style (finding the right words); 4) memory (developing mnemonic tricks, drawing on others' knowledge); 5) delivery (performing well: showing suitable emotions and gestures while speaking, etc.)

The Branches of Rhetoric: a) Deliberative: deals with two major areas: first, questions of the worthy (*dignitas*) or the good (*bonum*); second, with questions of action, the expedient, the useful (*utilitas*); b) Judicial (Forensic): questions of right and wrong; legal evidence; guilt and innocence; c) Ceremonial (Epideictic): praises what is praiseworthy rather than persuading us towards action.

2. Types of Appeal: a) Logical (*logos*); b) Ethical (*ethos*); c) Emotional (*pathos*). The middle parts of a speech generally appeal to *logos* or reason/logic, while the beginning appeals to *ethos* or character and morals; the final segment appeals mainly to *pathos*, or emotion.

3. Arrangement (*Dispositio*, *τάξις*), the Divisions of a Standard Oration:

Exordium: seeks favor and audience's good will; establishes speaker's credibility; may briefly reference subject, purpose. (appeals to *ethos*)

Narratio: offers a narrative of the facts and clarifies the nature of the case. (appeals to *logos*, i.e. reason and logic)

Partitio or Divisio: divides up the argument's major points, in order of discussion. (*logos*)

Confirmatio or Probatio: presents the full argument and corroborates it with evidence. (*logos*)

Refutatio or Confutatio: deals with possible objections. (*logos*)

Peroratio: closes the argument—leaves the audience with a good opinion of the speaker and a bad one of opponents; amplifies and restates/summarizes the points made previously; rouses the appropriate emotions in the audience. (appeals to *pathos*, emotion)

Exordium: Introduces the basic subject and purpose, preps us to be attentive and well-disposed; establishes the speaker's credibility.	"I have been writing about Milton's works since the War of 1812, and I <i>must</i> respond to arguments that misconstrue his treatment of relations between men and women. Why? Because if you get this wrong about Milton, you'll get everything else wrong, too. You're smarter than that."	Reader's angle: Who is this speaker or writer and what's he or she talking about? Who am I? – Say nice things about me. Why should I care about the topic anyway?
Narratio: Sets forth the facts, clarifies the nature of the case. Sometimes a summary or sharp statement of the charge is called the <i>Propositio</i> and treated as a division in its own right.	"In the third chapter of <i>Six Centuries of Literary Hits</i> , John Smith calls attention to Milton's alleged anti-feminism in <i>Paradise Lost</i> and the divorce tracts. Unfortunately, he's peddling half-truths based on a false theory that defaces Milton's work and ignores its historical context."	Reader's angle: So what's the point exactly? Please set it down clearly and make me understand that it's substantive.
Partitio (or Divisio): Dividing up the main argument into smaller sections.	"Smith butchers Book IV of <i>Paradise Lost</i> and misreads the divorce tracts; he ignores key parts of certain other works; he himself failed as an epic poet, so he's just jealous of Milton."	Reader's angle: Are the divisions logical and easy to follow? Have you included all the necessary points and will you follow them up in the rest of your speech or article/essay?
Confirmatio or Probatio: Proving your case with well-reasoned, thorough argumentation.	"As for Smith's mistakes regarding <i>PL</i> and the divorce tracts, the following six are the most egregious anywhere in Milton criticism. Then we will get to what he <i>hasn't</i> covered...."	Reader's angle: Can you convince me that your argument is more plausible than others? Will the points you make here adequately support the case you laid out above?
Refutatio: Refuting opponent's arguments; discussing counterpoints.	"To be sure, the divorce tracts show signs of anti-feminism, but Milton is simply trying in these tracts to accommodate a skeptical audience."	Reader's angle: But what about some other guy's arguments that actually support Smith's view?
Peroratio: Concluding; summing up; leaving the audience with favorable impressions and appropriate emotions; amplifying points made.	"Smith hands Milton a bad rap that muddies our understanding of his writings, <i>Paradise Lost</i> and the divorce tracts foremost among them."	Reader's angle: What's the upshot of all this? Why was spending my time on your essay or speech a good choice?

See also Gideon O. Burton's *Silva Rhetoricae* at <http://rhetoric.byu.edu>

I used that excellent site as a point of comparison with my own ideas

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