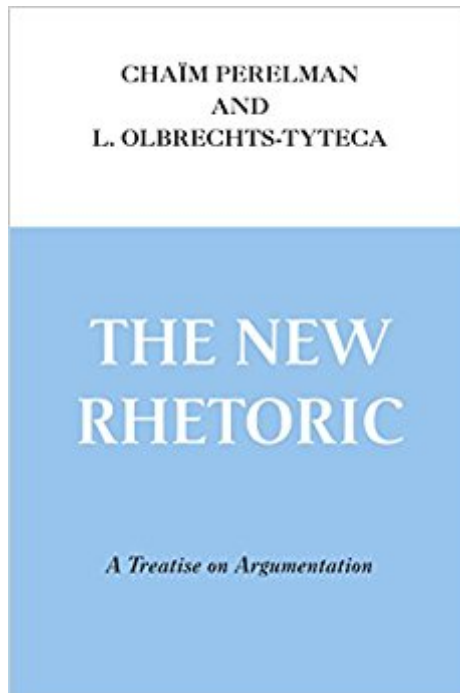




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New Rhetoric, The: A Treatise On Argumentation



Synopsis

The *New Rhetoric* is founded on the idea that since argumentation aims at securing the adherence of those to whom it is addressed, it is, in its entirety, relative to the audience to be influenced, says Chaïm Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, and they rely, in particular, for their theory of argumentation on the twin concepts of universal and particular audiences: while every argument is directed to a specific individual or group, the orator decides what information and what approaches will achieve the greatest adherence according to an ideal audience. This ideal, Perelman explains, can be embodied, for example, "in God, in all reasonable and competent men, in the man deliberating or in an elite." Like particular audiences, then, the universal audience is never fixed or absolute but depends on the orator, the content and goals of the argument, and the particular audience to whom the argument is addressed. These considerations determine what information constitutes "facts" and "reasonableness" and thus help to determine the universal audience that, in turn, shapes the orator's approach. The adherence of an audience is also determined by the orator's use of values, a further key concept of the *New Rhetoric*. Perelman's treatment of value and his view of epideictic rhetoric sets his approach apart from that of the ancients and of Aristotle in particular. Aristotle's division of rhetoric into three genres—"forensic, deliberative, and epideictic"—is largely motivated by the judgments required for each: forensic or legal arguments require verdicts on past action, deliberative or political rhetoric seeks judgment on future action, and epideictic or ceremonial rhetoric concerns values associated with praise or blame and seeks no specific decisions. For Aristotle, the epideictic genre was of limited importance in the civic realm since it did not concern facts or policies. Perelman, in contrast, believes not only that epideictic rhetoric warrants more attention, but that the values normally limited to that genre are in fact central to all argumentation. "Epideictic oratory," Perelman argues, "has significant and important argumentation for strengthening the disposition toward action by increasing adherence to the values it lauds." These values are central to the persuasiveness of arguments in all rhetorical genres since the orator always attempts to "establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience."

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Customer Reviews

Originally trained in Philosophy of Law - one of the three branches of rhetoric, historically - Polish-born ChaŃfÂ m Perelman (1912-1984) deals here extensively, clearly, and very persuasively indeed with the issues covered by the term (see previous work "The Realm of Rhetoric"), which, as the remainder of the title points out, is also the starting point of "Argumentation", or of any kind of "discourse." The work is of import to anyone interested in philosophy, speech, logic, or the logic of the (apparent) absence of logic. Perelman and co-author Obrechts-Tyteca's knowledge of Western philosophy is impressive, the book is written with the simplicity of style of the true scholar, and the translation is outstanding. For students of language, literature, politics, business, or acting, a mandatory and difficult read (thus satisfying: preferable to a "Rhetoric Made E-Z"?)- I would recommend this book along with B. Vickers' In Defence of RhetoricÂ American scholar Kennedy's Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern TimesÂ works, and a brilliant lexicon of sorts, to carry around everywhere you goÂ Handlist of Rhetorical Terms 2nd (second) Revised Edition by Lanham published by University of California Press (1992).

Classic read for rhetoric or argumentation students and scholars! I'm using it for an advanced argumentation class now!

A very important book for anyone interested in rhetorical studies.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's book is long, dense, and filled with examples that would only really be familiar to French readers (lots and lots of Bossuet, for example). Furthermore, their taxonomy of different types of argument is a bit fuzzy. Most problematic, it is very difficult to take their framework for understanding persuasion and apply it straightforwardly, for example, in rhetorical criticism. In short, it is not very easy, nor is it very portable. In spite of these problems, it is a MUST for anyone wanting to understand how persuasion and argument work. Their discussion of quasi-logical arguments alone, or the first 50 pages of the book, or worth the price of the entire thing. What they do very well is to upset commonsense assumptions about what persuasion is and about what makes an argument work. I loved this book, and I urge you to read it. If the length, complexity, and French examples are offputting, you might instead look at Perelman's later, shorter book "Realm of Rhetoric." This book here, though, is the real deal.

Unless you love argumentation theory, skip this and pick up Perelman's "The Realm of Rhetoric," which is about 600 pages shorter.

This is an academic book that has some real-world lessons--how do you argue and make a point effectively? I first read this book in college and continue to reference it. Perelman catalogs several hundred different types of arguments with tons of examples. In fact, the examples are staggering and worth the price of the book. Traditionally, rhetoric has been maligned as something manipulative and dishonest. Perelman's work looks at argument objectively, asking "how does someone convince someone else?" The result is a catalog that is like a toolkit for anyone trying to make a pitch. For anyone in business, this is invaluable.

It's not really about rhetoric; it's about dialectic. Perelman points out early on that he avoided the term dialectic, because of its Marxist and Hegelian overtones. But his source for the work is Aristotle's Topics, a work about dialectic. Because rhetoric and dialectic are companion (if competing) theories of discourse, Perelman felt comfortable updating the term rhetoric (by using the adjective "New"). This book is a compelling statement about dialectic for the modern world.

This book is a masterpiece in the subject of argumentation. Since Descartes the rhetorical argumentation got a bad connotation, as a disguise to fold the truth. But, as Perelman brightly teaches,

not all structures of the reality can be describe just by the formal (mathematical) logics. In fact, some "truths" can only be discovered by using argumentation, such as political or moral subjects. In a democratic scene, the awakening of a new logic is needed, because the mathematical method can not be aplyed to all areas of thinking anymore.

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