The enthymeme according to whom? : the enthymeme and its pedagogical implications

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The enthymeme according to whom?
The enthymeme and its pedagogical implications

by

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Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
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Signatures have been redacted for privacy

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INTRODUCTION

Over many centuries, rhetoricians have read and reread Aristotle's account of the enthymeme, hoping to gain some understanding of this difficult and variously interpreted concept. They have looked toward other rhetors for answers only to find that others have the same kinds of questions. Time and time again the enthymeme has mystified researchers wanting to understand it.

In the following paper, I will demonstrate that the enthymeme is a term that can be reckoned with if rhetoricians take time to look at some of the essential elements that make it up rather than participating in a continuing argument that has already lasted for over two thousand years. I certainly cannot profess to understand the enthymeme any better than those who have studied it much more than myself. Looking at the theorists, practitioners, and textbook authors who talk about the term, I can at least try to see if there is some kind of consensus. I should also mention that strict categorization of the material does not apply here. There are simply too many problems to talk about. Therefore, it is my intent simply to summarize and compare some of the discussion surrounding the term and highlight some of the more important points.

In the first chapter, I will concentrate on the theorists who debate the definition of the enthymeme. In order for them to debate it, however, they first must go through and discuss just what they think it is--that is, what they believe is wrong with what others have said and what they believe is right with what they say. I think that their discussion provides important insight
into how the enthymeme is looked at currently. To quote an author that I believe sums up their discussion, Nancy Harper says, "As most students of rhetoric eventually learn, everyone knows what an enthymeme is. The theorists and critics in the field all have definitions, but each, it seems, has a different definition" (304).

The first theorist is Aristotle. He was the first rhetorician to introduce a serious discussion of the enthymeme, so I think it is important to cover what he has to say. Aristotle's comments will be pulled from the *Rhetoric*. The enthymeme is defined as a rhetorical syllogism in Book I, section 8, but his discussion of the term is interspersed throughout the first two books. The second theorist is William M. A. Grimaldi. He looks for the definition of the enthymeme through his impression of Aristotle's own philosophical system. The third is Lloyd F. Bitzer, the theorist who changed contemporary thought about the enthymeme. The fourth theorist is James C. Raymond who builds upon what the others have said about the enthymeme, but he adds that the word "enthymeme" should be changed to the word "assumption." And the last theorist is Edward P. J. Corbett, who clarifies the modern definition of the enthymeme in such a way that almost anyone can understand it.

The second chapter of this paper delves into current discussion of the enthymeme in the composition classroom by composition practitioners. Rather than spending a lot of time on definition, the composition theorists talk about how they are teaching students to use the enthymeme in the composition classroom. These practitioners focus mostly on the use of the enthymeme for invention, but one of them in particular, Carolyn Hill, takes
the enthymeme further. However, she shares the same goals as the other practitioners—to show how the enthymeme helps students to invent material then arrange it taking into account the paper's readers and rhetorical context.

Lawrence Green demonstrates that the enthymeme helps students invent and structure their arguments. John T. Gage claims that one enthymeme controls a paper's entire structure and gets students to think about their audience. Maxine Hairston discusses the misunderstanding and oversimplification surrounding discussions of the term and offers solutions to these problems. She argues that the enthymeme helps students both to generate material and to organize it. Martin Jacobi makes the point that the enthymeme helps students to look at rhetorical situations and audiences, generate and select the appropriate material when they are looking at both content and organization. Finally, Carolyn Hill shows students how to turn them into sorites (stacks of enthymemes) and develop arguments from those.

The third chapter explores the use of the term in textbooks selected by the Freshman English Committee at Iowa State University. These texts provide some insight, albeit not a total picture, of what is being taught about the enthymeme in the composition classroom. If we can look at what the textbooks are saying about it, through their definitions and applications, then maybe we can find out whether there is any kind of influence from the theorists and the practitioners. Those textbooks mentioned in this chapter are only a sample of what is available on the Freshman English market. The books surveyed initially numbered twenty seven in all, but those that actually mentioned the enthymeme numbered only six. Therefore, it would seem premature for me to claim that these six books provide a total picture. This
chapter concludes by offering some recommendations to all involved in the continuing conversation over the enthymeme.
CHAPTER 1

THE THEORISTS

The first and most important theorist is Aristotle. He mentioned the enthymeme in the first two books of the *Rhetoric* in the fourth century B.C. Since that time, theorists and other rhetoricians have mulled over his comments about it. Aristotle is quite ambiguous about the enthymeme: it is difficult to pull a consistent idea of the enthymeme from his writings. This has left many rhetoricians frustrated about the term. However, for some, this has given them the chance to participate in the discussion.

The enthymeme is a difficult term to define. No one has really come to one firm conclusion about it. So in order to work toward some definition, or understanding, of what it is, one must look toward the source.

Aristotle’s view of rhetoric was different from that of other rhetoricians during his time. He began his *Rhetoric* with the broad statement: “Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (36). Others thought rhetoric concentrated mostly on pathos, an audience’s emotions. Aristotle addressed these contemporaries: “for verbal attack and pity and anger and such emotions of the soul do not relate to fact but are appeals to the jury man” (30). Rather than appealing to just the emotions, Aristotle wanted rhetoric to strive for a balance between ethos, pathos, and logos—the modes or appeals of persuasion. Ethos shows the speaker’s good character, and it establishes good will between the speaker and the audience. Pathos, as mentioned previously, invokes emotional or psychological responses from the audience that favor
the speaker’s argument. Logos establishes the subject, and it presents evidence by making or appearing to make a case.

Now, after considering the points made about Aristotle’s rhetoric, one must know dialectic because Aristotle draws parallels between rhetoric and dialectic. Whereas rhetoric is considered to be continuous dialogue that incorporates pathos, ethos and logos, dialectic is question and answer dialogue that focuses on strict logical deduction (26). For example, a person makes a statement, then another person asks a series of questions that bring out answers from the first person. They continue their conversation until they come to a logical conclusion. Aristotle uses dialectic to draw parallels for his audience when he is working on situating rhetoric.

With dialectic understood by his audience, then, Aristotle offers the syllogism, which is a tool of dialectic. So the discussion here can proceed, I will first present a brief, working definition of the syllogism. A dialectical syllogism contains three statements. The first two statements are called premises. The third statement is called the conclusion: it is drawn from the first premise and the second premise. For example, consider the most familiar of all syllogisms:

All men are mortal beings.  (First premise)
Socrates is a man.  (Second premise)
Therefore, Socrates is a mortal being.  (Conclusion)

Remembering that the syllogism is made up of three statements, two premises and a conclusion, let us extend the definition. The first premise is
called the major premise. The second premise is called the minor premise. The last statement in the series is called the conclusion.

Later, in this paper, the reasons for knowing the syllogism and knowing these three statements, the major premise, minor premise, and conclusion, will help us to understand the enthymeme better. But now the definition is furthered.

The syllogism, we know, contains three statements. It also has three terms. One term is called the major term. It is the predicate term of the conclusion. In the example given above, the predicate term of the conclusion is “mortal being.” The second term is called the minor term. The minor term is the subject of the conclusion. In this instance, the minor term is “Socrates.” The third term is called the middle term. It is a term that shows up in both premises, major and minor, but it does not appear in the conclusion. Looking at the example above, this term is “All men” or “man” because these terms do not appear in the conclusion (48-49). Therefore, I have diagrammed this discussion which looks like the following (Figure 1).

Since we understand that the syllogism is made up of three statements (major and minor premises and conclusion) and three terms (major, minor, and middle terms), we further the definition of the syllogism. The three major, middle, and minor terms helps us discover the syllogism’s truth and validity. In Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Edward P. J. Corbett distinguishes between them. He says that “truth has to do with the matter of the syllogism; validity has to do with the form of the syllogism” (49). If we were to look into the truth of the syllogism provided above, we would be asking if the premises are true or false. If we were to inquire about the
All men are mortal beings. (Major premise)

Socrates is a man. (Minor premise)

Therefore, Socrates is a mortal being. (Conclusion)

Figure 1.

validity of the same syllogism, we would be asking whether the conclusion can be drawn from the premises.

According to Corbett, all the rules for the syllogism are based upon validity. These are the six rules he lists:

1. There must be three terms and only three terms.

2. The middle term must be distributed at least once.

3. No term may be distributed in the conclusion if it was not distributed in the premise.
4. No conclusion may be drawn from two particular (as opposed to universal) premises.\(^1\)

5. No conclusion may be drawn from two negative premises.\(^2\)

6. If one of the six premises is negative, the conclusion must be negative. (52)

With the definition of the syllogism completed, we turn back to Aristotle. The dialectical syllogism focuses on strict logic. Aristotle demonstrates the ideas behind the dialectical syllogism, so readers carry the dialectical syllogism in their minds:

> it is clear that he who is best able to see from what materials, and how, a syllogism arise would also be enthymatic—if he grasps also what sort of things an enthymeme is concerned with and what differences it has from a logical syllogism. (33)

Therefore, readers understand that the dialectical syllogism deals with strict logic, but the reader does not know what subject matter suits the dialectical syllogism. Basically, Aristotle states that the subject matter that suits the dialectical syllogism suits the enthymeme, at least in most respects. However, before fully dealing with subject matter of the dialectical syllogism and the enthymeme, it is essential that I focus on the enthymeme’s construction.

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\(^1\) Particular premises make a statement about part of a class, while universal premises make a statement about a whole class. Particular premises sometimes use such words as *some, many, most* before the subject term of the premises. Universal premises sometimes use such words as *every, all, no.*

\(^2\) Negative premises deny something about the subject, while affirmative (positive) premises assert something about the subject.
For the rhetorician, knowing the dialectical syllogism provides a basis for the understanding of the enthymeme. Since rhetoric concentrates on the persuasive modes of ethos, pathos, and logos and since the dialectical syllogism contains two premises and a conclusion, then the enthymeme’s structure becomes apparent. When combining the two ideas, one finds that the enthymeme is essentially a rhetorical syllogism: “I call a rhetorical syllogism an enthymeme” (40). However, there is a difference between the dialectical and the rhetorical syllogism. Aristotle states that the enthymeme is “drawn from few premises and often less than those of the primary syllogism” (42). One might conclude that the enthymeme consists of at least one or two premises, especially when considering the modern definition of a syllogism, which specifically deals with the idea that the enthymeme is truncated or shortened. A truncated syllogism contains one less premise than the usual three. The premise that is left out is usually the major premise.

But why does the major premise get left out? Aristotle says that the missing proposition does not need to be included in the argument because the speaker and the audience already know that premise. They know it because it is already understood: “for everybody knows that” (42). For instance, Aristotle provides the following example: “[to show] that Dorieus has won a contest with a crown it is enough to have said that he has won the Olympic games, and there is no need to add that the Olympic games have a crown as the prize” (42). Basically, Aristotle means that the missing premise is the understood premise between the speaker and the audience. The speaker and the audience must have some grounds of acceptance before they can even proceed with the proper discourse, and those grounds are
determined by what the missing premise holds. If the missing premise rings true for both, then the discourse can begin.

Considering the overall structure of the enthymeme, one must look at the materials of enthymemes. The materials are probabilities and signs. They make up the premises or propositions in an enthymeme. A probability is what happens for the most part. Signs are either those things that always happen or might happen, and they are either infallible or fallible. Infallible signs, Aristotle says, are signs that are complete proofs. For instance, Aristotle offers the following example: “a woman has given birth, for she has milk” (43). Without any further comment, one can readily see that this type of sign is irrefutable, therefore, it is a complete proof. Fallible signs, Aristotle says, are signs that have no specific name; consequently, they are refutable because they are not complete proofs or truths. For instance, Aristotle states that just because a person is breathing fast does not necessarily mean that he has a fever. Aristotle says that this kind of sign is refutable because fast breathing does not always accompany a fever.

In Book II, Aristotle provides what he calls the topics. Essentially, Aristotle states that “most enthymemes are derived from these species that are particular and specific, fewer from the common [topics]” (46-47). Aristotle directly addresses the topics because he thinks that rhetors must first have all the arguments about questions that might come up when rhetors are speaking or trying to formulate an argument. Therefore, in Book II of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle demonstrates the topics for the reader. He states that the rhetor must have these in order to
grasp that on whatever subject there is need to speak or reason, it is necessary to have the fact belonging to that subject, whether [supplied] by political or any other argument, either all or some of them; for if you had none, you would have nothing from which to draw a conclusion. (187).

As a result, Aristotle presents to other rhetors the very topics for their arguments. For example, Aristotle presents lines of argument ranging from a person’s choices that may vary with a person’s definition of a term. He adds that the specific topics appear readily when classifying rhetoric into its varieties. The varieties of rhetoric, when determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches, breaks down into political, forensic, and ceremonial speeches. Political speech urges the audience either to do or not to do something. Forensic speech either attacks or defends someone. Ceremonial speech either praises or defends. Pulling these together, Aristotle asserts that the specific topics (premises) should be at the speaker’s command, especially when addressing one of these varieties of rhetoric.

So to summarize the points Aristotle makes about logic and the enthymeme in his Rhetoric, we must remember that Aristotle wanted a balanced rhetoric: one that concentrated not only on pathos but ethos and logos too. Aristotle drew a parallel between dialectic and rhetoric. He introduced the rhetorical syllogism which he called the enthymeme. The enthymeme, then, usually contained fewer premises than the syllogism because the unstated premise was already understood between the speaker and the audience, so it did not have to be stated. To formulate an
enthymeme, Aristotle thought that the speaker should know about probabilities and signs because they make up the enthymeme's premises. Additionally, he stated that speakers should know about the common and specific topics. The common topics could be applied to other fields, such as dialectic, besides rhetoric, but the specific topics apply to rhetoric alone with its other subsidiaries, such as political, forensic, and ceremonial speeches. The main point here, though, is that Aristotle calls the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism, and that it usually contains fewer premises than the syllogism.

In the 1959 article, "Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," Lloyd F. Bitzer posed a question, "Precisely what, then, is the difference between the enthymeme and the demonstrative or dialectical syllogism?" (146). He believed that if he found the answer to that question, then he might formulate a consistent definition of the enthymeme. His discussion begins by contrasting demonstration and dialectic. Demonstration is dialogue that focuses on conclusive evidence. For example, a person presents evidence to another person until they both reach a final conclusion. Dialectic, to review, focuses on strict logic. A person makes a statement, then another person asks questions that bring out answers from the first person, and they continue until they reach a logical conclusion.

Next Bitzer concentrates on their syllogisms. Remember that a syllogism is a form of reasoning. It contains three statements that lead from general to specific. The first two statements are premises and the third statement is the conclusion. Bitzer states that Aristotle presents evidence suggesting that in the demonstrative syllogism the speaker lays down the
premises and these premises should be “true and obtained through the first principles of science,” while in the dialectical syllogism the speaker asks for the premises from the audience and these premises should be “apparent and generally admitted” (147). Now Bitzer furthers his discussion. He asserts that the rhetorical syllogism (enthmeme) possesses the same characteristics as the dialectical syllogism because “enthmemes differ from demonstrative syllogisms the same way that demonstrative premises differ from dialectical premises,” and he states that this is evident in several statements of the Rhetoric (147). So Bitzer’s discussion can be understood more fully, I have designed diagrams that emphasize his points (Figure 2).

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<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Dialectical</th>
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<tr>
<td>Premises</td>
<td>speaker lays premises down</td>
<td>speaker asks for premises</td>
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<td></td>
<td>obtained though the first principles of science</td>
<td>must be apparent and generally admitted</td>
<td>must be apparent and generally admitted</td>
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Figure 2. Syllogisms and their Premises

Bitzer continues to look at the three species of syllogisms and their purposes. The demonstrative syllogism’s purpose is for the speaker to lay down the premises, so the speaker and the audience can come to a scientific conclusion. The dialectical syllogism’s purpose is for the speaker to ask for the premises, so the speaker and the audience can agree on the premises and criticism can begin. Finally, the rhetorical syllogism’s purpose is for the
speaker to ask for the premises, so the speaker and the audience can view a similar conclusion in order for persuasion to occur (Figure 3).

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<td>Purposes</td>
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Figure 3. Syllogisms, their premises, and their purposes

Bitzer continues by discussing the different forms of interaction among the syllogisms but this time he leaves the demonstrative syllogism out of the discussion because his points really concern what is happening between the dialectical and the rhetorical syllogisms. With the dialectical syllogism, we know that the speaker and the respondent talk through a series of questions and answers. We also know that the speaker asks for the premises from the respondent, so in a way the respondent provides the premises. This discussion is what Bitzer calls self-critical, meaning that since the respondent provides the premises for the speaker then the respondent actually ends up criticizing himself.

For the rhetorical syllogism, then, we know that the speaker and the respondent talk in a continuous discourse, much like a conversation that two
people would have between themselves. We also know that the speaker asks for the premises from the respondent (or audience), similar to what the dialectical syllogism does, then Bitzer adds:

The speaker draws the premises for his proofs and propositions which members of his audience would supply if he were to proceed by question and answer, and the syllogisms produced in this way by speaker and audience are enthymemes. (151)

Therefore, enthymemes are produced when the speaker asks for the premises from the audience, and the syllogisms that occur out of this interaction produce enthymemes. And if enthymemes are produced, then a persuasive situation is at hand (Figure 4).

In summation, Bitzer begins by drawing the differences between the demonstrative and dialectical syllogisms. The demonstrative syllogism's premises are laid down by the speaker, and they are obtained through the first principles of science. The dialectical syllogism's premises are asked for by the speaker, and they must be apparent and generally admitted. Then he establishes that the premises of the rhetorical syllogism (enthymeme) are the same as the dialectical syllogism. Next, he states that the purpose of the demonstrative syllogism is to come to a scientific conclusion. The purpose of the dialectical syllogism is to criticize. The purpose of the rhetorical syllogism is to persuade. Finally, he leaves the demonstrative syllogism out of the picture so he can draw an important distinction between the dialectical syllogism's interactions and the rhetorical syllogism's interactions. Whereas
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<td><strong>Interactions</strong></td>
<td>questions and answers</td>
<td>continuous dialogue</td>
<td>respondent provides the premises</td>
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Figure 4. Syllogisms, their premises, their purposes, and their interactions

the dialectical syllogism proceeds by questions and answers, the rhetorical syllogism proceeds by continuous dialogue. And whereas the dialectical syllogism gets its premises from the respondent, the rhetorical syllogism gets its premises from the speaker drawing them from the audience as if they were proceeding by question and answer. Therefore, Bitzer concludes with his most important point by saying: “The enthymeme is a syllogism based on probabilities, signs and examples, whose function is rhetorical persuasion. Its successful construction is accomplished through the joint efforts of speaker and audience, and this is its essential character” (152).
Up to this point, we know that Aristotle placed the enthymeme in rhetoric. He then drew parallels between rhetoric and dialectic: rhetoric incorporates all three appeals and proceeds in continuous dialogue; dialectic focuses on strict logic and proceeds through question and answer. With this information in mind, Aristotle discusses the dialectical syllogism, then introduces the rhetorical syllogism which he calls the enthymeme. It, according to Aristotle, is "drawn from few premises and often less than those of the primary syllogism" because the premise that is left out, usually the major premise, is already known by the speaker and the audience. Additionally, Aristotle says that the enthymeme’s premises are made up of probabilities and signs, then he adds information about the common and specific topics. We also know that Lloyd Bitzer thinks the essential feature of the enthymeme lies within its speaker-audience interaction.

Now we turn to Father William M. A. Grimaldi’s *Studies in the Philosophy of Aristotle’s Rhetoric*. He helps clarify some of the essential points brought out by Aristotle. Grimaldi is more interested in Aristotle’s philosophical system than he is in finding out the definition of the enthymeme through other works.

Aristotle had to define rhetoric differently from the Sophists because his rhetoric did not solely concentrate on the emotions, as he believed the Sophists did. At first, Grimaldi sees Aristotle rejecting both pathos and ethos: "He conveys the impression that the art of rhetoric for him pertains exclusively to the intellect and concerns itself quite simply with merely logical proof of the subject matter under discussion" (20-21). Therefore, Grimaldi states that Aristotle worked more on presenting logic, bringing out
the person who reasons rather than the person who takes in what a brilliant “persuasive” speaker says.

But Grimaldi is careful in presenting the purely logical side of the argument because Aristotle could not have totally dismissed the other elements: “Aristotle admits ethos and pathos as elements co-equal with reason in the art of rhetoric” (21). After all, what human could make decisions based totally on logic? Grimaldi answers this question by stating that “rhetoric for Aristotle is an activity which engages the whole person in the effort to communicate meaning by the way of language . . . ” (53). Therefore, from at least a philosophical position, rhetoric incorporates the whole person by using logos, ethos, and pathos in order to effectively communicate.

In order for the rhetorician to communicate properly through rhetoric, Aristotle stated that rhetoric is not trickery but truth, and rhetoric is not flattery anymore as it seems to be for the Sophists; it is instead the counterpart to dialectic (85). Since dialectic deals with logic more so than rhetoric, it is fitting for Aristotle to show the relationship between the dialectical syllogism and the rhetorical syllogism (enthmeme). Only when the rhetorician can grasp the ideas of one can the other be understood. Grimaldi only briefly discusses the parallel between the two, however: “From Aristotle’s statements one can conclude that in the modality of its premises the rhetorical syllogism is usually like the dialectical syllogism but sometimes like the scientific syllogism . . . ” (86). One might conclude that Grimaldi thought it was clearly understood, and it did not need further discussion so he shortened his argument here.
However, Grimaldi extended his argument about the construction of the enthymeme. Grimaldi believes that there is no indication that the enthymeme is any different from a syllogism. Thus, since a syllogism has three statements, the enthymeme must have three as well. Additionally, since the syllogism basically “sum[s] up the implications and the scope of an argument in . . . fairly precise, condensed, and reasoned inferences,” then the enthymeme must do the same (87). However, Grimaldi does not see this as meaning that the enthymeme is indeed a truncated syllogism, which is a syllogism with a “suppressed premise or omitted conclusion” (87).

Instead, he states that there are two passages in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* that do not give rhetoricians the chance to insist upon such a final conclusion about its brevity. But he is not so final himself when he states that the enthymeme could be abbreviated: “There is a definite predilection for enthymeme as a brief, direct, and compact inference, and possibly in an abbreviated form” (88). Grimaldi does not have any problem with the enthymeme being this way, because he states that Aristotle was thinking about his audience when he said that the enthymeme must be brief: “a quick, comprehensive grasp of the problem” (88). But Grimaldi states that this does not mean that the enthymeme should be shortened according to its premises: rather it should be shortened according to the way it is presented. Finally, Grimaldi says that the abbreviated form of the enthymeme is not necessarily an essential characteristic, as opposed to its modern definition which implies that a premise is left out because it is believed to be understood between the speaker (or writer) and the audience.
Before the rhetor can construct an enthymeme, he or she must understand the probabilities and signs. Probabilities are those things that usually happen, whereas signs are those things that either will happen or might happen. When discussing probabilities, Grimaldi finds that “Aristotle’s text conveys the strong impression of a theory of discourse which asserts that discourse in all areas, but particularly in the area of the probable and contingent, is never purely logical and notional” (58). Grimaldi spends quite a bit of time discussing this, but his discussion centers more around the search of Aristotle’s philosophy behind writing his *Rhetoric* than with the nature of the probabilities themselves. However, Grimaldi does note that probabilities concentrate upon the human condition, which is always changing. As far as signs are concerned, Grimaldi never really ventures into the discussion because his efforts are concentrated more on the other elements that make up the enthymeme.

As stated before, the rhetor cannot properly formulate an enthymeme, or an argument without the knowledge of the topics. However, Grimaldi offers that the more a person understands their meanings, then the more problematic Aristotle’s statements become in the *Rhetoric*, “and yet the effort to specify and discover the meaning of his comments opens the way to a reasonable understanding of the topics and the nature of the methodology of the Aristotelian topics” (115). Nonetheless, Grimaldi sees the topics as having a substantial function in order for the rhetorician to build enthymemes.

The topics (topoi) presented in the *Rhetoric* provide the rhetor with lines of argument that “supply both the content for the critical examination of the subject and general inferential statements which would present legitimate
forms for deductive reasoning” (118). Grimaldi takes the topics (topoi) and divides them into two classifications. The first topoi are what he calls the particular topics. They provide the rhetor with means to get into a subject in order to understand it better. The second topoi are the general topics. The rhetor uses these to develop forms of inquiry which help to understand further conclusions in an argument.

Grimaldi, therefore, is interested in Aristotle’s philosophical system. In redefining rhetoric, Aristotle concentrated on logos. This pulled the Rhetoric away from the Sophistic emphasis on pathos and ethos, and helped Aristotle to show the parallels between dialectic and rhetoric which led him to discuss the syllogism. Grimaldi says that the enthymeme is no different from the syllogism. If the syllogism contains three statements, so does the enthymeme. If the syllogism sums up an argument then the enthymeme does too. However, this does not necessarily mean that the enthymeme is a truncated syllogism, although he does understand that “there is a definite predilection for enthymeme as a brief, direct, and compact inference . . .” (88). But to Grimaldi this means that it should be shortened according to the way it is presented. Finally, Grimaldi states that probabilities concentrate upon the human condition, which is always changing, and topics provide the sources of information for the speaker and the audience.

So far we have established that Aristotle was introducing a new rhetoric and trying to define the enthymeme. Lloyd Bitzer was drawing distinctions between the dialectical syllogism and the rhetorical syllogism (enthymeme), especially through their speaker-audience relationship. William Grimaldi was exploring Aristotle’s philosophical system by looking
at both rhetoric and the enthymeme. Now we turn to James C. Raymond's essay titled “Enthymemes, Examples, and Rhetorical Method.” He says that for Aristotle the enthymeme was the body of persuasion for rhetoric. Raymond says that the enthymeme has often been “ignored, misunderstood, or denigrated” (140). He attributes this problem to those that do not recognize that some enthymemes work well in rhetoric while other enthymemes work better in other fields. Raymond states that Aristotle drew this distinction between the different kinds of enthymemes through the special topics and the common topics.

But Raymond continues to look at those rhetoricians who decide to discuss the enthymeme another way. Lane Cooper, for instance, thought that the discussion about the enthymeme really fell within how many terms it had; while other rhetoricians who stood on opposing sides thought that discussion fell within the enthymeme as a syllogism that contained a suppressed premise or a debatable premise. However, Raymond believes that a consensus began to surface once Lloyd Bitzer “demonstrat[ed] that they . . . [were] wrong” (141). Bitzer’s argument focused on how the premises are drawn from the audience’s presuppositions and he stated that was the essence of the enthymeme.

Since Bitzer’s article, other authors have focused on this argument by stating that looking into the kind of proofs and presuppositions of the audience helps writers identify their audiences before constructing their arguments. And others, like William Grimaldi, have looked elsewhere: enthymemes come from ethical, emotional, and rational proofs, which are used to gain “assent on the part of the whole person: intellect, will, and
emotions,” (142). Additionally, Raymond points out that Grimaldi thinks that rhetoric transcends dialectic because it has fewer limitations, which means that rhetoric is not as strict in its application as dialectic. So for those that do not understand this, then their “tests of strict deductive and inductive inference” do not work in rhetoric (142).

Raymond suggests that Aristotle was trying to address issues that could not be resolved through reason and with audiences that could not follow long chains of reason. He adds:

The differences are these: whereas a syllogism is a formal pattern of thought with expressed premises, the major premise in an enthymeme may be implied rather than expressed because the audience is presumed to know it; and whereas the major premise in a syllogism must be an established truth, the major premise in an enthymeme may be unproved (or even unprovable) if the audience believes in it. (142)

Therefore, Raymond states that the enthymeme is not as rigid as the syllogism, but it is not less systematic. Since there are many kinds of enthymemes, there are also many kinds of assumptions that the enthymemes use as major premises, and these assumptions come from probabilities and signs. To review briefly, probabilities are those things that generally happen and signs are those things that happen or might happen. Probabilities assume the usual about the world and people. For example, Raymond says that it is probable that a weaker person will not physically attack a stronger person.
Signs are either infallible or fallible. Infallible signs are usually irrefutable. To use Raymond’s example: “the clicking of a Geiger counter [is] a sure sign of radioactivity” (143). Fallible signs are often refutable because their assumptions are based upon an implied syllogism or a universal conclusion based on one instance.

Raymond further says that the enthymeme is Aristotle’s solution to reasoning logically with an audience and reasoning logically with indisputable major premises:

Because enthymemes presume upon what an audience already knows or believes, they can express in a condensed or elliptical manner chains of logical connections that would be complex indeed if the assumptions themselves had to be demonstrated. And because enthymemes build upon what the audience already knows or believes, they avoid the problem of proving their own first premises, as even science must avoid it, by presuming them. (144)

Keeping this in mind, then, rhetoric is different from dialectic: it has a different audience and a different subject matter. Enthymemes are appropriate to rhetoric because they do not tax the audience’s attention—they do not ask for too much. And with subject matter, enthymemes are drawn from probable conclusions that come from probable premises, which seems appropriate when the writer is trying to address an audience that he may not know about what they regard as credible and believable.
Raymond says that he would feel more comfortable if teachers abandoned the name "enthymeme" and changed it to "assumption," so teachers could explain to their students that they should not try to persuade through logic alone but also by looking at the audience's assumptions, both implicit and explicit. And Raymond poses a significant question: "Thus, the ultimate question to ask in analyzing a piece of persuasive writing is not 'Are its arguments valid?' but rather 'What would a reader have to believe in order to find the arguments persuasive?'" (150). Therefore, when students do this then they can "understand that readers are persuaded when they see a writer's conclusions as the logical consequence of their own assumptions . . . they can learn to analyze their audiences with some sophistication. . . ." (151).

And finally, Raymond states the following about the enthymeme being misunderstood, ignored, or denigrated:

One reason for this neglect, of course, has been the absence of a consensus about the meaning of [the enthymeme]; as long as confusion and disagreement prevailed in the scholarly journals there could be little chance of clarity in textbooks. (150)

In this article, Raymond draws some interesting points. Raymond calls the syllogism formal and states that it has expressed premises. He does not call the enthymeme informal, but he does say that its premises are implicitly rather than explicitly stated. Additionally, Raymond makes the point that the major premise in a syllogism must be an established truth, while the major premise in an enthymeme can be unproved if the audience believes in it. His
point here is that enthymemes presume what an audience knows or believes, so enthymemes also presume their own major premises, which is usually the statement that is implicitly rather than explicitly stated. Enthymemes work well in rhetoric because they do not tax the attention of the audience too much. However, Raymond states that enthymemes should be called assumptions, so teachers can explain to students that they should not try to persuade an audience based upon logic alone, but that they need to look at their audience's assumptions.

Next, we move on to Edward P. J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student., first published in 1965, revised in 1972, and now in its third (1990) edition. This book has provided many beginning rhetoricians with simple and understandable information about rhetoric. Corbett's comments are taken from a section in his book about enthymemes. He begins by saying that enthymemes are the same as syllogisms but they are applied under rhetoric. The only difference is that enthymemes are known, at least according to their modern definition, as abbreviated syllogisms. An abbreviated syllogism, much like what Grimaldi and Raymond describe, is a syllogism that has two premises and a conclusion but one premise is usually left out because it is implied. Corbett posits that this idea of today's enthymeme could have come from Aristotle's statement in his Rhetoric: "'The enthymeme must consist of few propositions, fewer than those which make up a normal syllogism,'" (Book I, 2).

However, Corbett also points out that Aristotle says something quite different in Prior Analytics. Here, I will summarize. The essential differences between the syllogism and the enthymeme lie within the syllogism leading to
necessary conclusions from universally true premises and the enthymeme leading to tentative conclusions from probable premises (60). Corbett comments that it is understandable when we deal with human affairs that we sometimes have a problem finding out the truth. When we cannot do that, then, we use rhetoric so we can persuade an audience to take a certain action based on the probable.

Corbett shows the difference between the syllogism and the enthymeme by looking at their conclusions and premises. For example, with the syllogism he offers the following:

- All men are mortal. (Major premise)
- Socrates is a man. (Minor premise)
- Socrates too will die. (Conclusion)

The major premise and the minor premise are universal truths. They are facts. The conclusion is drawn from these premises that are truths, and they lead to an "infallible conclusion" (61). On the other hand, Corbett gives this example for the enthymeme:

John will fail his examination because he hasn't studied.

Remember that in most enthymemes the implied statement is the major premise. Corbett's example, shown in partial-syllogistic form, looks something like this.
[Implied statement]          (Major premise)
He [John] hasn't studied.    (Minor premise)
John will fail his examination. (Conclusion)

But when this example is turned into a full syllogism, the missing statement is provided, one of Corbett's examples looks like this:

Anyone who doesn’t study will fail his examination.         (Major premise)
He [John] hasn’t studied.                              (Minor premise)
John will fail his examination.                        (Conclusion)

Corbett says that the minor premise could be true. On the other hand, the implied statement or major premise is not universally true: some people do not have to study for a test in order to pass, while others do need to study. And Corbett points out that statements like the major premise show that there might be a probability that John, since he did not study, may be on the “Dean’s list of failures” (61). He continues to say that Aristotle was not only thinking about people and how they deal with things that are probable but what people believe to be true. So if we want to persuade an audience, then we must think about the “generally held opinions of that group” because these opinions are usually understood as truths (61).

Referring to the syllogism and the enthymeme, Corbett states that they possess the same mode of inference which is deduction. The enthymeme, though, is an “elliptical grammatical structure” (62). And when the missing premise is supplied, then someone might be able to refute another person’s
argument because the missing premise might be the weak spot. Only when the full syllogism is constructed, Corbett says, can this vulnerability become apparent.

Since Corbett has discussed probabilities, he now talks about signs. Aristotle talked about two kinds: infallible and fallible. Infallible signs are those that accompany something else. For example, Corbett says that smoke always accompanies fires. Fallible signs are those that do not always accompany something else. Corbett mentions just because a person is breathing fast does not necessarily mean that he has a fever: the person could be breathing quickly due to some other condition. Conclusions, therefore, made from this kind of sign “will always be open to refutation” (63).

Summing up the points he has made, Corbett says that (1) the implied premise in an enthymeme could be a vulnerable spot for someone to refute another’s argument and (2) even though the enthymeme uses probabilities for its propositions and fallible signs, they do not lead to “necessarily and universally true conclusions, but they can be effectively persuasive” (64).

So that students can readily recognize enthymemes, Corbett points out that compound sentences that use coordinating conjunctions (for or so) and conjunctive adverbs (therefore, hence, consequently) can be enthymemes, and so can complex sentences that use subordinating conjunctions (since or because). However, to emphasize his point and clarify it more, he offers the following two sentences:

John Smith would not make a good governor. He has Communist leanings.
The first statement is an assertion and the second statement is the grounds for that assertion, meaning that is the premise for the assertion. There are many ways that the two sentences can be linked together. For example,

John Smith would not make a good governor, because he has Communist leanings.

But, Corbett states, not every sentence that uses linking words will be an enthymeme because some sentences give a reason for the assertion rather than grounds. He offers this sentence:

He didn’t go to the lecture last night, because he had a headache.

And he says that this is not an enthymeme because it does not have a premise from which the conclusion can be deduced (65).

Rather than just dismissing the fact that the enthymeme has been known as an abbreviated syllogism, Corbett spends time clarifying the ways in which it has become that. But he does not merely dismiss this as a misunderstanding. Instead, he shows how the abbreviated syllogism works by taking an enthymeme and showing what might be implied by it and what implied statement actually works for a logically valid syllogism. Oftentimes, he points out, that if we do not feel right about what a person is saying, then usually the place to look for a weakness in their argument is in the implied premise. For if the implied premise just does not work for us, then we can build our own argument upon refuting that statement.

Corbett takes the more simple theoretical approach. Granted this could have come from the fact that this material is taken from a book that addresses
beginning rhetoric students, but what he says makes sense and is a bit easier to digest. He does not ignore the fact that the enthymeme is considered, at least today, to be an abbreviated syllogism. In fact, he even shows how this understanding could have come about by what Aristotle says. But Corbett offers that Aristotle also says that the essential differences between the syllogism and the enthymeme lie within the syllogism leading to necessary conclusions from universally true premises and the enthymeme leading to tentative conclusions from probable premises. He demonstrates this point.

Corbett also offers what some of the other authors did not—that enthymemes are actually elliptical grammatical structures, such as compound sentences that use coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs and complex sentences that use subordinating conjunctions. He uses the "because clause" as an example, but makes sure that students understand that the enthymeme must consist of an assertion with grounds attached rather than an assertion with a reason attached. Assertions with reasons are not enthymemes because they do not contain a premise from which the conclusion can be deduced. However, Corbett finally points out that if students do not feel comfortable with someone else's argument, then it is usually the missing or implied premise that needs to be examined.

This chapter discusses the many definitions of the enthymeme according to its interpreters. Aristotle devised the enthymeme in order to redefine a rhetoric that was based on pathos to one that was based on pathos, ethos, and logos—a balanced rhetoric. He drew parallels between rhetoric and dialectic, then introduced the rhetorical syllogism and called it an enthymeme. The enthymeme usually contained fewer premises than the
syllogism because one premise is not expressed. The speaker and the audience already understand it. Aristotle said that the premises of enthymemes are made up of probabilities and signs, then he offers the topics, both common and specific, so speakers know the facts about topics.

Bitzer reveals the essential character, according to him, of the enthymeme. He first demonstrates the parallels and differences between the demonstrative and the dialectical syllogisms, then he draws parallels between the dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms (enthymemes). This is the part where he really establishes his point. The premises of the dialectical and the rhetorical syllogism are similar: the premises are asked for by the speaker and must be apparent and generally admitted. However, the purposes and interactions are different. In the dialectical syllogism, the purpose is to criticize and the interaction proceeds through questions and answers and the respondent provides the premises. In the rhetorical syllogism, the purpose is to persuade and the interaction proceeds through continuous dialogue and the speaker draws premises from the audience as if they were proceeding by question and answer.

Grimaldi expressed interest in Aristotle’s philosophical system. He thought that Aristotle wanted to redefine rhetoric. But in order to do so, Aristotle needed to concentrate more on logos, then work on ethos and pathos. This concentration on logos led Aristotle to discuss the dialectical syllogism, then introduce the rhetorical syllogism. Grimaldi believes that the enthymeme is not different from the syllogism: it has three statements and it sums up an argument. However, just because it sums up an argument does not necessarily mean that it is truncated according to its premises. Grimaldi
thinks that it should be shortened according to its presentation. Finally, he adds that Aristotle mentioned probabilities because they concentrate upon the human condition and topics because they provide sources of information.

Raymond draws distinctions between the syllogism and the enthymeme. The syllogism is formal and its premises are expressed. He does not call the enthymeme informal, but he does say that its premises are unexpressed or implicit. While the syllogism’s major premise must be an established truth, the enthymeme’s major premise can be unproved if the audience believes in it. He also points out the enthymeme does not tax the audience’s attention too much. But Raymond makes the recommendation that the enthymeme should be called an assumption because students should concentrate on the audience’s assumptions.

Finally, Corbett states that the enthymeme, in its modern setting, is considered to be an abbreviated syllogism with one of the premises is left out. He says that the essential differences between the syllogism and the enthymeme lie within the syllogism leading to necessary conclusions from universally true premises and the enthymeme leading to tentative conclusions from probable premises. Corbett adds the enthymemes are elliptical grammatical structures that most students can identify, but he cautions that enthymemes are assertions with grounds attached not assertions with reasons attached.

Now we turn to the practitioners.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRACTITIONERS

Now that we have seen many interpretations of the enthymeme according to the theorists, we should turn to the practitioners to see how they interpret it for use in the composition classroom. The first practitioner, Lawrence D. Green, "Enthymatic Invention and Structural Prediction," 1980, discusses how enthymemes help writers invent material and structure their papers.

In a simple argument, the writer’s primary point is usually located in the conclusion. The rhetorical strategies she uses to prove her point are considered to be the minor premise, or as Green calls it the “because clause.” The conclusion and the minor premise imply that there is another premise. This premise, then, is the major premise. The terms of the conclusion and the major and minor premises provide the writer with the structure for her paper. The conclusion guides her presentation, and the minor term provides the strategies that get her to the conclusion.

Green posits that enthymemes show students different strategies when trying to address their audiences. These strategies are shown through the parts of the enthymeme. For instance, he says that

1) the assertion represents the intended thesis of the paper, an assertion which the author has reason to believe the intended audience does not yet know, understand, or accept; 2) the “because clause” represents the intended means of argument for
the thesis; 3) the implied second premise represents a common understanding that is available to the writer and the reader without argument. (625)

So if students can come up with an enthymeme that contains all its parts, they can structure their essays this way and write them accordingly. Additionally, if students can control the enthymeme while they are writing it, they can see what comes next when they write.

Green talks about the verbal predication in the conclusion (or what he calls the thesis) and the premises. Different kinds of verbal predication make for different relationships among the structural parts. Green states that depending upon their “verbal force,” there are four levels of enthymemes. The first level is the policy level: it is marked by verbs of obligation. The second level is the value level: it is marked by verbs which evaluate. The third level is the consequential level: it is marked by verbs of causation or influence. The fourth level is the definition level: it is marked by verbs of implicit or explicit equivalence (625).

The policy enthymeme is the most common but it is the most difficult to control as far as structure. This enthymeme asks the question “what should be done?” (625). It cannot stand the test of logical analysis because it tends to ask its own questions and to rely too much on ethos and pathos. It also poses a rhetorical problem by dividing the audience into those who believe and those who do not. Therefore, Green says that handbooks that prescribe beginning arguments with “should” statements only get the students as far as the first page, then their arguments virtually “die” from lack
of something to write about. Green does not mean to condemn the policy enthymeme, but he thinks that a whole communication should not be centered around one.

The second level is the value enthymeme. This enthymeme wants the audience to do something, and its claim is usually stated through two underlying premises. However, it presents logical and rhetorical problems similar to those of the policy enthymeme. The major premise suffers from vagueness and this leaves the minor premise hard to find or invent, which turns the enthymeme into "a thesis without any premises" (629). Rhetorically, it poses a problem for the structure of the paper because the writer spends more time defending the chosen criteria rather than the original point the student intended.

The third level of enthymeme is the consequence enthymeme. It asks the questions of "What is actually happening? What happened? What will happen?" (629). This enthymeme is not like the other two. Instead, it offers invention and structural control. As writers need material, they will invent it. And as writers need to write, they will develop rhetorical strategies that lead them to their theses, providing shape to their papers. The fourth level is the definition enthymeme. It assigns "names, boundaries, and parts to a subject" (633). It contains a specific limitation: after the definition has been defined, then the communication is over, either the audience agrees or disagrees with it.

Green makes these points. The enthymeme, as we know, contains three statements. Usually the conclusion and the minor premise are stated while the major premise is not. The conclusion, which he calls the assertion,
is the thesis of the paper. It is something that the audience does not know, accept or understand. The minor premise, which he calls the “because clause,” is the means of argument for the thesis. The major premise, which he calls, the implied premise, is a common understanding that is shared between the writer and the reader. They should not have to argue about it.

Green talks about the verbal predication in both the conclusion (thesis) and the premises. Depending upon the “verbal force” of the predication, writer’s get different relationships among the structural parts and, therefore, different levels of enthymemes. The first level of enthymeme is the policy enthymeme. It asks the question, “what should be done?” It is the most common enthymeme, but it usually poses writing problems, such as the writer not having anything more to write about once the first page is written. The second level of enthymeme is the value enthymeme. It leaves the writer with a minor premise that is hard to find and paper that spends more time trying to defend criteria rather than the original point. The third level of enthymeme is the consequence enthymeme. It asks the questions of “What actually is happening? What happened? What will happen?” Apparently, Green sees this as the most helpful enthymeme—in that it helps students invent material, develop rhetorical strategies, and arrange their papers. The fourth level is the definition enthymeme. It, simply stated, defines subjects. However, it poses a problem. Once the subject term has been defined, the communication is over.

The next practitioner, John T. Gage, “Teaching the Enthymeme: Invention and Arrangement,” 1983, talks about bridging the gap between invention and arrangement. Before doing so, he talks about the enthymeme
being the "body" of all artistic proof. This means that the enthymeme encompasses inductive and deductive reasoning as well as ethos, pathos, and logos: "The enthymeme can stand for the rhetorical conditions underlying all compositional decisions" (39). And he adds that when Aristotle said all one needs to know about arrangement is the question and the grounds for proving one's answer to it, he was probably implying that a single enthymeme can structure a whole argument.

Invention procedures help students to discover the underlying enthymeme of a paper and they help to provide terms (major, minor, and middle terms) and that arrange it as well. These terms and the way in which they show up cannot be known until students begin to work out their own ideas and look at their audiences' assumptions (what their audiences believe). The application that follows, Gage states, constantly encourages students to question the quality of their reasons and ideas.

Gage lists parts of a rhetorical situation. These four parts are (1) questions at issue, (2) probable answers to those questions, (3) potential strategies for leading to those answers, and (4) assumptions that make the strategies work (40). The second and third parts are what the writer selects, and the first and fourth parts are what is derived from the writer’s audience. Since all of these involve the writer and the audience, invention is known to be mutual. One thing that Gage recommends, however, is that the rhetorical situation be real.

From this real situation, students take a discussion they have been involved in, one that has provoked some sort of disagreement. The disagreement provides students with materials (questions, issues, answers
and reasons) for their enthymemes. To begin building an enthymeme, students need to first make an assertion about the disagreement. The assertion should be something about which the people involved in the discussion might not think in the same way the writer does. This assertion, then, becomes the first part of the enthymeme, which is the conclusion. Gage notes that it is important to remember that any part of the enthymeme, even the conclusion, may be revised at some point. This helps students to respond in such a way that their positions are not what he calls "knee jerk." They should have good reasons for saying what they do. Therefore, Gage says, "the object henceforth is for the student the earn his or her assertion" (41).

The next task is for the student to finish the enthymeme by adding a premise, or what Gage calls a "because clause," to the assertion. Now that the enthymeme is complete, Gage says that the assertion serves as the student’s thesis and the "because clause" represents the strategy that will lead to the thesis. The object of this task is to get students to move from an implied premise to a conclusion that is unshared between the writer and the audience. The enthymeme will not be the end of the student’s writing process. It is supposed to be evaluated according to how coherent a paper it produces. And Gage recommends that a good chunk of class time be devoted to evaluating enthymemes according to the following seven criteria:

(1) The enthymeme should be comprised of an assertion and a "because clause."

(2) The assertion serves as the thesis for the paper. It is supposed to answer one of the questions at issue.

(3) The assertion and the "because clause" should share a predicated term. This relation provides the assumption.
(4) The assumption, which is implied, must be agreeable to the audience that at first did not agree with the assertion.

(5) The noun phrases should be precise and unambiguous. The grammatical relations should be direct.

(6) The verbs should be transitive ones and they should be dynamic because they help generate material.

(7) The assertion should usually answer a question of fact rather than a question of value or policy. The question of fact gets students to reach back to establish real grounds, while the question of value or policy should speak for themselves.

The enthymeme that addresses these criteria has had its reasons and assumptions pretty well figured out and those elements that are valuable to the essay stay. Progressing from the enthymeme to the paper depends upon the terms and their various implications as well as how the writer sees their relationships and structures them accordingly. The essay that results from this procedure will be one of deduction since students write toward their thesis. Gage places a note to those that teach their students to write papers putting the thesis at the beginning. He says that oftentimes students do not know what to do once they have stated their thesis. As a result, they usually fall back on some paradigm that does not help progress their argument. "The remedy is quite simple," says Gage, tell them to "save the thesis until [they] have earned it; consider the paper as developing by logical steps progressively toward it. When the thesis can be asserted, the paper is over" (46).

Taking the enthymeme and applying it to a paper is more than just putting down each statement then elaborating on it. What it involves is actually recreating the relationship of the statements and the terms. It is important to remember that every enthymeme puts together a different
dynamic of ideas, which ultimately results in an outline of ideas rather than one of subjects. And writing the paper involves “sticking to this plan, developing these ideas, and adding definitions, explanations, examples, quotations, and refutations as the need for these arises” (48). If something does not advance what the writer is trying to say, then it is simply taken out.

Gage first concentrates on the rhetorical situation offering its four parts: questions, answers, strategies, and assumptions. Students get the materials for these four parts by participating in a real disagreement. So students can build enthymemes, they make an assertion about that disagreement, preferably one that differs from what the audience thinks. This assertion serves as the conclusion of the enthymeme, and it is also the thesis of the paper—much like what Green said previously. Next, students finish the enthymeme by adding a “because clause” to the assertion. This “because clause” serves as the minor premise of the enthymeme, and it is also serves as the strategy that will lead to the thesis. The thesis is located at the end of the paper, so students work toward it. Students spend plenty of time checking their enthymemes according to Gage’s criteria. Once they perform this task, students have figured out elements that are important to the essay.

So far we have looked at two of the practitioners. Green concentrates on the force of the verbal predication which determines the level of enthymeme. According to Green, the enthymeme that most helps students invent and structure their papers is the consequential enthymeme. Gage talks about students getting material from real disagreements, then making an assertion and attaching a “because clause” to it. After students apply Gage’s criteria to their enthymemes, the enthymeme’s reasons and assumptions are
pretty much determined. The third practitioner, Maxine Hairston, "Bringing Aristotle's Enthymeme into the Composition Classroom," 1986, echoes what Aristotle said in the first chapter. The enthymeme is the one rhetorical strategy that incorporates all three elements of rhetoric: logos, ethos, and pathos. But she is surprised that more composition teachers do not use it in their classroom, including those teachers who may have run across it in classical studies, because Aristotle touted it as the most effective form of persuasion.

Hairston gives three reasons why this neglect has come about. First, those that have read and studied classical rhetoric have often misunderstood and oversimplified the enthymeme because they have tried to define the enthymeme more rigidly than Aristotle. Second, those who teach composition have usually majored in literature and have no interest in rhetoric and its strategies. Third, because basic writing students have entered the composition classrooms, emphasis has shifted from product to process, and, as a result, logic and the enthymeme have been pushed aside.

Next, she gives a more detailed look into these problems. Addressing the misunderstanding and oversimplification of the enthymeme, Hairston attributes this to the enthymeme usually being known as an abbreviated syllogism. An abbreviated syllogism is the same as a truncated syllogism. A truncated syllogism is a syllogism containing all three statements (major premise, minor premise, and conclusion), but one of the statements is left unstated because it is usually understood between the writer and the audience. Hairston states that when the enthymeme is known as an abbreviated syllogism, then it forwards the common misconception that it is
"no more than a shorthand method for expressing a conclusion that has really been arrived at by syllogistic reasoning" and it also "loses the rich rhetorical potential that Aristotle envisioned for it" (61).

To emphasize this discussion, then, Hairston thinks that the enthymeme serves the same function as the syllogism does in demonstration or dialectic: "it links the parts of an argument together" (62). But, she says, its form is much different. In demonstration and dialectic, the speaker (or writer) must articulate each statement, proceeding from the major premise to the minor premise to the conclusion, so the speaker's audience will be able to follow the reasoning that leads the audience to universals. In rhetoric, the speaker does not have to say each statement because the audience provides the speaker with the premises. The premises come from common knowledge that the speaker and the audience share, and such formality does not apply because "the speaker’s concern is human affairs and . . . the speaker’s goal is to establish probability, not certainty" (62). Additionally, Hairston believes this difference does not make the enthymeme illogical or non factual, but it shows that humans do not need complete knowledge in order to draw a rational conclusion.

For the speaker to persuade the audience, rather than using only logic, Hairston believes that the speaker must appeal to the audience's whole personality. This is similar to what Grimaldi says. The whole personality includes not only the audience's logical side but their emotional and ethical sides as well, which, Hairston says, shows the audience that "they share common interests and common goals with the speaker" (63). She adds, "Aristotle believes that the best way to engage the audience’s complete
To Hairston, the enthymeme is much more than just an abbreviated syllogism. When it is turned into a full syllogism, a person who is familiar with argumentation can see that the unstated premise is not the only assumption that is present. Hairston says that underneath the syllogism, lies “a rich lode of other significant assumptions” (64). Hairston adds that the enthymemic argument cannot be built without the speaker knowing the audience. The audience helps the speaker decide the right strategy by making the speaker assess the audience and choose examples appropriate for them, so the enthymeme, therefore, becomes a tool that helps students investigate their audiences.

Next, Hairston discusses the second reason why the enthymeme is not being used in the classroom. At the beginning of her essay, she states that those who teach composition usually major in literature, and, as a result, they find no use for rhetoric and its strategies. She attributes this problem to those who use speculative intellect rather than practical intellect. Speculative intellect concentrates on “the tools of deduction, induction, and dialectic,” while practical intellect focuses on “the rhetorical tools of the enthymeme and examples” (66). People using speculative intellect search for absolutes and logic dominates, while people using practical intellect focus on “human activity, the world of the contingent, the uncertain, and the unchangeable,” and logic, emotion, and ethics all receive emphasis (67). So those who prefer speculative intellect find that practical intellect is not useful.
And finally, Hairston says that the three current schools of teaching composition, the expressive, cognitive, and social viewpoints have affected the enthymeme in different ways. The expressive view lets students get in touch with their inner selves, and for these teachers, then, the syllogisms and enthymemes serve no purpose. The cognitive view looks at composing as a cognitive task, which Hairston says is similar to problem solving. From this viewpoint, invention occurs “as a series of individualized, top-down problem-solving steps that do not depend on any system or external guidelines” (72). So although they might use a rhetorical syllogism, they may not “employ it as a device for generating either content or organization” (72). The social view sees the writer as part of a community that determines the writer’s composing process, and Hairston believes that this view will soon accommodate the enthymeme because it looks at the community rather than just the writer.

With hope that the enthymeme may soon surface in the composition classroom, Hairston says that the enthymeme can show what it can do: generate content and suggest organization in writing situations. First, the enthymeme can help students to look at the proposition that guides their compositions, to identify the common grounds that they share with their audience; and to think about the certain kinds of information that an audience has to help students draw examples and support for their writings. Second, the enthymeme can help introduce students to the rhetorical context of a situation that involves not only the writer but the audience and the purpose and how they all affect each other.
Hairston offers her own classroom use of the enthymeme. Working in groups, students analyze a rhetorical situation. Hairston discusses a scenario that involves women being discriminated against in a science department. Students are to make up a scenario that proceeds like the following description. Students are to imagine themselves as a woman delivering a speech to a group of young female scientists. The woman does not want to discourage this group, but at the same time she wants to give them realistic information. Since most of the young scientists have never been exposed to discrimination, they might not be receptive to what the woman has to say. Hairston sees this scenario as script-making for the students, and it works as an invention strategy. After this is accomplished, students can begin to look at the audience, focusing on common knowledge that is shared. And Hairston says that this is a simple way to get students to use the enthymeme the way that Aristotle intended.

It surprises Hairston that the enthymeme is not being used in the classroom. She attributes this neglect to three reasons: those who apply rigid definitions to the enthymeme, those who are not interested in rhetoric's strategies, and those who have pushed logic aside. Rigid definitions, such as the abbreviated syllogism, limit the rhetorical potential of the enthymeme. Those uninterested in rhetoric's rhetorical strategies limit the enthymeme to absolutes and logic. People who push logic aside do not pay attention to its ability to generate content and organize material. Hairston offers her own classroom use of the enthymeme, which involves script-making and looking at the common knowledge shared between the writer and the reader.
Martin J. Jacobi's main concern in "Using the Enthymeme as a Heuristic in Professional Writing Courses," 1987, is that those who write professional communications often do not consider the rhetorical context or the audience. Too much reliance on forms of discourse takes students away from their contexts. For example, Jacobi talks about how textbooks are organized around patterns, such as the different modes of writing. He adds that they also divide letters and memos into different categories. And these areas are limited in what they teach students to do. Jacobi says that there seems to be a bias toward arrangement rather than invention, which, of course, affects what students put into their writings.

He also states that modes of writing "approach the process from the wrong end" (42). To Jacobi, this means that teaching the modes of writing suggests that knowing a certain kind of formula means knowing when to use it. However, this poses a problem. The modes can describe the format of letters, but they do not "suggest which form any one letter should take" (43). Additionally, the categories and the patterns that the textbooks suggest often prove to be a problem. What works well in one format could also work well in another. Finally, he sums up this point by stating that the modes do not help students analyze and determine the specifics of their responses in professional discourse.

Then Jacobi gives his solution to these problems by announcing the enthymeme, which he presents through the words of two other rhetoricians, James McBurney and John T. Gage. McBurney states that the enthymeme is a truncated syllogism; it uses probabilities; it does not adhere to strict logical rules; and it brings together ethos, pathos, and logos. And Gage says that it
helps students figure out what goes into any rhetorical situation (43). Jacobi adds that the enthymeme also helps with arrangement by showing students strategies.

Jacobi offers a sample assignment. Students are given a rhetorical situation in which they must construct a document. Students write a letter to the faculty asking them to participate in a survey that would assess their students’ academic and professional writing needs. Most of the teachers have heard that these surveys are a waste of time and they hold other objections to the surveys as well. Students, Jacobi says, do not get much help from the “traditional” patterns for letters. Instead, they have to rely on what they think the audience should accept and do: “that is, it helps students clarify the letter’s policy and determine the argument that will affect it” (44). He points out that the policy for the letter is, of course, that the teacher should fill out the questionnaire. But now students need to figure out good reasons for this policy and construct an enthymeme around that.

When they are searching for these reasons, Jacobi notes that students are under certain restrictions: “the assertion must lead readers to the policy; the assertion’s support must be related to it by an assumption acceptable to both writer and readers; and the support must make the assertion sufficiently convincing” (45). And it is at this stage, that students have the most difficult time because they have to look at context and audience.

To offer an example for his student’s rhetorical situation, then, Jacobi offers that there are a number of arguments that would work. For example, he states that one student might say that faculty need to fill out the survey so students can learn how to communicate with them, while another student
might say that faculty should fill it out because it might bring prestige to their college. Jacobi says they both lead to the policy.

So when the students have figured out their enthymemes, they need to discuss them in class in order to find out the positive aspects and the negatives ones of their enthymemes. After they do this, organizing their letters seems relatively easy because they have looked into the context and audience of their letters. For example,

Each term of the enthymeme must be adequately defined for the reader; the minor premise must be adequately developed with evidence; the assumption must be stated or easily inferred; and the resulting conclusion and the policy derived from it must be presented. (46).

Jacobi addresses students who do not consider rhetorical context and audience. Students who do not consider rhetorical context usually do so because they rely too much on forms of discourse and modes of writing. Students who do not consider audience also depend too much on the modes of writing. They do not know how to determine the specifics of their responses in professional discourse. Jacobi offers the enthymeme to help resolve these problems. Thus, the enthymeme, according to Jacobi, is a truncated syllogism that uses probabilities, does not adhere to strict logic, incorporates all the appeals, assists students in figuring out rhetorical situations, and helps arrange papers by showing students strategies.
Jacobi offers his own assignment, which unlike Gage assignment is not "real world," but it gets students to determine the rhetorical situation and think about their audience. Students decide upon the policy (what writer ultimately wants the reader to do) of the letter, then figure out good reasons for it. From this material, students form an enthymeme. Jacobi recommends that students discuss their enthymemes in class, so they find out its negative and positive aspects. However, students' enthymemes should define each term of the enthymeme for the reader; develop the minor premise with evidence; state or infer the assumption (major premise); and present the conclusion and the policy derived from it.

Taking a different approach with the enthymeme, Carolyn Hill in "Beyond the Enthymeme: Sorites, Critical Thinking, and the Composing Process," 1989, looks at how another term, called the sorite, gets students to think critically and establish common ground with their audiences. At first, she establishes definitions. Hill defines the enthymeme as a conclusion with a reason attached, or as some might call it a "because clause." She gives the following example to establish her point.

I can't write an enthymeme because I have never written an enthymeme.

The conclusion of the enthymeme is "I can't write an enthymeme." The reason is "I have never written an enthymeme"; this also serves as the minor premise. While the unstated premise, or the major premise, is "Those who have never written an enthymeme, can't write an enthymeme."

Next, Hill offers the definition of sorites. Sorites are two or more enthymemes in which the conclusion of one enthymeme serves as the
premise for the next. To simplify, the conclusion is located at the top, then
students supply a reason, then they supply a reason for that reason, and they
continue onward. This creates a chain of arguments that progress from being
abstract claims at the top to general at the bottom.

Hill calls the reasons minor premise sorites because they progress
downward in the argument. Those reasons that do not follow this direction,
but instead take a step to the side, she calls major premise sorites. These come
about when students think that their minor premise sorites are not going to
be accepted by their audience. So they must write a claim that is going to
support it, then if it is accepted by the audience, the argument can proceed
downward again.

Hill’s main purpose is to get students to think critically about their
audiences. She proposes that if students can begin to think in terms of
enthymemes and sorites, then they can accomplish this. To begin, she states
that during the invention process, she likes students to write, so they can
learn a bit of self-discovery in the process. But before they write, Hill has her
students read an assigned text, Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare.
When they have read it, Hill and her students discuss some issues that come
up because of their reading, write those issues down, and then proceed on to
the invention process.

Students begin to freewrite, putting down on paper what they are
thinking in their heads without any pause in their thoughts by selecting one
of the issues that are listed. They are instructed to write emotionally, as they
would in a letter, either to a friend or someone to whom they feel
comfortable. Next, she has her students look at a sample of what they just
did. They pull out some of the claims from this sample, then discuss which ones might be reasons and which ones could be conclusions. Students notice that sometimes the claims can serve as both. At this point, they begin to form sorites, filling in certain gaps in their chain of arguments. And through all of this, students usually debate over the acceptability of the claims, which usually directs the conversation toward thinking about their audiences when writing their own arguments.

The more that her students deal with enthymemes and sorites, the more they begin to progress from minor premise sorites to major premise sorites, which Hill sees as understanding the issues more and realizing that reasoning in different rhetorical situations does not always work the same. In each situation, their audiences vary according to the premises they accept, the views that they have, and the thinking that they do. This recognition by the students leads them into not just thinking about writing their papers from a logical standpoint but from an ethical and emotional one too.

After completing this exercise, Hill directs her students to do the same things to their own papers. But this time they must pick an enthymeme that will work as the controlling enthymeme in their papers: that enthymeme she says will serve as the logos. They then need to pick a different audience than the sample, specifically one that does not agree with their conclusion, and consider this audience’s values and beliefs. What they also must consider is that they should choose an enthymeme that is arguable in the five-page length that she gives them. Following up this exercise, students share the enthymeme they have selected with other students, and discuss
whether it is appropriate for their audience. If it is not, then they can go back and freewrite using that enthymeme. Or they can refine what they do have.

Hill concludes her paper by stating that her exercise does six things: (1) it lets students use their own experiences by writing in their own voice; (2) it helps them to think critically and construct knowledge through thinking about their audiences; (3) it empowers them through collaborating in small groups; (4) it gets them to broaden their invention processes; (5) it shows them how ethos, pathos, and logos work together; (6) it gives them the chance to see what is actually necessary in their arguments and what the audience actually accepts.

Hill takes an approach different from the other practitioners. Rather than dealing with just the enthymeme, she stacks enthymemes together and builds sorites: the conclusion is stated at the top, next comes a reason, then another reason for that reason, etc. Hill calls the reasons the minor premise sorites, and they move the argument downward. Those reasons that do not move downward, but instead to the side, she calls major premise sorites. After reading a text on guerrilla warfare, Hill asks her students to discuss issues in it. Next, they freewrite to a someone they know personally about one of those issues, then they look at a sample of the exercise they have just done and discuss claims. They decide upon which claims are reasons and which are conclusions. These decisions get students to think about their audience. After finishing this exercise, students do the same things to their papers. Hill claims that this exercise helps students to use their own experiences and voice; think about their audience; collaborate in small
groups; broaden their invention processes; use all three appeals; enable them to see what is important in their arguments and what the audience accepts.

These are the many ways in which the practitioners define and apply the enthymeme in their composition classrooms. Green is concerned the enthymeme’s verbal predication, in the conclusion and its premises. According to the verbal force of the predication, writer’s get different relationships among the structural parts. As a result, they get different levels of enthymemes too. The first level of enthymeme is the policy enthymeme. The second level of enthymeme is the value enthymeme. The third level of enthymeme is the consequential enthymeme. The final level of enthymeme is the definition enthymeme. Apparently, Green finds the consequential enthymeme the most helpful because it gets students to invent material, develop rhetorical strategies, and arrange papers.

Gage concentrates on the rhetorical situation and offers its four parts: questions, answers, strategies, and assumptions. His students participate in real disagreements. In order to start building an enthymeme, students make an assertion, preferably one that differs from the audience, and this serves as the conclusion of the enthymeme. Students finish the enthymeme by adding a “because clause.” This serves as the minor premise in the enthymeme as well as the strategy that leads to the thesis. Gage likes students to leave their theses until the end of the paper, so they will have earn it.

The enthymeme is not being used in the composition classroom which surprises Hairston. She lists three reasons for this “neglect”: application of rigid definitions, disinterest in rhetoric’s strategies, and not paying attention to logic in composition. Hairston offers her own simple assignment in which
students participate in script-making and looking a common knowledge
between the writer and the reader.

Jacobi is interested in how to teach students about rhetorical context
and audience. He says that students rely too much on forms and modes of
discourse. Students receive an assignment. This assignment asks students to
write a persuasive letter to a disinterested audience. Students must figure out
the policy of their letter, then come up with good reasons for this policy.
From this material, students formulate their enthymemes. However, they
must make sure that each term is defined for the reader; the minor premise is
developed adequately; the major premise is stated or inferred; and the
conclusion and policy are presented.

Finally, Hill takes the enthymeme a bit further and makes it into a
sorite. Sorites are stacks of enthymemes: at the top is the conclusion, then
following that is the reason, then following that is the reason for that reason,
and so on. She distinguishes between two types of sorites: minor premise
sorites and major premise sorites. Hill gets students to read, discuss, and
write about a text on guerrilla warfare. They practice pulling out issues and
discussing them. Then they apply this exercise to their papers. Hill claims
that this helps students to use their own experiences and voice; think about
audience; collaborate in small groups; widen invention processes; integrate
the three appeals; and, finally, determine necessary strategies.

Now we turn to the textbooks.
CHAPTER 3

THE TEXTBOOKS

We have seen that the theorists cannot come to a definite conclusion about the definition of the enthymeme. Grimaldi states that the enthymeme is no different than the syllogism. If the syllogism has three statements, then the enthymeme should have three as well. If the syllogism sums up an argument, then the enthymeme does too. But he is careful to note that the enthymeme is not a truncated syllogism. Lloyd Bitzer thinks dialectical syllogisms and enthymemes differ from each other in their interactions between the speaker and the audience. In the dialectical syllogism, the premises are provided by the respondent. In the enthymeme, the premises are drawn by the speaker from the audience. James Raymond believes that it addresses issues that do not work under strict application and audiences that cannot take large chains of reasons. Finally, Corbett sees the enthymeme, according to its modern definition, as an abbreviated syllogism that is an elliptical grammatical structure.

We have also seen that the practitioners cannot decide on it as well, but they do agree on some of its applications. Lawrence Green demonstrates that it helps students invent and structure arguments. John Gage claims that one enthymeme can control a paper's entire structure and get students to think about their audience. Maxine Hairston sees the enthymeme as not just an abbreviated syllogism. It includes rhetorical strategies that involve both the speaker and the audience and their common knowledge and experiences to rhetorical situations. Martin Jacobi says that the enthymeme helps students
determine the rhetorical situation and think about their audience. Finally, Carolyn Hill takes the enthymeme a step further. She shows students how to turn them into sorites and develop arguments from those.

Now we turn to the textbooks. These questions immediately come to mind. Do the textbooks differ in their definitions? If they do or do not, do they reflect what the theorists and the practitioners are saying? Do the textbooks differ in their applications? If they do or do not, do they reflect what the practitioners are saying? This remains to be seen. Before starting this process, however, it is important that I mention three things. First, what kind of classes are the students who use the textbooks enrolled in? Second, what kind of textbooks were examined? Third, what kind of method was used?

The core Freshman English program at Iowa State University consists of two classes. In English 104 and 105, students learn how to write academic prose. Those who either pass or test out of English 104 proceed to English 105. The first class, English 104, teaches students how to write significant event, profile, causal analysis, position, proposal, and evaluation papers. The second class, English 105, teaches students how to write summary, rhetorical analysis, source, and various argumentative papers. For these classes, the English Department issues two book lists: one list for English 104 and another list for English 105. The teacher decides which books she will use for her particular class.

On each list, the books are divided into two categories: readers and rhetorics. Readers contain a compilation of essays with different amounts of space devoted to apparatus, i.e. explanation, discussion, and advice to
students. Nancy R. Comley et. al.'s *Fields of Writing* divides essays into modes of writing (reflecting, reporting, explaining, arguing, etc.), and these modes are further divided into different curriculums, such as arts and humanities, social science and public affairs, and sciences and technologies. Rhetorics usually contain information on certain types of writing plus a brief sampling of essays. For instance, Rise B. Axelrod and Charles C. Cooper's *St. Martin's Guide to Writing* divides chapters into the different modes of writing (narration, explanation, argument, etc.), then briefly offers examples of essays from students and professionals.

After examining the twenty seven books on the Fall 1992 list, both readers and rhetorics, I found that only six of them addressed the enthymeme in some direct way. Most of the books that did mention it were the rhetorics. Of the books that included the term, however, most of them addressed it briefly with the exception of two books that used it quite extensively. Since this proved to be somewhat of a limited picture, I decided to include Maxine Hairston, one of the practitioners from the second chapter. I thought that she might provide further insight.

I should also mention the method that I used. It is fairly quick, and it follows the same format that most people would use when they are trying to find a certain term. With most of the books, I looked in three places: index, glossary, and table of contents. If I did not find the enthymeme in any of these places, I usually thumbed through the pages. If I still did not find it, I simply moved on to the next book.

So now we turn to the textbook authors. Stuart Hirschberg in *Strategies of Argument* presents the enthymeme as an abbreviated syllogism.
It is Hirschberg's claim that most people do not think in the form of syllogisms, so they mostly leave out the major premise and state the minor premise and the conclusion. As a result, they get an enthymeme which "takes for granted the assumption or unexpressed major premise" (146). By which one could gather that he means people do not state the major premise because they assume their audience already knows or understands it. However, Hirschberg carefully notes to students that they should state their major premises, so they can evaluate whether their argument is valid or not. He adds that students who get their audience to agree on the major premise stand a better chance at getting them to agree with the conclusion.

To Hirschberg, the enthymeme is defined as an abbreviated syllogism. Hairston says this approach furthers the common misconception that the enthymeme is a shorthand method of syllogistic reasoning. And indeed Hirschberg states that most people leave out the major premise because they already think that their audience knows it. However, Hirschberg notes that students should explicitly state their major premises, especially if they want to find out whether they are valid and truthful. He also says that the more students get their audience to agree on the major premise, the more the audience agrees on the conclusion. Therefore, I think it is commendable that Hirschberg does discuss the major premise because students sometimes simply make a conclusion, then give a reason for it rather than really looking at their underlying assumption and what how far they ask their audience to accept what they say.

In Strategies for Argument, Sally De Witt Spurgin briefly introduces the enthymeme. To her, enthymemes are "deductive arguments expressed in
ordinary language” where “usually one of the premises is implicit instead of explicit” (124). She also notes that enthymemes typically deal with those things that are “highly probable” rather than certain. Concerned with the enthymeme as a deductive argument, she adds that the relationship among the premises and the conclusion is still deductive as long as the conclusion carries the same certainty as the premises, and “as long as their conclusions would be neither strengthened nor weakened by ‘whatever else may be the case’” (124).

Spurgin’s definition of the enthymeme is similar to Hirschberg’s. However, she adds that it is expressed in day-to-day language, and that it is a deductive argument that normally deals with probabilities. It is pretty much true that most people do not speak in syllogistic form—unless they specifically want to talk that way. But more than likely, they will get perplexed looks from the audience. Therefore, Spurgin takes into account that a good number of people do make an assertion then give a reason or provide grounds for it and do leave out one of the premises because, again, it is already understood between the speaker and the audience. It is also notable that Spurgin provides a context for the enthymeme by placing it in deductive argument and saying that it deals with probabilities.

Robert Miller, *Motives for Writing*, says that enthymeme is a “two-part deductive argument from which the major premise has been omitted” (189). Taking the enthymeme into application, he states that students cannot construct whole essays from just the syllogism, which he has just discussed. If they believe that they have some principle, such as the major premise, that their audience will accept, then they can write their essays while considering
the different needs that arise while they compose. But when students write on certain topics, they might have to take more time trying to convince their audience of the premise more so than some other topic. On the other hand, if they do not have to spend much time convincing their audience of a premise, then they can "offer" the enthymeme. This does not mean that the student's argument is going to be shorter, but that one step has been taken out so other aspects of a student's argument can be accented.

Miller's sees the enthymeme's construction similarly to how Hirschberg and Spurgin see it: that the enthymeme consists of two parts with the major premise left unstated or omitted. He, like Spurgin, adds that the enthymeme is a deductive argument, and the major premise a valuable element that helps students with audience. But Miller adds something different to the discussion here. The enthymeme is "offered" when students think that they do not have to convince their audience of a premise, then they can emphasize other aspects of their essay (189). However, one might wonder whether Miller is really safe in saying this because, more than likely, students already assume too much about their audiences. This is why others, Green, Gage, etc., take the enthymeme and apply it in their classrooms, so they can demonstrate to students what they sometimes take for granted.

So far we see that Hirschberg defines the enthymeme as an abbreviated syllogism. Spurgin defines it as "deductive arguments expressed in ordinary language" in which one of the premises is usually implicit. And Miller says it is a "two-part deductive argument from which the major premise has been omitted." He also adds that students can use the enthymeme when they
believe that they have an underlying principle in which their audience would agree with their argument (189).

Now let us turn to Annette Rottenberg's *Elements of Argument*. The enthymeme is really not defined here. Instead, it is more or less described: "When only two parts of the syllogism appear," then "the resulting form is an enthymeme" (217). Then she presents the problem. Some deductive arguments may give students some trouble, such as the deductive argument that omits one of the premises (enthymeme), which she says is usually the major premise. If students do not evaluate the major premise, they might come to an invalid conclusion. But if students do know deductive reasoning, they can check the reasoning in their argument. Rottenberg notes that the syllogism, however, serves as a better outline for an argument, especially when students are trying to establish relationships among the different parts.

In her definition, Rottenberg builds upon what the other authors say. However, she presents the enthymeme as a red flag in deductive argument. The enthymeme omits one of the premises, so students might be led astray in their conclusions. She recommends that they check their reasoning fully (214-217). Rottenberg's approach differs from the approaches taken by most of the practitioners in the second chapter. She sees the syllogism, rather than the enthymeme, providing a better outline for an argument. This could be due to the fact that she sees the enthymeme more as a form of a syllogism instead of a separate term.

In *Writing Arguments*, John Ramage and John Bean make the point that in formal logic things are certain and unchanging. While in "real world" arguments those things that are debatable and probabilistic must begin from
assumptions, values, and beliefs granted by the audience. If, for example, the audience grants this first statement, an assumption:

Activities that take time away from studying are bad for teenagers.

Students can construct this second statement, an argument:

After school jobs are bad for teenagers because they take time away from studying.

The first statement is an assumption. It is also known as the major premise. If the audience agrees on the major premise, then they can construct the second statement which Ramage and Bean call a "claim with a reason" attached (96). They say that without the major premise the structure of the argument is incomplete, but with the major premise, the enthymeme is complete. Now the completed enthymeme can serve as the "skeleton" for an argument (96-98).

Taking the enthymeme and turning it into a syllogism helps writers to figure out what the unstated premise is, then they will discover the underlying assumption on which their argument is based. They can then see what they are expecting their audience to readily accept. If they think that their assumption will not be accepted, then they need to adjust it until it is—they just try to make it more acceptable by appealing to their audience's assumptions, values, or beliefs. Sometimes this is not possible though, so Ramage and Bean say that there are several options: writers can find different reasons to support the claim; change or modify the claim; or stick to the same argument but admit the differences. Their primary point is that
reconstructing the syllogism helps writers to plan the content of their papers and maybe modify their ideas.

Ramage and Bean pretty much represent the enthymeme the same way that the previous authors did, but they tend to concentrate more on the audience, especially their values, beliefs, and assumptions. For example, at first, they present the major premise, then they state that if the audience accepts it the students can construct a second statement, which combines the conclusion and the minor premise. Actually, this is quite different from the way that Corbett and some of the practitioners demonstrated the enthymeme. They showed students how to first write a conclusion then attach a reason, ground, or "because clause." On the other hand, Ramage and Bean later present the enthymeme in a manner similar to the practitioners, so students still understand that they need to check arguments for underlying assumptions. However, Ramage and Bean believe, like Rottenberg, that the enthymeme should be turned into a syllogism, which again leaves the idea that the enthymeme is more or less a form of the syllogism.

We have discussed, up to this point, five of the six authors and the way they define the enthymeme as well as apply it. The final author included in the Freshman English textbooks, L. Bensel-Meyers, says the enthymeme "represents the conclusion of a syllogism in the first clause and the least acceptable premise in the 'because clause'" (124). The major premise is usually not the premise most discussed in a paper because it is the premise that is supposed to be most understood between the writer and the audience. However, because this is assumed to be true, it does not mean that some assumptions are not worthy of suspicion.
The best way to identify an argument that seems suspicious is to reconstruct the enthymeme into a syllogism. But first, it is important to know that the syllogism must possess three terms, and only three, to be logical. These terms must be distributed evenly among both premises and the conclusion. For instance, she offers to reconstruct a syllogism behind an enthymeme by identifying the two primary terms in the enthymeme. After identifying the two primary terms—which seems to demonstrate that students reading this book already know how to do this—she looks for the repetition of the terms. She notes that the first term is repeated in the enthymeme, but the second and third terms are not. Therefore, she concludes that these terms should be repeated in the major premise in order for them to be properly distributed. Finally, the writer, with the whole syllogism before him, should ask whether he would accept the missing premise. If not, the writer should place it in the “because clause,” so it can be proven in the essay, or change it to make it more valid (126).

L. Bensel-Meyers furthers the use of the enthymeme by showing students that they can create logical thesis statements by following criteria that almost match what John Gage entered in his essay. She offers the following:

1. The issue question needs to be identified for both the writer and the reader, and the answer should be given as a complete clause

2. The reason should be stated in the “because clause.”

3. The two-clause statement needs to be turned into a syllogism.

4. The premises should be determined as to which is the least likely to be accepted.
5. The "because clause" should be adjusted according to the premise that needs the most clarifying. (127-128).

Finally, Bensel-Meyers suggests that the logical thesis statement helps build a miniature outline by showing the different logical steps that an argument can take. Summarizing the enthymeme, she states, can help to figure out the steps that go into this outline. But first, the essential parts must be identified. This includes the terms: A, A* (first term repeated), B, and C. The verbs of both clauses: V1 and V2. Next, she offers an outline of the steps, and provides an example.

**Introduction**
You want to know if whales are fish or mammals?

**Body**

A-A*
Whales certainly look and act like fish, don’t they? They swim in the ocean, have slippery skin, and eat other fish.

A*-V2
But, you know, they are also different than fish. They don’t lay eggs like fish do.

C
And their body temperature stays fairly warm even when the ocean is very, very cold. They are warm-blooded.

B-C
As you know, this isn’t true for fish. Their temperature changes with their surroundings. Only mammals are warm-blooded.

**Conclusion**

A-B
That means the answer to your question is that whales are mammals not fish. (168)
She admits that not all arguments will progress in this way. But the enthymeme helps reveal the terms and gets the writer to discover the essential parts of the argument that need discussion.

Bensel-Meyers presents the enthymeme a bit differently from the other authors. The enthymeme consists of the conclusion and the least acceptable premise in the "because clause". The most acceptable premise is usually assumed between the writer and the audience, and this means that it is not discussed as much as the other two. However, this does not mean that arguments do not have their faults. Again, like the other authors, she suggests turning the enthymeme into a full syllogism in order to figure out its truth and validity, plus whether the audience will accept the missing premise. If they do not, then she suggests that it is placed in the "because clause". Bensel-Meyers, therefore, makes a concerted effort toward making students aware that they must bring forth as well as back up what they say, rather than keep things hidden and not discussed in their essays. Additionally, her example of the logical thesis statement building an outline provides a basic example for students to follow.

However, I should also note something that is different from the other authors as well. Bensel-Meyers seems to spend a short amount of time on discussing the distribution of the enthymeme's terms, to test whether it is valid. She recommends constructing the enthymeme into a syllogism. In order to do so, the terms must be identified. After they are identified, they must be repeated at least once. Granted this process helps students to examine and to test their arguments, but one wonders whether students might need a few weeks in syllogistic reasoning before they begin to
understand the enthymeme. Since so many of the authors seem to equate the enthymeme to the syllogism, then it is understandable that this process of determining whether an enthymeme is valid is similar to or the same as the process of determining whether a syllogism is valid.

Now that we have looked at all the Freshman English text authors, it is time to turn to Maxine Hairston. She can also be classified under rhetorical aims as will be demonstrated below. I looked at six of her books on composition, but only three mentioned the enthymeme. These three books were first, second, and third editions of *A Contemporary Rhetoric*. The first edition was written in 1974, the second in 1978, and the third in 1982. The first edition differs from the second and third, while the second and third editions contain the same information on the enthymeme. It might be interesting to see if Hairston goes through any changes from the first to the second and third editions.

The first edition submits enthymemes as "syllogisms that omit one of the three statements" (200). Hairston says that an enthymeme might appear in a discussion sounding like this: "Jones an Eskimo? Oh he couldn't be. He's a blond." The person saying this leaves out the major premise, "No Eskimos have blond hair," because "it is so obvious that it is not worth mentioning" (200). Most people use this "abbreviated form" in order to save time and avoid spelling out assumptions and generalizations that underlie their reasoning. But often times when enthymemes are "expanded into their full form," the major premise "proves to be unsound" (200).

In the second and third editions, Hairston introduces enthymemes as "condensed syllogisms from which one premise, usually the major one, has
been omitted” (3rd ed. 330). Note that she adds the word “condensed” to her definition. Hairston is also a bit more specific in talking about the statement that is omitted. It is not just “one of the three statements.” Instead it is “one premise, usually the major one” that is omitted. One could conjecture that her specificity comes from a movement that encourages writers to consider their audiences. The major premise, known to some as the underlying assumption, affects what writers expect their audiences to accept, believe, and understand. She even includes a subtitle that directs students toward looking for their major premises, emphasizing it even more.

Enthymemes establish probability. That is why they are used. For example, if a person is talking with a medical doctor about politics and this person reasons that the doctor would be a conservative on most issues, then the underlying premise would be that most doctors are political conservatives. But looking at this reasoning in full syllogistic form, the reasoning is invalid because the middle term, medical doctors, is not distributed. Like Bensel-Meyers, Hairston seems to think the distribution of terms is important—that students should check whether their enthymemes are in fact valid. Hairston also points out that even if the middle term is not distributed the person still might have some merit in their reasoning if they can back it up through personal experiences, reading, and observations. She also points out that "enthymemes like [this one] are cause and effect arguments of high probability even though the major premises cannot be called absolute truths" (201).

In the second and third editions, Hairston sticks with the claim that the enthymeme helps writers establish probability. She offers similar examples to
make her point. But before Hairston states that students can establish their reasoning based upon their experiences, readings, and observations, she mentions that they can rarely generalize about the opinions of all of any class, again reinforcing the idea that students can deal in probabilities, but they should really look at their major premises to make sure that “the unstated premises are sound, if not absolutely airtight” (3rd ed. 331).

She moves on to describing how categorical syllogisms (syllogisms in which the major and minor premises are absolute) and enthymemes help students to write their essays. First, students learn how to follow their pattern of thinking and test its truth and validity. Thus, a student who is attempting to convince the dean that he should be exempted from taking algebra because it does not apply to his profession of nursing finds that the major premise would be that no student should be required to take a course that will not be of use to him. This helps the student understand that he placed himself in a position in which the major premise is very difficult to defend.

Second, students learn how to construct arguments using syllogistic reasoning. For example, say a student wishes to write a paper convincing the federal government that it should pay the campaign expenses of major political candidates. Taking a stand on the issue proves not to be a problem. Clarifying the reasons for thinking this way is a problem. If the student uses syllogistic reasoning, she can begin with her conclusion and work backwards. She writes out her opinion, “I am for federal funding of political candidates because I think the present system is unfair.” Then she finds some kind of backing for it by writing down reasons, such as “It favors candidates who have the support of wealthy people.” Next, she combines the reasons into the
major premise. It reads, "'Any system of campaign funding that favors one class over another, encourages corruption, and is undemocratic should be changed.'" The minor premise reads, "'The present system of campaign funding does have these things.'" The conclusion is, of course, the opinion that she stated first.

Hairston mentions that if the student feels that the conclusion needs more backing, she can construct a second syllogism to serve as the basis for the conclusion. On a final note, Hairston believes that if students remember to look at their premises when they make a statement, then they improve their thinking and writing.

The categorical syllogism and the enthymeme get pretty much the same treatment in the second and third editions. Again, they both still help students look at their thinking then test its validity and truth. They also get students to use syllogistic reasoning in putting together arguments. But her method for performing the syllogistic reasoning changes. She condenses it. Students first state the conclusion, then discover the basis for it. Next they work out the syllogism, presenting major and minor premises plus conclusion. Students then prove the premises by providing reasoning or examples. Finally, they put the argument on paper by expanding and supporting their premises. She does not include the idea that students can write a second syllogism if they feel that their conclusion needs it.

From this discussion, it is easy to see the many ways in which author's see the enthymeme. There seems to be a major consensus that it exists under logic, which is partially true. But they seem to ignore that the enthymeme actually incorporates the other appeals as well. There also seems to be a
consensus that the enthymeme is something less than a syllogism. It is either incomplete, abbreviated, hidden, or a form of it. For some reason, this seems to still limit the enthymeme in what it can actually do. If the textbooks continue to view it this way, then they are missing out on the other things that it can do as well, such as structure an argument and provide rhetorical strategies for students with which to write their papers.

If more authors study the enthymeme and incorporate it into their textbooks, then students might actually learn something about it. But before they do, something here must be said to both the theorists and the pedagogists. It is of the utmost importance that all those interested in the enthymeme come to some sort of consensus about it.

As in the Thomas Conley article, "The Enthymeme in Perspective," if we can agree on at least the things that most of the authors are saying, then maybe we can come to some sort of consensus. He lists the following "agreements" about the enthymeme. First, the enthymeme is a deductive kind of argument that is used to achieve persuasion. Second, the enthymeme must not be reduced to the formalist conception of the truncated syllogism. Third, if it is expressed as such, then it is expressed that way for practical reasons, such as not insulting the audience's intelligence. Fourth, the premises of the enthymeme are probabilities, but they may employ certainties. This dependence upon probabilities makes it rhetorical. Fifth, if an enthymeme is expressed as a truncated syllogism, then the implied premises are supplied by the writer and the audience. Finally, viewed rhetorically, the enthymeme uses all appeals, logos as well as ethos and pathos (169).
But if we as rhetors continue to go in many directions, then we are destined to participate in the continuing discussion about the enthymeme that has been occurring for over two thousand years. This does not mean to say that we should begin agreeing on just anything, but we should look at those things we do agree on and go from there. Because if we don’t begin to agree, then we are going to affect the way in which the enthymeme is treated in the textbooks—maybe it won’t be treated at all. To repeat, I believe that James C. Raymond sums up this comment best:

One reason for this neglect, of course, has been the absence of a consensus about the meaning of [the enthymeme]; as long as confusion and disagreement prevail . . . in the scholarly journals there [can] be little chance of clarity in the textbooks.

(150)

I tend to agree with this position.


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