This paper attempts to show that the significant difference between the enthymeme and the dialectic syllogism rests on the similarity of purpose of both dialectic and rhetoric, and on the differences in the respondents to which they address themselves. To support this thesis, the author reviews several contemporary approaches which have dealt with the enthymeme and develops an analysis of the essential requirements of dialectic and rhetoric which affect the characteristics of their respective syllogisms. The author predicts four essential characteristics of the enthymeme based on an assumption made by Aristotle that the rhetorical respondent, while untrained in the assessment of arguments, still has an innate understanding and preference for logical reasoning. The four characteristics are: (1) it must be short, simple, and to the point; (2) to accomplish this, the rhetorician must make use of common knowledge and draw obvious conclusions; (3) since one is arguing from propositions with which the auditor is already familiar, the enthymeme may be stylistically modified; (4) this modified argument has greater persuasive impact than the arguments developed by the educated man. (TS)
THE ENTHYMEME AND THE RATIONAL JUDGE

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The Enthymeme and the Rational Judge

"Everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way." 1

It is with this single sentence that Aristotle indicates the importance of the enthymeme as proof and in so doing places it at the very heart of his rhetorical theory. We all tend to have, at least, a hazy notion of the nature of the example, but we are not so fortunate when it comes to delineating the essential characteristics of the enthymeme.

For centuries rhetorical scholars have sought to identify and isolate distinct characteristics of the enthymeme. Unfortunately, these attempts have, for the most part, done more to confound our misunderstanding of the enthymeme than to supplement it. These attempts have generally sought to compare structural components of the dialectic and rhetorical syllogisms in order to discover some kind of consistent differentiating quality. This scholarly tradition seems to be predicated on an assertion by Aristotle that the enthymeme differs in some way from the dialectic syllogism.

In this paper, I maintain that such an approach is limiting, for the significant difference between the enthymeme and the dialectic syllogism does not rest upon limited structural and
and functional characteristics. Rather, the difference between the enthymeme and dialectic syllogism rests upon the similarity of purpose of both dialectic and rhetoric and the difference in the respondents to which they address themselves.

Therefore, in an effort to support the above assertion, this paper will: 1. review several contemporary approaches which have dealt with the enthymeme, and 2. develop an analysis of the essential requirements of dialectic and rhetoric which affect the characteristics of their respective syllogisms. The review of the various contemporary explanations of the enthymeme is by no means meant to be exhaustive, however, I maintain that these positions are representative, providing a cross-section of scholarly opinion.

A Review

For several centuries the enthymeme was considered to be nothing more than an elided syllogism, where one or more premises are suppressed. This notion, at least, implied that previous rhetorical scholars were unable to ascertain any other distinguishing characteristic which would differentiate the enthymeme from other syllogisms, specifically the dialectical syllogism. However, in recent times many authorities have questioned the distinction of the enthymeme as an elided syllogism. This questioning has led to the development of several new divergent conceptualizations, all of which sought more consistent characteristics with which to distinguish the enthymeme from
Among the first to offer any sustained resistance to the enthymeme as an elided syllogism was Thomas De Quincey. De Quincey sought to establish the enthymeme as being distinct because its "matter" was probable and not certain. In doing so he writes,

"Oxford! thou wilt think us mad to ask. Certainly we know, what all the world knows, that an enthymeme was understood to be a syllogism of which one proposition is suppressed--major, minor, or conclusion. But what relation had that to rhetoric." 3

In questioning the appropriateness of defining the enthymeme as an elided syllogism he concluded that,

"An enthymeme differs from a 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." 4

As an attempt to differentiate the enthymeme from the syllogism proper, the demonstrative syllogism--this is indeed an accurate assessment. However, De Quincey failed to note what many others have pointed out, that this distinction did not distinguish between the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms. According to Aristotle, both the dialectical syllogism and the enthymeme may rely upon probabilities for their premises.5 With this in mind, the distinct nature of the enthymeme remains unclear.

James H. McBurney is probably among the most important figures in re-assessing the nature of the enthymeme. In the
1936 issue of *Speech Monographs* McBurney reviewed his findings and conclusions concerning the function and nature of the enthymeme. Whereas it is unlikely that he sought to demonstrate that the enthymeme was a syllogism distinct from all other syllogisms, his conclusions have often been so interpreted. We should note that McBurney set out to establish what he perceived to be the characteristics of the enthymeme and not to contrast it with the dialectic syllogism. For this reason it is necessary, once again, to review his conclusions.

McBurney drew a total of seven conclusions concerning the enthymeme, only one of which relates directly to the purpose of this paper. After reviewing certain passages in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Book II, chapters 22 and 25) concerning the differences between the demonstrative and refutative enthymeme, he writes,

"Perhaps no other passages in Aristotle brings out more forcibly the point that several forms of the enthymeme are formally deficient than these explanations dealing with the refutation of the 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 formally valid syllogisms."

He then concludes that, "the inferential process is formally deficient in several of the enthymemetic types, and many enthymemes therefore cannot be stated in valid syllogisms, . . ."  

Whereas McBurney never explicitly states that this establishes a distinction from the dialectical syllogism, many have assumed so,
claiming that the enthymeme "differs" from the dialectical syllogism because it is sometimes formally deficient. One very important consideration is often overlooked. The inferential processes, arguing for a conclusion from probabilities, is the same for both the dialectical syllogisms and enthymemes. This would lead one to believe that both the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms are sometimes formally deficient, thereby indicating no essential difference. Therefore, one cannot successfully claim a distinction between the enthymeme and dialectical syllogism based upon the inferential process inherent to each.

Another varied and distinct approach is offered by Charles Sears Baldwin who claims that the enthymeme deals with things concrete whereas the syllogism deals with things abstract. He writes,

"Proof as contemplated by rhetoric proceeds by such means as may be used in public address. Instead of the syllogism, which is proper to abstract logic, rhetoric typically uses the enthymeme, that approximate syllogism which is proper and necessary to the actual concrete discussions of public questions." 10

He goes on to say that,

"Rhetoric ranges for subject-matter most often in the fields of social ethics and politics, tempting its professors, Aristotle adds acutely, to assume the mask of politics [Rhet 1536a]. It deals with 'the ordinary and recognized subjects of deliberation,' [Rhet 1357a] with matters still in dispute and doubt. Thus dealing with social and political conduct, it can neither proceed, as logic does, by absolute propositions nor arrive at logical demonstration. Its premises are not universals, but generally accepted probabilities. That is, to resume his previous distinction, the mode
of rhetoric is not the syllogism or induction proper to logical formulation, but the enthymeme or instances proper to actual presentation. 11

Baldwin's analysis has been interpreted as having delineated a difference between the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms. This is perhaps unfair to Baldwin, for on the same page, when speaking of the "syllogism," he refers to scientific induction and abstract deduction, as well as the need for absolute premises. The only syllogism Aristotle associated with "science" or for which he claimed a need for absolute premises is the demonstrative or scientific syllogism. 12 This would tend to lead one to believe that Baldwin was actually contrasting the enthymeme with the demonstrative syllogism and not the dialectical syllogism.

With such a contrast in mind it might still have been appropriate to think of the enthymeme as concrete. However, as Bitzer points out, neither the enthymeme, nor the dialectical syllogism, has concretness as an essential feature.13 Bitzer argues that, "the essential difference is not to be found in the concretness of enthymemes because (a) this feature does not always characterize enthymemes and (b) it sometimes characterizes other kinds of syllogisms." 14

Bitzer's own attempt to distinguish between the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms centers on the method of interaction. Bitzer writes,

"But we must note an important difference between the forms of interaction which occur in rhetoric and in dialectic—a difference which further clarifies the distinction between the dialectical syllogism and the enthymeme." 15
Bitzer maintains that dialectical interaction is in the form of question and answer where the respondent actively "contributes premises for the construction of dialectical syllogisms." 16 Rhetorical interaction, on the other hand, is continuous discourse and "does not allow him to obtain premises from his audience through question and answer." 17

Bitzer concludes his analysis by saying,

"The speaker uses a form of interaction which has its 'counterpart' in dialectic, but instead of using question and answer to achieve interaction, he uses the enthymeme, which accomplishes for rhetoric what the method of question and answer accomplishes for dialectic. The speaker draws the premises for his proofs from propositions which members of his audience would supply if he were to proceed by question and answer, and the syllogisms produced in this way by speaker and audience are enthymemes." 18

This statement lends itself to two interpretations; (1) the rhetorician should enter into some kind of hypothetical dialogue with his audience or (2) because of the mode of interaction, the rhetorician must base his arguments upon propositions which are, generally, admitted and believed by the audience. This latter possibility seems far more likely. Aristotle does not require the rhetorician to enter into a hypothetical dialogue but rather to procure premises based upon, what would seem to require, an analysis of the generally accepted beliefs of the populous. 19 In this way the rhetorician would be assured of basing his proofs upon propositions his audience would supply if he were to proceed by question and answer.

This account of the differences inherent to the forms of
interaction does appear to provide a consistent method of differentiating the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms. However, it has not been demonstrated that this difference constitutes the essential characteristic of the enthymeme which sets it apart from all other syllogisms.

Another approach which centers on stylistic considerations also provides a distinct yet compatible approach to the essential characteristics of the enthymeme.

As Charles Mudd writes,

"Logically, the syllogism is an ordered structure of a simple beauty, but stylistically it leaves much to be desired. A speaker, then, does not often use syllogisms as a means of communicating arguments. Instead, he omits whatever premise the audience can infer without trouble and gives only those parts of the argument which are needed to make it clear." 20

Mudd contends that the enthymeme is a logically valid deductive argument based upon premises which "usually are only probable rather than necessarily true." 21 He goes on to say that,

"Examples of enthymemes are to be found in both the Rhetoric and the Analytics. In every case, these are examples of arguments in logically valid deductive form. According to Aristotle, then, the enthymeme is the logical form of valid deductive argument used in speaking, and drawn from premises that are either necessarily true or generally true, or accepted as being true. For the sake of style, one of the propositions may be omitted." 22

Gary Cronkite maintains that "the enthymeme is any form of deductive rhetorical argument, adapted in any way the speaker deems necessary to accomplish the purpose of persuasion." 23
Thus, Cronkite would seem to concur with Mudd on the need for stylistic modification.

However, some confusion results when Cronkite appears to advocate that there is no essential difference between the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms. He writes,

"Those who search the Rhetoric for distinctions in form and subject matter which will allow them to identify enthymemes and dialectical syllogisms, then, are likely to continue to be disappointed, for there are not such differences; indeed, it is probable that at times the rhetorical syllogism may be a dialectical syllogism, if the speaker deems that the most persuasive form in which the argument can be expressed."

This passage lends itself to one of two interpretations. First, Cronkite maintains that there is absolutely no difference between the dialectical syllogism and the rhetorical syllogism or second, he believes there is a difference but that it rests upon the need for stylistic adaptation rather than differences in form and subject matter. The latter possibility is one with which I concur and which can be most easily defended.

Indeed, the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms are structurally the same and they do draw upon the same subject matter. However, I maintain that the justification for this adaptation goes beyond the need to maximize persuasive impact, an assertion which will be supported later in this paper.

Both Cronkite and Mudd would seem to agree that there are no inherent differences in the form or subject matter of dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms; and that there are aspects of rhetorical communication which necessitate the adaption of
deductive argument in such a way as to maximize persuasive impact without diminishing its logical validity. This does provide a valid conceptualization from which to view the enthymeme.

Inasmuch as both this approach and the approach presented by Sitzer establish valid conceptualizations of limited aspects of the enthymeme, one cannot claim that either has isolated all of the essential characteristics of the enthymeme. Furthermore, an underlying rationale which could support both of these positions has yet to be formulated. In an effort to establish such a rationale, research must continue.

The results of the review which has been undertaken are twofold. First, we can identify differences in focus which have hampered the formulation of conceptualizations about the enthymeme. Second, those positions which focused on characteristics other than form or subject matter have presented the strongest conceptualizations.

The positions represented by De Quincey, Baldwin, and McLurney dealt with concepts of form and subject matter. As has been pointed out, these conceptualizations fell short of developing a functional foundation upon which to base our understanding of the enthymeme.

The positions represented by Sitzer, Mudd, and Cronkite dealt with concepts of adapting dialectical reasoning to the peculiar needs of rhetorical interaction. However, two distinct conceptualizations have been formulated, one dealing with stylistic adaptation and the other interactive adaptation.
Thus, it would seem that both positions have isolated characteristics of the enthymeme but lack a common rationale which is capable of incorporating both positions. In an effort to ascertain such a comprehensive rationale, we must turn to Aristotle for guidance.

A Reconceptualization

Whereas it is admitted that the enthymeme does most assuredly have its stylistic as well as interactive characteristics, it is believed that the essence of the enthymeme has a broader and more defined foundation than any which have been developed so far. As was stated at the beginning of this paper, it is believed that the difference between the enthymeme and the dialectical syllogism is inherent in the functions of the two "arts" and specifically the respondents for which they were designed, a position which will now be investigated.

While comparing the Art of Dialectic with the Art of Rhetoric we must, of course, return to Aristotle. The first statement Aristotle makes in the Rhetoric is that, "Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic. Both alike are concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all men and belong to no definite science. Accordingly all men make use, more or less, of both; for to a certain extent all men attempt to discuss statements and maintain them, and to defend themselves and attack others." 23

In this passage of Aristotle's the foundation is laid upon which to base our discussion of the relationship between dialectic and rhetoric. To Aristotle, both dialectic and rhetoric are forms of discourse concerned with universal topics about which men seek.
to present and support their own positions. However, the most crucial component of this relationship is implied in the following passage.

"Now the framers of the current treatises on rhetoric have constructed but a small portion of that art. The modes of persuasion [logical arguments] are the only true constituents of the art: everything else is merely accessory." 26

Here it is indicated that the primary means of dialectical and rhetorical discourse is logical reasoning. The modes of persuasion consist of example and enthymeme for rhetoric corresponding to induction and the dialectical syllogism (epichireme) of dialectic. 27

But, of course, there are those who will say that logos is not the only constituent of the art and, further, that Aristotle's Rhetoric itself testifies to this. Kennedy argues that to clarify this point, one must realize that Aristotle's Rhetoric is the culmination of an extended developmental process which resulted in many apparent inconsistencies. 28 However, as Jebb indicates, the statement that, "the master of logic will be the master of rhetoric, is a truism if we concede the primacy of the logical element in rhetoric." 29

In an effort to further clarify the relationship between dialectic and rhetoric Aristotle states,

"It thus appears that rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and also of ethical studies. Ethical studies may fairly be called political and for this reason rhetoric masquerades as political science, and the professors of it as political experts—sometimes from ostentation,
sometimes owing to other human failings. As a matter of fact, it is a branch of dialectic and similar to it, as we said at the outset. Neither rhetoric or dialectic is the scientific study of any one separate subject: both are faculties for providing arguments. This is perhaps a sufficient account of their scope and how they are related."

In this passage Aristotle criticizes those contemporaries of his who seek to distort the "art" of rhetoric into something it is not--political science. According to Aristotle, Rhetoric is similar to dialectic, just as broad in scope, and not tied to any specific science. He seeks to discourage any attempts to distort this most basic relationship, for "both are faculties for providing arguments." This is their sole function and all that need be said concerning the matter.

With this relationship established, it would appear impossible to enlist Aristotle's support for any distinction between rhetoric and dialectic, or between the enthymeme and the dialectical syllogism, based on the claim of one's being more logical than the other. As we can see from our previous discussion most of the contemporary sources cited a distinction which suggests, in one dimension or another, that the enthymeme was less complete or rigorous or consistent in its logical potential than the dialectical syllogism.

In order to avoid that error, I propose, with support from Aristotle, that both dialectic (and its syllogism) and rhetoric (and the enthymeme) are equally logical. Dialectic is a concise, controlled, and systematic process of reasoned discourse. Rhetoric, while still a process of reasoned discourse, is concise, controlled and systematic with respect to a different species of human interaction.
It is important that we understand that the species of interaction and the human correspondents which Aristotle refers to are not logically inferior, or even logically different. Rather, as Jebb puts it,

"Aristotle never assumes that the hearers of his rhetorician are as οἱ ἥρακτος, the cultivated few; on the other hand, he is apt to assume tacitly—and here his individual bent comes out—that his hearers are not the great surging crowds, the ἄθορος, but a body of persons with a decided, though imperfectly developed, preference for logic." 31

This "preference" for logic suggests that these hearers do not consider themselves to be inferior in their ability to reason logically. If such an inferiority were part of the hearers' self-concept, or of the speaker's concept of the hearer, both the enthymeme and the example would cease to be effective modes of persuasion. Moreover, any attempt at persuasion would be irrelevant since only coercion or diversion could be employed. What Jebb understands Aristotle to be saying is that the academic or social experience of the appropriate hearers of rhetoric is less conditioned by specific scholastic conceptual frameworks than that of the appropriate hearers of dialectic. Nowhere does Aristotle insist that all humanity may be divided into two classes: those capable only of dialectical instruction and those capable only of rhetorical persuasion. 32

It is easy to assume, from the distance of the twentieth century, that any dialectician could handle rhetoric, but not all rhetoricians could handle dialectic. Even this comforting distinction is shaken by a passage in the Topics in which Aristotle
includes, "intellectual training, casual encounters and the philosophical sciences, "among the uses of dialectic. 33 It is not, therefore, simply a matter of distinguishing between the logical and the less-than-logical man that distinguishes the interactors, but a matter of indicating the differences in their education—in their learned responses.

The different kinds of human interaction inherent to dialectic and rhetoric is imaginatively suggested by Zeno's metaphor of the closed fist (logic) and the open hand (rhetoric), which, as Howell asserts, explains "the preoccupation of logic with the tight discourses of the philosopher and the preoccupation of rhetoric with the more open discourses of orator and popularizer." 34

Both modes have a similar logical imperative, but this similarity is modified by the parties of the interaction. As Jebb states,

"It is quite true that, if we start from the conception of rhetoric as a branch of logic, the phantom of logic in rhetoric claims precedence over appeals to passion. But Aristotle does not sufficiently regard the question—What as a matter of experience is most persuasive with the more select hearers of rhetoric; but rhetoric is not for the more select; it is for the many, and with the many appeals to the passion will sometimes, perhaps usually, be more effective than the semblance of the syllogism." 35

It is now time to return to one of Aristotle’s earliest statements in the Rhetoric (Book I, chapter 2) delineating the different duties of dialectic and rhetoric.

"Dialectic does not construct its syllogisms out of any haphazard materials, such as the fancies of crazy
people, but out of materials that call discussion; and rhetoric, too draws upon the regular subjects of debate. The duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument or follow a long chain of reasoning." 36  italics mine

I, for one, am not willing to discount Aristotle's qualifying phrases in that description, for they seem to shift the emphasis from assumptions about the logical abilities of the auditors to indications that the hearers of the rhetorician do not have certain scholarly predispositions by which they can quickly catagorize the statements to which they are listening.

Therefore, the difference between the syllogism and the enthymeme is not one of the form of the statement, or the intelligence of the auditor, or the subject under discussion. Rather, the difference is based upon an assumption, made by Aristotle. This assumption implies that the auditor is less educated but not less intelligent. It is the lack of scholastic training which makes the rhetorical respondent susceptible to appeals to the passions, a form of persuasion distasteful to Aristotle. 37

This lack of educational background forces Aristotle to delineate certain criteria essential to the formation of the enthymeme. Aristotle says,

"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. Reasoning of the
former kind will necessarily be hard to follow owing to their length, for we assume an audience of untrained thinkers; those of the latter kind will fail to win assent because they are based on premises that are not generally admitted or believed." [italics mine]

Furthermore,

"... We must not carry its reasoning too far back, or the length of our argument will cause obscurity: Nor must we put in all the steps that lead to our conclusions, or we shall waste words in saying what is manifest. It is this simplicity that makes the uneducated more effective than the educated when addressing popular audiences--makes them, as the poets tell us, 'charm the crowd's ear more finely.' Educated men lay down broad general principles; uneducated men argue from common knowledge, and draw obvious conclusions." 39

These passages establish four characteristics of the enthymeme. First, that because of the nature of the respondents the enthymeme should be short, simple and to the point. Second, this can be accomplished by arguing from common knowledge and drawing obvious conclusions. Third, by relying on these generally believed and admitted premises the enthymeme may be stylistically modified, for it is unnecessary to say what the hearers already know. Fourth, this simplified and stylistically modified argument is more effective than the well developed and complicated arguments of the educated.

Therefore, it is the rational judge, untrained in the rigors of dialectical reasoning, yet still demonstrating a preference for sound, logical, reasoning, who determines the essential characteristics of the enthymeme. The enthymeme cannot, in any manner, be considered to have any inherent structural or logical deficiencies. By establishing a functional foundation
for the analysis of the enthymeme we can more readily understand why Aristotle attaches such a high degree of importance to the enthymeme.

I believe, the analysis which this paper encompasses establishes such a foundation. By viewing the enthymeme through the eyes of the respondent for which it was designed a clear, consistent, conceptualization of its essential characteristics can be formulated.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the enthymeme has four essential characteristics:

(1) It must be short, simple, and to the point.
(2) To accomplish this, the rhetorician must make use of common knowledge and draw obvious conclusions.
(3) Since one is arguing from propositions the auditor is already familiar with, the enthymeme may be stylistically modified.
(4) This simplified and stylistically modified argument has greater persuasive impact than the arguments developed by the educated man.

These characteristics are predicated upon an assumption (made by Aristotle and with which I concur) that the rhetorical respondent, while untrained in the assessment of arguments, still has an innate understanding and preference for sound reasoning. Thus, we have Aristotle developing a rational argument for a rational judge.
FOOTNOTES


4. De Quincey, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, p. 90


8. McBurney, 68.

9. There are those, including myself, who believe the enthymeme to be in no way formally deficient. For further explanation of this position refer to: Charles Mudd, "The Enthymeme and Logical Validity," *QJS*, XLV (December, 1959), 409-414.


15. Sitzer, 409.
22. Mudd, 410.


24. Cronkite, 133-134.


32. In fact the opposite is suggested, "Again, the persuasion exerted by rhetorical arguments is in principle the same, since they use either example, a kind of induction, or enthymeme, a form of syllogism." *Analytica Posteriora* 71a 7-10.


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