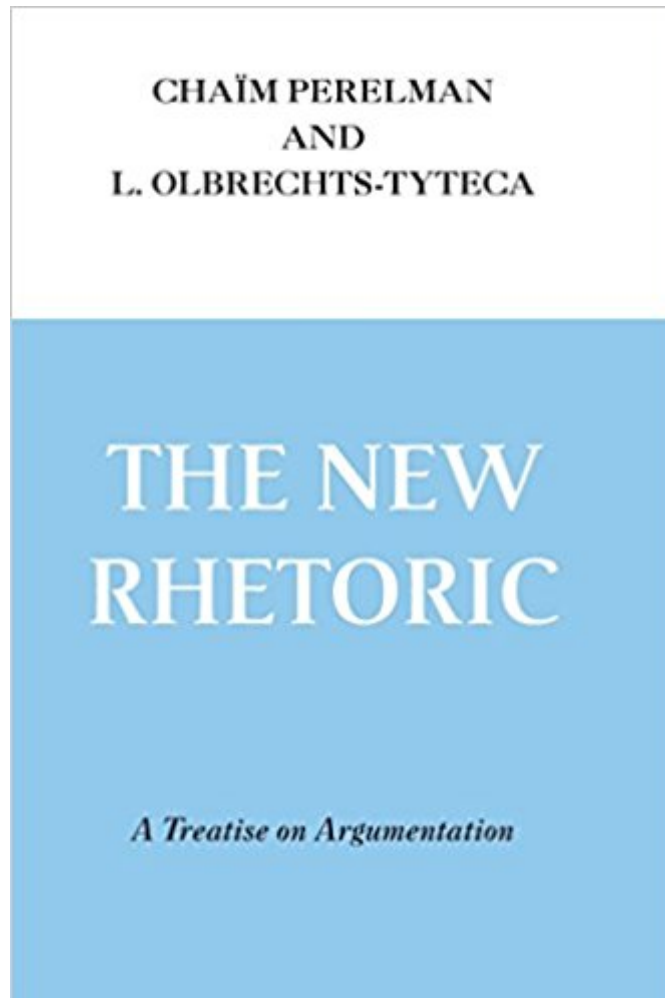




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# The New Rhetoric: A Treatise On Argumentation



## 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 Chaim 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"It is difficult to see how any rhetorician, rhetorical critic, logician interested in verbal logic, or student of either philosophical or popular argument can claim full competence without familiarity with this work. It challenges the orthodoxies of all and suggests fresh modes of inquiry to all." *—The Quarterly Journal of Speech* "[A] readable English translation of this highly influential work in which Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out historical and systematic inadequacies in much of contemporary logic and methodology." *—The Review of Metaphysics* "An important work representing the recent increase of interest in rhetorical studies among Continental scholars. . . The interest of philosophers of the rank of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in rhetoric marks a significant break from the influence of Ramus and Descartes upon Western philosophy's concept of reason and reasoning. An important work, highly recommended." *—Choice*, March 1970 "One of the best features of the book is that the authors have not merely described kinds of argument used in persuasive discourse, but have constantly shown how such arguments

can be countered – and not merely by one’s saying ‘but that doesn’t follow logically’. Even if we abandon the slogan ‘deductive or defective’; we are not required to abandon all criticism of nondeductive arguments. The non-logical has its own logic.”

– Mind, October 1971 “An important book, which should initiate re-estimation of the importance of a liberal art central to antiquity and the Renaissance, latterly eclipsed by the . . . logic of science and mathematics. . . . Dealing primarily with the written word, the authors analyze the constant and the variables in all argumentation, whether addressed to a universal audience or to one’s self. Perelman claims that this work marks a break with a concept of reason which has dominated Western thought for three centuries. In 550 pages, he makes a good case for the claim.”

– The Key Reporter, Autumn 1970

Chaim Perelman (1912–1984), a Polish-born philosopher of law, studied, taught, and lived most of his life in Brussels. He became the youngest full professor in the history of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, where he remained for the rest of his career. He was among the most important argumentation theorists of the twentieth century. *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, written with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca in 1958, and translated into English by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver in 1969, is his chief work. He is also the author of *The Realm of Rhetoric* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1982). (L. is for Lucie) L. Olbrechts-Tyteca (1899–1987) was a Belgian academic and longtime co-worker of Chaim Perelman. She volunteered in 1948 to support Perelman’s work and developed several aspects of the New Rhetoric independently in later years.

Originally trained in Philosophy of Law - one of the three branches of rhetoric, historically - Polish-born Chaim 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 Olbrechts-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 Rhetoric* - American scholar Kennedy’s *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition*

from Ancient to Modern Times— works, and a brilliant lexicon of sorts, to carry around everywhere you go. A 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 "The 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 applied to all areas of thinking anymore.

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