

The art of persuasion: the relevance of rhetoric today

Raquel HIDALGO DOWNING

Departamento de Filología Románica, Eslava y Lingüística
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
rhidalgo@filol.ucm.es

Recibido: enero, 2006

Aceptado: marzo, 2006

ABSTRACT

In this article the author reviews the book *Persuading people: an introduction to rhetoric*, by Robert and Susan Cockcroft (2005), and discusses the relevance of studying and teaching rhetoric today. The book presents a modern reading of ancient rhetoric, incorporating concepts of literary criticism and linguistics, and applies the techniques of rhetoric to the analysis of a wide corpus which includes literary texts, political speeches, press articles and advertisements.

In the article I argue that the approach of the book presents rhetoric as a highly attractive, interdisciplinary field of study, offering an interesting perspective of text analysis for teachers and scholars of literature and linguistics, in particular in the areas of pragmatics and discourse analysis. Furthermore, the book includes a proposal for putting strategies of persuasion into practice, which can be used with students to improve their writing and speaking skills.

Key words: Rhetoric, persuasion, literature, discourse studies, pragmatics, communication.

El arte de la persuasión: la relevancia de la retórica en nuestros días

RESUMEN

La autora de este artículo reseña el libro *Persuading people: an introduction to rhetoric*, de Robert and Susan Cockcroft (2005), y defiende el estudio y enseñanza de la retórica en la actualidad. El libro presenta una lectura moderna de la retórica clásica, mediante la incorporación de conceptos de crítica literaria y lingüística, y aplica las técnicas al análisis de un amplio corpus que incluye textos literarios, discursos políticos, artículos de prensa y anuncios publicitarios.

En el artículo defendemos que el enfoque del libro hace de la retórica un área de estudio interdisciplinar extremadamente atractiva, que ofrece una interesante perspectiva de análisis textual para profesores e investigadores de literatura y lingüística, en particular en pragmática y análisis del discurso. Además, el libro propone ejercicios para poner en práctica las estrategias de persuasión, que pueden ser utilizados para mejorar las habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Retórica, persuasión, literatura, análisis del discurso, pragmática, comunicación.

SUMARIO: 1. A new rhetoric for the modern world. 2. Design and organization of the book. 3. Contents of the book. 4. Persuasion as an interactional skill: the nature of spoken persuasion. 5. Materials, texts and exercises. 6. Conclusion. 7. References.

ROBERT COCKCROFT AND SUSAN COCKCROFT, 2005: *Persuading people: an introduction to rhetoric*. 2nd edition (1st edition 1992). Palgrave Macmillan. xii+ xiii + 257 pp. ISBN-10: 1-4039-2182-2

Persuading people: an introduction to rhetoric has been recently released (2005) as a second edition of the book which appeared under the same title in 1992. As the authors explain in the introduction, the new edition of the book has its motivation in the good acclaim the book has received over the years, and in the wish to comply with some of the suggestions made by readers of the book, such as the inclusion of practical exercises. Naturally, the authors also acknowledge the need to update the contents of the book, and to introduce a few new sections which were not present in the previous edition.

The review-article that follows is organised into six parts: section 1 addresses the relevance of rhetoric today; section 2 presents and comments on the design and organization of the book; section 3 gives a summary of its contents; section 4 addresses the issue of spoken persuasion; section 5 examines the materials included in the book. The article ends with a conclusion and a bibliography.

1. A NEW RHETORIC FOR THE MODERN WORLD

This book presents an introduction to rhetoric, adapting the teachings of ancient rhetoric to the present day. If we consider that the book was first published in 1992, Robert and Susan Cockcroft are to be seen as pioneers, since the subject of the book has not ceased to grow in interest, importance and possible applications, both inside and outside academics.

In the teaching situation, rhetoric is a particularly appealing subject because it addresses simultaneously the didactic need of *knowledge* and *skill*, in a very neat and integrated manner: it can be used as a very solid frame and tool of analysis, for instance of literary texts and various language materials –and in varying degrees of theorization; but it can also be used as practice, in order to train students to write –critical, academic but also creative, fictional writing– and also to speak, very likely the most neglected area of our educational programmes. It is not surprising, then, that the book is addressed to university teachers and students of literature and language, but other possible readers and more importantly, *users* of the book, easily come to mind: students, teachers but also professionals of any area involved in communication, such as journalism, advertising, business, law, social psychology and political science.

This and other similar manuals of rhetoric (Corbett 1990, Crowley and Hawhee 1999) are being used very successfully in several British and American universities, as the authors point out in the first chapters, precisely because both the subject matter –persuasion and rhetoric– and its nature –theoretical, interdisciplinary and practical– seem to respond brilliantly to various current social and professional needs, as well as to the didactic pressure felt in the humanities to update the contents

of what we teach in order to make them more relevant, interesting and why not, useful, in the existing and coming world.

An important issue which the authors address also in the first pages, and which appears several times in the book, is the ambivalence of the discipline of rhetoric: is it a set of strategies aimed to enhance the properties of discourse, or is it a manipulative technique? Robert and Susan Cockcroft defend the current value of rhetoric, arguing that it has been the companion of democracies throughout History, and that it is a value of citizenship. Other authors (Hunter 1984) suggest a distinction between good and bad rhetoric, positive and negative rhetoric. The division is actually quite widespread, stating that bad or negative rhetoric is that which is more exclusively concerned with form and strategy than with truthfulness of value.

Naturally, the debate has to do with the *use* the persuader will make of the rhetorical strategies learnt, which is something that the analyst or rhetorician can hardly control.

For the purpose of this and similar books, the real danger of rhetoric is academicism, fossilization or reduction to a recipe: just as the teaching of drawing techniques may be used by the (bad?) painter as a substitute of his/her creativity and personal development, in which case the drawing technique becomes an obstacle rather than a facilitator for the flourishing of artistic skill.

Rhetoric was developed within the Greek and Roman cultures and has been transmitted throughout the centuries with little variation, even in the terminology; therefore many people today perceive rhetoric as something rather old-fashioned and pedantic, with obscure and unrecognisable terminology. The valuable teachings of rhetoric have often been reduced to endless lists of literary figures (tropes) which students have had to identify when reading ancient poetry in their school years.

This explains why the need to learn communication skills –which is an obvious and very important social demand– has been developed by social psychology, not by literary criticism or linguistics, and then put into practice in the business and professional world, through more or less efficient and rigorous manuals, which teach how to speak in public, prepare oral and written speeches or presentations and carry out a negotiation.

Now, while the old manuals of rhetoric were too theoretical and obscure, and probably too close to their classical sources, many of the practical manuals for speaking in public are felt by the humanist to be simplistic and naïve, lacking any theoretical foundation and rigour, and tending to provide canned recipes –start your speech with an anecdote, finish with a joke– to be adequately inserted in the persuader's discourse.

One of the virtues of the Cockcrofts' book, and I am sure a reason for its success, is that it brilliantly bridges the gap unfilled by both extremes. The manual draws on the original sources, and reveals the solid background of the authors in the subject; therefore it presents rhetoric with academic rigour and numerous texts. But the subject matter has been reinterpreted, the terminology has been modernised, the materials cover different areas of study and application. The practical side of the manual is covered by a final chapter with exercises.

The book is faithful to the spirit but not the letter of Aristotle's definition of rhetoric. The authors define rhetoric as "the arts of persuasive discourse", "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject matter" (Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005: 3). The definition is close to Aristotle, whose description of rhetoric puts the emphasis precisely on the discipline as a set of techniques of persuasion which can be applied to any subject: "this is the function of no other of the arts, each of which is able to instruct and persuade in its own special subject; thus medicine deals with health and sickness...But rhetoric so to speak appears to be able to discover the means of persuasion in reference to any given subject" (Aristotle 1926:15, as quoted by Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005: 4).

The techniques of persuasion studied by the authors are then applied to any given subject; in particular, they apply rhetoric to the analysis of literary texts and to areas such as advertising, political discourse and journalism.

The book can be read and used as a suggestive guide which invites readers to become familiar with the concepts of ancient rhetoric, and to adapt them to their academic or professional situation.

2. DESIGN AND ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The organization of the book also comes from Aristotle. The authors follow the distinction made in his *Rhetoric* of three different proofs or structural principles of persuasion: (i) *ethos* or "persuasion through moral character"; (ii) *pathos* or persuasion by "putting the hearer into a certain emotional frame of mind"; and (iii) *logos* or "persuasion through the speech itself, "when we establish the true or apparently true" (page 4).

The three categories are well known in the studies of rhetoric and also in discourse analysis, where they have been applied successfully to the examination of, for instance, political discourse (Charaudeau 2005, Maingueneau 2002), as well as to other types of discourse.

Robert and Susan Cockcroft use the three proofs or structural principles to examine the components of persuasive discourse, and also as the organizational key of the book: chapter 1 describes *ethos*, chapter 2 is dedicated to *pathos*, and chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to *logos*. Then they address persuasion in action, in the two chapters that follow: chapter 5 examines "the persuasive process", that is to say, the arrangement and internal ordering of persuasive discourse, while chapter 6 presents "The persuasive repertoire". Here the authors present, providing the definition and illustrating with examples, the different techniques or devices used when preparing persuasive discourse, such as metaphor, parallelism or paradox. The book ends with a final chapter, "Practising persuasion", where the authors adapt the traditional rhetorical exercises in order to offer a wide range of rhetorical activities, "some recent, some ancient", which can be used in the classroom or by the reader, user or persuader as training or preparation for numerous communicative situations.

Last but not least, there follow three Appendices, which offer additional development of several topics presented in the book. Appendix A gives a more

detailed description of “models of argument”, while Appendix B presents further details and examples of tropes or rhetorical figures. Finally, appendix C provides a Finding List for Rhetorical Devices, consisting of a very useful chart which shows the equivalence between the English terms used by the authors, the Greek and Latin terms and the corresponding references in Lanham’s *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (1991).

The authors have wisely considered that a full detailed description of rhetorical figures and models of argument would overload the main text and turn it into a lengthy list of items, putting off non-academic readers and perhaps even some academic ones. Thus, they offer a synthesized, more attractive presentation in the main text, and invite the more advanced or interested reader to pursue further study only if desired.

The organization of the book is different from many handbooks of rhetoric, which are often structured according to the different stages of discourse elaboration: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *actio*. In particular, traditional manuals tend to centre too closely on *elocutio*, the stage where the repertoire of rhetorical figures is presented, and often consist in the presentation of a more or less detailed list of rhetorical figures which are defined and then applied to literary texts.

The Cockcroft and Cockcroft manual also refers to the different stages of discourse elaboration, although implicitly. Only in the last chapter do the authors make this clear to the reader: while the first chapters (1, 2, 3 and 4) devoted to the presentation of ethos, pathos and logos correspond to *inventio*, the chapter on the persuasive process corresponds to *dispositio*, and the chapter on the persuasive repertoire would stand for *elocutio*. Two things are worth mentioning regarding this conception and presentation of rhetoric: the proportion is different from other manuals, because the stage of *inventio* is given more importance and space than usual. This means that the authors are interested in transmitting to the reader an integral and dynamic conception of persuasion, founded in traditional rhetoric as much as in literary theory and modern linguistics, but wider in scope and application: persuasion as a communicative process, inherently interactive, not as a static source of wisdom which can be translated and turned into a repertoire of rules. This also means then that an important part of the elaboration of the book is taken by the real reinterpretation of the old concepts of traditional rhetoric, and its application to modern materials and areas of study, and not in the presentation of rhetorical figures or advice for the user.

The result is a truly modern concept which breaks the old conception of rhetoric as an “ornamental” discipline, as something that is “added” to speech; instead, persuasion is presented as part of the communicative process itself in many circumstances, perhaps even inherent to many forms of interaction.

3. CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

As mentioned in the previous section, the book starts by presenting a modern reading of Aristotle’s three proofs of persuasion.

In chapter 1, the authors present and discuss “personality and stance”; the change in the terminology aims to reflect the difference in the concept. For Aristotle, “ethos” meant the proof brought about by the character or virtue of the speaker, revealed in his speech; for Quintilian, “no man can be a good orator unless he is a good man”, so that ethos was linked to the orator’s values, such as moral strength (areté), benevolence (eunoia) and constructive competence (phronesis).

The modern meaning, personality and stance, represents a broadening of the term. Personality refers to something interactive, which reflects group values but is subject to the persuader’s control, and therefore links the persuader’s individuality with the act of persuasion. Stance, on the other hand, refers to the persuader’s position on a certain issue, as well as the observance of *kairos* (timeliness), that is to say, the persuader’s ability to be aware of the current state of opinion and of the needs or pressures of the audience. Quoting Lynette Hunter (1984), who studies stance in literary texts, the authors argue that “stance expresses not what someone believes but how he or she believes it” (page 31). Then the authors explain briefly how personality and stance are transmitted: they discuss categories such as gender or age, which affect the complicity with the audience, and they mention “warmth of thought” (Quintilian’s *calor cogitationis*) as a way of expressing personality and stance. The chapter ends with a most interesting set of examples, which are analysed and include a speech offered by Demosthenes, an advertisement for Toshiba, John Kerry’s speech at a political campaign meeting, and several analyses of literary passages from Jane Austen, poetry by Robert Browning and the opening of *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the description and analysis of pathos, renamed “emotional engagement” by the authors. Emotion is central to rhetoric, since without emotion persuasion does not really take place. In fact, studies of rhetoric typically use the presence or absence of emotion to distinguish persuasion from conviction, the latter signifying “the assent of the intellect to a proposition” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 14-15, in Cockcroft and Cockcroft 2005), and implying “the belief that any other rational being, anywhere, would reach the same conclusion”, but not necessarily involving the will or the emotions or making the audience move into action. Persuasion, on the other hand, “produces a transformation of attitude and action” (ibidem).

The persuader uses pathos by actualising emotion for the audience, through the creation and recreation of pictures or scenes in the mind of the listener. This is done best by appealing to the senses, for instance through the use of graphic language and choosing the right words; other techniques mentioned by the authors are alliteration, repetition, emotional abstraction; they also mention sentence perspective (word order). Then they analyse the use of such techniques in different texts by Dickens, Keats and Shakespeare; there are also two very interesting examples of the use of repetition in a speech given by John F. Kennedy, and of repetition, word choice and lexical accumulation in a parliamentary response by the opposition to one of Margaret Thatcher’s interventions.

Linguistics has studied extensively the techniques mentioned by Cockcroft and Cockcroft to actualise emotion and can contribute immensely to the study of

rhetoric in this respect. Pragmatics and discourse analysis, studies on language variation and in particular on register, as well as critical discourse analysis, have a lot to say on linguistic and textual devices such as lexical choice (Halliday 1978). A particularly fruitful area of analysis has been precisely the impact created on the reader by word choice and sentence perspective in the transmission of ideological meaning, for example in the press and advertising (Fowler et al. 1979, van Dijk 1988, Simpson 2000 among many others); undoubtedly, the results of such studies would be of great use for a rhetorician and for teaching persuasive skills. An interesting related area of application would be to spot frequent errors or sources of misunderstanding between the persuader and the audience; for instance, errors of register. In fact, the failure in creating *kairos* may often have its origins in the persuader's lack of appropriate speech preparation in terms of textual features such as register.

The third proof, *logos*, is presented in two different chapters: "Reason: the Resources of Argument" (chapter 3) and "Reason: Choice and Judgement" (chapter 4). The division corresponds to the distinction between invention, developed in the first part, and judgement, to which the second part is devoted: with the two operations, the authors reflect the difference between the two processes, and also the double nature of the act of reasoning, which implies the ways in which we think up arguments on a given topic (invention), as much as the evaluation on the appropriateness of those arguments, or of the opponent's arguments (judgement).

Most of the chapter on the Resources of Argument is taken up by the description of "models of argument". With this term, the authors refer to the well-known Greek concept and term *topoi*: commonplaces, common types of argument or topics. Instead of using Aristotle's proposal of general arguments, however, they use Peter Ramus' (1968 [1574]) classification into ten models of argument, which include, among others, the following: the definition model of argument, cause and effect, similarity, testimony, the associational model of argument or the oppositional model of argument.

The authors relate the models of argument to the idea of schema (Schank and Abelson 1977), the concept first proposed in psychology and which has had such an important influence in linguistics for the study of discourse processing and production.

This is a quite neat way of modernising the concept of argument, although not new or even surprising; the approach suggested by the authors would include the concepts of schemata, plans, goals and scenarios (Schank and Abelson 1977) to the study and practice of rhetorical structure.

In Chapter 4 the authors discuss the issues related to the second reasoning operation, judgement. The topics developed have to do with "the point at issue", that is to say, in how we identify and address the issue of a speech, debate, or text. The chapter also discusses further types of reasoning, such as syllogism, induction or dilemma. Having presented the three proofs, the book moves on to "The persuasive process" and "The persuasive repertoire".

The persuasive process presents the way the three structural elements become ordered in the persuasive discourse; it has to do with the arrangement of the material by the persuader in order to construct his or her persuasive discourse, text or speech. In this chapter, then, we are at the stage of *dispositio* or arrangement of content.

The authors present first the classical proposal of ordering, as it has reached us today through Quintilian's presentation in his *Institutio Oratoria*. In the classical ordering, the arrangement of arguments could result in a sequence of up to seven stages, which always required an Introduction, a presentation of the point of issue and a Conclusion, responding to the demands of ethos, logos and pathos, respectively.

The most interesting and innovative contribution of this chapter consists in the authors' discussion of the parallels found between Quintilian's ordering of the persuasive discourse and many different, current text types. The authors first establish a comparison with Labov's (1972) structures found in spontaneous oral narratives, which present the following ordering: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution and coda. The ordering is very similar to that proposed by the Roman rhetoricians and can be consulted on page 137, where the authors show the similarities in a clear chart. Other parallels are noted with many text types, such as news, scientific reports, academic essays, or Propp's theory of narrative structure.

Another contribution of this chapter consists in the authors' proposal of an obligatory and an optional structure of persuasive discourse, based on Hasan's (1984) idea of Generic Structure Potential.

The final chapter presents the "persuasive repertoire", that is, the set of procedures or techniques that can be used to enhance discourse, to make it more efficient or persuasive. The repertoire is the "actual language of persuasion", therefore treating *elocutio* or the stage of discourse elaboration which works with the expression of content.

The authors present a flexible repertoire which invites the reader to experiment with their own texts and persuasive needs. The chapter looks like the more traditional presentations on rhetoric, where a list of procedures with examples taken from literary texts is offered, although other texts are also analysed. The repertoire also follows the traditional classification in devices such as sound patterning, lexical choice, figurative language (tropes) and schemas, although the terms have been modernised and are expressed in English.

However, by offering this chapter as the last, the repertoire is understood within a broader context, that which looks at the persuasive process as a whole, as a type of interaction or wide communicative process. In this sense, the repertoire is presented as a quite flexible component of the persuasive discourse: on the one hand, it could stand by itself, providing the linguistic devices to work on persuasion or analyse it in actual texts. On the other, it could be seen as optional, in the sense that it is one more stage in the general contextualisation of persuasion, which can be eventually addressed by other means.

Another important divergence from traditional presentations on rhetoric is terminology. The authors have adapted the Greek and Latin terms, making quite an effort to bring the ancient terms –and hence the concepts– to the present day reader: except for terms which are common enough, such as metaphor, metonymy or antithesis, the rest are addressed with current English words of deducible meanings, such as "mislabelling", "puns and word play", "amplification" and "diminution". At

the end of the book, in Appendix C, the authors provide a chart with the matches between their terms and the classical terms. In this way, the authors address and aim to satisfy different kinds of readers: the user of the manual, the student, the non-academic on the one hand, and on the other, the scholar, literary critic or linguist who would pursue the study of rhetoric further.

4. PERSUASION AS AN INTERACTIONAL SKILL: THE NATURE OF SPOKEN PERSUASION

The three structural principles are presented in the book as the components of persuasive discourse. As seen in the previous section, the authors have modernised the concepts in order to make them relevant to the modern world. For instance, the concept of persuasion presented is ‘dialogic’ or ‘interactional’, in the sense that persuasion is seen as a process which involves author and reader (literature), persuader and audience, rather than a technique prepared and thought out by the sender. The interactional nature of persuasion is particularly evident, and interesting, in the first component, ethos.

The authors present ethos as “personality and stance”, reflecting a widening of the ancient concept, which was more linked to the idea of ‘moral value’ (ethics). Stance is of great importance in the literary text, since it expresses the narrative voice, probably the most central, and interesting aspect of literariness for the active reader and the analyst. However, stance in literature is transmitted by *textual* means, such as (and among others) the use of person (pronouns). How is this transmitted in spoken interaction?

The problem with trying to pin down how personality and stance are transmitted in spoken interaction is, precisely, that ethos is more than any other component ‘an interactional skill’. The modern counterpart of ethos is image: a quite complex concept, difficult to define, although at the same time familiar and accessible to anyone’s intuition. Image includes very different things, such as social class, education and life-style, and others such as ideological position and attitude; it is manifested through appearance, clothing and body-language among other things. Many of these features are difficult to analyse and to isolate because, as a discourse analyst would say, “they are not in the text”.

Ethos plays a central role in certain kinds of persuasive discourse, such as advertising and politics. In these, image is like a social mirror where the persuadee, whenever the persuasion has effect, projects his or her own image, real or fantasized, pursued or desired, as represented in the persuader. But image is of great importance in many other persuasive situations (and not always trivial, as one would be tempted to think), such as the business world. In general, spoken persuasion, which takes place in and through face-to-face interaction, depends heavily on non-textual features of the persuader and of the communicative process.

The question of whether appearance plays a role in persuasion is actually quite an important issue, as well as interesting, which should not be dismissed as merely pertaining to the world of celebrities endorsed by the mass media. Social psychology

(Chaiken 1979, Maddux and Rogers 1980) has investigated the relationship, finding that appearance, and in particular physical attractiveness, influences attitude change and facilitates persuasion. The most interesting result of these studies is that the relationship is indirect, in the sense that appearance influences the audience through the projection of other associated virtues, which are unconsciously attributed to the persuader. In particular, the physically attractive communicator is evaluated as being more sociable, interesting, warm, outgoing, poised, strong, sexually warm, responsive, and as having better interpersonal skills than the unattractive communicator. The findings are consistent with the stereotype “what is beautiful is good” (Chaiken 1979).

However, when combined with other categories, such as expertness or argumentation (supporting the persuasion with arguments), physical appearance does not affect persuasion to the same extent; expertness seems to be the strongest of the three categories, affecting persuasion more than appearance and even argumentation (Maddux and Rogers 1980: 242-243). Interestingly, expertness also pertains to the component of *ethos*, since it reflects professional image, which is a form of status.

According to the results of such studies, appearance plays a particularly decisive role when the audience is able to either follow the persuader or ignore him or her (by switching channels or turning the page), as happens with the mass media.

Another area where *ethos* may reflect the combination of different interactional skills is politics: the transmission of the politician’s image. There is a certain debate on whether *ethos* “pre-exists discourse”, is constructed “through discourse” or is a combination of both (Maingueneau 2002; Charaudeau 2005: 26-27).

According to Charaudeau, the process of construction of the politician’s image is not only the combination of both, personality *and* discourse, but also the reaction to certain important, big events (wars, international or national crisis), as well as the progressive accumulation of certain “traits de personnalité” which emerge through time after many small events. The first process builds strong symbolic figures: “la *puissance* avec Napoléon, la *résistance* avec de Gaulle, la *conscience morale* avec Mitterrand”¹, while the second constructs images which are attributed to the person: “la figure de *courage* attribué a G. Pompidou, celle de *froidueur* attribué à V. Giscard d’Estaing”² (Charaudeau 2005: 66).

In addition to the two types of events, gender stereotypes and expectations of political *ethos* affect the construction of the politician’s image. Mills has studied the image and language of what she calls “strong women speakers” (2003: 190-195): these are salient women in politics who tend to combine features typically associated with men and women in their speech and image, for instance by creating a strong discourse with sociolinguistic features associated with men, while showing a quite stereotypically feminine appearance in clothing. Margaret Thatcher, who very likely created the stereotype, followed by Madelaine Allbright and, more recently, Condoleeza Rice, would enter this category.

¹ “*power* in Napoleon, *resistance* in de Gaulle, *moral conscience* in Mitterrand”.

² “the figure of *courage* attributed to G. Pompidou, or *coldness* to V. Giscard d’Estaing”.

To sum up, persuasion in many social contexts involves different interactional skills which are not strictly textual nor are they expressed necessarily, or exclusively, in the text. Where image has an important role to play, which is probably the case for all spoken interaction, other means come into action to assist the persuader and influence the audience: the construction of the persuader's image through time and during the interaction.

5. MATERIALS, TEXTS AND EXERCISES

Cockcroft and Cockcroft's presentation of rhetoric is always accompanied by a set of texts, which are analysed by the authors. These make up a remarkable corpus of materials which gives its own character to the book and becomes one of its more outstanding strengths and virtues. At the end of each chapter, there always follow various texts which illustrate the concepts presented in the previous pages. The authors divide the materials into two categories, literary persuasion and functional persuasion. While the first includes texts of the various genres –drama, poetry, novel– of Classical and modern English and American writers, functional persuasion is defined as “any persuasive discourse (spoken or written) concerned with everyday life, where real people are persuaded to a real purpose” (page 5). Examples of functional persuasion include written advertisements, written press articles (such as opinion reports), fragments of speeches by well-known politicians (Margaret Thatcher, John Kerry, John F. Kennedy), for instance in the context of campaigning, and parliamentary interventions.

The texts chosen are always extremely clear, appropriate and relevant as illustrations of the desired concepts, and the analyses are intelligent and attractive. The compilation and analysis of such a corpus is a laborious, difficult and time-consuming task which can only be the result of years of expertise and reflection on the field of study; also, it reveals the authors' efficient and appealing teaching approach, as well as a constant self-evaluation of their teaching. One cannot but congratulate the authors for such an excellent, thorough work and thank them for sharing their materials in this book.

The types of materials suggest that the book is addressed, as was mentioned at the beginning of the article, to a wide range of readers-users, although one must admit that the student of literature will particularly benefit from it. Literary persuasion receives most of the attention in the materials offered; undoubtedly, the study of rhetoric is of great value for the study of literary texts and, in the new light of a reinterpreted discipline such as rhetoric, offers an interesting, renewed reading perspective.

On the other hand, the category left to the functional perspective is probably too broad and may be covering too wide a range of genres and situations. If functional persuasion is that which takes place in everyday life, then literature would actually be a small part –a rather small part– of persuasion, a wide communicative process which is present in many professions, affecting, governing even, fundamental aspects of public life such as business, politics, the media, education and justice.

From this point of view, functional persuasion could very well stand by itself, making up a whole book. This is not, of course, to be seen as a defect of this book. Furthermore, functional persuasion would probably need further specification and detail. For instance, certain types of persuasion, such as the press and advertising, as well as political debate, have already received much theoretical and analytical attention within linguistic studies, in particular in the area of pragmatics and discourse analysis. Similarly, academic and scientific discourse are likewise recognised as employing their own persuasive rhetoric.

In the Greek and Roman cultures, three types of persuasion were developed (as also acknowledged by the authors in the introduction, pages 5-6): political/deliberative persuasion (centring on public policy), forensic/legal advocacy (concerned with justice) and demonstrative oratory (the oratory of praise or blame). In my opinion, the division still holds in the modern world, probably offering some very interesting modern formats and genre subdivisions. For example, demonstrative oratory may be covering today such varied genres as advertising, press writing –reviews, editorials–, academic writing (reviews, criticism) and lecturing, or speeches offered in different kinds of situations such as award-ceremonies.

In this respect, an area of great interest and of social importance which is missing in the materials included in the book is forensic or legal rhetoric. Naturally, it is probably difficult to obtain data from the court, although many fictional films may offer the opportunity to analyse this kind of persuasion.

In addition to the useful texts, the Cockcrofts' manual presents a final chapter, "Practising persuasion", where the authors adapt the classical *progymnasmata* or elementary exercises of rhetoric, which deal one by one with the elements of speech. As they explain, the exercises have been adapted for modern use by Crowley and Hawhee (1999: 320-366) and are now being taught successfully in several European and American universities by rhetoricians.

Again, the authors follow the classical division in the three structural principles, besides working on the persuasive repertoire, the figures. The exercises pursue the practice of different verbal skills; among those devoted to ethos, some work on the persuader's stance, for instance "reliving a key childhood perspective from an adult perspective" or "recalling how it felt to start a new job", to denounce or celebrate the characteristics of people, for example by preparing "a farewell to a work colleague" or a "tribute to a retiring colleague". In order to work on pathos, the authors propose to imagine extreme states of emotion, for example by "telling a historical event where you have been involved". To practice logos, they propose the exercise of proof/disproof of an argument, or practising narrative, which consists in transforming stories according to changes in chronology, perspective, characters or genre.

As in previous sections of the book, it is not clear whether the exercises are thought to be performed as oral presentations or as written texts. Most of the exercises could be adapted for either, although the question that remains throughout the book is whether written and spoken persuasion are the same, and whether the persuader uses the same resources when writing as in face-to-face interaction.

Finally, the book treats the three stages of *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio*, while leaving out the last two stages, *memoria* and *actio*. These final stages are important in spoken forms of persuasion, where the speaker has to deliver his or her speech, thus requiring strategies in order to memorise the prepared techniques, and also to *perform* them successfully, using both voice and body, in accordance with different, complex and not completely predictable features of the interaction. These include the audience and the audience's reaction, the context (physical, proxemic space, as well as social), the materials involved and available (visual or not), the formality of the situation and the nature of the speech.

6. CONCLUSION

Persuading people: an introduction to rhetoric is a highly valuable tool for linguists and literary critics, offering an updated presentation of ancient rhetoric, as reinterpreted for the present day. It is an attractive, friendly book, which reads very well and, without sacrificing rigour, has the rare virtue of being able to transmit complex, lengthy knowledge, turning it into an approachable discipline which is open to the findings and analytical tools of related disciplines, such as discourse analysis or social psychology. Finally, including as it does the practice of rhetoric, it prepares the way for further elaboration in, for instance, training programmes or workshops on creative writing and public speaking.

To sum up, Robert and Susan Cockcroft prove themselves in this book to be the perfect classical rhetoricians by successfully accomplishing the three duties of the effective orator, as stated by Cicero: to teach, delight and move to action.

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