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Loss and Recovery of 'Substance' in Greco-Roman Rhetoric

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Abstract

This article attempts to delineate the Greco-Roman history of rhetoric in light of the concept of 'substance'. It examines how Greco-Roman Rhetoric, while traveling from Plato to Aristotle to Cicero to Quintilian, encounters debates and dialogues regarding the issues of essence, meaning, and purpose of rhetoric. Therefore, this article does a qualitative textual analysis of five texts: Phaedrus/Gorgias *by Plato (2002, 1864),* On Rhetoric *by Aristotle (n.d.),* Oratory and Orators *by Cicero (1875), and* Institutio Oratoria *by Quintilian (2013). In order to unravel the journey of Greco-Roman rhetorical substance, these texts have been analysed and interpreted from three different points of view: substance in rhetoric/oratory, substance in the language of rhetoric/oratory, and substance in rhetoricians/rhetor/orator. The article concludes that in the history of Greco-Roman rhetoric, Plato nullifies substance, Aristotle adds substance, Cicero amplifies substance, and Quintilian multiplies substance. The article not only tracks the history of Greco-Roman rhetoric from the perspective of substance but also opens new avenues for further research.*

Keywords: classical rhetoric, rhetoricians, substance, knowledge, language

1. Introduction

> "Writers of rhetorical manuals are scoundrels who disguise the fact that they are perfectly knowledgeable." ~Plato
>
> "Art consists in perceptions agreeing and cooperating to the achievement of some useful end, we shall be able to show that rhetoric lacks none of these characteristics." ~Quintilian

The debates on rhetoric necessarily raise the issues of language use and knowledge. It has been stated that "the questions of language and knowledge raised by classical rhetoricians were never to be put to rest" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 2). This article is an attempt to trace the language-and-knowledge issue raised in classical rhetoric in light of rhetorical 'substance'. To be more specific, the article is about the trajectory of the Greco-Roman rhetoric which travels with the debates on the issue of 'substance'. The term 'substance' corresponding to the Greek *ousia* and Latin *substantia*, means some

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"foundational or fundamental entities" (Robinson, 2018). In this sense, substance, in the context of this article, means the fundamental meaning, essence, and purpose. The primary authors and their texts discussed in this paper are Plato (*Phaedrus and Gorgias*), Aristotle (*On Rhetoric*), Cicero (*Oratory and Orators*), and Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*). The discussion is based on the thematic weaving of these texts in terms of their arguments about the substance of rhetoric or oratory per se, the substance in the language of rhetoric or oratory, and the substance in rhetoricians or orators. The entire article concludes with a synthesized assertion— if Plato nullifies the substance of rhetoric, Aristotle adds it, Cicero amplifies it, and Quintilian multiplies it.

This article has some limitations, delimitations, and use of terminologies. The limitation of this articles is evident in the number of the selected texts. That is, this article is entirely based on *Phaedrus and Gorgias*, *On Rhetoric, Oratory and Orators, Institutio Oratoria*. The rationale behind the selection of these text relies on the principle that, besides Plato's criticism against false rhetoric, classical rhetoric is the totality of "Aristotle's system, and its elaboration by Cicero and Quintilian" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 2). Additionally, all these texts are the translated versions, and the article is based on the textual and thematic analysis of those translated texts. Seen in this light, the originality and authenticity of the translated texts can be questioned. I have also delimited this article by focusing solely on what the authors tell about the 'substance' of rhetoric in course of theorizing rhetoric. My focus is 'what the authors say' and 'what they mean' about substance in rhetoric rather than 'why and how they say so'. In other words, this article primarily attempts to expose how the 'loss' of substance in rhetoric in the hands of Plato gradually gets 'recovered' when it reaches to the hands of Quintilian. The paper uses some key terms in its own context where 'substance' means the 'essence', and 'meaning' as footnoted by E. M. Cope while translating Plato's *Gorgias* (1864, p. 42). Likewise, the terms 'rhetoric' and 'oratory' have been used interchangeably; the same is the case with the use of the terms 'rhetoricians', 'rhetors', and 'orators.'

Structurally, the article has been divided into five sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, discussion, and conclusion. Having the introduction here, what follows next is literature review that is further followed by methodology. The discussion, which engages us in the core arguments of the article in three sub-sections, is followed by conclusion that sums up the entire discussion.

Literature Review

Study and interpretation of rhetoric evident in Plato (*Phaedrus and Gorgias*), Aristotle (*On Rhetoric*), Cicero (*Oratory and Orators*), and Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*) is by

no means a new topic of exploration. It is because "the fundamental concerns of rhetoric in all ages appear to be those defined in the classical period" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 7). Even though there are ample discussions on classical concepts on rhetoric, texts and authors, for literature-review purpose, I planned to select an article for a text. The logic behind selecting this is that the selected article represents the argument of many other articles, and it is also relevant to the discussion made in this article.

One who goes through the history of Greek rhetoric can easily find that Plato is against 'rhetoric'; he creates the binary between philosophy and rhetoric. Plato (1864), in *Gorgias*, questions rhetoric for being unrealistic and meaningless: "The *Gorgias* dialogue is widely recognized as the source of Plato's harshest condemnation of rhetoric", where he takes rhetoric as "distanced from being and reality" (Reames, 2016, p. 75). Likewise, Plato's views on rhetoric in *Phaedrus* was also very degrading. The main concern of Plato (2002) in his *Phaedrus* is persuasion, and he accepts that persuasion is powerful in changing the mindsets of people. However, for Plato, rhetors or orators such as sophists "were merely interested in persuading the audience, regardless of whether the recommended course of action was good" by "valuing persuasion above truth" (Werner, 2010, p. 25). Thus, Plato viewed rhetoric getting detached from substance, that is truth and reality. Aristotle's (n.d.) *On Rhetoric* has drawn the attention of many critics. In the history of Greek rhetoric, it is also self-evident that Aristotle's discussion on rhetoric opposes Platonic views because, unlike Plato's emphasis on pathos (emotions), Aristotle takes rhetoric as the combination of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotions) and logos (logic), and takes rhetoric as a part of epistemology/knowledge (Meyer, 2012). The Greek debates and dialogues on rhetoric continue in Roman period too. In this transition from Greek to Rome, Cicero's (1875) definition of an oratory and orators has been one of the topics of discussion in the history of the Classical rhetoric. It has been argued that Cicero's ideal orator "should be educated so widely and thoroughly" in the legal and philosophical dialogues by exteriorizing "the voice for philosophical wisdom in the public practice of politics" (Stem, 2006, p. 209). In the same way, Quintilian's view of rhetoric, has been taken as s significant juncture in the history of rhetoric. Quintilian's (2013) oratory, as theorized in *Institutio Oratorio,* is a moral philosophy of good man speaking well rather than rhetoric per se (Walzer, 2006).

Thus, the review shows that discussion on the history of rhetoric in Greco-Roman period has been discussed from various perspectives. This article attempts to engage on the debates and arguments regarding the historical transitions in Greco-Roman period. The article is in alignment with those scholarly discussions because it does not completely differ from their argument. Most of the discussions on Greco-Roman rhetoric have been

focused on individual texts and authors; they do not study rhetoric from a comparative perspective. Therefore, this article revolves around the concept of 'substance' in the Greco-Roman rhetoric and tracks how 'substance' has been extracted off and filled in Greco-Roman rhetoric when it travels from Plato to Quintilian. Hence, the concept of 'substance' and 'comparative perspective' are the defining features which justify the space of this article in the domain of Greco-Roman rhetoric.

2. Methodology

This article is a qualitative study. As a qualitative study, the study has been shaped by the researcher's philosophical stance. Ontologically, this article is inclined to social constructivism. Social constructivism takes knowledge, realities, and meanings as the socio-cultural and institutional constructs (Hay, 2016). This article takes the concept of substance, rhetoric, and even philosophy as the social and institutional constructions in the Greco-Roman period and unpacks how those constructions undergo some changes from Plato to Aristotle to Cicero to Quintilian. Epistemologically, the article is based on interpretivism. Owing to the ontological assumption of social construction and challenging the positivist claims on objective and empirically verifiable knowledge, interpretivism takes knowledge and meaning as an outcome of social interaction that is "subjective, and built according to experiences. . . embedded within a given culture, along with "inevitable alterations in such interpretations that accompany the dynamic nature of social reality" (Irshaidat, 2022, p. 142). Similarly, utilizing textual and thematic analysis as methodology, this article explores some pertinent topics, ideas, patterns, or themes occurring in the texts and generalizes meanings drawing upon those textual evidence (Hawkins, 2018). The primary texts being analysed in this article are *Phaedrus and Gorgias* by Plato, *On Rhetoric* by Aristotle, *Oratory and Orators* by Cicero, and *Institutio Oratoria* by Quintilian. The logic behind the selection of these texts is that they show how the history of rhetoric went through some crucial debates in the Greco-Roman period regarding its meaning, purpose, content, the 'substance' in totality. By the same logic, in this article, the analysis and interpretation of these texts have been done from the thematic perspective of 'substance'.

3. Discussion

This section reflects upon the Greco-Roman debate on the 'substance' of rhetoric. The section has been divided into three sub-sections discussing on substance of rhetoric/oratory, substance in the language of rhetoric/oratory, and substance in rhetoricians/orators.

Substance in Rhetoric/Oratory

The debate on Greco-Roman rhetoric from Plato to Quintilian revolves around the issue of substance. The concept of substance appears in the way Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian define rhetoric and oratory.

Plato does not see any substance or essence in rhetoric. For him, "rhetoric has no subject matter of its own" (Murphy, Hoppmann & Katula, 2014, p. 33). Plato (2002) in *Phaedrus*, argues that rhetorical expertise means an absence of knowledge and truth. It is only the outcome of the language action of a person "who doesn't know the truth but has restricted his research to opinions" (p. 50). It means, rhetoric, in Platonic philosophy does not work with truths, and ideas but with opinions, and emotions. It is not guided by reason, rationality, and logic. Hence, rhetoric is the domain of unproved opinions but not the ultimate truth for Plato. Moreover, rhetoric for Plato cannot become systemic and logical knowledge because it absolutely relies on "a ridiculously unsystematic form of rhetorical expertise" (p. 50). In fact, Plato ridicules the expertise and knowledge of rhetoricians/rhetors. In his anti-rhetoric extremity, Plato distinguishes between substantial dialectics and unsystematic or unsubstantial rhetoric. It is because rhetoricians, for him, are "ignorant of dialectic" (p. 60**).** In addition, Plato (1864), in *Gorgias*, writes that Rhetoric has no virtue: "I have been asking ever so long what the virtue of rhetoric can possibly be" (p. 16). Here, Plato avers that virtue is not the content and subject of rhetoric; it is empty. He further claims that rhetoric never contains any substance: "tell us in what the virtue of rhetoric really does consist of" (p. 22). It shows Plato's disdain against rhetoric and rhetoricians. According to Herrick (2009), Plato's *Gorgias* makes withering criticisms "against anyone [like Sophists] depending on rhetoric" (p. 58). Therefore, rhetoric, unlike dialectic, for Plato, contains neither knowledge nor truth or virtue. It lacks the substance to be called its own. According to Bizzell & Herzberg (2001), "Plato faults the Sophists for not using rhetoric to try to discover absolute truth" which had the possibility of forming a true rhetoric (p. 28). Moreover, Blamires (1991) argues that Plato's arguments dwell upon the "dichotomy between learning and inspiration, between what has intellectual validity and what is of mere aesthetic interest" (p. 5). Thus, rhetoric for Plato, is a matter of aesthetics and inspiration rather than rigorous intellectual and rational activity. It triggers some serious debates regarding the means and the end of rhetoric.

However, it is Aristotle (n.d.) in *On Rhetoric* who adds substance to rhetoric. Plato's binary between dialectic and rhetoric gets a sharp reply from Aristotle when he throws an opening salvo: "rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic" (p. 1). This statement goes in direct response to Plato's criticism against rhetoric as a counterpart to cookery in

Gorgias: "by asserting that rhetoric is the counterpart to the techne of dialectic, Aristotle answers his teacher's claim that rhetoric is a mere analogy to the knack of cookery" (Herrick, 2009, p. 79). Furthermore, when Aristotle takes rhetoric as discovery of available means of persuasion, rhetoric becomes a systematic investigation (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001). In the hand of Aristotle, Plato is unable to see what rhetoric consists of. Aristotle argues that philosophers like Plato have been debating on the non-essentials of rhetoric rather than something substantial because they "say nothing about enthymemes", which is the substance of rhetoric (p. 1). By enthymemes Aristotle means the body of proof, rhetorical proofs, or a kind of syllogism. Here, Aristotle snatches rhetoric from the hand of Plato and positivizes it as a more rational and logical discipline (Murphy, Hoppmann & Katula, 2014). Aristotle writes that rhetoric contains "science of logic", "ethical branch of politics" and "sophistical reasoning" (p. 8). Hence, unlike Plato, Aristotle brings logic, ethics, politics, and reasoning into the realm of rhetoric. Rhetoric, for him, aims at upholding truth and justice, information, argumentation, and self-defence from unjust attacks. (p. 33). Hence, Aristotle takes the "territory of rhetoric as practical and systematic art" (Herrick, 2009, p. 80). In other words, Aristotle adds logic, meaning, and substance to rhetoric. Therefore, Blamires (1991) rightly remarks: "Aristotle's bent is scientific, and he endows natural phenomena with a validity that Plato transferred to the timeless" (p.7). It means, for Aristotelian philosophy, validity matters more than eternity. Hence, Aristotle dismantles the Platonic arguments in the history of rhetoric, thereby accelerating the philosophy-versus-rhetoric discourse.

Moreover, if Aristotle adds substance in rhetoric, Cicero (1875) amplifies the substance of rhetoric/oratory. Plato (1864, 2002) castigated rhetoric as a mere play of empty words and opinions of the rhetoricians whereas Aristotle added logic and enthymeme in rhetoric. Cicero (1875) goes one step ahead than Aristotle in his *Oratory and Orators*. For him rhetoric or oratory strives "to include all knowledge of all matters and sciences under the single profession and name of an orator" (p. 64). Indeed, Cicero's high claim on orator having 'all knowledge of all matters' cheers rhetoric as a powerful vehicle of knowledge. For cicero rhetoric is "the civilizing force" enhanced by "philosophy, ethics, and other disciplines important to careful thinking and good government (Herrick, 2009, p. 102). Here, oratory is not an empty play of words as Plato claims. Instead, it contains "words agreeable to hear, and thoughts adapted to prove" (p.64). Oratory contains knowledge and learning for Cicero as good oratory is a summation of "many subjects in thought and reflection, and many also in reading" (65). Cicero's oratory is the higher performance of knowledge, insights, and philosophical observations (Murphy, Hoppmann & Katula, 2014). For him, it contains "the nature of all things, and the dispositions and motives of mankind" (p. 65). Here, we can see that an oratory

encompasses what Plato calls virtue, logic, reason, and knowledge. In this way, Cicero's rhetoric increases the substance of rhetoric/oratory. Evaluating Cicero's theorization of rhetoric, he has also been regarded as "a patron of Greek literary and rhetorical arts" (Enos, 2005, p. 457). In this context, Blamires's (1991) assessment of Cicero's rhetoric as a triad of elegance, lucidity, and persuasiveness sums up the discussion. It sounds that Cicero bridges the gulf between rational (philosophical) and imaginative or emotional (rhetorical) use of language when he nightlights both rigorous learning and oratory.

More importantly, Quintilian (2013) in *Institutio Oratoria* multiplies the substance of rhetoric/oratory. Quintilian takes rhetoric as "art of good citizen speaking well" which validates the "moral function of rhetoric (Herrick, 2009, p. 113). Thus, Quintilian invalidates Plato's criticism against rhetoric. Oratory, for Quintilian, incorporates knowledge from music, law, poetry, astronomy, philosophy, and history. Here, like Cicero, Quintilian also adds many disciplines of knowledge to Aristotle's enthymeme. Plato cannot see the substance and virtue in rhetoric, but Quintilian triumphantly does: "rhetoric which benefits a good man and is in a word the only true rhetoric will be a virtue" (p. 351). Here, the rhetoric of oratory is virtue and vice versa. For Quintilian, the substance of rhetoric includes invention, arrangement, eloquence, memory, and delivery; they are also known as the canon of rhetoric. Quintilian further adds that the study of literature is also a part of oratory: "the foundations of oratory are well and truly laid by the teaching of literature" (p. 65). Therefore, Quintilian suggests orators to be experts in both Greek and Latin, as Homer and Virgil were. Quintilian dismantles Plato's argument when he writes that an orator is well-informed of philosophy: "Ignorance of philosophy is an equal drawback" (p. 63). For Quintilian, oratory/rhetoric has the potential to bring socio-political changes in Rome (Enos, 2008). Thus, Quintilian proliferates and multiplies substance in rhetoric. The influence of Quintilian in the history of rhetoric has been stated by Blamires (1991) "as a powerful force to arouse emotion and to inspire action" (p. 24). Here, the balance between emotion and action has been necessitated wherein rhetoric functions for a good end.

Overall, if Plato strips off the substance of rhetoric, Aristotle pours essence into rhetoric. Like Aristotle, Cicero amplifies and Quintilian multiples the substance of rhetoric.

Substance in the Language of Rhetoric/Oratory

One of the crucial issues in Greco-Roman rhetoric was the rhetorical or oratorial use of language. Therefore, the issue of substance in the language of rhetoric is one of the primary debates in Greco-Roman rhetoric.

Plato (1864), in *Gorgias*, devalues rhetorical language as unsubstantial and unwise. "It is the art that deals with words; and I maintain that I am right", writes Plato (p. 7). Here, Plato means that the words employed in rhetoric lack any substance, value, and wisdom. In this context, Herrick (2009) writes that Plato criticizes the persuasive use of language of rhetoric or oratory as "a dangerously deceptive activity for both the individual and the state" (p. 59). Plato writes that the unsubstantial art of rhetoric solely depends on the effect produced by the very play of words when he takes rhetoric as "the art whose effects are produced by words is rhetoric" (p. 7). It means rhetoric is made up of unsubstantial and unwise use of words. Again, Plato throws a series of attacks against the language of rhetoric when he takes it as an art of words: "rhetoric is one of those arts that effect and give force to all their operations by words" (p. 11). Then, Plato ironically asks "you give the name of rhetoric to everyone which deals with words? (p. 6). He further attacks rhetorical use of language with the statement "cookery to medicine so is rhetoric to justice" (p. 30). It means the rhetorical use of language can never bring justice in society. Hence, Plato strongly holds that the language of rhetoric lacks any moral purpose (Murphy, Hoppman & Katula, 2014). It lacks substance. In this sense, Plato's criticism of rhetoric draws the attention of scholars to the use and misuse of language. However, Plato strongly believes that rhetoric is synonymous with deceit.

Aristotle (n.d.), unlike Plato, in *On Rhetoric* values the substance of the language of rhetoric. The language of rhetoric, for Aristotle, is never empty. It is substantiated with logos (logic), ethos (credibility), and pathos (emotions). Therefore, the language of rhetoric bears the responsibility to "name them and describe them, to know their causes and the way in which they are excited" (p. 4). The purposes and goals of Aristotle's rhetorical use of language are "not accomplished by any other art, including dialectic, logic, or poetry" (Herrick, 2009, p. 80). If the language of rhetoric has been coalesced with those logical reasoning, emotional appeal, and credible proofs, it cannot become an empty vehicle as Plato claims. Moreover, Aristotle, contrary to Plato, compares the language of rhetoric with the language of dialectic because "both are faculties for providing arguments" (p. 4). The language of arguments in dialectic and rhetoric has been backed up by different inductive and enthymematic inferences: "I call the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism" (p. 4). Therefore, we can understand that the language of rhetoric is not a mere play of words as criticized by Plato. It is substantially rich in its attempt of making logical arguments in the hand of Aristotle as he takes rhetoric as a matter of logical reasoning, enthymematic argumentation, and persuasion.

Cicero (1875), in *Oratory and Orators* further unearths the substance of the rhetorical language by highlighting eloquence, thereby defending it against Platonic criticism. If Aristotle's focus was on enthymematic and rhetorically syllogistic language, Cicero's

emphasis falls on the language of eloquence. Eloquence in rhetoric or oratory is not just the mere play of words but a tool for bringing changes in the world because "it embraces the origin, the influence, the changes of all things in the world" (p. 214). Cicero's oratory required not only the use of words but also invention, arrangement, expression, memory, delivery which are known as the canons of rhetoric even at present (Herrick, 2009). If Plato takes rhetorical language as a lack of essence, Cicero explores universal significance in eloquence because it is the totality of "all virtues, duties, and all nature, so far as it affects the manners, minds, and lives of all mankind" (p. 214). Therefore, it is the meaning and essence of mankind. Plato cannot see any virtue in rhetoric or oratory, but Cicero counterargues: "Eloquent is one of the most eminent virtues" (p. 207). Hence, Cicero's language of oratory encompasses knowledge, mastery of style, a charming and cultured wit, memory, and comprehension of civil law (Murphy, Hoppmann & Katula, 2014). It is full of substance. Hence, Plato's misuse and Aristotle's enthymematic use of language in rhetoric come to be virtuous use in Cicero.

Quintilian (2013), like Cicero and unlike Plato, in *Institutio Oratoria,* makes high claims on the language of oratory. For Quintilian, an orator's language will have "the greatest mastery of all such departments of knowledge and the greatest power of expression in words (p. 15). In this sense, it is loaded with power and knowledge. For Quintilian, oratory is the fusion of talents and styles: "without natural gifts technical rules are useless" (p. 19). If Plato criticizes oratory just as the language aiming at persuasion for no good end, Quintilian reverses the logic when he writes that orator's "language is based on reason, antiquity, authority and usage" (p. 113). When an orator performs the oratory, the language contains the sublime substance of Quintilian as it is "lifted by the sublimity of heroic verse, inspired by the greatness of its theme and imbued with the loftiest sentiments" (p. 149). Hence, Quintilian infuses a brim full of substance in the language of rhetoric/oratory. Here, the substance is acquired by the rhetor by rigorous learning of the knowledge from almost all the disciplines, even Platonic philosophy.

In sum, if Plato devalues the language of rhetoric/oratory; Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian take it as a vehicle of reason, argument, knowledge, ethics, morality.

Substance in a Rhetor(ician)/an Orator

In the Greco-Roman rhetoric, one of the fundamental debates was who a rhetorician/ rhetor/orator is and what substance he delivers for the society.

Plato (1864), in *Gorgias*, claims that the practitioners of rhetoric lack knowledge or substance. For Plato, for anyone to be filled with substance, there must be ability, knowledge, and practice. Rhetoricians, however, for him, lack "supplemented natural

ability with knowledge and practice" (p. 61). Here, Plato means that an orator has neither aptitude nor ample learning and training. Owing to this premise, Plato further pours his disdain against the rhetoric with the statement that rhetoricians who write rhetorical manuals are "scoundrels who disguise the fact that they are perfectly knowledgeable" (p. 63). For Plato, rhetoricians, or orators sound like knowledgeable person, but they lack it. Plato further writes that rhetoricians like sophists lack any knowledge in justice, and therefore "educating people to practice such rhetoric is also reprehensible" (Herrick, 2009, p. 66). Thus, Plato equates rhetoric as injustice and disharmony. He makes very harsh criticisms against rhetoricians when he uses the term 'scoundrel' to name rhetoricians. Hence, according to Plato, the rhetoricians are neither honest nor have knowledge; they lack substance. Here, we can sense how critical Platonic philosophy is against rhetors/orators/literary writers. Plato is against all those people who exercise imagination.

On the contrary, Aristotle (n.d.) in *On Rhetoric* regards rhetors or orators as the men of knowledge or substance. For Plato, rhetoricians are dishonest but for Aristotle rhetoricians impart knowledge. For him, the term 'rhetorician' connotes more the art and knowledge and less the person because they **"**may describe either the speaker's knowledge of the art or his moral purpose" (p. 3). It means knowledge, purpose, morality have been communicated by rhetoricians. For him, the rhetoricians have a universal and useful knowledge like that of the people who practice dialectic: "It is clear, then, that rhetoric is not bound up with a single definite class of subjects but is as universal as dialectic; it is clear, also, that it is useful" (p. 3). Additionally, rhetoricians need a faculty of observation because they should "discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow" (p.3). A person who lacks knowledge cannot become a rhetor for Aristotle as a rhetorician requires "the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us" (p. 4). Plato's attack against rhetoricians gets challenged by Aristotle. According to Aristotle, rhetoricians should be able to practice three types of rhetoric: deliberative (legislative), epideictic (ceremonials), and forensic (past). Thus, in Aristotle, "to be a truly accomplished speaker was a very demanding occupation" (Herrick, 2009, p. 93). Hence, a rhetor is a person fuelled with imagination, knowledge, art, observation, and delivery for Aristotle.

In line with Aristotle, Cicero (1875) in *Oratory and Orators,* states that the orators have perfection, knowledge, and ingenuity like that of a philosopher having substance of their own. In the hand of Cicero, an orator should master the variety of styles of persuasion needed for success on numerous unpredicted occasions (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001). Cicero debunks Platonic binary between philosophy and rhetoric: "I have no dispute as to which of these two sciences [persons] is superior, . . . [but] oratory may exist in the

highest perfection without philosophy", writes Cicero (p. 71). It is at this point where Cicero argues that it was philosophers like Plato who created the division between philosophy and oratory: "hence arose the divorce, as it were, of the tongue from the heart, that one class of person should teach to think and another to speak" (p. 209). It means the hierarchy between philosopher and orator is impractical and meaningless because orators and oratory exist on their own. Nevertheless, Cicero seems to be very reconciling and integrating: "yet no injury shall be done to that of philosophy by us" (p. 210). Hence, Cicero's analysis of effective or reconciling rhetoric strengthens social harmony (Marsh, 2017). It is where rhetoric comes to be a socio-cultural discipline; it exists for public goodness.

Like Cicero, Quintilian's (2013) definition of a rhetorician or an orator, in *Institutio Oratoria,* is synonymous to goodness and knowledge. Indeed, Plato's scoundrel argument gets challenged by his single statement "no man can speak well who is not good himself" (p. 315). Here, For Quintilian, the first essential premise for an orator is that "he should be a good man" (p. 9) along with "all the excellences of character as well" (p. 10). Quintilian further writes that an orator is also a philosopher: "Let our ideal orator then be such as to have a genuine title to the name of a philosopher" who is "blameless in point of character" (p. 15). For him, orators have both adaptabilities of context and knowledge as "he is called upon to meet the most varied emergencies" (p. 291). Therefore, Quintilian's improvisation, a blend of natural talent and incessant learning, that makes it possible to deliver speech in all situations without hesitation (Holcomb, 2001). Quintilian claims that orators need highest level of education: "the perfect orator owes more to education" (p. 349). According to Quintilian, orators have the wisdom of philosophers, the language of poets, the memory of lawyers, the voice of tragedians, and the gesture of the best actors. Quintilian "cast the orator in the role of a good citizen intent on employing rhetorical powers for the benefit of the society" (Herrick, 2009, p. 113). Hence, Plato's criticism of rhetoric has been invalidated by Quintilian. Therefore, Murphy and Katula (2014) rightly remark that Quintilian values the role of rhetorician as a moral force in the community, thereby exploring full substance in the mind of an orator/rhetorician. Now, rhetoric becomes a part of morality, ethic, learning, and civility; it is a part and parcel of human civilization for Quintiulian.

Thus, Plato's nullification of the substance from rhetoricians and orators has been added, amplified, and multiplied by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.

Conclusion and Implications

One of the fundamental tensions that rhetoric per se, the language of rhetoric, and rhetoricians or orators that went through, in the Greco-Roman period, is the debate on

their sum and substance. Plato criticizes them as an unsystematic practice lacking knowledge, virtue, and purpose. In this sense, Plato's criticism of rhetoric starts a philosophy-versus-rhetoric debate in the history of rhetoric. However, the rhetoric, the language of rhetoric, and rhetoricians get their more positive shape when Aristotle took rhetoric as a counterpart of dialectic where enthymeme is the essence and substance. Hence, Aristotle's view on rhetoric not only responds to Plato but also introduces a shift in perspective to look at rhetoric. On top of others, it is the Roman rhetoric, developed by Cicero and Quintilian that brings rhetoric into full bloom in terms of its sum and substance. They claim rhetoric or oratory to be the highest kind of knowledge mastering in all the disciplines of knowledge such as language, history, philosophy, politics, legality, morality, ethics, goodness, and contingent social realities. It is a part of cililized and learned society. Hence, while traveling from Plato to Quintilian, classical rhetoric fully recovered its substance in Roman oratory. Nevertheless, classical debates and discussions have been iterated and reiterated in the history of rhetoric even at present. Thus, the debate on substance in classical rhetoric is one of the junctures where rhetoric and philosophy encounter each other to dialogue and debate on its substance.

The question of rhetorical substance leaves us with some implications for further research. The exploration of the debate on the 'substance' of Greco-Roman rhetoric triggers some new perspectives and possibilities to do research on/with Western and non-Western rhetoric both diachronically and synchronically. This article encourages future researchers to delineate the history of rhetoric from the perspective of substance. It also initiates a dialogue to study rhetoric and philosophy from a comparative perspective.

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