

Aristotelian Rhetoric As Tool Of Development Of Critical Thinking In Education

Sotiria. A. Triantari¹, Ioannis Noitsis²

¹Associate Professor in Florina ,University of Western of Macedonia
striantari@yahoo.gr/striantari@uowm.gr

²Teacher in Primary Education and PhD candidate,School of Education in Florina
University of Western of Macedonia
Email: inoitsis@gmail.com

Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that Aristotle's Rhetoric is important until today for the originality of thought in modern education. The art of rhetoric from the ancient times to the late nineteenth century occupied an important position in education. Rhetoric promotes the creative and critical thinking. Rhetoric is based on proofs, syllogisms and arguments, which activate the mental ability of humans.*

Keywords: *Rhetoric, thinking, education, "proofs inedit", speech, communication, reasoning.*

I. INTRODUCTION: RHETORIC AND CRITICAL THINKING

Rhetoric of Aristotle is the most constituted and important manual of the rhetoric in antiquity (Erickson, 1974; Ijesseling, 1976). The Aristotelian *Logic* and *Rhetoric* are two basic tools for the constitution of speech, the improvement of communication and the development of critical thinking. In this study, first, we analyze the significance of Aristotelian rhetoric in the development of critical thinking. Secondly, we present the practical importance, which rhetoric has as a tool of development of critical thinking in education.

Aristotle in *Rhetoric* pursued the revelation of truth through the practice of speech, with ulterior purpose the right reasoning and the way of thinking (Triantari, 2012a; Triantari, 2014a). He accomplished the persuasiveness and rightness of speech with the reconciliation of rhetoric with philosophy and he emphasized the philosophical character of rhetoric (Pernot, 2005; Düring, 1994).

From Aristotelian rhetoric we inherited the following two basic factors: a. The education, which is equivalent to philosophy and embraces

the knowledge of logic, ethics and politics. b. The right reasoning process and constitution of speech by means of linguistic principles, which Aristotle combined with education (Kennedy, 1963).

Aristotle recognized three artful modes of persuasion, each of which is accomplished by what the orator says: he persuades his audience by presenting himself as a man of a good character, by arousing emotion in the audience, and by arguing the issue and using rational argument (Aristotle, *Rhetoric A'*, 1356a. Fortenbaugh, 2010; Fortenbaugh, 1970; Fortenbaugh, 1991; Fortenbaugh, 1992).

Among the three artful modes of persuasion the most important is the rational argument. Aristotle supported that the power of persuasion is the skill of the rhetorician to argue against his interlocutor about right and just, refuting his arguments (Aristotle, 1355a; Rapp, 2009). Therefore, rhetoric is the capacity of the orator to compose manner arguments and correct syllogisms. Aristotle considered that the "proofs not inedit" and the "proofs inedit" is a basic condition for the composition of arguments and syllogisms (Aristotle, 1355b;)].

II. THE “INVEDIT PROOFS” IN ARISTOTELIAN RHETORIC AS THE BASE FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Aristotle in his first Book of *Rhetoric* distinguished two kinds of proofs, “not invedit” (artless) and “invedit” or artistic (art). In the “not invedit” proofs (artless) the orator can use evidence, probative evidence and written agreements etc. In the “invedit” proofs (art) the orator invents probative syllogism and proofs (Aristotle, 1355b; Carey, 1994 ; Garey, 2003).

This study focuses on “invedit proofs (art)”, which are constructed by ourselves. Aristotle regarded the syllogisms as a basic condition for the composition of “invedit proofs”, connecting them mainly with the practice of rhetoric, kinds of syllogisms, speech forms, style, *topoi*, disposition of speech (Triantari, 2014^a). He calls the rhetorical syllogism an “enthymeme”. Aristotle refers: “It is possible to form syllogisms and draw conclusions from the results of previous syllogisms; or, on the other hand, from premises which have not been thus proved, and at the same time are so little accepted that they call for proof”. (Aristotle, 1357a; Fortenbaugh, 2010).

Here, Aristotle emphasizes the syllogisms, demonstrating that the logical form of a syllogism characterizes as critical thinking an active process of the mind. This helps us to set questions, to make complex hypothetical syllogisms and to elaborate the information. He approached and defined the critical thinking and he gave the possibility to the modern thinkers, as John Dewey, to elaborate systematically the meaning of critical thinking (Mezirow, 1981; Kokkos, 2010).

Furthermore, Aristotle made clear that the reasoning uses real and valid premises, which lead to right conclusions. Whereas the enthymeme is based on general prevailing positions, which reach possible conclusions. This marks off the enthymeme from the scientific syllogism that draws necessary conclusions from premises that are themselves necessary (Fortenbaugh, 2010). The enthymeme, which as the examples is the second mode of constitution of the argument, arouses critical thinking, because they can set each conviction and kind of knowledge in doubt. The difference between enthymeme and example is

that the enthymeme proceeds deductively while the example proceeds inductively. The orator constitutes his arguments with the inductively syllogisms and enthymemes. He criticizes and refutes arguments, composes arguments to support his view and generally he can doubts views, which humans take for granted (Aristotle, 1359b16; Poulakos, J. & Poulakos, T. 1999).

Therefore, the arguments are constituted from syllogisms, which are composed from enthymemes and examples. The orator supports or refutes a view through the arguments. Man, who has critical thinking, uses the arguments and criticizes each information with them or views, and elaborates it with his reason, forms potential opinions, compares, distinguishes and proceeds to his conclusions. An argument is an exercise, which is based on reasoning rules.

Aristotle presents the constitution of the argument, which constituted from two enthymemes whose logical form is that of a mixed hypothetical syllogism. He discusses about the finances of the city:

“The man who is going to offer counseling concerning finances ought to know the number and extent of the city’s revenues, in order that if any source of revenue is missing it may be added, and if any course is deficient it may be increased” (1359b).

Particularly, we have two arguments, which proceed through a continuous proposition and an assumption to a conclusion:

- a) If any source of revenue is missing it may be added; but some source of revenue is missing; therefore it may be added.
- b) If any source of revenue is deficient, it may be increased; but some source of revenue is deficient; therefore it may be increased. (Fortenbaugh, 2010).

First, Aristotle shows that for the constitution of an argument we must have critical ability and to have critical thinking we must have knowledge, to assume right. Here, the orator is going to offer counseling concerning finances must know the number and the extent of the city’s revenues. This Knowledge helps him to proceed to his conclusions, forming potential ideas, which are expressed by the two enthymemes whose logical

form is mixed with hypothetical syllogisms (Kiriakidis, 2006).

Second, Aristotle approaches the process of development of critical thinking through the way of constitution of the two arguments. Therefore, the argument is a practice for the improvement of critical thinking.

The American philosopher John Dewey (19^o century) in his work *We How Think* drew the way of process of critical thinking from Aristotle and defined critical thinking as “Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey, 1910).

Dewey’s thought presents elements from the constitution of “inveit proofs” (art, *pisteis entechnoi*). Here, we point out four basic elements, which demonstrate the influence of Aristotle on Dewey:

- a. Syllogisms, which compose the argument, are a way of process of critical thinking, that Dewey calls “active consideration”.
- b. Hypothetical syllogisms show that no knowledge and no belief is not valid, but it sets in control.
- c. The exploring of knowledge or beliefs is carried out through a clear and attentive reasoning process and it leads to specific conclusions.
- d. The valid of views is based on two elements: a. the probative evidence that leads to truth and b. the right reasoning rules that rationalize the arguments of the orator.

Aristotle regarded enthymemes of this form as valid arguments, because the orator has knowledge and particularly about finances. The orator investigates the implications, which this knowledge caused and he thinks out a plan of action for the good of the city; namely if any source of revenue is missing must find a way it may be added; if any source of revenue is deficient, must find a way it may be increased. Dewey draw by Aristotle’s thought and he pointed out that critical thinking includes the exploration of implications that causes knowledge.

Aristotle’ thought broadened the field of critical thinking of Dewey, who considered that

humans are the creators of their personal course and social reality through their active and self-reliant thinking (Kokkos, 2010; Mezirow, 1981; Mezirow, 1998).

The influence of Aristotelian thought in Dewey is distinguished in the following points as well. Aristotle, as a latter Dewey, didn’t perceive rhetoric as a mental exercise with its rules and syllogisms. Aristotelian rhetoric is a tool for those who think, speak and act. It is a place of speeches and different types of thinking. Rhetoric is theory and praxis that are directed by thinking in a critical exploration. It is art, which improves and develops critical thinking. The development of critical thinking leads to the strengthening of communicative skills. A citizen, who has critical thinking and communicative skills, is an active citizen. Through knowledge and information every citizen follows and thinks about the progress of political and social reality and not only is a passive spectator but also he is a thoughtful, creative and active citizen. Aristotle, characterized intelligent people by nature those, who can get to know and understand the real world, having at the same time the ability to influence and change their behavior and the words they use (Triantari, 2012a).

The role of rhetoric is multifarious in modern education, because it can promote the critical thinking and critical conscience. In that case pupils/students can form their personality, to be able to contribute to the progress of civilization of their times.

III. CRITICAL THINKING OR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: THE DYNAMICS PRESENCE OF RHETORIC IN MODERN EDUCATION

In the beginning of *Rhetoric* Aristotle says that rhetoric is useful because it helps just men to articulate their case convincingly, helps humans to understand difficult material (such as scientific material), helps them to counteract false arguments, and helps good men to defend themselves when they are attacked (Morgan, 2010). His opinions about rhetoric includes the following:

- a. Rhetoric is a political and social power, because *logos* of an orator can include both speech and reason.
- b. Good orators are those who speak persuasively and are also the city's wisest, the most intelligent and the most rational counselors (Morgan, 2010).
- c. The right use of the speech form provides flexibility in the structure of thought and speech (Triantari, 2014b).
- d. A good orator elaborates his thinking to acquire critical consciousness.

The consciousness through critical thinking is achieved with the knowledge of morality, but also with the knowledge of the human soul. The orator's morality, which appears in his wisdom and friendliness towards his audience and his ability to distinguish and study different types of human characters in relation with certain factors, such as their emotions, their desires, their habits. All those determine his rhetorical skill, but also is a guarantee in the framework of communicative practice and dialogue (Crick, 2005; Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Triantari, 2012a).

Therefore, the role of rhetoric has two aspects in education. The first aspect is the ability of a pupil/student to compose arguments and to support his views free of predisposition, individual perception and interests. The second aspect of rhetoric is its role as a communicative tool between teachers and pupils/students, educators or trainees. Aristotle referred that rhetoric is related to dialectic, because both of them have reasoning and right thinking in common (1354a; Green, 1990). Rhetoric is the art which promotes the dialogue. It develops the ability of critical thinking and strengthens the free thinking of humans. These both aspects contribute to the perception of its importance throughout the duration of education of human beings in educational theory and practice in the formal and non formal education (Giroux, 2000).

Critical thinking is a characteristic of humans who think free. The school is the place in which the pupils/students can develop critical thinking. The knowledge of rhetoric is a basic condition, because the basic element for the formation of critical thinking is *logos*, reason

(Betts, 1992). The aim of rhetoric is the exercise of reasoning in education. The pupils/students must learn syllogistic methods to think with reasoning arguments and to use the verbal forms right (Hart, 1976).

Therefore, the power of rhetoric is based on necessity of teachers and pupils/students to develop communicative and expressive skills through which is highlighted critical thinking. At all times critical thinking was a necessity and Aristotle emphasizes this "we must be able to employ persuasion, just as strict reasoning can be employed, on opposite sides of a question, not in order that we may in practice employ it in both ways (for we must not make people believe what is wrong), but in order that we may see clearly what the facts are, and that, if another man argues unfairly, we on our part may be able to confute him" (1355a). Aristotle's view reflects the importance and necessity of critical thinking, and at the same time of rhetoric, because today we receive much information, printed and electronic, optical and acoustic (magazines, books, advertisements, etc.).

In art of rhetoric two factors are combined, *logos* and *ethos*. Today, rhetoric has two forms, verbal and visual. Aristotle announced the evolution of visual rhetoric, by giving images from Plato's Republic: "For people, who look like a captain, who has arms but weak hearing ... for the verses of poets, who like young people who are not handsome, when these latter lose freshness of their youth, so the content of verses when it breaks up by measures, they become unrecognizable" (1406b). In addition, he says: "Rhetorical speech must be neither with rhyme nor completely without rhythm. Actually, in the first case speech wouldn't be persuasive, because it seems, to be pretended and distracts audience from the meaning ... when again speech does not completely rhyme, the phrase seems incomplete" (1408b; Triantari, 2012a). Rhetoric forms with speech intellectually a visual creation of image, with the proper enriching tone of voice, as it emerges from the rhythmic rhetorical speech. Aristotle attempted to create relationships between intellectual and visual images, influencing his audiences deeply. Reverberation of this completeness is the modern research and study by

young scholars on the importance of “visual rhetoric” in the communicative process (Foss, 2005).

In 1972 Douglas Ehninger tried to give a general definition to rhetoric, in which not only verbal symbols were included but also the “visual rhetoric”. Ehninger determined rhetoric as a way with which people can influence the thought and behavior of others through a strategic usage of symbols (Ehninger, 1972). “Visual rhetoric” is a method, which daily entraps peoples as long as are diffused are images on television, advertising, cinema, architecture, decoration and elsewhere. Therefore, Image is an important educational tool in the hands of the educator (Foss, 2005). A teacher uses “Visual rhetoric” to educate his pupils in critical thinking. The knowledge is not sufficient. Educators must train pupils in speech and image through the lessons that they teach.

Rhetoric and its extension, “visual rhetoric”, is a basic tool for the development of teaching methods, which function in combination with speech and image. This combination is also designed to help students learn to think rhetorically that is, to approach their visual environment from a rhetorical perspective (Fow, 1982; Triantari, 2012a). Students/pupils learn meanings through the approach of visual images. This effort also promotes electronic visual rhetoric, as students learn through the internet. “Visual rhetoric” serves primarily the communication between an educator with his trainee, a teacher with his pupils, making their contact even to distant education possible (Fow, 1982).

An example that combines speech and image is the following: A teacher teaches a historical event not only with his speech but also through image. The knowledge that the pupil/student is informed, is connected with the place, time, social conditions, religious and ideological views, political states, which the pupil/student must analyze with a critical spirit and must strengthens his critical ability and critical consciousness.

Today, rhetoric serves the effort of educational bodies for the development of students and active citizens. The techniques of rhetoric contribute significantly to the culture of

communicative and expressive skills, since it is considered equally essential to both verbal and written speech. It helps pupils to penetrate into the substance of a subject, to participate actively in the class, to work together as teams, to understand the importance of information, to learn to listen and converse, to penetrate into the psychology of other pupils, to express their opinion and to develop progressively abstract and synthetic ability (Lourianaki, 2008).

Rhetoric is considered necessary as a separate subject of teaching at all levels of education, but also as a technique in interthematic and interscience between similar subjects. John Dewey argued that rhetoric serves as a form of love, in the sense that it has the ability to inspire us and others a desire to get to a higher level of existence (Dewey, 1886).

IV. CONCLUSION

The importance, which rhetoric has in modern education, focuses on the following points:

- a. Rhetoric develops and improves critical thinking through the exercise of speech and image
- b. A pupil/a student acquires syllogistic methods and the possibility to compose arguments, which promote his free thinking and helps him to create democratic consciousness
- c. The development of critical thinking is for the modern European citizen a fundamental motivation for the redefinition as a citizen in the democracy of the European Union.
- d. The echo of the Aristotelian rhetorical as theory and praxis leads to the revision of the concept of democracy, which should not be restricted to ensure individual interests only.
- e. Rhetoric in modern education and lifelong education can be the foundation stone, in order that educators and trainees can think with critical thinking and moral consciousness and relate their aims, namely economic, social, cultural, etc. with the participating democracy (Dewey, 1997; Triantari, 2012b).

- f. Citizen who has developed critical thinking can defend democratic values
- g. Rhetoric in modern education can contribute to the awareness of educators and trainees and help to the right and non-violent participation of citizens in socio-political events and will guarantee the increase of the number of citizens with democratic political culture (Triantari, 2012a)

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