TOPOS AND THE RHETORIC OF PRAIRIE POETRY

BY

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Submitted to the
University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for a

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Department of English

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Abstract

A rhetorical analysis of twentieth-century prairie poetry in Canada rests on several assumptions: (1) rhetoric and poetics have a non-empty, significant intersection; (2) the rhetorical and poetical tradition bears on poetry written in this century and in this country; and (3) there is a prairie poetry which is amenable to rhetorical analysis. These assumptions are also the major findings of this study.

But the study itself is motivated by re-thinking the critical cliche that prairie poetry is dominated by a sense of place. Rhetoric's traditional treatment of literal "place" as a *topos* is the basis of a method of rhetorical analysis developed in Part 1 and applied in Part 2.

Part 1 surveys the relevant tradition and concludes that (1) the figures function as topoi for the invention of style, and (2) the topoi and the figures share an iterative binary structure which is the basis of argumentation. Consequently, a *topos* is well-defined as a *partial ordering*: it is a binary relation <x,y> between two terms such that whenever <x,y> and <y,z> then also <x,z>.

Part 2 traces a chronology of topoi, especially but not only of the form <prairie,x> or <x,prairie>, in the work of five major and three minor Canadian prairie poets. It identifies the characteristic topoi and arguments of each poet and demonstrates that rhetoric functions as an heuristics of the composition and the reading of their work.

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Introduction

A rhetorical analysis of twentieth-century prairie poetry, such as this is, rests on several assumptions about which it is best to be clear. First, it assumes that rhetoric (the art of persuasion) and poetics (the art of mimetic production) have a non-empty and significant intersection. Secondly, it assumes that the whole rhetorical and poetical tradition has some bearing on poetry written in this century and in this country. Thirdly, it assumes that there is a coherent sense and a substantial body of prairie poetry which is amenable to rhetorical analysis.

These assumptions, though they necessarily function as presuppositions, are also the major findings of this study. But the study is motivated by a re-thinking of perhaps the single most obvious and certainly the most often remarked fact about prairie poetry: it is a writing dominated by a sense of place. What, then, is the rhetorical function of "place"? Rhetoric´s two-thousand-year-old answer, that literal "place" is an instance of a *topos*, seems at first either hopelessly muddled or superficially coy. In fact, this answer is the basis of a method of rhetorical analysis developed in Part 1 and applied in Part 2: a topos is a binary, transitive relation that is central to both the composition and the reading of poetry; and prairie poetry is deeply informed by a topos of place.

Part 1 surveys the relevant tradition, beginning with Aristotle. According to The Rhetoric, a (rhetorical) topos, for example, the greater and the lesser, is a structure embracing a large number of enthymemes or rhetorical syllogisms. This observation reflects a conception of rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic with its emphasis on logos, one of the three modes of persuasion (ethos and pathos being the other two). Under this conception, the topoi are used to invent the matter and manner of arguments for persuasion by the spoken and written word. Despite the artless clarity of Aristotle´s observation, the nature of the topos is obscured as much by its ubiquity in his work as by the absence of any careful definition. Besides the four topoi common to all oratory, Aristotle provides a list of twenty-eight valid topoi and a distinction between special and general topoi. As if this were not enough, two concepts (predicables and predicaments, later called logical topics) related to yet distinct from the notion of topos are introduced in Topics and Categories. Finally, the centre-piece of rhetorical style, the metaphor, seems to function as a place where the good (that is, persuasive) style can be invented, a suggestion that is supported by the treatment of style in The Poetics.

Roman contributions to the notion of topos do not clarify its nature. Cicero´s list of sixteen basic topoi (De Oratore) freely combines logical and rhetorical topoi, and

the location of topos in stasis rather than in logos represents a diminution of Aristotle´s more general concept. Regarding style, however, the Romans go much further than the Greeks by providing an extended classification of the tropes and the figures. These lists are places where the several styles may be invented. Indeed, the high, middle, and low styles are defined by the frequency and kinds of tropes and figures used; and Aristotle´s three modes of persuasion are restated as the aims of the orator and linked to the three styles. This development, an instance of the Roman notion that all oratory is one despite the five divisions of rhetoric, presages the emergence of the figure as a topos of style.

The classical notion of topos is therefore as useful as it is imprecise. If function (for example, invention) is an important part of definition, then the figures deserve to be considered as topoi of style. In the Middle Ages, two rhetorical poetics do indeed treat the figures in just such a way. Geoffrey de Vinsauf (Poetria Nova) applies rhetoric to the composition of poetry, devoting most of his treatise to the role of the figures in inventing style; Dante (De Vulgari Eloquentia) applies rhetoric to the vernacular, effectively enlarging the list of places where style may be invented. Both works suggest that the significance of topos for literature is shifting from argument (logos) to style (lexis).

Style literally constitutes the rhetoric of English poetry in the Renaissance. Erasmus (De Copia) teaches that style includes manner (the figures) and matter (the topoi). Thomas Wilson (The Arte of Rhetorique) gives a separate yet functionally similar treatment of the classical doctrines of invention (the topoi) and style (the figures). Peter Ramus reduces the topoi to ten, removes them from rhetoric to logic, and leaves rhetoric (apparently) only style. But Ramistic rhetoricians (Fraunce, for example) base the tropes on Ramus´s ten (logical) topoi, and the famous "method" is more rhetorical than logical. Manuals of figures (such as Peacham´s The Garden of Eloquence) which include nearly all of the classical topoi show that style has become (by synecdoche) the whole of rhetoric. And a new element, the imagination, is treated in rhetorical terms: Sidney´s Apologia emphasizes the poet´s imaginative invention, Bacon´s De Augmentio Scientarium links reason to the imagination by way of rhetoric.

If stylistic rhetoric is the first "new" rhetoric, it is hardly the last. Locke´s empirical philosophy (An Essay Concerning Human Understanding) initially had little effect on the rhetoric of poetry, but it did provide the stimulus for a second "new" rhetoric in the eighteenth century. George Campbell´s A Philosophy of Rhetoric recovers much of Aristotelian rhetoric by founding it on empiricism. Campbell does not treat the topoi as such, but he does discuss fully

the rhetorical triad, ethos / pathos /logos. He emphasizes pathos--for example, to explain the power of the tropes to affect the imagination of the reader or hearer, Campbell introduces a notion of vivacity of language derived from Locke´s philosophy of ideas. Imagination is a favourite eighteenth-century notion, and Romantic poetics fashions out of it a new figural topos. For both Wordsworth and Coleridge, the imagination is the creating faculty (genius) of the poet, manifested in language, and appealing to a similar appreciating faculty (taste) in the audience. But they differ in their understanding of how this faculty is manifested in language: Wordsworth locates the imagination in metaphor ("Preface" to Lyrical Ballads); Coleridge introduces a new figural topos, the symbol, defining it, the poet, and the poem in similar rhetorical terms (Statesman´s Manual, Biograpia Literaria). The ensuing so-called collapse of the rhetoric of poetry rests in part on the inability of rhetoric to account for the symbol.

Twentieth-century rhetoric consists of three related strands: the rhetoric of the figure, the rhetoric of language, and rhetoric proper. The work of Richards (The Philosophy of Rhetoric) and Ricoeur (The Rule of Metaphor) shows that the rhetoric of the figure priorizes metaphor. Though it fails to account for the dominant role of the symbol in twentieth-century poetry (despite some advances made by the New Critics), the rhetoric of the figure does

establish that all the classical figures are signs in the Saussurean sense (Group Mu A General Rhetoric; an immediate consequence of Group Mu´s work is that the Saussurean sign is also a figure).

The rhetoric of language, that is, the somewhat fuller reformulation of classical rhetoric in semiotic terms, derives in part from Saussurean linguistics. The work of Barthes (The Pleasure of the Text) and Derrida (Of Grammatology) demonstrates that the instability of the sign (= signified + signifier) means that the presence of author (ethos) and reader (pathos) can never be eradicated from the text (logos). The semiotics of C. S. Peirce, a second source of the rhetoric of language, offers a broader if more difficult notion of the sign which incorporates rather than eliminates the rhetorical triad (Collected Papers Vol. 2). Peirce´s concept of the sign, for example, accounts for the semiotic nature and the persuasive power of the literary symbol by iteration.

Rhetoric proper in the twentieth century is either classical rhetoric applied or classical rhetoric rethought. Corbett may be cited as an example of the former; Perelman is the major example of the latter. In his The New Rhetoric (co-authored with Olbrecht-Tytteca) and The New Rhetoric and the Humanities, Perelman returns us to the role of the topoi. According to Perelman, the Aristotelian topoi are very general premises shared by a speaker and his audience

(for example, the greater and the lesser). Each topos is a preference, a simple binary ranking according to some value ("greater than" means "preferred with respect to some criterion") which allows argumentation to proceed. These topoi may themselves be further grouped into pairs (for example, topoi of quantity versus topoi of quality) which again function as more generalized topoi in that they too are binary rankings based on preferred values.

This survey of topos suggests first of all that the figures function as topoi for the invention of style; and secondly, that all topoi as well as the figures share an underlying binary structure which is successively applicable. Such binary relations are called partial orderings and are familiar to students of (mathematical) logic. Recent researches in category theory have used a generalized partial ordering, called a topos, to provide a foundation for logic (Goldblatt Topoi: A Categorial Investigation of Logic). These considerations motivate a definition of rhetorical topos:

> A topos is a binary relation $\langle x,y \rangle$ that is transitive, that is, such that whenever $\langle x,y \rangle$ and $\langle y,z \rangle$ then $\langle x,z \rangle$.

That all the classical topoi as well as the figures (including the symbol) are topoi in the sense of the

definition can be demonstrated. Besides capturing the essence of traditional notions of topos and figure, this definition provides a simple and flexible tool for rhetorical analysis.

Part 2 of this study comprises an analysis which traces the chronology of topoi, especially but not exclusively of the form <prairie,x> or <x,prairie>, in prairie poetry. These topoi are relations between a place (the prairie) and the things (persons, deeds, objects) associated with or belonging to that place; values and attributes of place transfer to the things associated with it. In the work of Dorothy Livesay, the topos <woman,land> emerges from the early poetry of the thirties as a consequence of topoi such as <woman,x> and <x,prairie> (x is variously wind, rain, bird, flower, earth, and so on). This topos ultimately finds clear expression in the metaphor "I am mainland." One of the major attributes of the prairie that transfers readily to woman is its Dionysian quality, a quality that leads eventually to a rejection of the male. The male is usually figured by the (Apollonian) sun or by a consequence of its absence, ice. When the topos <woman,ice-melter> appears, it represents the female´s usurpation of the male´s role as well as her ability to prevent the coming ice-age occasioned by the failure of man. The rejection of the male is completed by the topos <woman,woman> in the later poems. Thus, the sequence of major topoi, <woman,land>, <woman,ice-

melter>, and <woman,woman> may be said to describe Livesay's female rhetoric.

Miriam Waddington, whose writing career begins in the forties, employs chiefly a "topos of transformation," that is, she uses figures of transformation to deliver themes of transformation. The sequence (1) <prairie,colour>, (2) <colour,*pictura*>, (3) <*pictura*,*poeisis*>, for example, describes the topoi (1) used in an early poem as well as the rhetorical pointing (2 and 3) of a set of ekphrastic poems. This rhetorical consciousness culminates in a later poem which explicitly uses the topoi <experience,x> and <x,colour> to express transformation (birth, life, death) in an array of the colours (red, blue, yellow) of rhetoric. The theme of transformation is rendered also by such symbols as <water,->, <trumpet,->, and the literal signs of language, <x,->. A particularly powerful transformation is effected by the topos <male,female>, representing the interpenetration of the anima and the animus within any individual psyche.

Eli Mandel might be called a poet of the imagined place. In the fifties, Mandel writes a straightforward landscape poetry infused with references to mythology and based on topoi such as <prairie,grammar>. As Mandel increasingly adopts the resources of rhetoric, this topos is replaced by <prairie,rhetoric>. The question, how to turn place into poetry, receives its fullest answer in a "tree of place" constructed out of the "double" topoi, <place,A/B>

and <"out of",A/B>, in which A/B is a doubling of or pun on the meaning of the first term. In particular, the most important "place" for Mandel is the double itself, a kind of tension between the literal and the imagined, neither of which can exist without the other. Not surprisingly, Mandel is the first writer here studied to consciously employ a double persona, <writer,rhetorical/serious>.

The most "prairie" of all prairie poets considered in this study is undoubtedly John Newlove. From his earliest work (the sixties) to his most recent, Newlove´s major topos, <prairie,x>, collects hundreds of references to the objects, persons, and deeds associated with this place. <Prairie,x> functions also as a symbol whose values include the imagination (of home, escape, and return) and the poet himself. The topoi <prairie,singer>, <prairie,nomad>, and <prairie,tree> are significant stages in the development of Newlove´s "prairie" persona. The last of these, <prairie,tree>, is part of an extended topical argument that establishes <prairie,garden>.

Robert Kroetsch´s poetry (beginning in the seventies) is a continuing argument against the law of the excluded middle. This argument uses a topos based on paradox, <x,not-x>, and a persona based on the derived topos, <_homo, rhetoricus/seriosus_>, to engage in a search for meaning. It concludes, in effect, that meaning is subject to the law of undecidability. Kroetsch moves steadily toward an extreme

reflexivity, expressed by <x,x>; in the latest poetry, <x,x> takes the form <woman,woman>. Though the topos <prairie,x> is present in the poetry, it is overwhelmed by paradox and persona.

Each of the five past decades (the thirties to the seventies) therefore introduces a major prairie poet, all of whom are still writing today (the eighties). These five poets constitute the core of an an extended first generation of prairie poetry; a second generation begins writing in the seventies and achieves its maturity in the present decade. Three of these newer poets represent both a continuing tradition and a new departure.

Andrew Suknaski makes his debut in the seventies with a very specialized application of the topos <prairie,x>: "prairie" is Wood Mountain, and "x" is the people, the times, the stories, or the language of that place. Two of these second terms (language and time) point, respectively, to Suknaski´s earlier and later concerns. Time, for example, is figured in the later poetry by direct reference, by a topos of repetition (<time,x>), and by the fusion of two images (a wheel and an arrow). Suknaski therefore writes chiefly in the tradition of Mandel and Newlove.

Douglas Barbour, on the other hand, locates himself in the tradition of Waddington and Kroetsch. His affinity with Waddington is seen in his deliberate, pointed use of *ekphrasis* based on the topos <sight,speech>, or, more

precisely, on the topos <painted image,verbal image>. This topos leads him to explore others, namely, <verbal -,sound image>, <sensation,word>, and <sound,word>. Such reflexivity is reminiscient of Kroetsch, but Barbour´s concerns are narrower and technical rather than philosophical.

Patrick Friesen, like Suknaski, begins his career as an ethnic poet, but his earlier topos, <prairie,x>, is replaced in the most recent poems by symbolism and a severe irony. The symbol <light,x> traditionally signifies knowledge; <room,x> symbolizes the female; Friesen uses these two symbols to denote illusion and entrapment, thereby mocking his narrator´s self-portrayal as a holy fool of love. The author´s rhetoric of conviction and mockery contrasts sharply with the narrator´s misplaced reliance on conviction alone.

The presuppositions of this study are, I hope, borne out by its conclusions. The intersection of rhetoric and poetics includes the topoi of invention of both argument and style, leading to a simple yet useful definition of _topos_. This definition, applied systematically to a body of contemporary poetry, shows that rhetoric does indeed continue to function as an heuristics of composition and reading. Furthermore, the actual topoi discovered in the poetry, ranging as they do over a long and living tradition, demonstrate that this poetry is both substantial and rhetorical.

Part 1: Topos

1.1 Greek Topos

The word _topos_ means place (F. E. Peters, _Greek Philosophical Terms_ 1967 197). Aristotle´s "innermost motionless boundary of what contains [a thing]" (_Physics_ IV, 212a) is obviously _physical_ topos, but he had also a notion of _natural_ topos (for example, the natural place of fire, which is derived from absolute lightness, is above us, _On the Heavens_ IV, 310a-311b), and, more significantly for a literary study, a notion of _logical_ topos (unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from the _The Complete Works of Aristotle_, Revised Oxford Translation, 2 vols., 1984, edited by Jonathan Barnes). In its most general conception, a logical topos is an aspect of the formal cause of a thing: "the form or the archetype, i.e. the definition of the essence, and its genera, are called causes (...), and the parts in the definition" (_Physics_ II, 194b25-30). More precisely, the logical topoi are the predicables and predicaments treated in the _Categories_ and _Topics_. Thus, the four predicables (definition, property, genus, accident) are distinguished linguistic elements or signifiers from which all propositions are formed (_Topics_ 101b15-25); the ten predicaments (what a thing is, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, activity, passivity) are

categories of signification in which the predicables fall (Topics 103b20-30, Categories 1b25 ff.).

It will be helpful, in view of the long-standing difficulties in distinguishing between predicables and predicaments, to quote Aristotle's explications of each. First, the predicables:

> For every predicate of a subject must of necessity be either convertible with its subject or not; and if it is convertible, it would be its definition or property, for if it signifies the essence, it is definition; if not, it is a property..... If, on the other hand, it is not predicated convertibly of the thing, it either is or is not one of the terms contained in the definition of the subject; and if it is one of those terms, then it will be the genus or the differentia; whereas, if it is not one of those terms, clearly it would be an accident... (Topics 103b5-20).

Second, the predicaments (categories):

> Of things said without any combination, each signifies either substance [e.g., man, horse] or quantity [four-foot] or qualification [white, grammatical] or relative [double, half, larger] or where or when or being-in-a-position or having or doing or being-affected (Categories 1b25 ff.).

Third, the relations between predicables and predicaments:

> Next, then, we must distinguish between the categories of predication in which the four abovementioned [predicables] are found. These are ten in number: What a thing is, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Place, Time, Position, State, Activity, Passivity. For the accident and genus and property and definition of any thing will always be in one of these predications; for all the propositions found through these [predicables] signify either what something is or its quality or quantity or some one of the other types of predicate. It is clear, too, on the face of it that the man who signifies what something is signifies sometimes a substance, sometimes a quality, sometimes some one of the other types of predicate (Topics 103b20-30).

A simple statement of the nature of the predicables and the predicaments seems therefore to be this: the predicables are the four basic types of predicates useful for generating propositions about things; the predicaments are categories or types of predicates useful for signifying the nature of things. Both are in fact classifications of predicates, but from different perspectives: for the former, the perspective of the signifier; for the latter, the perspective of the signified. For this reason, and because later rhetoricians (e.g., Thomas Wilson) referred to them as such, the predicables and the predicaments may be called logical topoi. They are, literally, places where predicates may be found (see also Ochs 197).

The most important notion of topos, however, for literary analysis, is <u>rhetorical</u> place. This notion is introduced somewhat casually (implying therefore its treatment elsewhere in the canon) in <u>The Rhetoric</u>:

> ...the proper subjects of dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms are the things with which we say the commonplaces are concerned, that is to say those that apply equally to questions of right conduct, natural science, politics, and many other things that have nothing to do with one another (1358a10-15).

Immediately following this statement is an example of such a commonplace or topos, namely, that concerned with "the more or less" (1358a15). A few lines further, Aristotle identifies "the special commonplaces which are based on such

propositions as apply only to particular groups or classes of things" such as the examples (right conduct, natural science, et cetera) listed above (1358a17 ff.). On the other hand, "The general commonplaces have no special subject-matter and therefore will not increase our understanding of any particular class of things" (1358a20). Finally, "we must distinguish, in dealing with enthymemes, the kinds and the commonplaces on which they are founded. By kinds I mean the propositions peculiar to each several class of things, by commonplaces those common to all classes alike" (1358a30).

This passage (as it appears in the earlier, not the revised) translation is the source of the much-debated distinctions between particular and general topics, or between material and formal topics, or between particular and common places (see Ryan Chapter 2 and Grimaldi for a full discussion of the debate). Without engaging in that debate, one can nevertheless observe that, whatever they are, the topoi exist in degrees of generality (or, equivalently, specialization) and that they are the stuff out of which enthymemes are made. Aristotle's further discussion of topos emphasizes the latter: (1) the topoi are "embodied" in enthymemes (1395b20); (2) the topoi are the "elements" of enthymemes (1396b20); (3) "an element is a commonplace [topos] embracing a large number of enthymemes" (1403a18).

Again, it will be helpful to describe the topoi listed

in The Rhetoric. First, under the rubric of "arguments common to all oratory," four topoi are given (1392a5-1393a20):

(1) "Greatness and Smallness";
(2) "Possible and the Impossible";
(3) "Past Fact";
(4) "Future Fact".

Second, the enumeration of twenty-eight valid topoi (1397a5-1400b35) may be summarized as follows (Lanham Handlist 107-109):

(1) Restate your contention in an opposite way.
(2) Redefine a key term.
(3) Use a correlative idea.
(4) Argue *a fortiori*.
(5) Argue from the past.
(6) Turn an accusation against an accuser.
(7) Define your terms favourably.
(8) Play upon various senses of a word.
(9) Divide your argument into its logical parts.
(10) Argue from induction.
(11) Argue from authority.
(12) Argue your contention part by part.
(13) Argue from consequences.
(14) Invert your opponent´s arguments.
(15) Argue from appearance or its opposite.
(16) Argue from logical consequences.
(17) Argue that the same results imply the same causes.
(18) Argue from the earlier to the later.
(19) Substitute possible for actual motives.
(20) Use general motives to argue individual motives.
(21) Argue that the truth of a greater improbability implies the truth of a lesser.
(22) Use an opponent´s inaccuracies and self-contradicition.
(23) Refute slander by reviewing the facts.
(24) Prove effect by showing cause.
(25) Argue that failure to use one´s best argument shows trustful innocence.
(26) Disprove an action by showing it inconsistent with earlier actions.
(27) Earlier mistakes excuse or explain present ones.
(28) Play on the meanings of names.

Some commentators feel that these twenty-eight topoi

are the detailed working out of the first four given above (Corbett). Others feel that they fall into three inferential patterns: antecedent-consequent or cause-effect, more-less, some form of relation (Grimaldi). More recently, Ryan has argued convincingly that the topoi are the underlying structures of the enthymemes (48-49). There seems to be a consensus that both the first four and the latter twenty-eight are general topoi and have a formal rather than material nature. Thus, Grimaldi in his concluding summary says that the general topics are "forms of inference into which syllogistic, or enthymematic, reasoning naturally falls. As modes of reasoning, they may be used for the [particular topics] of various subjects which specifically differ..., and when they are applied to the [particular topics] they effect syllogistic or enthymematic argumentation" (Grimaldi 186). Others hold that "the rhetorical topics do not constitute a logical system of invention" (Ochs 195).

The special (particular, material) topoi are not listed in The Rhetoric for obvious reasons. Aristotle holds that these topoi belong not to rhetoric but to the other sciences (1358a), yet he refers to and uses them constantly. For example, in his discussion of epideictic oratory (Book I Chapter 9), he analyzes the objects of praise and blame (excellence and vice, the noble and the base) by defining his terms, establishing the relations between them (e.g.,

excellence is a noble thing), determining the parts and the effects of excellence, listing the kinds of noble acts, and so on (1366a25 ff.). Aristotle is using several topics (definition, relation, division, effect, and so on) to determine the "aspects of the subject," to set out the content of the discussion. These topics are drawn from both the logical and the rhetorical topoi (as I have used these terms); yet, the topics are not used to argue a point but to generate the material for possible argument. As Grimaldi says, "particular topics are concerned with the specific content and meaning of the subject under discussion. They enable one to acquire the factual information pertinent to the matter which in turn permits one to make intelligent statement upon the subject" (186).

The topoi occupy a central position in Aristotle's concept of rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 1355b25). Persuasion for Aristotle means argumentation, and "the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word" are of three kinds: "The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself" (*Rhetoric* 1356a1-5). These three kinds (of modes or means of persuasion) are commonly known as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*; and the terms mean both the bases of persuasion (character

of the speaker, frame of mind of the audience, proof provided in words) and the techniques of using these bases to persuade (Lanham Handlist 1969 46, 74, 107). The topoi are used to invent both the matter and the form of logos, as Grimaldi´s analysis (above) corroborates: insofar as persuasion is logos, it is enthymematic argumentation; insofar as it is enthymematic argumentation, it is generated by the topoi (Rhetoric, Book II, Chapters 19-26). But the relation between topos and the other two modes of persuasion is equally close. Ethos and pathos are treated in the first seventeen chapters of the second book of the Rhetoric; the topoi are enumerated only in the remaining chapters (19 to 26) which deal with logos. Yet, the discussion of pathos uses the topoi to set out the facts about the emotions and advocates the topoi as ways of appealing to the emotions: "It is now plain that when you wish to calm others you must draw upon these commonplaces" (1380b30). Similarly, the discussion of ethos sets forth the nature and types of "character" by using the topoi and is immediately followed by a discussion of the four topoi common to all oratory (1392b29). Evidently, the cornerstone of Aristotle´s conception of rhetoric is logos, and the topoi are themselves situated in this cornerstone. At the same time, logos and, a fortiori, topos are also considered not only in themselves but in relation to ethos and pathos.

Although the organizing principle of The Rhetoric is