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RHETORICAL

For twenty centuries "rhetoric" was the educator of the young and the theory of speech in the West—as the classicist Werner Jaeger called it, "the first humanism." The three and a half centuries of modernity since Bacon and Descartes have been in this respect an interlude. British empiricism and French rationalism have had a long and glorious run, but a revival of rhetoric has been evident since the 1960's in the study of literature and speech. And a sense of how to do things with words has spread now to other inquiries, to philosophers ruminating on speech acts or to linguists on the pragmatics of conversation.

Rhetoric in the late twentieth century has had to be reinvented in ignorance of its past. Yet the mathematician who reflects on the standard of proof in geometry, the economist who notes that the Fed is a speaker with intent, the political scientist who

wonders amidst his regression equations if politics should after all be reduced to public opinion polls, all are practicing rhetoric. When they reflect in particular on their own scholarship, they are practicing the "rhetoric of inquiry."

Rhetoric has traditionally been defined in two ways. The narrow definition is Plato's, made popular in the nineteenth century by the romantic elevation of sincerity to the status of the chief virtue. Rhetoric in the Platonic definition is cosmetic. Journalists use the cosmetic definition in their news stories and philosophers in their seminars. When the newspapers want to castigate a politician's obscuring blather and thirty-second spot on flag burning, they write "Campaign Mired in Rhetoric." The philosophy seminar uses "rhetoric" to attack the ornament that clutters up the clear and distinct idea.

In Plato's language, rhetoric is associated especially with those democratic institutions disdained by men of taste, such as assemblies or law courts. "You attempt to refute me," says Socrates in the *Gorgias*, "in a rhetorical fashion, as they understand refuting in the law courts. . . . But this sort of refutation is quite useless for getting at the truth." Or in the *Phaedrus*: "[H]e who is to be a competent rhetorician need have nothing at all to do, they say, with truth in considering things which are just or good, or men who are so, whether by nature or by education. For in the courts, they say, nobody cares for truth about these matters, but for what is convincing."¹

A broader definition derives from Aristotle. *The Rhetoric*, 1.2.1, defines its title-term as (to quote George Kennedy's new translation) "an ability, in each [particular case], to see the available means of persuasion." Of course the Greeks, ever talkers and fighters, distinguished sharply between persuasion [*peitho*] and violence [*bia*]. Their literature is filled with speeches of persuasion weighing against the violent alternative. The Athenians at the height of their power in the Peloponnesian War sneer at "a great mass of words that nobody would believe," mere rhetoric. They tell the Melians, their victims, that as a matter of realism in foreign policy "the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel."² Their abandonment of sweet persuasion proves to be unwise. Or again: King Priam of Troy, prostrate before Achilles, pleads eloquently for the body of his son, linking in his final words the very instruments of persuasion and of violence: "I put my lips to the hands of the man who has killed my children."

All that moves us without violence, then, is persuasion, the realm of rhetoric. It

¹Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 471e, and *Phaedrus*, trans. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 272d. Compare *Gorgias* 473e-74a: "Polus, I am not one of your statesmen. . . . The many I dismiss"; cf. 471e; 502e on rhetoric as mere flattery; and *Phaedrus* 260a, 275e, 277e, 267a-b, 261c-d, 262c, among other places, where Plato expresses his contempt for law courts and democratic assemblies, as against those who know.

²Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 5:89. The opposition of *peitho* and *bia* is finely discussed by John T. Kirby in "The 'Great Triangle' in Early Greek Rhetoric and Poetics," *Rhetorica* 8 (1990): 213-28. The line from the *Iliad* is 24:506 of the Lattimore translation.

would therefore include logic and fact as much as metaphor and story. "Logic," as logicians have been making steadily clearer in the century past, is not an unargued realm. Logic can be Aristotelian, first-order predicate, deontic, modal, fuzzy, relevant, multivalued, informal, epistemic, paraconsistent, and so forth. Likewise "fact" is not to be determined by kicking stones or knocking tables. That a fact is a fact relative only to a conceptual scheme is no longer controversial, if it ever was: Facts are constructed by words.³ As Niels Bohr said, "It is wrong to think that the task of physics is to find out how nature is. Physics concerns what we can say about nature. . . . We are suspended in language. . . . The word 'reality' is also a word, a word which we must learn to use correctly."⁴ That is to say, appeals to experimental findings are as much a part of a broad-church definition of rhetoric as are appeals to the good character of the speaker. Mill's logic of strict implication is as much rhetoric as is the anaphora of Whitman's poetry. In this definition, a science as much as a literature has a rhetoric.⁵

But surely, someone will reply, the broad definition Goes Too Far. Some Eleatic Stranger will use the figure of argument *si omnia, nulla*—that is, "If rhetoric is everything, then it is nothing [since it is not distinct from anything]."⁶ Deploying the figure of argument from consequences, such a questioner will demand, If we do not use the word narrowly, what is to keep Science, with its well-known Scientific Method, which entails the use of numbers and lab coats and so forth, separate from the rest of the culture? What is to prevent the advertisers from invading the labo-

³The conclusion has become a cliché among scientists. See, e.g., Michael Polanyi (crystallography) in *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Ludwik Fleck (bacteriology) in *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, trans. Frederick Bradley and Thaddeus J. Trenn, ed. Trenn and Robert K. Merton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979; in German, 1935); and Steven Weinberg (theoretical physics) in "Beautiful Theories" (revision of the Second Annual Gordon Mills Lecture on Science and the Humanities, University of Texas, 5 April 1983).

⁴Ruth Moore, *Niels Bohr: The Man, His Science, and the World They Changed* (1966; reprint, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 406.

⁵See Charles Bazerman, *Shaping Written Knowledge: The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); John Angus Campbell, "Charles Darwin: Rhetorician of Science," in *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences*, ed. John S. Nelson, D. N. McCloskey, and Allan Megill (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 69–86; Harry M. Collins and Trevor H. Pinch, *Frames of Meaning: The Social Construction of Extraordinary Science* (London: Routledge, 1982); Maurice A. Finocchiaro, *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning: Rhetorical Foundations of Logic and Scientific Method* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1980); Peter Galison, *How Experiments End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (New York: Norton, 1989); Rom Harré, "Some Narrative Conventions of Scientific Discourse," in *Narrative in Culture*, ed. Christopher Nash (London: Routledge, 1990), 81–101; Rom Harré, *Varieties of Realism: A Rationale for the Natural Sciences* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Mary Hesse, *Models and Analogies in Science* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963); Imre Lakatos, *Proofs and Refutations: The Logic of Mathematical Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Michael Mulvey, *The Word and the World: Explorations in the Form of Sociological Analysis* (Winchester, Mass.: Allen & Unwin, 1985); Mark Steiner, *Mathematical Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

⁶*Si omnia, nulla*, by the way, is fallacious here, as often. In physics one acknowledges that all objects above absolute zero have some heat, and that absolute zero is never in practice observed; this does not imply that heat is nothing. All speech acts have rhetorical force.

ratories? To speak of a "rhetoric of science" is surely oxymoronic, or maybe just moronic.

With similar indignation, the modern books from which students of philosophy learn logic wax wroth at the notion of reasoning cut loose from valid syllogism. L. Susan Stebbing's textbook, first published in 1943 but reissued many times since, takes an italicized stand against merely persuasive arguments: "We can *know* our conclusions to be true only when we *know* both that the premises are true and that they imply the conclusions. For this purpose we *reason*."⁷ She goes on to shout down "the orator," whose aim, she asserts, "is to induce belief at all costs," and whose "appeal is not to reason but to uncontrolled emotion, not to considerations logically relevant but to prejudice." Irving Copi's much-reissued textbook on logic, like most others, segregates his chapter on "Analogy and Probable Inference" from the properly syllogistic logic treated in the body of the book, though he admits disarmingly that of course "most of our own everyday inferences [presumably even the philosopher's] are by analogy."⁸ Copi condescends to rhetoric (75, 242), yet concedes that in "olden times . . . logic and rhetoric were more closely connected than they are today" (25). Stebbing is less broad-church on the matter, but she wrote in the time of Hitler and Mussolini. She can be forgiven a little uncontrolled emotion and prejudice in her rejection of "rhetorical" demagoguery.

If the Stranger is an American intellectual, the reply to a broad definition of rhetoric may be accompanied by some harsh words about Madison Avenue, for American intellectuals are unhappy with the persuasive speech called advertising. It has no effect on them, of course, but enslaves *hoi polloi* and *profanum vulgus*. It absorbs only one-half of one percent of the American GNP, but advertising is the most visible target for the narrow meaning of rhetoric.⁹ In truth about a quarter of the national income derives from forms of persuasion.¹⁰

The clerisy has been taught by philosophers to claim "certitude," but certitude is not to be had; and a childish yearning for it has corrupted discourse. Narrowing persuasion down to a nub of philomathematical "proof" leaves unexamined what persuades reasonable people, including philosophers.

⁷L. Susan Stebbing, *A Modern Elementary Logic*, 5th ed., ed. C. W. Mundle (London: Methuen, 1965), 160.

⁸Irving Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 378. The attitude is not confined to symbolic logicians. Jacques Maritain in his scholastic *Formal Logic*, trans. I. Choquette (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946), 285-86, describes analogy as "a rough draft of induction," which "can furnish only probable knowledge, not certainty."

⁹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990* (Washington, D.C.: GPO), series 1381, SIC code 731; and series 691.

¹⁰Arjo Klamer and Donald McCloskey, "The Economy as Persuasion" (unpublished MS, Department of Economics, University of Iowa, Dec. 1990).

Philosophers have since Plato been the enemies of rhetoric; but since Aristotle, too, they have been among its defenders. As J. L. Austin put it (his "speech acts" is one of many philosophical rediscoveries of rhetoric without the name): "The truth of a statement may be connected importantly with the truth of another without it being the case that the one entails the other in the sole sort of sense preferred by obsessional logicians."¹¹ John Passmore notes in *Recent Philosophers* that "there are large classes of valid arguments which are not recognized as valid in formal systems" but "mathematical logicians have replied that such a logic could never be anything more than a miscellaneous hotch-potch and that the critics were confusing logic and rhetoric." Passmore continues: "In the 1970s, however, quite a few logicians, if still very much a minority, came to be dissatisfied with this defense. They were unhappy with the suggestion that a logic could be regarded as adequate which could give no account, in a large class of cases, of the difference between acceptable and unacceptable reasoning."¹²

That is one reason not to adopt the narrow, Platonic, and modern philosophical definition of rhetoric. But there is another reason to favor the broad definition: We need a word that does not make room for a distinction between mere persuasion and actual, timeless, godlike demonstration. We do not get that word if we waste rhetoric in the already crowded territory of ornament, decoration, embellishment, adornment, cosmetics, ornateness, flourish, floridity, frill, grandiloquence, ostentation, pose, affectation, pretension, posturing, airs, hot air, blather, bloviation, bombast, bullshit, malarkey, insincerity, runaround, disingenuousness, evasion, shiftiness, exaggeration, advertising, public relations, promotion, hoopla, hype, salesmanship, ballyhoo, manipulation, weasel-words, humbug, balderdash, put-on, rant, poppycock, bunk, drivel, bilge, tripe, bosh, rot, baloney, hypocrisy, cant, sham, subterfuge, trickery, bluff, deception, fabrication, pretense, connivance, deceit, dishonesty, hoax, chicanery, fraud, fakery, counterfeiting, con, cheating, falsehood, mendacity, and lying. (Is there a language richer than English in words of contempt for the misuses of persuasion?)

It is desirable to have a word that embraces the most elevated form of mathematical proof and the lowest form of character assassination, because if we do not have such a word, people will try to claim the higher ground, and falsely. Their arguments, they will claim, are demonstrative, by contrast with the "mere" rhetoric of their opponents. They are thereby freed of having to give an account of why.

The trick of claiming certitude as a way of avoiding serious persuasion is Plato's Trope. I hold in my hand a proof, such as they have in mathematics—not the

¹¹J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 54. Austin's book is a revision of lectures given in 1955.

¹²John Passmore, *Recent Philosophers* (1985; reprint, La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1990), 7–8.

wretched opinions they trade in the courts of law—that kings should be philosophers and philosophers kings. “Don’t you know that first-order predicate logic is enough to build a world upon?” the Platonist will ask in 1920. Or, to give examples from economic rhetoric, “Don’t you know that market capitalism is optimal, according to this blackboard proof?” “Don’t you know that capitalism labors under contradictions?” These have all been presented as demonstrative, but in each case the so-called demonstration has been merely an excuse not to argue on grounds that would persuade reasonable people.

To this the Eleatic Stranger will reply: What else is scientific and philosophical argument of the demonstrative sort but precisely an account of its own argument? A survey of philosophers, however, does not show much methodological self-consciousness. The later Wittgenstein is the main example of a self-conscious philosopher; there have been some notable followers.¹³ But the genre does not appear to have high status in philosophy, being associated with metaphilosophy rather than Doing Philosophy. A well-known American philosopher told me once that he did not read at all in the history of philosophy, admitting cheerfully an entire ignorance of, say, Hegel, “because I had to choose between reading *about* it or *doing* it.” (Economists have the same attitude towards methodology and the history of economic thought.) It seems to require some deviation from the analytic, English-speaking, do-rather-than-think-about school before a philosopher—Richard Rorty is an example—starts taking rhetorical questions seriously.¹⁴

Of course, some arguments are better than others. Recognizing that nonetheless they are all *arguments* does not entail slipping into a hot tub of “relativism.” One does not give up the ability to distinguish between the Ajax Kitchen Cleanser jingle and Gödel’s Proof by noting that both are designed with an audience in mind, with perlocutionary force, with patterns of repetition, with a style suited to the occasion, with an implied author, with metaphor, synecdoche, and all the rest.

¹³Stephen Toulmin, beginning with *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), and lately, with Albert R. Jonsen, in *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); John Passmore, *Philosophical Reasoning*, 2d ed. (London: Duckworth, 1970); James H. Fetzer, ed., *Principles of Philosophical Reasoning* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984). A relative handful of philosophers have looked seriously at philosophical style. Instances are Stanley Rosen, *The Limits of Analysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1980); Gary B. Madison, *Understanding: A Phenomenological-Pragmatic Analysis* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982); Martin Warner, *Philosophical Finesse: Studies in the Art of Rational Persuasion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Berel Lang, *The Anatomy of Philosophical Style* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). All four are distinguished works, and the last three are sophisticated, in every sense, about the rhetorical tradition. The work comes naturally to historians of philosophy (such as G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966]) or to philosophers in the Continental traditions of scholarship (such as H. G. Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980]).

¹⁴See Richard Rorty, “Philosophy as Science, as Metaphor, and as Politics,” in *The Institution of Philosophy: A Discipline in Crisis?* ed. A. Cohen and M. Dascal (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1989), 13–33; and also in the same collection, Carlin Romano’s explicit evocation of the rhetorical tradition in “The Illegality of Philosophy,” 199–216.

The usual way of attacking relativism among philosophers is to use The Philosopher's Friend, the rhetorical device of catching someone being committed to X at the very moment of arguing against X. Here X = Truth and The Real. It is the philosopher's *tu quoque*, "you also." Few philosophers go beyond it. They say: The relativist, in asserting the truth of relativism, must acknowledge a standard of truth.

Such reasoning must confront, however, the rhetorician's *tu quoque*: that you, O philosopher, are in turn arguing rhetorically, committed to rhetoric in your very argument *against* rhetoric and *for* a narrowing of logic. That is: Philosophical and scientific argument has a rhetoric, too, but it is largely unexamined. Plato, though imagining a realm of ideas without rhetoric, is the leading case, as for instance in the conversation-stopping myths dropped into the *Phaedrus*. Cicero joked in *De Oratore* (1.47) that Plato was the best rhetorician when making merry of rhetoric. To expose the rhetoric in science and philosophy, rhetoric capable of great mischief, we need to recognize that arguing, after all, is what is going on.

Take, for example, the following popular figure of philosophical reasoning—"I cannot judge your proposition unless I can 'analyze' it into the form of a valid syllogism with correct premises." It is the master trope of analytic philosophy, often expressed with contempt against some misled colleague: "I cannot find an actual *argument* in the work of Mr. Moron." The philosopher will say of an argument by analogy, for example, "It is helpful [above all the philosopher, like the man from the government, wishes to be helpful] to recast the argument so that it is logically valid. For in that case, all questions about its *soundness* can focus on the truth of the premises." But the philosopher is then free to supply the missing major or minor premise, and since these are unlimited in number, he can choose one that makes the resulting argument silly or sound, as he pleases. Such is the usual way that philosophers deal with "fallacies" or other arguments that their methods do not treat: drag the argument under the streetlight, deforming it as it is dragged. Philosophers should be worried that their methods require most of human reasoning to be mugged in this way.

Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst have recently pointed out that such cases involve a rhetorical contradiction.¹⁵ They observe that supplying a missing premise in a hostile way entails a contradiction at the level of pragmatic rules necessary for speech to be possible at all. In particular it implies that the speaker of the incomplete argument wishes to follow the principle of cooperation in speech (namely, that the argument can be made complete, and is intended to be made easily complete), yet also wishes to violate what has been called "the maxim of quality" (namely, that the argument is meant to be true). Van Eemeren and Grootendorst are illustrating the discovery of modern linguistics that the context of language is as crucial to its meaning as is its syntax.

¹⁵Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discourse* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1983), 179ff.

And one wonders if any proposition is *not* so analyzable, if sufficient pragmatic context is allowed. For example, any speech act can be reduced to syllogism (ridiculing people undermines their authority; people with less authority are less persuasive; and so forth to the conclusion that the argument ridiculed is overturned). Economists do the same thing. If I as an economically trained economic historian come upon an argument for trade as an engine of growth proffered by my historically trained colleague, my first impulse is to analyze it. That is, I supply some missing premise, remaking the argument into proper economics. Since I can supply it, I can make it as silly as I wish; and I do.

If we break argument into rhetoric and dialectic (as even Aristotle did), dialectic immediately takes a superior position and the sneering commences. The move is impelled by the long and lunatic European fascination with certitude, since Pythagoras showed by force of reason that not all numbers are ratios of whole numbers. Most reasoning is downgraded to mere persuasion or mere teaching or mere something else lacking the dignity of Truth Saying. Plato has Socrates offer ironic praise to the rhetoricians Tisias and Gorgias, "who realized that probability deserves more respect than truth, who could make trifles seem important and important points trifles by the force of their language."¹⁶

But, the Eleatic Stranger will retort, Why settle for mere persuasion? Why not reach for the certitude of Truth?

Good luck. Truth with a capital *T* is that God's-eye view that we lost some long time ago. The other, workaday truth with a small *t* is of course essential for living. But if someone finds a way of distinguishing truth from falsehood more elaborate than looking at the arguments and assessing how good they are (with whatever standards of argument we can think of in the conversation as it stands), it will be philosophical news. We have tried for 2,500 years to find an epistemological philosopher's stone and we have failed.

The Stranger will say in vexation, But this Rhetoric speaks of mere forms, not the substance of the arguments.

A literary criticism whose only categories are form and substance is a poor thing. Short of mental telepathy, humans convey substance through the details of form. They have no choice, and in using language with intent to alter another's thought they are "using rhetoric." The most abstract argument uses rhetoric; the plainest of styles is a rhetoric of plain speaking. Allan Nevins asserted that Lincoln "was the *least rhetorical of speakers*, caring nothing for mere art, and everything for simplicity, directness, lucidity and honesty" (italics supplied). Yet in supporting such an assertion, he had necessarily to contradict it: in Lincoln's writing, says Nevins, "the vocabulary and phrasing he had drawn from Shakespeare, the Bible and Blackstone

¹⁶Plato, *Phaedrus* 267a.

were sufficient clothing for his honest thoughts." The level of a writer's style is a rhetorical choice, which changes how readers think of the writer and his thoughts. In a speech of Lincoln's analyzing slavery in 1845, Nevins tells us, "A few lines of homely diction" were "as lucid as a Euclidian demonstration." But the Euclidian claim to demonstrate a truth of the world from a truth of definition is no less rhetorical than Lincoln's frequent use of proverbs and metaphors. Nevins stresses that Lincoln "thought always of the minds of his auditors and readers."¹⁷ But the master question of rhetoric is this very question of intended audience.

Yet how, says the Stranger, can we protect ourselves from arguments that sound True but are not? The Muses boasted to Hesiod, "We know how to speak many false things as though they were true."

An answer is suggested by the parallel question: How can we protect ourselves against evil philosophy or, for that matter, evil uses of the multiplication table? There does not appear to be a simple criterion of demarcation to separate the bad philosophy that leads to death camps from the good philosophy that leads to Trinity College. The logical positivists used to claim loudly that their method provided such a criterion; but the death camps had as much of British eugenic positivism (Karl Pearson's, for example) as of German idealistic metaphysics. One is struck at Auschwitz by the methodical, industrial character of the place, by the skillful use of the multiplication table and the methods of scientific note taking. There is no demarcation *within arithmetic* that tells which uses of the multiplication table are bad or good.

Aristotle speaks to the point: "And if it is argued that great harm can be done by unjustly using such power of words, this objection applies to all good things except for virtue [*kata pantōn tōn agathōn plēn aretēs*], and most of all to the most useful things" (*Rhet.* 1.1.13, Kennedy translation). Aristotle supplies the standards in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

We can protect ourselves, said Cato the Elder (according to Quintilian), by raising up *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, the good man skilled in speaking.¹⁸ The protection from evil in science and in other human affairs is not theory, whether philosophical or rhetorical, but education and ethics, matters of practice. The skilled physicist can lie about an experiment if he is a bad man, no matter what the method. The sociology and history of science have shown that methods are not mechanical, for all that Bacon wanted them to be so and for all that later scientists have claimed them to be so in pursuit of persuasion. Take the supreme good in scientific method, controlled experiment. The choice of the experiment, its operation, its interpretation, and its use

¹⁷Allan Nevins, "Lincoln and His Writings," in *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Philip van Doren Stern (New York: Random House, 1940), xvii-xxvi.

¹⁸Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, vol. 12, no. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), 1; cf. 1: 9.

all depend on human contexts of argument.¹⁹ The human contexts, happily or no, can be tilted. In fact, there is no way to untilt them. Better to be aware that argument is going on than to pretend that theory can protect us from evil as though by machinery. If the investigator is not good in the wider sense—not merely *peritus* but *bonus*—only by accident will good methods lead to good results.

I admit that this last assertion is only weakly supported, if at all, in the history of science (but the proposition that all who follow a correct method do in fact produce good science is even less well supported). Many bad people have been good scientists: Newton was at the least a morally unattractive man, maybe worse; Pasteur kept double laboratory books. The best scientists were not always paragons. But nonetheless the only check we have is moral. An epistemology with any use in the world ends in ethics. The heat of the attacks on rhetoric by epistemologists, beginning with Plato, has an ethical source. No one would be so passionate about a theory of knowing if it were not actually a theory of moral action.

In the end, a program of rhetorical candor is a program of ethics. It is a joke among teachers of writing that the best advice is “Be good. Then write naturally.” Plato came to the same conclusion. At the end of the *Gorgias*, Socrates recommends a new rhetoric, philosophy by name: “And that rhetoric is to be used for this one purpose always, of pointing to what is just” (527c). Plato’s paradox is that Socrates embodies the recommendation by being the best of the rhetoricians, “the best and wisest and most righteous man.”

Plato would reduce argument to two men in dialectic; Descartes would reduce it to one man perceiving. But that justice of which Plato speaks is meaningless in a community of Cartesian solipsists. (Bertrand Russell tells somewhere of a woman who wrote to him declaring that she was a solipsist, and wondering why there were not more of them.) A third and final reason for a broader definition of rhetoric is that it rejects the solipsistic standard of proof explicit in Descartes and implicit in Plato. The solipsistic standard is of the lonely mind perceiving reality direct. It has not worked. What we know, and can discuss, is what we know together, not the subjective or the objective but the conjunctive. Rhetoric is the science of the conjunctive; it is the pragmatics of democracy, and stands against the rule of philosopher kings.

Donald Mc Closkey

¹⁹See Bruno Latour and Stephen Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Sage, 1979); Barry Barnes and David Edge, eds., *Science in Context: Readings in the Sociology of Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982); Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Harry M. Collins, *Changing Order: Replication and Induction in Scientific Practice* (London: Sage, 1985); Mulkay, *The Word and the World*; Galison, *How Experiments End*; Trevor J. Pinch, *Confronting Nature: The Sociology of Solar-Neutrino Detection* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1986).