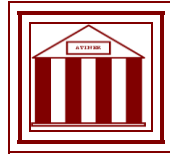


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**Background of the Values Essential for  
Human in Ancient Greek Texts on Rhetoric**

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## **Background of the Values Essential for Human in Ancient Greek Texts on Rhetoric\***

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### **Abstract**

Nowadays the term 'rhetoric' is mostly not used in the context of moral aspects or universal human values. On the contrary – by the concept 'rhetoric' we often understand the elocution that is used to achieve external effect, outwardly prettified but insipid speech, words without in-depth (meaning) coverage and true emotional experience. Of course, also in the Ancient Greece, the rhetorical skills were used for different purposes, the first teachers of rhetoric – the Sophists – did not hesitate to point to the fact that the main task of rhetoric is to make weak argument more effective than sound argument.

The essence of rhetoric as a means by which an individual can achieve personally desirable result can be felt already in the work by one of the first Ancient Greek theoreticians of rhetoric Aristotle – *Ῥητορική (On Rhetoric)* (4<sup>th</sup> century A.C.) and other major Ancient Greek theoreticians of rhetoric (Dionysius Halicarnassus's *Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων (On the Arrangement of Words)* (1st century A.C.) and Hermogenes's *Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου (On Types of Style)* (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.)). However, the authors of the mentioned rhetorical treatises also pay attention to a set of values important for every individual (happiness, virtue, youth and old age, friendship etc.) and ethical categories (good and evil, beautiful and ugly, justice and injustice).

The present paper aims to disclose what universal human values and values, which are essential for every human as well as ethical categories form the background of the rhetorical theory in the three above-mentioned treatises written in different time periods by attempting to assess the breadth of this background in each of the texts under discussion and by searching for the origins of ethical relativism of contemporary rhetoric.

**Keywords:** ancient rhetorical treatises, ethical categories, values

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### ***Introduction***

Discussion of the values important for every individual – such as happiness, virtue, youth, friendship etc., is usually associated with ethics and ethical categories – good and evil, beautiful and ugly, justice and injustice etc. Both, numerous contemporary and a number of well-known philosophers of the antiquity (Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Seneca etc.) have devoted attention to discussion of the above-mentioned issues, comparing of understanding and different types of classification. Summarizing the papers on the ancient ethical thought, it would be possible to compile a voluminous list of scientific literature (e.g., Meyer 2008, 187–126, or Broadie 1993, 439–44). It seems that *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Categories* by Aristotle and *Apology*, *Crito* and *Gorgias* by Plato, as well as *Epistulae Morales* by Seneca could be regarded as the most frequently analysed works of ancient Greek philosophers. No doubt that both, the above-mentioned and other works by philosophers of the antiquity on philosophical and, incl., ethical issues are the most appropriate source for studying the concepts mentioned at the beginning of the paper.

However, the focus of attention in this paper, as the title already indicates, is on the texts by the Ancient Greek philosophers – theoreticians of rhetoric on the art of rhetoric or theory of rhetoric related issues, where discussion of essential human values and ethical categories can also be observed, however, it takes place subordinately to discussion of rhetorical theory, forming its background. Three original Ancient Greek texts written in different time periods have been used for this study: (4th century A.C.) – a treatise *Ῥητορική* (*On Rhetoric*) by Ancient Greek philosopher and theoretician of rhetoric Aristotle, (1st century A.C.) – a treatise *Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων* (*On the Arrangement of Words*) by Dionysius Halicarnassus and (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) work *Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου* (*On Types of Style*) by rhetor Hermogenes.

The present paper aims to disclose what universal human values and values, which are individually essential for every human, as well as ethical categories form the background of rhetorical theory in the three above-mentioned treatises written in different time periods by attempting to assess the breadth of this background (so uncharacteristic to contemporary scientific texts) in each of the texts under discussion and by searching the origins of ethical relativism of contemporary rhetoric.

It is known that nowadays the term ‘rhetoric’ is mostly not used in the context of moral aspects or universal human values. On the contrary – by the concept ‘rhetoric’ we often understand the elocution that is used to achieve external effect, outwardly prettified but insipid speech, words without in-depth (meaning) coverage and true emotional experience (Svešvārdū vārdnīca, 1999). It should be mentioned that the Sophists were the first in the Ancient Greece who did not hesitate to use their rhetorical skills for different purposes, whose idea that the main task of rhetoric is to make weak argument more effective than the sound argument not only depicts the defeat of ancient ethical norms but also the fact that the relativism of new ethics will create a wide scope for this art. (Меликова-Толстая 1936, 147)

#### *Background of the values essential for a human in "Ῥητορική" by Aristotle*

Treatise *Ῥητορική* by Aristotle consists of three parts or books; two of which deal with what is rhetoric and its tasks, as well as discuss the types of means of persuasion, while in the third book the aspects of the type of expression and structure of oratory speech are analysed.

In the introduction of the edition translated into English, its author George Alexander Kennedy emphasizes that ‘the great strength of *On Rhetoric* derives from its clear recognition (..) that rhetoric is a technique or tool’, at the same time he also points out that the Aristotle’s ‘work is also of interest in that it summarizes many of the political and moral assumptions of contemporary Greek society’. (Kennedy 2007, 20–21)

We have to admit that the most comprehensive discussion of universal human values as well as individually essential human values and ethical categories can be observed in the first book of Aristotle’s treatise, which discusses the means of persuasion, as well as topics useful in Deliberative, Epideictic and Judicial Rhetoric. Already when Aristotle defines objectives of the three above-mentioned types of speech, one can anticipate that not only a theory of rhetoric but also ethical categories will be discussed.

*The ‘end’ (τέλος) of each of these is different, and there are three ends for three [species]: for the deliberative speaker [the end] is the advantageous (τὸ συμφέρον) and the harmful (τὸ βλαβερὸν) (..), and he includes other factors as incidental: whether it is just (δίκαιον) or unjust (ἀδίκον), or honorable (καλὸν) or disgraceful (αἰσχρόν); for those speaking in the law courts [the end] is the just and the unjust, and they make other considerations incidental to those; for those praising and blaming [the end] is the honorable and the shameful, and these speakers bring up other considerations in reference to these qualities. (Rhetorica (Rhet.) 1358b.20–29; here and further transl. by Kennedy, 2007)*

First of all, the author discusses the first type – **Deliberative Rhetoric**. Deliberative Rhetoric is defined as the one that is either exhortation or dissuasion, and since ‘all forms of exhortation and dissuasion are concerned with εὐδαιμονία (happiness) and with the things that contribute, or are opposed, to it’ (*Rhet.* 1360b.9–11), in the author’s opinion, it is necessary to clarify what is happiness and its components:

*Let happiness (εὐδαιμονία) be [defined as] success (εὐπραξία) combined with virtue (ἀρετῆς), or a self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) in life, or as the pleasantest life (βίος ἡδιστος) accompanied with security, or as abundance (εὐθηνία) of possessions and bodies, with the ability to defend and use these things (..). It is necessary for its ‘parts’ to be good birth (εὐγένειαν), numerous friendships (πολυφιλίαν), worthy friendships (χρηστοφιλίαν), wealth (πλοῦτον), good children (εὐτεκνίαν), numerous children (πολυτεκνίαν), a good old age (εὐγηρίαν), as well as virtues of the body (such as health (ὑγίειαν), beauty (κάλλος), strength (ἰσχύν), physical stature (μέγεθος), athletic prowess (δύναμιν ἀγωνιστικήν), reputation (δόξαν), honor (τιμήν), good luck (εὐτυχίαν), virtue (ἀρετήν) or also its parts; practical wisdom (φρόνησιν), courage (ἀνδρεία), justice (δικαιοσύνην), temperance (σωφροσύνην). (..) the power (δυνάμεις) to take actions and good luck (τύχην) should be present. (Rhet. 1360b.14–29)*

Hereinafter in the text the understanding of the concepts constituting happiness are briefly explained (e.g., how to understand the notions ‘good birth’, ‘wealth’, ‘physical stature’, ‘a good old age’ etc.). By explicating the above-mentioned concepts, the author does not link their discussion with the theory of rhetoric. The impression is that ethical issues prevail in the analysis of Deliberative Rhetoric, which is considered to be background issues in the exposition of rhetorical theory.

The author promises to discuss and discusses the concept of virtue while discussing praise or Epideictic Rhetoric. Also other concepts observed at the end of definition of happiness, for instance, 'justice' are explained later, while only general attention is devoted to understanding of individual concepts e.g., 'courage' should be linked to good and virtue.

Since the objective of Deliberative Rhetoric is the advantageous or, to be more precise – to persuade someone to choose the best possible and to dissuade from the most useless, Aristotle also addresses the aspects of understanding of good and advantageous: 'one should grasp the elements of good (ἀγαθῶν) and advantageous (συμφέροντος) in the abstract'. (*Rhet.* 1362a.21) The definition of a good is provided:

*Let a good (ἀγαθὸν) be [defined as] whatever is chosen for itself and that for the sake of which we choose something else and what everything having perception or intelligence aims at or what everything would [aim at] it could acquire intelligence. (Rhet. 1362a.21–24)*

The definition of a good is followed by characterization of its aspects. The author links the concept of good with independence (αὐταρκες), elimination of evil things (τῶν κακῶν ἀποβολάς), acquisition of a lesser evil rather than a greater one (ἀντὶ μείζονος κακοῦ ἐλάττονος [λήψις]), virtues (ἀρετὰς), pleasure (ἡδονήν), both pleasant things and fine things (τὰ ἡδέα καὶ τὰ καλὰ), happiness (εὐδαιμονία), justice (δικαιοσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία), temperance (σωφροσύνη), magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία), magnificence (μεγαλοπρέπεια), wealth (πλοῦτος), friends and friendship (φίλος καὶ φιλία), honor (τιμή), reputation (δόξα), talent (εὐφυΐα), memory (μνήμη), ease learning (εὐμάθεια), quick wittedness (ἀγχίνοια), as well as life (τὸ ζῆν) and justice (τὸ δίκαιον) etc. (*Rhet.* 1362a.26–1362b.28) Aristotle acknowledges that the issues under discussion should be considered as generally recognized goods. The controversial ones, on their part, should be discussed on the basis of the above-mentioned. According to G. A. Kennedy, this (*Rhet.* 1362a.27–28) is the first place in the text from which, Aristotle 'for the first time illustrates the use of some ethical topics in deliberation'.

*A thing is good if its opposite is bad and if its opposite is advantageous to our enemies. (..) And, in general, the opposite of what enemies want or [of] what makes them happy seems advantageous. (..) And a thing is good when it is not excess, but whatever is greater than it should be is bad. (..) And what many desire and what seems an object of contention [is good]. (..) And what is praised [is good]; for no one praises what is not good. (..) And in general, things that are deliberately chosen [are good]. (..) And [people value] things easily done. (..) And [people value] what no common person does. Etc. (Rhet. 1363a.2–1363b.3)*

Aristotle points out that 'persuasive arguments on the subject of a good and the advantageous should be taken from these [elements of topics]'. (*Rhet.* 1363b.3–4) The understanding of the above-mentioned as well as a number of other statements made by the author in both, the indicated text fragment of the original text and also further in the text regarding what is good, better, pleasant, more pleasant, beautiful, more beautiful depends on speaker's desires and needs – of what he wants to convince someone about. One of the most interesting is a statement by Aristotle that those goods are greater 'for which the punishments are greater'. (*Rhet.* 1365a.8)



Discussing, in contemporary understanding, the ethical categories from which to derive the means of persuasion in **Epideictic Rhetoric**, Aristotle discusses what is virtue (ἀρετῆς), vice (κακίας), honorable (καλοῦ) and shameful (αἰσχροῦ), 'for these are the points of references for one praising or blaming'. (*Rhet.* 1366a.24)

The author devotes most attention to the understanding of virtue. In Aristotle's opinion, virtue is not only the source of the means of persuasion but also an important trait of character of the speaker. It is known that the way the speaker is perceived in terms of his character, in the context of 'Ρητορική', is also a means of persuasion.

*Virtue (ἀρετῆ) is an ability, as it seems, that is productive and preservative of goods, and an ability for doing good in many and great ways, actually in all ways of things. (Rhet. 1366a.36–1366b.1)*

Aristotle also names the parts constituting virtue – justice (δικαιοσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία), self-control (σωφροσύνη), magnificence (μεγαλοπρέπεια), magnanimity (μεγαλοψυχία), liberality (ἐλευθεριότης), prudence (φρόνησις), wisdom (σοφία) are considered as such, as well as provides a brief description of the above-mentioned concepts. The author points out that not only the above-mentioned characteristics should be praised but also what is honored (τίμιον) and appropriate (κατὰ τὸ προσήκον).

Speaking about the words included in Epideictic Rhetoric, the author emphasizes that they should be like the one that 'makes clear the great virtue' (*Rhet.* 1367b.28). Also the actions to be discussed in speech should be depicted as such. Also in this statement certain relativism can be felt in the possible interpretation of real actions – the speaker should try to demonstrate them as excellent. Whether they really are such or not seems to be less important.

Discussing the aspects of formation of **Judicial Rhetoric**, Aristotle, first of all, defines wrongdoing: 'Let wrongdoing (τὸ ἀδικεῖν) be [defined as] doing harm willingly in contraversion of the law'. (*Rhet.* 1368b.6–7) Hereinafter vice (κακία) and weakness (ἀκρασία), which is the reason why people choose to harm or act meanly, are discussed.

The author also argues that everything that people do for themselves is either goods (ἀγαθὰ) or apparent goods (φαινόμενα ἀγαθὰ), or pleasure (ἡδέα) or apparent pleasure (φαινόμενα ἡδέα). Those, which seem pleasant, in Aristotle's opinion, are done because of longing. Injustice can be done also because of pleasure. That is why everyone who is going to speak in Judicial Rhetoric and wants to use the above-mentioned findings should understand what is pleasure and what is related to pleasure. Discussion on the understanding of pleasure is introduced with a definition:

*Let us assume that pleasure (ἡδονήν) is a certain movement of the mind and a collective organization of sensual perception reaching into [an individual's] fundamental nature and that pain is the opposite. (Rhet. 1369b.33–35)*

The components of pleasure, in Aristotle's opinion, are indolence (ῥαθυμία), idleness (ἀπονία), ease (ἀμέλεια), games (παιδία), repose (ἀναπαύσεις) and sleep (ὕπνος), as well as what every human is longing (ἐπιθυμία) for, because 'longing is a desire for pleasure'. (*Rhet.* 1370a.14–18)

Not having an evil (τὸ μὴ ἔχειν κακόν), anger (τὸ ὀργίζεσθαι), also to be revenged (τὸ τιμωρεῖσθαι), winning (τὸ νικᾶν) etc. are mentioned as the ones, which in certain context also belong to pleasure. Lawsuits (δικανική) and contentious debates (ἐριστική) are also pleasing for the skilful and capable. The understanding of painful things, contrary to what is expected,

is not discussed: 'Let this much, then, be said about pleasurable things; and painful things are clear from their opposites'. (*Rhet.* 1372a.2–3)

Continuing the discussion on the essence of Judicial Rhetoric, the author discusses a number of reasons why do people do injustice. The just, unjust as well as pleasure are also mentioned in this exposition, however, not because of understanding but already in relation to concrete actions, e.g., unjust gain, or circumstances under which somebody performs unjust action, e.g., insufficiency (for the needy – because of shortage, for the rich – because of excess). With the help of examples, the author tries to show how to distinguish between unfair and fair actions. In-depth attention is devoted to interpretation of written and unwritten law. Aristotle reflects the situations where under the written law some action is considered unjust while under unwritten – just. In the author's opinion, 'to be forgiving of human weakness is fair'. (*Rhet.* 1374b.10–11)

*'And [it is also fair] to look not to the law but to the legislator and not to the word but to the intent of the legislator and not to the action but to the deliberate purpose and not to the part but to the whole, not [looking at] what person is now but what he has been always or for the most part.'* (*Rhet.* 1374b.11–16)

At the conclusion of the first book, discussing the means of persuasion, which are not subject to the art of rhetoric (laws, witnesses, contracts, tortures, oaths), the author assigns secondary role to discussion of ethical issues. However, also here, in the context of analysis of the above-mentioned phenomena, the permanent presence of ethical categories (e.g., fair, fairer, just, juster, justice, good) can be observed.

In the second book of *Ῥητορικὴ* the author pays attention to awakening of desirable emotions (πάθος) in listeners (how to achieve and use them for one's own benefit), as well as to character (ἦθος) of the speaker and listeners.

Addressing emotions, Aristotle discusses different emotions – anger (ὀργή), calming down (πράυνσις), friendly feeling (φιλία) and enmity (ἔχθρα), fear (φόβος) and confidence (θάρασις), shame (αἰσχύνη) and shamelessness (ἀναισχυντία), kindness (χάρις) and unkindness (ἀχαριστία), pity (ἔλεος) and indignation (τὸ νεμεσᾶν), envy (φθόνος) and emulation (ζῆλος). The presence of ethical categories in discussions on the cause for arising of the above mentioned emotions can hardly be observed. Discussion of emotions is indicative of the fact that they all can be positively assessed and successfully used in certain situation.

Speaking about characters, the author discusses the traits characteristic of a young man in the prime of life and of an old man, as well as such people who are endowed with wellborn, wealth and power. In fact, a total of characteristics provided by Aristotle and characteristic of each of the discussed types includes the most characteristic emotions and causes for their rising, choices regarding actions and, of course, also the traits of character. The judgement regarding which of the above-mentioned characteristics are better or worse is not provided.

The focus on the essential human values can be observed again at the conclusion of the second book, when Aristotle speaks about 'goods that come from tykhē (chance / fortune / luck)' and their impact on human nature. (*Rhet.* 1390b.14) These are good birth (εὐγένεια), wealth (πλοῦτος) and power (δύναμις). Description of the understanding is provided for only one of the above-mentioned values – good birth, moreover, in comparatively laconic form: "Good birth" (εὐγένεια) refers to the excellence of the family'. (*Rhet.* 1390b.18)

In the rest of *Ρητορική* text – at the conclusion of the second book as well as in the third book, the author focuses more on the impact of different means of persuasion, incl., mode of expression, aspects of application in oratory speech and its composition. The presence of ethics-related category is mainly felt in the discussion of the understanding of the well-known concept ‘grammatical correctness’ (τὸ ἐλληνίζειν). (*Rhet.*1407a.20–1407b.26) Even though the author states that important components of correct Greek language is correct use of connecting words (conjunctions, particles, prepositions, articles etc.), as well as the need to use word genders correctly, the concept of correctness is not separately discussed.

*Background of the values essential for human in ‘Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων’ by Dionysius Halicarnassus and ‘Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου’ by Hermogenes*

In treatise *Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων* by the ancient Greek historian and teacher of rhetoric Dionysius of Halicarnassus (hereinafter – Dionysius) the course of language material processing is carefully studied. This is one of the few compositions of the Hellenic period and late antiquity, which has been completely preserved until today.

Unlike in Aristotle’s treatise *Ρητορική*, in the treatise by Dionysius, an extensive discussion on the concepts, which express fundamental human values, can not be observed. Characteristics of understanding, although comparatively relative, is provided for two concepts significant in the context of the treatise, in contemporary understanding – more related with aesthetics than with ethics – **charm** (ἡδονήν) and **beauty** (καλόν):

*Under „charm” (ἡδονήν) I class freshness (ᾄραν), grace (χάριν), euphony (εὐστομίαν), sweetness (γλυκύτητα), persuasiveness (πιθανόν), and all similar qualities; and under „beauty” (καλόν) grandeur (μεγαλοπρέπειαν), impressiveness (τὸ βάρος), solemnity (σεμνολογίαν), dignity (ἀξίωμα), mellowness (πίνον), and the like. (De compositione verborum (De comp.) 11.4–9; here and further transl. by Rhys, 1987)*

It should be noted that in the treatise by Dionysius the perception of these two concepts is closely related with the understanding of almost all proposed findings about connection of components forming expression because ‘charm and beauty of style are concerned’ (*De comp.* 4.145–146) or ‘the two essentials to be aimed at by those who compose in verse and prose are charm (ἡδονή) and beauty (καλόν)’ (*De comp.* 10.4–7). Even though, initially, it seems that the author’s subjective empirical approach to defining such important concepts does not contribute to their understanding, faced with a number of other places in the text, where they are mentioned (e.g., beauty of words, beauty of the result of arranging, beauty of expression, beauty and charm in compositions, beauty of speech, speech, which lacks beauty etc.) and gaining an understanding about language phenomena that they explain, the content of the above-mentioned aesthetical concepts is disclosed in full.

In addition to ‘charm’ and ‘beauty’, in the treatise by Dionysius, ‘**variety**’ (μεταβολή) and ‘**appropriateness**’ (πρέπον) are among the most commonly mentioned aesthetical concepts. These two qualities along with melody and rhythm are sources of the beautiful and charming expression. Although the text of the treatise is interwoven with both above mentioned concepts (‘variety’ and ‘appropriateness’), only ‘appropriateness’ is defined, moreover, in the second part of the treatise: ‘appropriateness is that treatment which suits the actors and actions concerned’ (*De comp.* 20.11–13). The author links the concept of appropriateness with the choice of words and the mode of the result of arranging. Dionysius states that appropriateness [of words and the mode of the result of arranging] plays a decisive

role in ensuring charming and beautiful speech: ‘it [appropriateness] will prove the chief source of beauty’ (*De comp.* 13.9–11).

Composition *Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου* by rhetor Hermogenes is the last and most voluminous of all three treatises under discussion. It is considered to be one of the most influential treatises about language style of late antiquity and Byzantine period (*Rutherford* 1998). The work by Hermogenes consists of two books, each of which consists of 12 chapters. The first chapter of the first book should be considered as an introduction – there the author reveals the theoretical framework of his work, while in next 11 chapters Hermogenes analyses the thematic and language means forming seven types of style and 13 their sub-types. In Chapters 10, 11 and 12, the author analyses what types and sub-types of style and their characteristics form different types of expression of oratory speech.

In the treatise by Hermogenes, the focus on values essential for a human associated with ethics or aesthetics (as in the work by Dionysius), their categories and understanding is not observed. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, designations of types and sub-types of style are significant: ‘clarity’ (‘σαφήνεια’) and subordinated ‘purity’ (‘καθαρότης’) and ‘distinctness’ (‘εὐκρίνεια’); ‘grandeur’ (‘μέγεθος’) and subordinated ‘solemnity’ (‘σεμνότης’), ‘asperity’ (‘τραχύτης’), ‘vehemence’ (‘σφοδρότητος’), ‘brilliance’ (‘λαμπρότης’), ‘floreescence’ (‘ἀκμή’), ‘abundance’ (‘περιβολή’); ‘beauty’ (‘κάλλος’); ‘rapidity’ (‘γοργότης’); ‘character’ / (‘ἦθος’) and subordinated ‘simplicity’ (‘ἀφέλεια’), ‘sweetness’ (‘γλυκύτης’), ‘subtlety’ (‘δριμύτης’), ‘modesty’ (‘ἐπιείκεια’); ‘sincere style’ (‘ἀλήθεια’) and subordinated ‘indignation’ (‘βαρύτης’); ‘force’ (‘δεινότης’).

Unfortunately, the author of the treatise does not reveal how the types and sub-types of style, which he names, have obtained their names. The understanding of concept designations is not additionally explained. The impression is that the names are designating and apparently generally known and understood by the target audience of the treatise. The essence of so diversely named types and sub-types under discussion is revealed in the analysis of the thematic and language means. It should be noted that also there the author does not hesitate to use a number of words designating a variety of qualities, which sometimes both, promote and impede perception of the given findings.

### *Conclusion*

Contrary to contemporary scientific papers, the content of texts by philosophers – theoreticians of rhetoric of the antiquity is characterised by diversity – the authors do not avoid speaking about the aspects, which, to contemporary reader, might initially seem unrelated to the main topic of the text. In the early Ancient Greek texts by theoreticians of rhetoric, discussion of the art of rhetoric can not be imagined without expressing the author’s opinion also about, in modern sense, moral values and their categories important for both, the speaker and listener.

In work *Πητορικὴ* by Aristotle the author devotes special attention to essential human values and ethical categories in the first book of the treatise by discussing the topics useful for Deliberative, Epideictic and Judicial Rhetoric. Speaking about Deliberative Rhetoric, Aristotle gives definitions of the concepts of **happiness** and **good**. Talking about, in modern sense, ethical categories from which one should derive the means of persuasion in Epideictic Rhetoric, Aristotle mainly focuses on the concept of **virtue** and its understanding. Virtue is discussed not only as a topic where to obtain the means of persuasion, but also as an important trait of character of the speaker. Discussing the aspects of formation of **Judicial Rhetoric**, the author provides a definition of **wrongdoing**. Since injustice may be caused also

due to pleasure, an important background question is – what is **pleasure**? In addition to happiness, good, virtue, wrong doing and pleasure Aristotle mentions and in certain places also explains a little bit a number of other concepts related to ethical categories, e.g., ‘good birth’, ‘courage’, ‘magnanimity’, ‘wisdom’ etc.

At the conclusion of the first book as well as in the second and the third book of *Ρητορική*, only sporadic discussion of ethical categories can be observed. At the conclusion of the second book, Aristotle speaks about ‘goods that come from fortune’, e.g., good birth, wealth and power, and their impact on human character. While in the third book the presence of ethic-related category is mainly felt in the discussion of the understanding of a well-known concept ‘grammatical correctness’.

In the analysed text of *Ρητορική*, particularly in the discussion of Deliberative Rhetoric in the first book, a tendency that the background issues about universal human values and ethical categories prevail over the fundamental theme of the treatise – the theory of rhetoric, can be observed.

In treatises by Dionysius Halicarnassus and Hermogenes, the analysis of the understanding of concepts expressing essential human values is hardly observed. Different kinds of qualities, e.g., beauty and beautiful, pleasure, appropriateness, virtue etc., are mentioned mainly based on the theory of rhetoric, or more precisely – with essence of arranging the parts of expression, tasks, modes and result. In the treatise by Dionysius, the three concepts related with the topic of the present paper – **beauty** and **charm**, as well as a source of charm – **appropriateness**, are defined. In modern sense, the first two are referable to aesthetics rather than ethics.

While in the voluminous composition by Hermogenes, despite designations of types and sub-types of style attracting attention, (e.g., ‘**clarity**’, ‘**grandeur**’, ‘**beauty**’ etc.), which undoubtedly express the content of concepts related to essential human values and ethical categories, the understanding of such designations is not provided.

No doubt that the most extensive background of universal human values as well as individually important human values and ethical categories can be observed in Aristotle’s treatise *Ρητορική*. Perhaps this is related to both, time when *Ρητορική* was written (it is the earliest of the treatises discussed in this paper) and the fact that Aristotle was, first of all, a philosopher and only then a rhetorical theoretician. While Dionysius and Hermogenes were the brightest teachers of rhetoric at that time, as evidenced also by their treatises where more dense discussion, in comparison with Aristotle’s *Ρητορική*, of the issue proposed in the title of the work can be observed.

The origins of ethical relativism of contemporary rhetoric, it seems, can be best discerned in the earliest of the texts under discussion – *Ρητορική* by Aristotle. The author’s findings that it is possible to distinguish between universally recognized and controversial goods, that something in certain context is better, more pleasant, more beautiful and more desirable, that both, words and actions discussed in speech should be like the ones which ‘make clear the great virtue’, that there exists greater or lesser injustice etc., reveal ethical relativism of rhetoric, which existed already at that time. Aristotle presents essential ethical concepts like the ones, whose understanding largely depends on wishes and needs of the speaker, namely, on what he wants to convince somebody about or in what light he wants to show what has happened or what will still happen.

Ethical relativism characteristic to the art of rhetoric is also confirmed by the understanding that the reader gains by familiarising oneself with characterization of controversial emotions (anger, friendly feeling, enmity, confidence, shamelessness, indignation) discussed in the second book of the Aristotle’s treatise. Purposeful arousing of

all these emotions in listeners in certain situations can be positively assessed and successfully used.

In treatises by Dionysius and Hermogenes, as there is no focus on the issues of understanding this kind of concepts, it is comparatively difficult to discern the origins of ethical relativism of rhetoric. It is clear that the authors do not pay attention to this kind of background issues; instead they narrowly focus on goals of rhetoric and goal attainment. It is important to clarify, in what way (by the help of language means) to show somebody in the light as desired by the speaker, the question of whether he is like that or not, is no longer asked.

Universal human values as well as individually essential human values and ethical categories were an important precondition for emergence of rhetoric. However, it seems that it's not any longer, in terms of its development and existence.

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