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Pennsylvania
Scholars Series

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.

Introduction

.....Gerard A. Hauser

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.: Reviving the Dialogue of Philosophy and
Rhetoric

.....Gerard A. Hauser

Rhetoric and Communication in Philosophy

.....Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.

Henry Johnstone's Still Unacknowledged Contributions to Contemporary
Argumentation Theory

.....Jean Goodwin

Philosophical Rhetoric

.....Donald Phillip Verene

Oh Popoi! Henry Johnstone, Homer, and the History of Rhetoric

.....Mari Lee Mifsud

Prisoners of Conscience, Self-Risk, and the Wedge: The Case of Dietrich
Bonhoeffer

.....Gerard A. Hauser

The Dialogue of Philosophy & Rhetoric

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The Dialogue of Philosophy & Rhetoric

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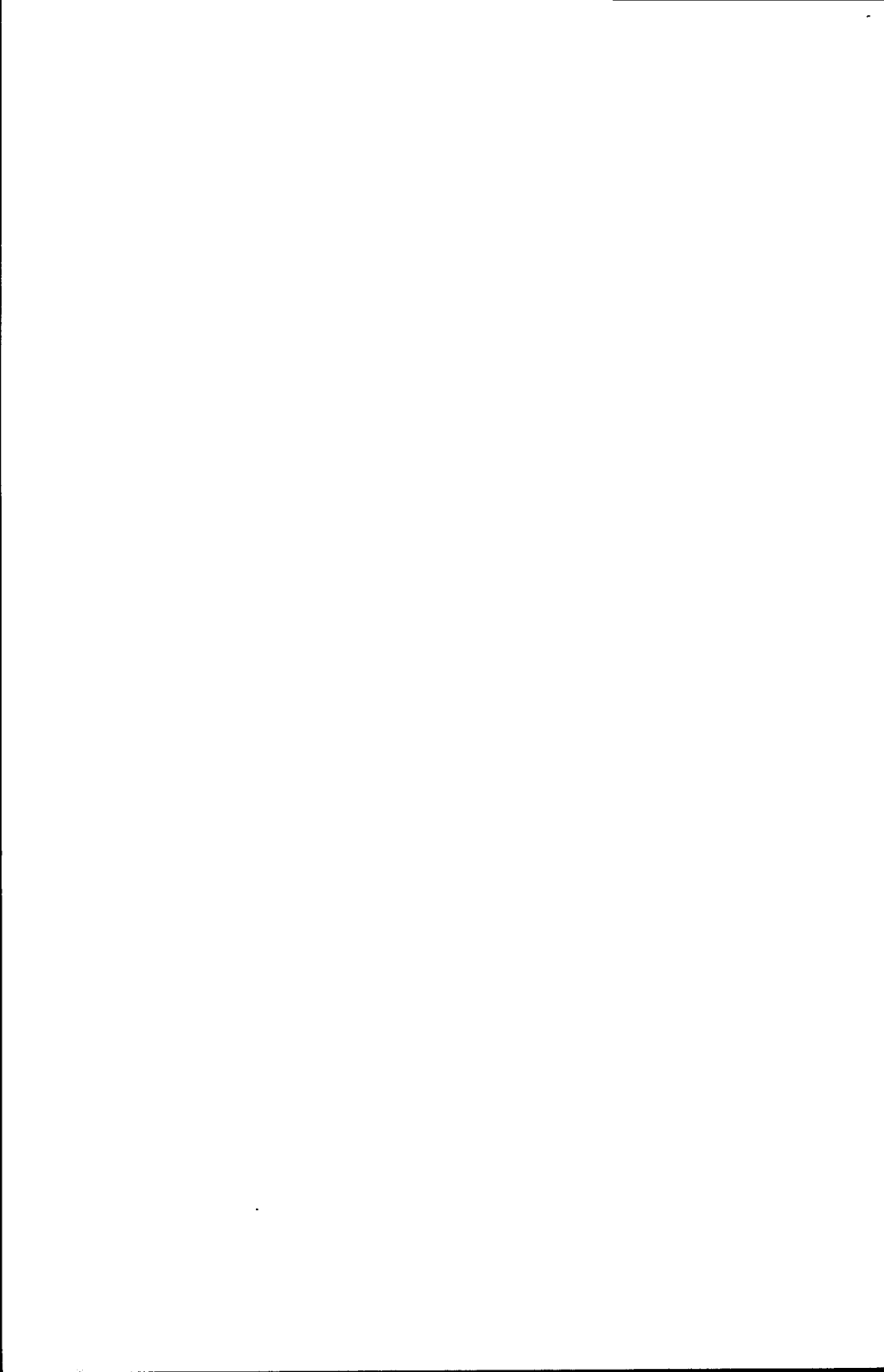
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Introduction

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates responds to Calicles' preference for the life of action over that of introspection by acclaiming him a test of gold: "I am convinced that if you agree with the opinions held in my soul, then at last we have attained the actual truth. For I observe that anyone who is to test adequately a human soul for good or evil living must possess three qualifications, . . . knowledge, good will, and frankness." In the modern era, Socrates' vision of philosophical exploration returned to the scene in the writing and teaching of Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. It is difficult to imagine a more Socratic attitude than that expressed in his analysis of argument as an *ad hominem* appeal addressed to one's interlocutor, as characterized by its ability to drive a wedge that separated person from argument, and yet that was made to the other *con amore*.

Henry was among a handful of leading figures responsible for philosophy's rebirth of interest in rhetoric during the last half of the twentieth century. He, along with Richard McKeon, was foremost among American philosophers who developed a sustained line of inquiry that seriously considered rhetoric to be an interesting form of discourse, one that could illumine philosophical speculation and inform us on the character of philosophical argumentation. With his death on February 18, 2000, rhetorical studies lost a dear friend and colleague; the academy lost a giant.

Henry's contribution certainly could be gauged by the magnitude of his published work and scholarly accomplishments. He was a publishing author for 50 years from 1948 through 1998. During that time he authored and edited nearly 180 articles, books, collections, and reviews. He was the founding editor of the international journal *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, which he oversaw off and on for the better part of thirty years. Colleagues in the National Communication Association and in the American Society for the History of Rhetoric honored him for his lifetime achievements and contributions to the study of rhetoric and argumentation. In today's environment, in which academicians are assessed with the marketplace logic of productivity, Henry certainly would measure up. But these conventional measures of an academician's attainments leave volumes unsaid about the qualities that made Henry a luminary figure and invaluable friend to our discipline.

Henry reopened the dialogue between philosophy and rhetoric. More than Richard McKeon, who situated rhetoric within his analysis of the semantics of philosophical inquiry, or Ch. Perelman and Ernesto Grassi, who found in rhetoric more satisfying answers to the character of human

argument than those of positivism, Henry sought to engage rhetoric rather than appropriate it.

His research focused on informal logic and the nature of philosophical argumentation. His early writings on these topics made a clear distinction between philosophy and rhetoric and, in neo-Kantian fashion, found little to value in the latter. His later embrace of rhetoric, to the point where he maintained that all philosophical argument involved rhetoric due to its addressed character as *argumentum ad hominem*, emerged in the public dialectic of his writings. His published work exemplified his philosophical position by seriously entertaining the possibility that his initial analysis was flawed. In coming to terms with that proposition, he engaged rhetoric as a mode of discourse that merited serious consideration and the theories of rhetoricians as positions that could not be easily dismissed.

This same attitude of serious engagement was evidenced in his professional life. He was a prime mover in the rapprochement between philosophy and rhetoric through his sponsorship of Perelman's first trip to the United States, his co-sponsorship, with Robert Oliver, of the Penn State conference on Philosophy and Rhetoric in the early 60s that led to the founding of the journal that bears that name, his continuous series of scholarly essays in our journals and those of his discipline exploring the philosophical and rhetorical character of argument, his papers presented at our scholarly meetings and our universities in which he debated the defining terms of philosophy and rhetoric, his co-taught seminars in Philosophy and Rhetoric with Carroll Arnold and later with me, and his service on countless master's and doctoral committees. No venue or audience interested in considering the nature of argument was beneath him. It is difficult to imagine that rhetorical studies would be enjoying its current renaissance of interest in the humanities and its recent high level of scholarly attainments that is attracting favorable notice in other disciplines without the pioneering work of Henry. He, as much as anyone, opened an interdisciplinary space for rhetoric and philosophy to reinvent their relationship.

Those who knew Henry through his work are familiar with papers that are models of analytic precision, his capacity to express arguments with a clarity that often masked their subtlety, and his unfailing fairness in representing and responding to positions he was refuting. We tend to associate such high intellectual achievements with exceptional intellectual prowess. Certainly there is no discounting Henry's genius. Genius without wisdom, however, is unlikely to offer deep insight into concerns that truly matter in their human significance. Henry's exemplary habits of mind that produced a legacy of high intellectual accomplishments were matched by remarkable

personal virtues that preceded and informed his intellectual practices. He understood that you could not learn from others if you were blind and deaf to what they had to offer. His generosity disposed him to suspend his own views in order to hear what others had to say and entertain it seriously. Henry understood that searching for what lay within another's expression, even if innocent and poorly formulated, could lead to insight. His magnanimity led him to find something of value in even the most poorly formulated expression and credit his conversational partner with the insight. Henry understood that his persona could inhibit those junior to him. His humility led him to subordinate his own work in order to inquire about the intellectual passions of those whose company he shared. He was a master at drawing the most unsuspecting partners into intellectual companionship and, without their being conscious of it, touching their lives by his personal virtues.

This volume in the series on Pennsylvania scholars who have made significant contributions to the study of rhetoric and human communication includes essays by four colleagues who worked with Henry in a variety of capacities. Jean Goodwin was a contributor to *Philosophy and Rhetoric* who knew Henry as an editor. Her essay on Henry's contributions to the study of argument reminds us of the extent to which he was ahead of his time in formulating original positions on many of the critical issues that have dominated the field of argumentation over the past half-century. She also reminds us of how underappreciated Henry's contributions are. Donald Verene was Henry colleague in the Philosophy department at Penn State for over a decade and succeeded him as editor of *Philosophy and Rhetoric* during the 1980s. His essay discusses the way in which rhetoric interested Henry and the differences between his view and that of the Ernesto Grassi. Mari Lee Mifsud was Henry's final doctoral student and his co-author on the penultimate publication in his long career. Her essay analyzes an exclamatory phrase from Homer's *Odyssey* and extrapolates from it an understanding of *self* consonant with Henry's theory of the self. My association with Henry was as his colleague at Penn State for a quarter century, in various editorial capacities with *Philosophy and Rhetoric* and as his co-instructor of the Seminar in Philosophy and Rhetoric. My essay explores Henry's doctrines on the *self* and the *wedge* as critical tools for discussing the dissident letter, "After Ten Years," written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In addition, it includes Henry's previously published essay, "Rhetoric and Communication in Philosophy," in which he reverses the then (c. 1970) dominant tendency to explore how philosophy informs thought about rhetoric and communication to consider the opposite alternative, and a previously published

overview of Henry's emergent position on the relationship between rhetoric and philosophical argument accompanied by a bibliography of his work.

The original essays were first presented on a panel to honor Henry Johnstone at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association in November 2000. Richard Gregg was to serve as chair of that panel and had invited the participants to share their papers in this volume. His untimely death in February 2001 has denied us the insights on Henry he was to share in the introduction to this collection. Dick's passing, along with Henry's a year earlier, tempts us to mark the end of an era in rhetorical studies at Penn State University. But that would overlook the true legacy of Henry, Dick, Henry's long time associate Carroll Arnold, and others who taught and wrote about rhetoric there from the 1960s to the present. They were instrumental in starting a sustainable intellectual conversation on the relationship of philosophy and rhetoric. It was a conversation of unusual depth, passion, and integrity. As they have passed from the scene, the conversation continues. What finer legacy could any scholar hope to leave?

Gerard Hauser
Boulder, Colorado
August 14, 2003

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.: Reviving the Dialogue of Philosophy and Rhetoric

Gerard A. Hauser

The twentieth-century renaissance of rhetorical studies was a multidisciplinary phenomenon. It commenced with the exodus of public speaking teachers from English departments at the beginning of the century to found departments of speech; broadened its base by mid-century through the research of scholars of antiquity, American and British history, literature, political science, sociology, and speech; saw a return to prominence during the last quarter of the century in writing theory and instruction; and emerged by century's end in the form of new rhetorics that burgeoned as fruitful paradigms in intellectual and social histories, literary and social criticism, and a variety of theoretical works across the humanities and interpretive social sciences. This movement included revival of the ancient dialogue between philosophy and rhetoric that had lain moribund since the Enlightenment. The renewal of this discussion was particularly important.

From its inception at the beginning of the century as an area of inquiry, rhetorical theory had been largely confined to historical investigation of significant works of the past. Its manifestations were in the form of intellectual histories, such as W. S. Howell's *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* and Walter Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, or commentaries on specific doctrines of historically important systems and theories of rhetoric. However, by mid-century, philosophers such as Richard McKeon and Chaim Perelman were turning to rhetoric as a mode of thought and analysis that could address basic questions of knowledge and action in an age lacking a dominant set of shared assumptions. During the last third of the century these important but relatively isolated initial statements exploded into a flurry of intellectual work aimed at theorizing rhetoric in new terms. A leading figure in this renewed dialogue—both as participant and facilitator—was Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.

Among rhetoricians, Johnstone is known as the founding and long-time editor of the international journal *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. The journal, inaugurated in 1968, heralded a new era in which rhetorical theory, as a

domain of scholarship limited to historical interpretation, was surpassed through a fresh examination of basic epistemological, ontological, and ethical assumptions underlying human symbol use and what this might tell us of humans as symbol-using animals. For rhetoricians in the United States, the journal marked the beginning of an interdisciplinary, international dialogue on their subject. In addition to this invaluable editorial contribution, Johnstone also was a prolific scholar whose philosophical analyses of rhetoric made an important contribution to our understanding of its character and possibilities. His *oeuvre* provides a legacy that exemplifies the *raison d'être* scholarly inquiry.

Johnstone published more than 170 scholarly papers, books, and reviews across the last half of the twentieth century, with his first paper appearing in the Polish journal *Przegląd Filozoficzny* in 1948 and the most recent in *Rhetoric Review* in 2000. His work included original formulations on formal and informal logic, the nature of philosophical argument, the problem of the self, rhetorical figures, and Greek literary antiquity, with his reflections on the nature of philosophical argument being his signature contribution.

Johnstone had an abiding concern for validity. His papers, books, and edited anthologies express the development of this concern through his own formulation and analysis of what counts as a valid philosophical argument and his participation in an international dialogue with philosophers and rhetoricians that developed around his position. Collectively they are a testimony to open-minded consideration of the arguments on their merits and the resulting alteration and refinement of his position as the argument warranted.

Johnstone is most centrally identified with the thesis that all philosophical argument relies on its capacity to make a valid assertion within the framework of one's interlocutor. Quite unlike his Belgian counterparts Ch. Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca¹, who advocated that philosophical validity resided in appeals that could gain the adherence of a universal audience, Johnstone maintained that philosophical arguments were valid only insofar as they were deemed valid by those to whom they were addressed (1952b). For Johnstone, all arguments were bounded by the system of presuppositions in which they were situated. In his view, a proposition without an underlying system of presuppositions was open to the charge of being an arbitrary assertion. One justified one's claims, including alterations in one's assertions, with an eye to achieving consistency with the presuppositions on which the system rested. Six years before Stephen Toulmin's *The*

*Uses of Argument*² appeared, in which he advanced his much acclaimed theory of field dependent argument, Johnstone's article on the *argumentum ad hominem* was advancing his own thesis, which cut across the grain of universality as the benchmark of validity.

In his original formulation, philosophical argument was a rational enterprise in which the terms of engagement were agreement on the validity of an assertion based on its ability to expose the inconsistency in another's claims. Since the validity of a philosophical argument was dependent on its consistency with its system of presuppositions, critique would be taken as valid only insofar as it revealed an inconsistency between claim and presuppositions or undermined the presuppositions themselves, thus their *ad hominem* character. Although Johnstone did not have formal validity in mind, his initial formulation did require rational assent to the force of an argument once it was apparent that it had exposed an inconsistency in one's position.

This formulation of the *ad hominem* was itself problematic, however, because it created an opposition between *argumentum ad rem*, in which the truth or falsity of a position is assessed regardless of its presuppositions, and *argumentum ad hominem*, in which truth or falsity are determined within the framework of the antagonist's position. This tension created a conflict within Johnstone's position. On the one hand, an internal inconsistency was simply a case of poor reasoning, or a matter of fact that was exposed by an *ad rem* argument, which was contrary to Johnstone's thesis. On the other hand, an attack on presuppositions was always subject to denial by the antagonist as itself based on a false set of presuppositions. In this case, the *ad hominem* could not guarantee that one's antagonist would acknowledge the inconsistency. Without a formal mechanism to compel accedence, Johnstone's position seemed to show that the validity of a philosophical argument was arbitrary.

The rationalistic character of the *ad hominem* thesis posed a dilemma that compromised the integrity of its initial formulation. Johnstone quickly realized that he had a *consistency problem*, both with his own theory and, from the antagonist's point of view, with the apparent insulation of presuppositions against *ad hominem* attacks as themselves arbitrary. In other words, since the conclusions of every philosophical system are open to cogent and coherent attack from other philosophical systems, no conclusions are ever decisively secured as true. On these terms, the entire philosophical enterprise becomes, as he put it, a logomachy, a war of words (1978a, 135). It is worth noting that more than a decade before Jürgen Habermas began pub-

lishing papers and books outlining his communication-based theory of validity,³ Johnstone had identified the addressed character of validity as the basis for warranted assent and had recognized the irremediable defeasibility of this position on its own terms.

A second consequence of Johnstone's original formulation was its antagonistic stance toward rhetoric. Johnstone's rationalistic formulation allowed no room for acknowledging the rhetorical character of the *argumentum ad hominem* because to do so would have meant that validity was not entirely a matter of rational consistency and that hortatory considerations bore on what any given arguer regarded as valid. For Johnstone, philosophy was rational argument directed at a system of presuppositions; rhetoric was non-rational appeal to the individual (which entailed the person's susceptibilities). Philosophical arguments were bilateral appeals that adhered to a neo-Kantian principle of invoking only those argumentative moves open to one's interlocutor. Rhetorical arguments, on the other hand, were unilateral appeals. They were strategically directed at the susceptibilities of one's interlocutor in ways that could not be generalized as a permissible argumentative move open to all. As he held in his 1966 essay dealing with the relevance of rhetoric and philosophy to one another, since philosophy does not aim at action it "literally has no need for rhetoric" (1966c, 42).

After several papers (1961a, 1967b, 1970d), spread over a decade in which he attempted to resolve the consistency problem, Johnstone eventually concluded that in its original formulation it was irresolvable. Since validity could not be redeemed by objective properties of an argument that allowed us to demonstrate internal consistency or inconsistency among presuppositions nor by like properties with respect to different sets of presuppositions, he repudiated the problem. He then recast it from one of the validity of the philosopher's argument to one of the philosopher's concern for validity. In other words, he moved his conceptualization of validity from an objective property of an argument to a regulative ideal. Framing validity as a regulative ideal was significant for Johnstone's move to rhetoric. By framing validity in this way, he opened the way for inspecting the characteristics of argument that embodied it. These characteristics have made a lasting contribution to our understanding of the rhetorical character of philosophical arguments and what may be regarded as necessary conditions for rhetorical validity.

Regarding validity as a regulative ideal had significant impact on Johnstone's thinking from the middle 1960s forward. Johnstone had to consider what would be required to refute an antagonist's arguments. He posit-

ed that a critic's own presuppositions lock her into her own position. At the same time, in order to make claims that the other would consider valid requires the arguer to consider the consequences of her attack from inside the antagonist's position. The regulative ideal of validity thus requires a person to stand both inside and outside the position being attacked, to encounter the argument and the question of its validity from two distinct perspectives. Considering both points of view subjects the person to the tension between their respective calls and mutual contradictions. This tension, Johnstone holds, is the locus of the *self*. For Johnstone the self emerges from apprehending this tension of contradictions.

Johnstone's theory of the self developed in the framework of three sets of considerations. Johnstone's new position on validity as a regulative ideal shifted his emphasis from the relationship among premises to the relationship between arguer and antagonist as reflected in the characteristics of the argument itself. One important characteristic was the implicit assumption that the arguer regarded his antagonist as beyond effective control. Here Johnstone elaborated on the distinction between *unilateral* and *bilateral* arguments.

He defined bilateral argument as one in which "the arguer must use no device of argument he could not in principle permit his interlocutor to use" (1983b, 95). Bilateral arguments avoid tricks, deception, falsehoods, and the like; they apply the Kantian rule of ethical imperative to argument. In a unilateral argument, by contrast, the arguer uses devices of argument not available for the interlocutor's use. These may include not only gambits and ploys that attempt to elude critical inspection but also role-specific communication, such as directives from superiors to subordinates. Although one can imagine situations where unilateral communication would be essential to avoid chaos, in the domain of argument, unilateral appeals are never permissible because the ideal of validity requires the interlocutors' accedence to arrive at agreement as a result of their critical assessment of the argument. Audience members can think and articulate their thoughts; they can reflect on what we say and offer reasoned assessments; if they respond positively, it is because we have secured their agreement. They are not like robots or computers, who perform on appropriate command. They are not like children who can be instructed on how to behave. They cannot be regarded as objects of manipulation through means of suggestion. Each of these strategies is abandoned when we decide to argue, when we regard our audience as free and as capable of making its own choices. In short, we must regard our antagonists as human.

By assuming the audience is beyond effective control, Johnstone introduced a second defining characteristic, namely, the audience's freedom of response. The audience to which we offer arguments may ignore them, disbelieve them, or even refute them. Consequently, by choosing to offer arguments in support of ideas, we run the risk of having our ideas defeated. At the same time, audiences responsive to arguments also risk having their behavior or beliefs altered. Johnstone characterizes people willing to run these risks as open-minded (1963b).

A third condition necessary for genuine arguments is that the arguer and those responding both have an interest in the outcome of the argument. They are not considering mere possibilities but outcomes with consequences that affect both sides. Because those involved have a stake in the outcome, argument entails an important element of risk. We do not have a stake in mere possibilities. Arguments entail the specific risk of whether we will be able to maintain our system of beliefs and values, the commitments of mind and of spirit that define the self, or whether we will have to change a significant commitment, thereby reassessing the self. This tension between self-maintenance and change is essential for human growth, for getting beyond our individual and immediate experiences, and for inhabiting a common world with others who share our interests (1963b).

Collectively these three concerns—the search for bilateral arguments, the regard for the audience as open-minded, and embrace of the tension between self-maintenance and change—create the conditions for revealing the self. They also reveal the basic function of philosophical arguments. In Johnstone's words:

I have said that argument reveals the self by confronting it with risk. Philosophy makes clear the structure of the risks faced by a person who argues or listens to argument. It articulates a world of people and of things. It tells the self who it is and where it stands. Thus philosophy may be said to serve the emerging self by contributing to its morale. Philosophical arguments, then, have a morale function rather than an information function. If we expect general agreement regarding their conclusions, we simply do not understand them correctly. (1963b, 9)

The morale function of philosophy is precisely to place the thinker always in the dual context of considering the argument from both his own and his antagonist's position, to always confront the contradictions that entertaining both brings to his own fundamental commitments, and to assume the risk of elaborating and defending his own philosophical beliefs. The self is the

locus of contradiction and inconsistency. It is a call to accept the burden of the self, to always engage in self-risk as the way to self emergence.

When Johnstone began developing this position as a resolution to the earlier problem of consistency, he still held an antagonistic view of rhetoric. Rhetoric, unlike philosophy, in his mind, still was addressed to individuals, not systems; relied on unilateral, not bilateral argument; sought to avoid criticism, not invite it; concealed its methods rather than revealing them; repressed its audiences desires to reach its own conclusions; and was manipulative. However, as he continued to think through his position on the self as a resolution to the problem of consistency, he became more aware of the addressed character of philosophical argument as a basic feature that did not permit a clear dividing line between what was philosophical and rhetorical in an argument. Johnstone's later work reflects this shift in his expanded notion of rhetoric from an art of mere persuasion to one of evocation. In his paper, "Truth, Communication, and Rhetoric in Philosophy," he claims that the *argumentum ad hominem* in philosophy is precisely an exercise of that function (1969a). It is addressed discourse and in that respect adapted to the position of the other, "by addressing the man where he lives, not be hitting him over the head with facts" (1978b, 137). The rhetorical function of philosophical arguments is developed in Johnstone's concept of the *wedge*.

Johnstone had consistently maintained that a necessary condition for exercising reason is consciousness. For consciousness to occur, a person must be able to separate himself from the stimuli impinging upon him. There must be a gap between the person and a matter of conscious concern. Whatever introduces this gap he calls a wedge. "Only when a wedge has been said to be driven between the person and the data he receives," he writes, "can he be said to be conscious of that data" (1978e, 58). For Johnstone, this separation of the person from impinging stimuli applies most obviously to our unconscious assumptions, such as the unconscious assumption we might make about the death penalty as a permissible punishment for some crimes leading to an uncritical response to the state's execution of criminals for capital offenses. We need someone to call this assumption into question before we can have a conscious awareness of the death penalty as problematic in some respect. The need for something to separate us from data leads Johnstone to claim that rhetoric "is a means—perhaps the only means—of evoking and maintaining consciousness" (1990d, 333). It is "the technique of driving this wedge between a person and the data of his immediate experience" (1978e, 131). Equally it applies to unnoticed inputs of sensory data, as when a ringing telephone goes unnoticed until someone points it out, or alternatively, when we respond automatically to

stimuli in a conditioned way, as the student who, upon hearing the teacher announce, "This will be on the test," begins taking notes.

Johnstone finds the wedge present even in cases where such seemingly non-rhetorical means as threats are used to coerce compliant behavior. In "Rhetoric and Death," for example, he uses the reaction to a raised stick or a pointed pistol as more than a simple reflex. "A threat may be *considered*. Its victim can *decide* what to do" (1980b, 67). The threatened, for her part, does not make the threat to encourage reflecting on choices or to encourage negotiation. The threat is "intended as a barrier against wedges" (1990d, 335). It is a *unilateral* mode of rhetoric that declares its insensitivity to stimulation at the hands or its victim by driving a wedge in one direction. The victim, for his part, may decide not to cooperate, or may comply out a sense that it is the only course open to avoid injury or death. But, even in weighing these unhappy consequences, the person is responding to the threat as a threat, not as a stimulus.

The anti-rhetorical character of threats is used by Johnstone to clarify the relationship between rhetorical wedges and consciousness. A threat conveyed by an object, say a pointed pistol, can carry meaning as a threat of death only if we presuppose an antecedent rhetoric that constitutes an understanding of death as a possibility (1980b, 98). Otherwise we would have no more reason to respond to a pointed pistol as threatening our impending demise than, say, a trusting pooch. This suggests that at least some threats—those conveyed by gesture—cannot be rhetorical by their own means. Moreover, the victim threatened can refuse to comply. When that happens, whether because the victim regards the threatener's wish as not worthy of reply or because she unconditionally refuses to be an instrument for fulfilling the threatener's wish, Johnstone claims, "*victim and threatener are addressing exactly the same set of propositions*. Their encounter has become at least a protodebate" (1990d, 336). Further, when a threat is responded to as a threat rather than as a stimulus, as an instrument of rhetoric, the person who considers the options and chooses, whether that choice be to acquiesce or resist, is making a choice and in so doing assuming agency.

For each of these points, as for the general discussion of the wedge, Johnstone intended to establish the fundamental rhetoricality of conscious awareness, which was central to his project of accounting for the nature of argument and led him to maintain, ultimately, that all argument is rhetorical at its core. The highwayman and the bully, both of whom seek to create a fusion of self and stimuli apparently lacking rhetoricality, serve as the counterintuitive case to prove the extent of the wedge and of rhetoric in human

experience. For Johnstone, the wedge is a necessary condition for conscious awareness and, as such, is an inherent part of all philosophical argument. Hence, at the end of his career, Johnstone had moved 180 degrees from his original stance to affirm that rather than the opposite of philosophical argument, rhetoric lay at philosophy's core.

In combing through Henry's remarkably productive career, I was reminded of a distinction Henry had drawn in private conversation between academicians who engage in an activity and those who study its practitioners: the former engage in the discipline's intellectual practices to generate new statements about a set of intellectual concerns; the latter engage in the discipline's professional practices to transmit and comment on what others have produced. Writing in the discipline's specialized vocabulary, adhering to its professional norms, producing evidence that allows for continual certification of professional standing, but without going through the slow and painful process of intellectual work necessary to produce an original contribution, has become increasingly commonplace in the contemporary academy. Doubtless this tendency had revealed itself in those submissions Henry received as editor of *Philosophy and Rhetoric* that had prompted him to voice concern over those who sought "philosophy without tears" (1990e). For Henry, the allure of professional standing meant far less than his passion for engaging a serious question on its own terms as an intellectual problem worth resolving. His own passage from an empiricist to an idealist and from an anti-rhetorician to a philosopher of rhetoric exemplify his own theory of philosophical argument, of following the argument with open-mindedness, wherever it may lead. It is an example worth following.

Henry's formulations on the nature of philosophical arguments, and argumentation in general, and his insights into the rhetorical character of all arguing, leave a legacy of original thought that is testimony to the fruits of such labor. He was among a handful of leading figures responsible for the rebirth of interest in rhetoric during the last half of the twentieth century. He, along with Richard McKeon, was foremost among American philosophers who developed a sustained line of inquiry that seriously considered rhetoric to be an interesting class of discourse, one that could illumine philosophical speculation and inform us on the character of philosophical argumentation.

As much as his philosophical speculations, Henry's manner of intellectual engagement contributed to this renaissance. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates extols Callicles as his test of gold: "I am convinced that if you agree with the opinions held in my soul, then at last we have attained the actual truth. For I observe that anyone who is to test adequately a human soul for good

or evil living must possess three qualifications, . . . knowledge, good will, and frankness" (496e). Henry exemplified the spirit of Socrates' praise. Whether he was considering a journal submission, an observation by a student in class, the criticism of his interlocutor, or the intellectual exploration of his conversational partner, he remained perfectly attuned to the possibilities in the position being advanced and willing to respond with arguments that were remarkable for their clarity and directness. He exemplified his own doctrines by arguing *ad hominem* and *con amore*. With his death on 18 February 2000, rhetorical studies lost a dear colleague and friend; the academy lost a giant.

The bibliography that follows offers evidence of the range of Johnstone's thought, and the consistency of his scholarly practice. Johnstone initially compiled it for a commemorative issue of *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (1998b) celebrating his second and final retirement as editor and celebrating his intellectual contributions to philosophy and rhetoric. I have reformatted the entries he compiled to group them by type of publication, added a few works that have appeared since 1997, and included an incomplete list of secondary sources.

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¹ Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric* [1957], trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1969).

² Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* [1958] (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

³ Jürgen Habermas, "On Systematically Distorted Communication," *Inquiry* 13 (1970): 205-18; "Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence," *Inquiry* 13 (1970): 360-75; *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1970); *Toward a Rational Society*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1974); "The Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 3 (1975): 49-55; *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1977); *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1978); *The Theory of Communication Action*. 2 vols., trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984-1987).

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Rhetoric and Communication in Philosophy

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.

In this essay I want to focus on rhetoric and communication, and consider what they are in themselves and how they are involved in philosophical activity. How one construes the concepts depends upon the overt or covert philosophical position one takes. In investigating the role of rhetoric and communication in philosophy, I cannot help taking a stand on the philosophy of rhetoric and communication. To the extent that developing the philosophy of anything is an activity in which rhetoric and communication have necessary roles to play, rhetoric and communication are required by the very activity that seeks to define them. I do not believe that the circularity here is vicious; the phenomenon is simply an example of the often noted reflexivity of philosophical activity.

One reason why determining the roles of rhetoric and communication in philosophy is a problem is that undue emphasis on one to the exclusion of the other in the pursuit of the philosophical enterprise has usually resulted in a caricature of that enterprise. The belief that the function of philosophy is to communicate and not to persuade is characteristic of at least the extreme forms of positivism. Persuasion is here dismissed as merely a function of emotive language. What positivism has found par excellence communicable, however, has been scientific fact and theory rather than philosophical doctrine. Once the sciences have been identified as the chief locus of communication, there is not much left for philosophy as such to do, except perhaps to formulate the principles of scientific communication. An example of such principles is the Verifiability Criterion, according to which only empirical statements and tautologies can be communicated—everything else is meaningless. But even the ultrapositivist is willing to concede that the principles formulated in his philosophy, including the Verifiability Criterion itself, are neither empirical statements nor tautologies; they are rather conventions. Clearly, conventions are not formulated merely to be ignored. The positivist attaches considerable importance, for example, to a scrupulous observance of the Verifiability Criterion. He insists on this observance as a necessary condition for meaningful discourse. Since such insistence is not grounded in fact or logic, it can have only the status of urgent persuasion. Rhetoric has thus made its uninvited appearance. That the positivist tacitly recognizes its presence is indicated by his vague and apologetic explanation that the Verifiability Criterion has a pragmatic if not

a logical or empirical justification. For what has only a pragmatic justification can only be contended for as a means of facilitating action. But a belief that facilitates action is itself an action or a program of action; and it is precisely the function of rhetoric to incite actions and programs.

Philosophies in which rhetoric is given an exaggerated role to play and communication none at all are not likely to have much professional standing because professionals must communicate; "Publish or perish" is merely a corollary of "if you can't tell us what you're doing, how do we know that you're doing anything at all?" But clearly there are hyper-rhetorical positions whether or not they are mentioned in academic circles. One symptom of such a position is its use of the idea of philistinism. The philistine is the obtuse individual who demands to be told what no one can hope to learn merely by being told. Only by being open to rhetoric can one hope to be sensitized to the doctrine in question, but the philistine is closed to rhetoric. Implicit in such a hyper-rhetoricism is the principle that one cannot understand a doctrine unless one has been persuaded to believe it. This principle is to rhetoric as the Verifiability Criterion is to communication. As the latter defines the limits of communication without itself being communicated, so the former defines the limits of rhetoric without itself being the object of rhetorical activity. If it were itself the object of rhetorical activity, we would be plunged into an infinite regress, for we would then have to argue that the meta-philistine who cannot understand why to understand is to believe would understand this principle if he believed it. The principle is the inverse of a convention—whatever that is. It is the one principle that the hyper-rhetorician must communicate, and is thus his Achilles' heel. Of course, if he saw no one as a philistine, he would have no use for this principle. But it is precisely the beliefs, platitudinous and thoughtless though they are, of those whom the hyper-rhetorician identifies as philistines that define the content and point of his own position. Without philistines to deplore there would be no occasion for exhortations to the faithful. Similarly, without nonsense to attack, the positivist would have nothing philosophical to communicate.

We may note in passing that even though hyper-rhetorical positions have little standing in professional circles, the professional himself may have hyper-rhetorical tendencies. Although he can comfortably communicate with his colleagues, he may regard those who are not his colleagues as philistines. When asked by someone outside the field to describe his concerns, he may find that there is nothing he can communicate which would be of the slightest use, and that all he can say is "if you really want to know, you'd better take my course." To be sure, professional philosophers are by no

means alone in this aloofness; professional economists and physicists are inclined to give the same answer, and the aloofness itself can be interpreted as no more than despair over the task of attempting to communicate briefly what can only be communicated at length. Yet there are few professional philosophers who suppose that all they have to convey to their students is information, even of a difficult and involved kind. Most of us have the feeling that the student who merely has the information is still a philistine, and that some turning, some acquiescence of the will to concerns that must be first accepted if they are to be understood, is required if the student is to be set on the road to becoming a professional philosopher. Since I myself unabashedly share in this feeling, it would be ludicrous of me to condemn it; I cite it only in order to show that hyper rhetoricism is more common than it may at first appear to be.

But the sketches I have drawn of positions in which the roles of communication and rhetoric are exaggerated are themselves exaggerated. Perhaps all that can be safely gleaned from them is just a preliminary understanding of the concepts of communication and rhetoric. Communication, as the positivist embraces it and the hyper rhetoricist rejects it, is a transaction concerned with propositions. A proposition, as I am using the term, must be either true or false, but need not be true. The same proposition, furthermore, can be expressed in a variety of ways. Communication, in the weakest sense of the word, occurs when one person expresses a proposition, and, as a result, another person understands the same proposition. If there are no linguistic or intellectual considerations that prevent a recipient of a message from understanding it—if he can read the language in which the message is couched, and the message is not too complex for him to follow—then the Verifiability Criterion can be thought of as an attempt to define what can be communicated in this sense. Nothing meaningless can be communicated; i.e., nothing which is neither a tautology nor empirically testable. It is communication in this weakest sense that the hyper rhetoricist finds ineffectual in reaching the philistine; for no amount of it will make the philistine understand the doctrine he has, in his oafish good nature, inquired about. A stronger sense of the word is that in which A communicates proposition P to B if and only if as the result of A's efforts B believes P. This is the way in which I will use the word unless I give special notice to the contrary. The strongest sense of "communication" is that in which only true propositions can be communicated; that is, B believes P, and P is true. It is in this sense of "communicate" that what one communicates is information.

Rhetoric emerges from our discussion up to this point as concerned with attitudes rather than propositions. To the extent that it is occupied with linguistic forms, it will focus not on propositions as such but upon the sentences that most effectively present them to others. Propositions need not be believed in order to be understood, and communication, in the weakest sense, solicits only the understanding of propositions; but rhetoric solicits belief first in the expectation that understanding will follow.

Communication in the strongest sense essentially conveys information, but rhetoric essentially seeks to stimulate action, including the action of adopting a recommended belief. It is thus the art of persuasion. Its success or failure is not to be measured by the truth or falsity of the beliefs it recommends, but by the extent to which others have by its agency been persuaded to accept these beliefs.

I have spoken of the dialectical reversals that await both the ultra-positivist seeking to avoid using rhetoric and the hyper-rhetorician seeking to avoid using communication. What I have just said in the attempt to define communication and rhetoric suggests that even if we do not attempt to erect these concepts into doctrines, as the ultrapositivists and the hyper-rhetoricians do, a powerful dialectic is at work that prevents more than a provisional distinction between the concepts themselves. When communication is defined in the intermediate and standard way as getting someone else to believe what one believes, it is obviously difficult to see why such an evocation of belief should not be considered a rhetorical transaction as well as a communicative one. In a perhaps somewhat less obvious way, furthermore, the weakest form of communication is saturated with rhetoric. If I want to get you to understand a proposition that I understand, I may proceed, as the positivist wants me to do, by first making sure that what I have to communicate is actually a proposition; i.e., is empirically testable or logically true. I may then carefully formulate it with your linguistic and intellectual requirements in mind. But surely it is a mistake to suppose that all that I would now have to do is to enunciate the proposition as I have now formulated it. What I would also have to do is to get your attention. The art of getting another person's attention, however, clearly falls within the province of rhetoric rather than communication, and there is no genuine act of communication that does not require the use of this art. No doubt we can count on having the computer's full attention when we feed it a stack of punched cards, but when we talk of having communicated something to it via these cards we are using "communication" in a borrowed and anthropomorphic way. As the result of having been fed the cards, the computer stores certain values and instructions, but we cannot make sense of the

assertion that it has come to understand a proposition. Understanding is an achievement; whatever one understands, one could have failed to understand. But being primed with certain data is no achievement for the machine; it is at best an achievement for its maker or operator. The machine could have stored the wrong values, but we would describe such a situation as a malfunction, not as a failure on the part of the machine to understand what someone had tried to communicate to it.

The concept of rhetoric is similarly not dissociable from that of communication. Having gotten someone to listen to you, you must then proceed to say something. While it is action that rhetoric solicits, it is not action in the service of a proposition. Those whom the hyperrhetorist recognizes as brothers rather than philistines are united not by conforming behavior but by faith. And if they have come to understand something by just believing it, at least they now understand it—the net effect of the transaction is that they have received a communication.

So far I have schematically described two extremist positions that might be taken toward the roles of communication and rhetoric in philosophy, and from these descriptions I have extracted preliminary definitions of communication and rhetoric themselves. We must now turn to positions that have actually been held, and we must make needed corrections in our notions of communication and of rhetoric. Wittgenstein, in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and Heidegger, in *Sein und Zeit*, not only take more or less explicit positions regarding the roles of communication and rhetoric in philosophy but also to some extent practice what they preach. These two books are important, however, not only because of their orientations toward communication and rhetoric but also because these orientations are representative of the broad philosophical camps to which the books belong. In spite of some major differences between Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and the outlook of many contemporary linguistic analysts, what Wittgenstein says about philosophy in the *Tractatus* sets the tone for much of the Anglo-American linguistic analysis that has ensued upon it. Similarly, the attitude Heidegger takes toward philosophy in *Sein und Zeit* sets the tone of much contemporary continental European philosophy with respect to the issue of communication and rhetoric in philosophy. Hence reference to these books will enable us to compare two segments of the philosophical world which have often been thought impossible to compare; and possibly we will be able to suggest an area of rapprochement between them.

Wittgenstein declares himself early on the importance of communication. In the second paragraph of the Preface to the *Tractatus*, he writes, "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about

we must pass over in silence.”¹ Surely it is communication that Wittgenstein is here emphasizing. The mark of something said clearly is that it is understood; i.e., communicated. His point is that everything sayable must be communicable. One for whom rhetoric had a necessary role could deny this. He would point to the philistine, to whom one can talk until doomsday without communicating anything. The mere fact that one cannot get him to understand one’s doctrine by means of any amount of clear talk does not show that one must pass over these doctrines in silence.

The passage I have just quoted, however, is really about communication in every field except philosophy. It expresses a systematic limitation on philosophical communication. For philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, has nothing to say. It is “not a body of doctrine but an activity. . . . Philosophy does not result in ‘philosophical propositions,’ but rather in the clarification of propositions.”² Wittgenstein seems to be in the position of recommending that we pass over in silence anything that we think we might have to say in the name of philosophy, for it is nothing we can really say at all.

This, however, is far from Wittgenstein’s final verdict. In its very concern with the incommunicable, philosophy communicates something: “It will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said.”³ This clear presentation of what can be said is what Wittgenstein has in mind in speaking of philosophy as the activity of clarifying propositions rather than producing propositions itself.

The idea that philosophy is to present clearly what can be said suggests that it can present clearly what has hitherto been presented obscurely. Wittgenstein attributes much obscurity of this kind to difficulties that philosophers have had with language: “Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. . . . All philosophy is a ‘critique of language.’”⁴

Philosophical activity as Wittgenstein conceives it can be illustrated profusely from his own work as well as from that of many others. Philosophical sentences are exhibited as in fact unsayable by showing that they fail to conform to the logic of our language. Even the language of the *Tractatus* itself must ultimately be left behind, because there is no position beyond our language from which we can describe its logic; all that we can hope to do is simply to show its logic, by saying as clearly as possible what can be said. Thus at the end of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein says, “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as

steps—to climb up beyond them.”⁵

One difference between Wittgenstein's conception of the function of philosophy and that of the ultra positivists is that the discovery that what the philosopher is inclined to say is sayable does not undercut the former in the way that the discovery that the Verifiability Criterion is neither empirical nor tautologous undercuts the latter. Having made this shocking discovery, which amounts to the acknowledgement that the Verifiability Criterion cannot be communicated, the ultrapositivist can only make a rhetorical plea for its adoption; but this plea is inconsistent with his basic conviction that the function of philosophy is to communicate and not to persuade. For Wittgenstein, on the other hand, philosophy can elucidate even though it says nothing; and elucidation is clearly a kind of communication. Hence Wittgenstein's view does not have the fundamental incoherence of ultrapositivism.

Anglo-American philosophy has largely adopted Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as an activity that eliminates problems caused by inattention to the logic of our language. According to this conception, philosophy is clearly communicative, at least when it is done properly. What philosophy has to communicate is not propositions but elucidations. It follows that we must to some extent abandon our preliminary understanding of communication as concerned with propositions. Of course, one could point to the logic that is violated by the problem we seek to elucidate by expressing this logic as a set of propositions in the metalanguage; this approach has often been taken. The fact remains, however, that this is not Wittgenstein's own approach, and his philosophy communicates as much about the sources of our philosophical ills as anyone else's. It communicates because it disseminates an understanding which is not contingent on prior belief. To put the matter in another way, no one stands in relation to Wittgenstein as an intrinsically unreachable philistine; there is always hope that the philosopher can reach his hearers by reformulating his point one more time. If he gives up it is because he is tired, not because they are philistines. Yet notice how the gap between communication and rhetoric has been narrowed. The clarity that the philosopher aims to pass on is as much a reorientation of attitudes as an intellectual reassessment. It is an understanding, but not the kind of understanding that one could put completely in words. It is a release from perplexity, and thus an enhancement of the hearer's well-being. In the last analysis one accepts Wittgenstein's elucidations not because they are true—whatever that could mean - but because one feels better about accepting them. The rhetorical dimension of the transaction resulting in this

acceptance is obvious.

An early section of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is entitled "The Lesson of a Destruction of the History of Ontology."⁶ It is strange to see a philosopher writing of the destruction of anything philosophical; philosophers do not usually suppose that they destroy doctrines or the histories of doctrines; they do not imagine that such destruction could even be relevant to the enterprise in which they are engaged. The business in which most philosophers think they are engaged is that of refuting rather than destroying. To refute a doctrine is to exhibit it as incoherent and therefore unacceptable. A refuted doctrine can still be exhibited; indeed, if it could not, it could not be refuted, for there would be nothing to which we could then ascribe the incoherence that we want to ascribe to the doctrine. To put the matter in another way, the philosopher who regards the refutation of a doctrine as his concern must first make his hearers understand what it is he is attacking. Since the dissemination of understanding falls within the province of communication, refutation is a communicative transaction.

How would the destruction of a doctrine differ from its refutation? If a doctrine were destroyed, it would cease to exist, and therefore could no longer be exhibited, even exhibited as incoherent. If we are too literal-minded, we may find ourselves asking how it is that Heidegger thinks he can write about the history of ontology at all if he has indeed destroyed this history. (We can of course write the history of things that have been destroyed, but according to Heidegger's title, it is the very history of ontology that is to be destroyed.) Yet we can interpret the destruction of the history of ontology in a more sympathetic way. To destroy this history is to expose it as a bad dream; it is to awaken us from this dream, which has held us in its thrall for two thousand years. Thus what is destroyed is the power of the history over us. Heidegger can write about this history as one can write about any illusion from which we have been released. Destruction, then, in Heidegger's terms, is an awakening. To use other words that occur frequently, not only in *Sein und Zeit* but throughout Heidegger's works, it is a recall from forgetfulness. Heidegger makes it clear that he regards such an evocation as one of the primary tasks of philosophy, if not its only task. Clearly, then, he conceives of philosophy as fundamentally a rhetorical enterprise. Its function is not only to awaken, but specifically not to disseminate understanding. Traditional ontology, for example, is, according to Heidegger, not something that a person could simply understand, prior to deciding whether it is true or false. The person is defined by his ontology, and is held in its grip. He can dissociate himself from it only by being awak-

ened from it; but he can be awakened from it only by becoming a new person. Heidegger's appeal is not merely rhetorical but downright homiletical.

Yet for all his emphasis on the rhetorical nature of the philosophical enterprise, Heidegger is no hyperrhetorician. For the content and point of his doctrine is not defined simply by contrasting the doctrine with the beliefs of the philistines. In fact, Heidegger's entire position is specifically committed to the task of awakening the philistines from their ontological slumber. Heidegger refers to the philistines as *das Man*—the “they.” *Das Man* expects to be told in plain language what he can in fact come to understand only by being awakened. But because Heidegger's entire thrust is toward the awakening of *das Man* he cannot reject as a mere philistine the man who fails to understand him. In Heidegger's own terms, he is not successful until he has reached the philistine. Hence in a sense there are no philistines at all for him. If I am correct in arguing that Heidegger conceives philosophy as basically rhetorical, some revision in our conception of rhetoric is called for. We can no longer think of it as an art of persuasion, except perhaps derivatively; its purpose is not to incite its hearer to action—even the action of adopting some specific belief. Instead, rhetoric totally reorients the hearer; if he listens to it he is in a position to abandon an inauthentic life in favor of an authentic one. Once we see that rhetoric has an at best incidental concern with action, we remove one of the important differences between it and communication. Rhetoric as bound to action is successful or unsuccessful; the question of its validity does not arise. If we have persuaded person A to perform act B or adopt belief C, our rhetoric has been efficacious, and it is gratuitous to ask whether he ought to do B or believe C. The validity question more properly arises in connection with communication, especially in the strongest sense, in which only the truth can be communicated. Here the test is not only that we have gotten A to believe C but also that C is true. But this test applies to Heidegger's rhetoric too. For it is certainly one of Heidegger's most emphatically expressed doctrines that it is the truth to which a person must be awakened. This doctrine is in fact a corollary of the Heideggerian account of truth as unconcealment. Just as Wittgenstein's view of philosophy as primarily communicative is echoed by a large segment of Anglo-American philosophy, so Heidegger's rhetorical conception expresses an attitude toward the philosophical enterprise that is widespread on the European continent. It is doubtful that it originated with Heidegger; for the Husserlian phenomenology from which Heidegger took his departure is already fundamentally committed to a rhetorical view of philosophy. While Husserl's talk about essences may suggest that he thought the function of philosophy was to communicate about

them, the epoché, or bracketing of ordinary experience that Husserl took to be the starting point of philosophical inquiry, is actually an awakening to essence—a laying aside of prosaic concerns and attitudes that permits the person to come to a more authentic form of life. We find the same basic orientation in much post-Heideggerian philosophy on the Continent, as well as in the phenomenological soil from which Heidegger's thought sprang; it is clearly an existentialistic orientation as well as a phenomenological one. For Wittgenstein, philosophy elucidates, and in so doing engages in non-propositional communication. For Heidegger, philosophy awakens, and in so doing engages in a nonpersuasive rhetoric. The gap between communication and rhetoric has been narrowed from both sides. Is it possible, indeed, to suppose that there is any longer a gap? Wittgenstein and his followers have often spoken of the power of philosophy to remind us of what we already know, as if it were identical with its elucidatory power. To elucidate problems is simply to remind one's hearers of the logic of our language. It is to awaken them from an ontological slumber. To be sure, the slumber with which Wittgenstein is concerned is far different from that with which Heidegger is concerned. It would be a gross distortion to say that Wittgenstein is trying to call his audience to authentic existence, or that Heidegger is trying to call his to an awareness of the logic of our language. The only identity for which I am arguing is the identity of their views of the function of philosophy. Both of them emphasize the call of philosophy. At the same time, both see this call as communicative, as an elucidation or unconcealment.

I want to conclude by formulating the evocative-elucidatory function of philosophy in more general terms. If philosophy has this function in both Anglo-American and continental European philosophy, it does so because philosophy always has this function, at least when it is not caricaturing itself. Using an odd and somewhat old-fashioned word, I want to say that philosophy is the articulation of morale. Good morale is not associated with a dull or confused person. It belongs only to those who have to some extent broken out from illusion and confusion. They know what they are about, and they have a sense of their own competence. Morale is thus a certain rather explicit self-confidence. It is philosophy, in my view, that renders this self-confidence explicit, and thus distinguishes it from a mere unthinking valor. Of course we cannot point to a prior self-confidence which we then proceed to make explicit; the self-confidence is itself the result of an increasing explicitude in the way we confront the world, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is clearly intended to improve the morale of the thinker beset by confusions about the logic of our language. It accomplishes its purpose by

making this logic explicit, and thus by giving the thinker an explicit self-confidence with respect to his ability to identify and handle the problems arising from abuses of logic. This ability, however, is more than a technical skill. This point is clearly made by Heidegger, who sees technical skill as falling within the competence of *das Man*, the inauthentic one who lacks morale. The "know-how" of *das Man*, his skill, his curiosity, and his preoccupation with jargon, may simply provide him with an excuse for evading the issues to which morale would be relevant.

Not only Wittgenstein and Heidegger, but all important philosophers, have been concerned with man's morale. In different ages they have formulated in different terms the principles upon which an explicit self-confidence can be based. If asked to amplify this remark, I would not hesitate to refer to Professor McKeon's illuminating summary of the historical progress of philosophy.⁷ According to Professor McKeon, the fundamental category of ancient philosophy was Being, that of modern philosophy was Thought, and that of contemporary philosophy is Action. The generalization I would base upon this summary is that the ancient philosophers sought to provide man with an explicit self-confidence by exhibiting Man's being as continuous with Being as such; modern philosophers pointed to man's competence as a thinker as a basis for morale; and contemporary philosophers have tried to establish man's morale primarily by making him aware of his role as an agent. If we test the last clause of this generalization by applying it to Wittgenstein and Heidegger, we see that the fit is not too bad. The action that Wittgenstein is concerned with is the speaking of language; his concern with this action is to render it competent. The action that Heidegger is concerned with is of no specific kind; it is action itself, viewed under the form of time, that occupies Heidegger, and the authenticity of which he seeks to establish.

It remains to be shown what communication and rhetoric have to do with morale. My view is that they are involved in the way in which the philosopher addresses those whose morale he seeks to improve. Such hearers must both find morale desirable and unwittingly lack it. Their lack of morale unbeknownst to themselves can be the result of a relative confusion or dullness. I use the term "relative" because there is a point beyond which a person's dullness or confusion cannot be increased without depriving him of his very desire for morale. To the glassy-eyed person stumbling about in ontological oblivion, there is nothing one can say; any awakening would be a miracle. To the person thoroughly imbued with the courage of his confusions there is likewise nothing one can say, the efficaciousness of which can,

to any degree, be counted on. Let us assume, then, that the philosopher's hearers are people under the erroneous impression that their pursuit of morale has been successful. Accordingly the first thing the speaker must do is to point out that those whom he addresses are living in a fool's paradise. Their attempts to formulate an explicit self-confidence have amounted precisely to a denial of the competence they are claiming. This is, for example, the message of the philosophers of Being to those who attempt to articulate man's morale by proclaiming that man is the measure of all things. It is the message of the philosophers of Thought to those who attempt to express morale in terms of man's belonging to the nature of things. It is the message of the philosophers of Action to those who think they have found morale in deductive thought. All such messages are communicative. Their aim is to point out to the hearer something he did not know.

Of course, any message is communicative; that is what it means to call it a message. But what philosophers have to say to their hearers are more than messages. They are arguments. Plato did not merely tell Protagoras that the morale he had settled for was specious. He also urged him to adopt the higher morale of identification with Being. He could go on to do this only because morale was what Protagoras wanted. Similarly, we will listen to Heidegger's evocation only if his destruction of the history of ontology has created in us the need for a newer morale.

I am obviously now speaking of the rhetorical component of philosophical argumentation. But in suggesting that it can be separated out from the communicative component I am oversimplifying. The philosopher does not first attack existing formulations of morale and then propose new formulations of it. His very attack introduces his proposal. In Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, for example, it would be very difficult to distinguish the communicative from the rhetorical. This difficulty has characterized the writings of the more important philosophers. Even when a philosophical treatise begins with a polemical section and goes on to propose a positive doctrine, the polemic is likely to be informed with the doctrine that is to be proposed. Even the very act of proposing a doctrine is far from being a purely rhetorical transaction. Doctrines are proposed in the name of truth; morale has often been thought to reside in the unconcealment of the concealed. It is difficult, on the other hand, to think of any philosophical statement that is purely communicative in intent. It is not the message of the philosopher that catches the attention of his hearers; it is his appeal to them to listen.

In this essay I have made some remarks concerning the nature of philosophy. I hope that these remarks will themselves be construed as philosophical. If they are, of course, they ought to exemplify the very analysis of

philosophical expressions which they propound. I am confident that they do. I have not only tried to communicate something about the nature of philosophy, but have also recommended a reformulation of at least one prevailing view toward it. According to this view, Anglo-American philosophy communicates, continental philosophy exhorts, and ne'er the twain shall meet. This view constitutes a potential morale problem, or perhaps an actual one. How can we continue to maintain a formulation of our own competence according to which we have competence but others whom we meet at philosophical congresses are systematically barred from attaining it? Such a view, instead of articulating our morale, ends up by destroying it, because the existence of large numbers of intelligent people with whom we cannot communicate shows that we are incompetent at the very skill by which we attempted to define our competence; namely, communication. We will never really be competent at communication until we are ready to admit that in communicating we are also engaging in rhetoric.

Notes

¹ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (New York: Humanities Press, 1961). All my Wittgenstein quotations are from this edition.

² *Ibid.*, 4.112.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.115.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.003, 4.0031.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.54.

⁶ M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 7th ed. (Thbingen: M. Niemeyer, 1953), pp. 19-27.

⁷ See Richard McKeon, "Philosophy of Communication and the Arts," *Contemporary Philosophic Thought*, Vol. III (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970).

Henry Johnstone's Still Unacknowledged Contributions to Contemporary Argumentation Theory

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I only had the honor of speaking with Henry Johnstone on few occasions, but even in that short time he said the few kind words that have gotten me through more than one black period in my work. This contribution is just a small example of his dearest gift to the general development of the theories of rhetoric and argumentation, a gift widely recognized but perhaps never possible to adequately acknowledge. As a founder and long-time editor of the journal *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Johnstone contributed with extraordinary generosity his time and spirit to make room for the self-development of everyone else in the field. His keen but compassionate insistence on clear thinking provided also an immediate goad to all who would send their work to that journal, and remains a continuing inspiration.¹

In this paper, however, I am concerned with a more everyday contribution to the field: namely, the paid and unpaid debts contemporary argumentation theorists owe to Johnstone's own work. Johnstone's central idea about argumentation can be oversimplified thus. When paying attention to the complex and confusing human behavior that we call "argument," we have an initial and vital choice about what to be on the lookout for. On one hand, we can focus on the individual argument—the unit of discourse with something like a premise/conclusion structure; what has been called *argument-1*² or *argument as product*.³ On the other hand, we can focus on the activity of arguing—the transaction during which persons are (among other things) exchanging arguments-1; what has been called *argument-2* or *argument as process*. Looking at the unit of argument we begin to ask logical questions, such as how the premises support the conclusion. Looking at the transaction of arguing we begin to ask ethical questions, such as how the persons involved ought to treat each other.

Johnstone's central insight, first proposed in the series of papers leading up to the 1959 publication of *Philosophy and Argument*,⁴ was simply this: the primacy of the argumentative process over the argumentative product. Argument should initially be approached not as a logical but as a transac-

tional phenomenon. The conclusion of a unit of argument, for example, cannot even be understood without knowledge of the disagreement between persons that the arguer was trying to overcome, as well as all the arguments pro and con that have gone before. Johnstone's famous assertion that all valid arguments are *ad hominem*, grounded not in the neutral facts but in the personal commitments of the opponent, similarly shifts attention from the product to the process of argument. In this view, the validity of any unit of argument is dependent on its force within the immediate situation, a force it draws from "the very energy" of the person to whom it is addressed (67). And finally, throughout his long career Johnstone remained most interested in the human and humane aspects of arguing. The primary outcome of arguing—its main conclusion, we might say—is not to secure the truth of propositions, but to secure the selfhood of those participating in it. "A person who chooses argument does in fact choose himself."⁵

Johnstone's focus on the transaction of arguing had an immediate impact within the U.S. argumentation and debate community, directing attention to the normative aspects of controversy. By the late 60s, Ehninger had drawn from Johnstone's work in his essays on "argument as method"⁶ establishing what remains (I believe) the foundational ideology supporting the teaching of argument in Communication departments. By the early 80s, Johnstone's influence was joining the wider stream of thinking on the nature and importance of arguing in the public sphere, especially as inspired by the reception of Habermas within the U.S.⁷—a scholarly trajectory well displayed by the works of my colleague in this issue, Gerard Hauser.⁸

My topic, however, is not Johnstone's past impact, but his present influence on contemporary argumentation theory. Within the past generation, there has begun flourishing a bit of an interdisciplinary and international renaissance in the study of argument. One of the most vital streams in this movement is a group of renegade philosophers, mostly Canadian, who founded what they often call "Informal Logic" in an effort to provide a better theoretical grounding for the everyday practice of argument.⁹ This developing tradition, however, has paid almost no attention to Johnstone's works. Johnstone's name does get dropped in most of the obligatory historical surveys. But he is not given even his own subsection in the field's current handbook, *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory*.¹⁰ Instead, he is referenced primarily as an early critic of the more renowned Perelman. And when the traditional fallacy of *ad hominem* attack is discussed, Johnstone's minority views get footnoted.

What cause can be assigned for this inattention? It must be at least in part because the contemporary renaissance in argumentation theory began off track. The Informal Logic movement, driven as its name suggests by a break with formal logic, started by pursuing not the process but the product of argument. The early influential work by Hamblin¹¹ induced a reawakening of fallacy theory—the theory, that is, of units of argument apparently *bad*. Thomas¹² textbook re-introduced the idea of diagramming the structure of units of argument, a proposal that set off a debate about how such structures work in detail. And encompassing these particular inquiries was an overarching interest in establishing how ordinary units of argument can be assessed as sound. With this sort of primary attention to argument as a product, it is not surprising that argumentation theorists adopted as ancestors from the 1950s those authors with a similar product orientation—Stephen Toulmin and Chaim Perelman, most notably; not Henry Johnstone.

By the late 1980s, however, the Informal Logicians themselves had begun to encounter the limits of their orientation towards argumentative products. They found, as Johnstone would have predicted, that it is difficult to say much about such units of argument without paying careful attention to the transactions during which one person is giving them to another. With the work of Douglas Walton¹³ and the pragma-dialecticians, such as van Eemeren and Grootendorst,¹⁴ for example, theorists began to notice that at least some fallacies are violations of the rules or principles of argumentative exchanges: they are not logically invalid, but transactionally inappropriate. James Freeman¹⁵ similarly developed an account of argument structure that showed it to be the outcome of a transaction involving asserting and questioning. Trudy Govier,¹⁶ finally, recognized that we can not even identify some stretch of prose as an argument (as opposed, say, to an explanation) unless we understand the purpose for which the arguer designed it. These scattered insights are just now being organized into larger theories of the activity of arguing, as indicated by the book titles of the last few years: Walton's *Argument Structure: A Pragmatic Theory* (1996); Tindale's *Acts of Arguing* (1999), and Johnson's *Manifest Rationality: A Pragmatic Theory of Argument* (2000).¹⁷

Contemporary argumentation theory, in short, is just now catching up to where Johnstone began forty and more years ago. At this point, then, we are perhaps better equipped to recognize and deal with his true contribution to argumentation theory: not just his insistence on the priority of process over product, but the specific model of the transaction of arguing he proposed. Let me begin to suggest this by way of a digression into the current

main strategy adopted for modeling argumentative activity.

Any model is a simplification; that is its purpose. It is aimed to give us cues about what to look for and what to ignore as we try to find our way through the intricacies of actual practice. Theorists therefore have always been enticed to use this simplification to their advantage, solving their theoretical problems by putting forward models in which those problems simply do not arise. Political theorists have faced this sort of temptation for centuries. Trying to locate ways in which we can live together peacefully, prosperously or justly, they imagine an original "state of nature" or an "original position" in which people do just that as a matter of course. Habermas is the most spectacular contemporary example of this tendency. His "ideal speech situation" paints in miniature a picture of a way any of us would want to live. If it is indeed the case that, whenever they open their mouths, people have to speak truly, sincerely, based on reasons that anyone would accept, and with an obligation to be persuaded by further reasons—if this is indeed the case, then of course from that small acorn of admirable social interaction an entire oak of just and legitimate polity could grow.

The lure of building the desired outcome into the original model has been especially strong for contemporary argumentation theorists. Arguing, after all, has a bad reputation. As Lakoff and Johnson¹⁸ have shown, arguing is metaphorically associated in English with fighting. Interpersonal arguments are often avoided as a stressful disruption of ordinary social relations.¹⁹ Even noted sociolinguist Deborah Tannen in her book *The Argument Culture*²⁰ associates argument with contentiousness, and searches for forms of verbal interaction that might avoid its problems.

Now, as argument theorists we all have to struggle against this bad rap, if for no other reason than to persuade our students to take our courses seriously. We believe (and rightly) that arguing is a noble activity, and we are therefore tempted to build that nobility into our models. Indeed, most contemporary models of the transaction of arguing do just this. Arguing is taken in these models to be an activity performing some respectable social function, such as the rational resolution of disagreement or the securing of truth.²¹ Participants in the arguing are supposed to be cooperating in order to achieve this goal. They share, or must confess to sharing, a commitment to the common goal; they must also share a set of reasonable argument schemes, argument procedures, and argument premises. In sum, argument is modeled as a form of dialogue. If in this world arguers do not seem particularly dialogic or cooperative—well, that is just the ordinary gap between an empirical description of practice and an ideal model of practice. It is not

impossible to be an uncooperative arguer; it is simply wrong—according to the dialogic models.

It is especially those who hold such a cooperative view of arguing who need to pay attention to Johnstone's works. In a sense, Johnstone plays a realistic Hobbes to these optimistic Rousseaus of contemporary theory. Instead of solving the problem of argument's poor reputation by modeling the activity of argument as, from the beginning, cooperative, he takes as his starting point a much more ruthless view of the arguer's basic condition. We know that on its surface arguing involves disagreement; what Johnstone says is that it is *disagreement all the way down*.

The key text for Johnstone's view is chapter 2 of *Philosophy and Argument*, a revision of an article from 1954. In tracing as he does with extraordinary elegance the (conceptual) evolution of the activity of arguing, Johnstone nowhere asserts any legitimizing social function for arguing (though of course he admits that arguing could perform such functions, as byproducts of the activity).²² Instead, Johnstone resolutely and uniformly adopts the perspective of the individual arguer: the arguer as a nascent self. The activity of arguing starts when the individual becomes aware of another individual, one with different views. She finds herself confronted not with a set of shared goals or methods, but with what Johnstone terms the "abyss" separating each from the other (3). Johnstone thus begins not with an ideal of cooperation, but with the fact of opposition (2); the "radical" (3, 132) conflict between views. This opposition is experienced, Johnstone goes on, not as an aid, much less as an opportunity, but as a "threat"—it presents a "problem" that must be resolved by the arguer (8, 9).²³ In struggling to find a solution, the individual tries out a variety of methods for eliminating the threat; each one Johnstone shows to be partially, but only partially, adequate. In particular, Johnstone objects to what he calls the "hopeful" theories of argumentative dialogue (132-3; see also 15), which assume, inadequately, that people disagree about views but share a commitment to a single process for resolving these disagreements. Indeed, Johnstone was later to conclude that arguers may not share a conception of consistency, thus blocking even their attempts to prove each other wrong on their own terms.²⁴ And his famous theory of the "bilaterality" of argumentative engagement arises (in this account) not from any idea of sharing or mutuality, but instead from the game-like nature of the activity of arguing, in which each side must allow the other to make the winning moves it also claims for itself.²⁵

Johnstone's theory of radical disagreement is conspicuously more realistic than cooperative theories of argument, in that it embraces without scolding those angry and apparently intractable controversies that cause us so much pain. We need to realize, however, that what Johnstone is proposing is not just a more realistic view, but a deeply ethical one as well. He has a vision not of imposed social cooperation, but of a person struggling to meet her obligations. "The individual who attempts to speak and act in such a way as to remain true to [herself]," Johnstone affirms, "must come into radical conflict with others no less true to themselves but according to different beliefs."²⁶ If this vision is not "hopeful"—if radical conflicts may never be resolved by argument—if in trying to bridge the abyss of difference, arguers only discover new gulfs—well, this only acknowledges the tragic aspect of our lives as arguers, as Johnstone's closing invocation of the myth of Oedipus suggests.²⁷

Once the non-"hopeful" perspective on arguing is adopted, we may begin dealing with some of Johnstone's proposals in detail. As Johnstone himself recognized, this may open inquiries into argument that take a specifically rhetorical approach.

An insistence on the "abyss" between arguers, for example, raises the serious problem of accounting for how arguments can ever begin. Locked in their own worlds, individuals may not even notice their disagreement, or if they notice may react with some sort of pre-programmed dismissal. As Johnstone remarks, "people have a strong tendency not to listen to such [radically antithetical] propositions—they can't believe that anyone could really have given voice to such nonsense."²⁸ In addition to the philosophical blindnesses Johnstone was considering, one might think here of the conspiracy theorists who diagnose opposition as yet another sign of attempted cover-up, or the devout of various persuasions, including the liberal, who take dissenters as damned. These people will not argue. It is specifically the function of rhetoric, Johnstone proposed, to insert a wedge between an individual and his otherwise closed-off world, creating the conditions in which arguing can proceed:

Rhetoric occurs when a space has been created between the rhetor and his audience even if the rhetor is no more than the brandisher of a pistol or stick. This space separates the audience from what it might otherwise have responded to as a stimulus. . . .

Why does the holdup man or the slave driver *want* to use his pistol or stick in the service of rhetoric? In some cases perhaps he does *not* want to. If his wish is simple enough to be satisfied by a reflex action on the part of the victim, perhaps he would rather avoid asking the victim to decide. But not many wishes are so simple. If I want you to do something you are not conditioned to do, I must begin by driving a wedge between you and your stimuli. I must create a space between you and them.

All rhetorical transactions require this wedge. In order to address *any* audience from a stickup victim to a joint session of Congress, the rhetor must first get his audience to attend to what he is saying or doing. Rhetoric is an evocation or raising of consciousness.²⁹

Recent work by Fred Kauffeld and Scott Jacobs has tended to parallel Johnstone's ideas by examining how arguers themselves establish the preconditions for their argumentative transactions. These preconditions cannot simply be imposed from the outside by the ideal model for the argumentative transaction, as the "hopeful" view suggests. Instead, according to Jacobs' recent programmatic statement "Argumentation as Normative Pragmatics," ordinary argumentative practice is entirely "self-regulating and self-sustaining." Theorists must therefore begin to examine "the way in which argumentative messages enhance or diminish the conditions of their own reception . . . [how they] open up or close down the free and fair exchange of information . . . encourage or discourage critical scrutiny of the justification for alternative positions."³⁰ Kauffeld, in turn, has given just such accounts of how and why arguers undertake and impose obligations to argue, thus earning access to each other's time and attention.³¹ If we follow Johnstone in taking rhetoric as the "art of getting another person's attention,"³² these scholars are beginning to build a rhetorical theory of argumentation.

Another Johnstonian conception that will prove equally worthy of re-examination is his notion of how arguments work. The theorists who have recently turned from assessing the logical validity of arguments to assessing their transactional force have fallen confidently into asserting that arguments *persuade*. For example: "the fundamental purpose of argumentation," Ralph Johnson recently announced, is "rational persuasion."³³ Johnstone's tragic view suggests more caution. Our use of arguments certainly expresses our confidence in the power of reason somehow to change minds. But as a transaction, arguing is bound also by other values, including especially the

need for each arguer to respect the autonomy of the other. And this respect will tend to constrain the power of persuasion; it must leave the auditor "free."³⁴ As Johnstone says:

When we wish to control the action or belief of another person, but either lack an effective means of control or have an effective means that we nevertheless do not wish to use, we argue with the person. Argument is therefore not effective control. To argue with another is to regard him as beyond the scope of effective control, and hence is precisely to *place* him beyond the scope of effective control, provided he is capable of listening to argument and knows how it is that we are regarding him. We give him the option of resisting us, and as soon as we withdraw that option we are no longer arguing. To argue is inherently to risk failure, just as to play a game is inherently to risk defeat. . . . An adept arguer can feel certain that he is going to win an argument against someone, but if the certainty is an objective consequence of the very procedure he is using, then this procedure is not an argument.³⁵

Even a threat, Johnstone notes, "always can be *considered*. Its victim can *decide* what to do. Even though in ninety-nine percent of holdup cases, the victim decides to comply with the wishes of the armed man, he could decide otherwise."³⁶ So if argument changes a mind, it does so by the auditor's own *self*-persuasion. It helps him imagine an alternative possibility, aids him in recognizing what sort of person his commitments make him, and provides him some inducement to think these matters through on his own.³⁷ In listening to the arguer, the auditor thus "must *listen to himself*."³⁸

Within contemporary argumentation theory, Christopher Tindale's recent *Acts of Argument: A Rhetorical Model of Argument* comes closest to echoing Johnstone's view. Although he does not develop the idea in detail, Tindale hints that the primary function of argument is to "create an environment in which the 'self-persuasion' of the audience, as it were, can take place" (17). A specifically rhetorical model of argumentation, he concludes,

does not relate effectiveness with manipulation, and does not countenance manipulative treatments of audiences. Adherence is sought through understanding, and this is pursued through the creation of an argumentative environment in which the arguer and audience complete the argument as equal partners. On this model, an audience is not aggressively persuaded by the arguer, but is persuaded by its own under-

standing of the reasoning (206).

Tindale's work thus makes a promising start on a revised conception of the force of argument, one again identified as a specifically rhetorical approach to the subject.

I could go on to catalog Johnstone's other contributions, waiting to be rediscovered by contemporary argumentation theory: his ideas about the relationship of arguing to selfhood, or his notion that the meaning of a proposition is constituted in part by the arguments that support it. I will leave the reader free, however, to consider these matters on her own. Instead, I will close by saying that preparing this paper has forced me to confront the deep and previously unremarked debts my own thinking owes to Henry Johnstone. I find in my mind the open places, and the scars, left by the man's wedges and goads. And so let me also express my resolve not to let these debts remain any longer unacknowledged.

Notes

¹ The reader born too late can get a taste of what I mean from Johnstone's occasional editorial confessions. See, for example, 1990. Johnstone, "Foreword," in *Rhetoric and Philosophy*, ed. R.A. Chervitz (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990), pp. xv-xviii; and Johnstone, "Some Notes on an Unprogrammed Editorial Career," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 31 (1998), pp. 1-5.

² D.J. O'Keefe, D.J., "Two Concepts of Argument," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 13 (1977), pp. 121-128.

³ J.W. Wenzel, "Three Perspectives on Argument: Rhetoric, Dialectic, Logic." *Perspectives on Argumentation: Essays in Honor of Wayne Brockriede*, eds. R. Trapp and J. Schuetz (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1990), pp. 9-26.

⁴ H.W. Johnstone, Jr., *Philosophy and Argument* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959).

⁵ H.W. Johnstone, Jr., "Some Reflections on Argumentation," in *La théorie de l'argumentation: Perspectives et applications* (Louvain: Éditions Naulwelaerts, 1963), p. 35.

⁶ See, for example, D. Ehninger, "Argument as Method: Its Nature, Its Limitations and Its Uses," *Communication Monographs* 37(1970), pp. 101-110.

- ⁷ See, for example, J.R. Cox and C.A. Willard, *Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research* (Carbondale: SIU Press, 1982).
- ⁸ See, for example G.A. Hauser, "Civil Society and the Principle of the Public Sphere," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 31 (1998), pp. 20-41.
- ⁹ R.H. Johnson and J.A. Blair. "The Recent Development of Informal Logic," in *Informal Logic: The First International Symposium* (Inverness: Edgepress 1980), pp. 3-28; and "Informal Logic: Past and Present" in *New Essays in Informal Logic* (Windsor, Ontario: Informal Logic, 1994), pp. 1-19.
- ¹⁰ F.H. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst, F. Snoeck Henkemans et al., *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory: A Handbook of Historical Backgrounds and Contemporary Developments*. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996).
- ¹¹ C.L. Hamblin, *Fallacies* [1970] (Newport News: Vale Press, 1993).
- ¹² S. Thomas, *Practical Reasoning in Natural Language* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977).
- ¹³ D.N. Walton, *A Pragmatic Theory of Fallacy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995).
- ¹⁴ See F.H. van Eemeren and R. Grootendorst, *Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992).
- ¹⁵ J.B. Freeman, *Dialectics and the Macrostructure of Arguments: A Theory of Argument Structure* (Berlin: Foris Publications, 1991).
- ¹⁶ T. Grovier, *Problems in Argument Analysis and Evaluation* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1987).
- ¹⁷ D.N. Walton, *Argument Structure: A Pragmatic Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); C.W. Tindale, *Acts of Arguing: A Rhetorical Model of Argument* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999); and R. H. Johnson, *Manifest Rationality: A Pragmatic Theory of Argument* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000).
- ¹⁸ G. Lakoff, and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- ¹⁹ P.J. Benoit and W.L. Benoit, "To Argue or Not to Argue," in *Perspectives on Argumentation: Essays in Honor of Wayne Brockriede*, eds. R. Trapp and J. Schuetz (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1990), pp. 55-72.
- ²⁰ D. Tannen, *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue* (New York: Random House, 1998).

²¹ See Johnson 2000; Grovier 1987; F.H. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst, S. Jackson and S. Jacobs, *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993); and D.N. Walton, *The New Dialectic: Conversational Contexts of Argument* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

²² See Johnstone, 1959, p. 133.

²³ The original article, perhaps a little too dramatically, termed the first encounter with philosophical disagreement "one of life's darkest moments."

²⁴ H.W. Johnstone. "Philosophy and Argumentum ad Hominem Revisited," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 24 (1970), pp. 107-116.

²⁵ Johnstone, 1959, p. 11.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁷ A suggestion later confirmed and extended in Johnstone "Truth, Anagnorisis, and Argument," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 16 (1983), pp. 1-15.

²⁸ H.W. Johnstone, "Response," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 20 (1987), pp. 130-131.

²⁹ H.W. Johnstone, "Rhetoric and Death," in *Rhetoric in Transition: Studies in the Nature and Uses of Rhetoric*, ed. E.E. White (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), pp. 67-68.

³⁰ S. Jacobs, "Argumentation as Normative Pragmatics," in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of the ISSA*, edited by F.H. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst, J.A. Blair and C.A. Willard (Amsterdam: Sic Sat., 1999), p. 400.

³¹ F.J. Kauffeld, "Presumptions and the Distribution of Argumentative Burdens in Acts of Proposing and Accusing" *Argumentation* 12 (1988), pp. 245-266.

³² H.W. Johnstone, "Rhetoric and Communication in Philosophy," in *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument* (University Press: The Dialogue Press of Man and World, 1978), p. 64.

³³ Johnson, 2000, p. 159; see also Walton, 1998.

³⁴ Johnstone, 1980, p. 67.

³⁵ Johnstone, 1963, p. 30.

³⁶ Johnstone, 1980, p. 67.

³⁷ Johnstone, 1983.

³⁸ Johnstone, 1987, p. 133.

Philosophical Rhetoric

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I knew Henry Johnstone as a colleague and friend for nearly three decades, one of which was the decade (1976-87) during which I served as editor of *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. My editorship fell between Johnstone's first tenure as founder and editor and his second period of editorship, during his retirement. Johnstone introduced me to the importance of rhetoric while we were colleagues at Penn State. Before that time, I had the usual prejudice of philosophers against rhetoric, that derives from Descartes' exclusion of rhetoric from truth in the *Discourse*, Locke's designation of rhetorical statements as "perfect cheats" in the *Essay*, and Kant's nasty claim in the third Critique that *ars oratoria* "ist gar keiner Achtung würdig" that it deserves no respect whatsoever.

Johnstone was from beginning to end a logician. He made his initial reputation in philosophy as the author of a logic textbook. Because he took logic seriously, as the heart of philosophy, he was led to write *Philosophy and Argument* (1959). It became one of three widely read books on philosophical argumentation and reasoning published within a few years, the others being Stephen Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (1958) and John Passmore's *Philosophical Reasoning* (1961).¹ These works came at a time when many professional philosophers were claiming, to each other and in their classrooms, that to philosophize is to argue, and that the validity of all arguments could be assessed by the application of symbolic logic to what was said. Johnstone, Toulmin, and Passmore showed that more was involved in the evaluation of philosophical arguments than could be gotten from formal logic.

Johnstone's *Philosophy and Argument* begins with the problem of disagreement in philosophical argument and claims that something more than the principles of formal validity is required for its resolution, and concludes with the sense in which argumentation is rooted in selfhood. This feature of argumentation led Johnstone to publish, just over a decade later, *The Problem of the Self* (1970), and a little less than a decade after that to recapitulate his own philosophical development in the collection of his essays, *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument* (1978).²

What is Johnstone's approach to rhetoric as connected to philosophy? To what extent is his approach complete, that is, to what extent does it require supplementation and development? Johnstone's views have been commented on by many. It is not my intention to explain Johnstone's conception of rhetoric and philosophy in its complexity. My aim is to elicit the inner form of Johnstone's thought as a philosopher, to describe the problem that originates and drives his position, to see the woods instead of the trees.

Johnstone's problem was as follows: Philosophers make claims about the nature of things, the nature of knowledge, the nature of human existence, and so forth. These claims must be tested by argument. In argument, philosophers aim at validity. The principles of validity are determined in logic. Philosophy is about controversy; it is a critical activity. When there is disagreement in philosophy, formally valid arguments can be produced by both sides. How are philosophical disputes to be resolved?

In disputes occurring in fields of empirical and scientific knowledge there are open avenues for their resolution. Such fields contain methods of experimentation and investigation that allow for the production of evidence and facts that can settle such disputes. But, in philosophical reasoning, what can count as evidence or as a fact is itself in dispute. A fact is a fact only in accord with a specific theory. In philosophical controversy it is the theory which is in dispute.

The standards of empirical objectivity in scientific investigation make possible the use of *argumentum ad rem* to resolve a dispute. The thing to which thought can appeal is not itself in question. In philosophical dispute, as Johnstone claims, *argumentum ad rem* can go nowhere, because the nature of the thing appealed to is itself at the basis of the dispute. Philosophical arguments *ad rem* can all be valid if properly formulated. The standard of objectivity of thought that logic can supply cannot resolve the controversy. This leads Johnstone to his doctrine of *argumentum ad hominem*, the definition of which he takes from Whately. Whately says that such argument does not show "that 'such and such is the fact', but that 'this man is bound to admit it, in conformity to his principles of reasoning, or consistency with his own conduct, situation', etc."³

Johnstone expands the idea of validity from its meaning in formal logic, that the argument is formed so as to have the premise justify the assertion of the conclusion, to the meaning that the argument is formed not only as formally valid but also so as to have it accepted by the person to whom it is directed. A proper philosophical argument must be both formal-

ly and informally valid, in Johnstone's terms. By incorporating *argumentum ad hominem* into the meaning of validity, Johnstone has taken the name for an informal fallacy in standard Aristotelian logic and made it a principle of correct reasoning in philosophical matters.

Informal fallacies are committed in ordinary arguments that are subjectively or psychologically persuasive but that do not contain objective grounds for their conclusions. Johnstone wishes the appeal *ad hominem* to have an objective character, at least in terms of philosophical exchange. Philosophers are committed to consistency in thought. For a philosophical position to stand requires the attempt, not simply to avoid formal, logical self-contradiction, but to avoid resting the position on principles that are in any sense in opposition to themselves.

For example, a problem that exists for the Leibnizian conception of monadology is how God can act in the world as a causal force. If all monads are "windowless," meaning that all causal action is immanent within the self-movement of each monad (each monad acting upon its own prior states), how can God act upon the world? God's causal power would affect the monads as an external force on their being. A similar problem may remain in Whitehead's cosmology of "actual entities," even though he attempted to solve it through his doctrine of "prehension" of one actual entity by another. God is still a special kind of actual entity.⁴

On Johnstone's view, a valid philosophical argument, directed to a Leibnizian or a Whiteheadian, might bring out this metaphysical inconsistency. The holder of such a metaphysical position would be moved by an attachment to consistency to take steps to modify or abandon this position. Because of this dimension of *argumentum ad hominem*, philosophical dispute can accomplish something rather than remaining as a spectacle of two sides, each holding its own.

So far as I can see, Johnstone's position is essentially Socratic. All Socratic arguments are *ad hominem* in this sense; they all follow the pattern of bringing the person Socrates is questioning to a point where two or more of that person's beliefs are in conflict. The resolution of controversy, for Johnstone, is a modern version of Socratic midwifery. In Socratic *elenchos*, one philosophical position is not simply pitted against another, instead, some one position is brought into opposition with itself.

Johnstone holds that one feature which his approach has, for communication, is that philosophical reasoning of this type increases morale. Good thinking builds morale in human affairs.⁵ I think Johnstone is right in this. Good thinking is good for human beings. But his comments on this miss

the irritating and dangerous affect the demand for consistency and distinctions can have on a person, which is evident in the Socratic version, namely, that of the gadfly. Ultimately the Socratic approach is the only one to pursue, but it is not always smooth. In Johnstone's world we are all rational selves.

Johnstone's connection of his conception of argumentation with selfhood is also Socratic. Johnstone's *argumentum ad hominem* is not simply an appeal to the particular circumstances of a person to gain acceptance, as such an argument does when it functions as an informal fallacy. The power of Johnstone's conception of *argument ad hominem* is its appeal to the person's sense of selfhood. We attempt to construct our existence as a self by bringing the facets of our experience together into a consistent pattern. The philosopher's philosophical position is an extension of this aim at consistency. Johnstone's appeal is to this basic process by which we achieve character. This is of a piece with the Socratic aim of self-knowledge. Johnstone's conception of morale is part of the larger aim of self-knowledge and the sense that philosophy is rooted in the self's drive toward a knowledge of itself.

Johnstone developed his views of argumentation and the self largely in terms of the tradition of Anglo-American philosophy, the analytic philosophy of his day. But to believe this was his source would be wrong. The epigraphs to both *Philosophy and Argument* and *The Problem of the Self* are from Hegel, quoted in the original German. Each states eloquently the thesis of the book. The first makes the point that the fundamental refutation of a principle must be accomplished by a development of it in terms of itself rather than by opposing it to some other. The second makes the point that the goal of actuality is movement and the unfolding of becoming and that this restlessness extends to the self.

In his introduction to the essays in *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument*, Johnstone said that few readers other than his former colleagues at Williams College, who were schooled in absolute idealism, "have noticed the idealistic character of my writings on philosophical argumentation." He says his readers "have not seemed to be aware, for example, that when I said that I thought that philosophical arguments were *sui generis*—not to be judged by the standards of argumentation in everyday discourse—I was expressing much the same idea that can be expressed by saying that Hegelian dialectic is not to be judged by the standards of argumentation in science and everyday discourse."⁶ It was no accident that, when Johnstone decided to disband a substantial portion of his personal library and pass works on to graduate students at Penn State, one of the prizes therein was a

complete set of *Jubiläumsausgabe* of Hegel's works.

What Johnstone had discovered in his concern for the role of argumentation in philosophical controversy was the relationship, stated in the first sentence of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, that "Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic." Dialectic is that part of logic that concerns argumentation involved in reasoning from commonly held views (*endoxa*). As Aristotle says, "dialectic is a process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries" (*Topics* 101^b3). Johnstone's conception of philosophy and argument is in fact a conception of dialectic applied to philosophical disagreement. Having started with a version of dialectic, Johnstone was naturally led to the counterpart of dialectic, that is, to rhetoric. His conception of *ad hominem* is a theory of persuasion.

Johnstone's conception of persuasion in philosophical dispute as essentially self-persuasion forms a bridge between Aristotle's conception of dialectic and Hegel's. Hegel grounds his dialectic of opposites in the life of the self or spirit (*Geist*). Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which is the schema of movement of the categories in his *Science of Logic*, is the science of the experience of consciousness. Hegel's *Phenomenology* has been called a *Bildungsroman*, in which the self moves from one stage of consciousness to the next, in a grand process of self-knowledge. Like Johnstone's *argumentum ad hominem*, human consciousness at each stage discourses with itself realizing the inconsistency of its position at that stage and thereby moving to a new standpoint, only to repeat the process. Consciousness is continually restless in its movement, arguing, so to speak, with the oppositions within itself and moving to a greater comprehension of experience through a process of self-refutation. Consciousness as the general form of selfhood is always its own opponent. Johnstone's Hegelianism lies in his grounding of argumentation in the self.

How complete is Johnstone's attempt at making rhetoric the counterpart of dialectic? In the end, Johnstone's position is a version of the *ars critica*. Philosophy, for Johnstone, is criticism, and hence argumentation is the means to conduct the critical evaluation of ideas. Instead of a doctrine of *ars topica*, Johnstone develops his theory of the self as the locus of arguments. He begins his account of philosophy and rhetoric with philosophical claims as given. The problem is to test such claims and to find a way to move ahead in the controversy that ensues. But how do we come to formulate such philosophical claims in the first place? For an answer to this we must turn to the work of Ernesto Grassi.

My association and friendship with Grassi was of almost as many years as with Johnstone. The many conversations I had with Grassi, both here and in Europe, opened up new dimensions for me of the relation of rhetoric to poetic and to philosophy. Although I introduced them to each other, and Grassi's first essay on rhetoric to be published in English appeared in the first issue I edited of *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, I think Johnstone and Grassi remained largely in separate worlds.⁷ Johnstone was the humane rationalist; Grassi was the rhetorical humanist. In his above-mentioned essay, Grassi first stated his thesis that rhetoric is not exterior to philosophical thought but at its very center—that rhetoric is what makes philosophy possible. This thesis became his book title, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, now recently reprinted.⁸

Grassi raises the question of the starting points of logic, of the process of rational argument. Rhetoric as the speech of the emotions, as the instrument of persuasion of an audience, the discipline of preachers and orators, is traditionally regarded as external to the establishment of philosophical truths. Philosophical truth is understood as arrived at by a process of rational thought, investigation, and speech, which, once formulated, may be communicated to others through rhetorical forms of language. But, as Grassi points out, it is a scandal to logic that logic cannot provide its own starting points. Once an argument is stated, once a philosophical claim is made, we can evaluate its validity, even extending the principle of validity as far as does Johnstone, to include the factor of *ad hominem*. This depends upon our power to use language rationally to develop ideas.

But how do we originally come to an idea, a claim that is then subject to criticism? This requires another sense of speech, one not *demonstrative* or critical but *indicative*, or one that can simply produce a significance. Such speech "leads before the eyes" (*phainesthai*). It is metaphorical speech or imaginative speech. The speech that produces *archai* has a prophetic (*prophainesthai*) character that cannot be comprehended from a rational point of view, yet it is required for the formulation of any beginning from which reason can act. Grassi ties rhetoric to this originating power of language. He says: "Thus the term 'rhetoric' assumes a fundamentally new significance; 'rhetoric' is not, nor can it be the art, the technique of an exterior persuasion; it is rather the speech which is the basis of the rational thought."⁹

Grassi has developed this view in a wide number of works, running from his first statement in *Rhetoric as Philosophy* to his demonstration of how rhetoric functions as philosophy in Renaissance thinkers in *Renaissance Humanism* (1988), to the collection of his essays in *Vico and Humanism*, in

which he shows the importance of Vico's imaginative universal (*universale fantastico*) and Heidegger's notion of the "clearing" (*Lichtung*) for this view.¹⁰ Grassi, like the Latins, joins rhetoric and poetic. To initiate a thought in a fundamental sense, to make a beginning point, we require an image, a metaphor. The power of the metaphor is to bring together a similarity in dissimilars, which requires *ingenium*. As Aristotle says: "the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and is also a sign of genius" (*Poetics* 1459^a5-7).

The art of cultivating this power of ingenuity has been lost since the Renaissance. Since Descartes, the focus of thought and education has turned from *ars topica* to *ars critica*. Grassi wishes to revive *ars topica* and make it the centerpiece of rhetorical study. Philosophies depend upon metaphors, what the American contextualist Stephen Pepper called "root metaphors" in his *World Hypotheses*, or what the French feminist philosopher Michèle Le Doeuff calls *The Philosophical Imaginary*.¹¹ When Grassi's perspective is brought to bear on Johnstone's conception of argumentation we can see that what we are attacking in a philosophical controversy is not only a rational claim, that must be tested against itself, but also, behind it, a metaphor, an image of the world upon which it depends. For example, this image could be the root metaphor that the world is a machine, or that the world is an organism, or other metaphors that derive from these.

The self confronts itself not only in terms of the consistency of the claims it wishes to hold but also in terms of the images of itself that form the imaginative reality on which its existence depends, as rooted in human culture. A rational conception of selfhood is insufficient to grasp the poetic and rhetorical basis of human consciousness. Rational senses of communication presuppose and depend upon the imaginative forms of the self that are expressed in myths, religions, and poetry, which function as *topoi* from which the self "draws forth" its significance. The self, as Cassirer shows, "is connected to all the symbolic forms of human culture, and they are its nature writ large." Cassirer says: "That self-knowledge is the highest aim of philosophical inquiry appears to be generally acknowledged."¹²

We might describe Johnstone's position as *philosophy and rhetoric*, the conjunction of the two, and Grassi's position as *rhetoric as philosophy*, the placing of rhetoric as prior to philosophy and the moving of philosophy back to its roots in rhetoric. The position I wish to suggest might be called *philosophical rhetoric*, which presupposes the other two. I attempted to explain this in my essay in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, "The Limits of Argument: Argument and Autobiography" (1993) and in my book, *Philosophy and the Return to Self-*

Knowledge (1997).¹³ This position is a stand against "literal-mindedness" in philosophy; Hegel called such philosophers "*unsere Buchstabenphilosophen*." What the approach of philosophical rhetoric adds to Johnstone's logical approach, joined to Grassi's humanist insights, is the importance of narrative. Johnstone has expanded the philosophical notion of validity into its rhetorical dimension. Grassi has advanced metaphor from its role as a literary device to its status as the form of philosophical *archai*, tying rhetorical speech to primordial speech. Both of these require narrative.

Narrative is the speech of memory. Philosophies are essentially narratives. All great works of philosophy simply tell the reader what is the nature of things. The arguments we find within such works are meaningful within the structure of the narrative they contain. The narration confers meaning. Questions of meaning always precede questions of truth. Philosophical arguments do not stand on their own. They cannot profitably be removed from the narrative that informs them and evaluated as though they had independent value and truth.

Philosophies, like all narratives, act against forgetting. To forget is to leave something out, to omit or overlook a feature of a subject matter or of the world. Philosophical speech is memorial speech because it reminds us of what we have already forgotten or nearly forgotten about experience. The speech of philosophical narrative can never become literal-minded because to act against forgetting is to attempt to hold opposites together. The narrative is always based on a metaphor; a metaphor is always a narrative in brief. The narrative is also the means to overcome controversy, because for the self to overcome an inconsistency of its thoughts it must develop not simply a new argument but a new position, a new narrative in which to contain any new argument.

The self makes itself by speaking to itself, not in the sense of introspection but in the sense of the art of conversation, which is tied to the original meaning of dialectic. On this view, philosophy is not rhetorical simply in its need to resolve controversy, nor is it rhetorical simply in terms of its starting points for rational demonstration. Philosophy is rhetorical in these senses, but it is further rhetorical in its total expression. Any philosophy commands its truth by the way it speaks. Great philosophies speak in a powerful manner that affects both mind and heart. It is common, in the *Dialogues*, that, after engaging in the *elenchos*, Socrates says he is unsure whether a claim that seems to be true, really is true. His answer is to offer a "likely story." All philosophies, on my view, are likely stories, which originate in the philosopher's own autobiography and are attempts to move from this

to the autobiography of humanity, to formulate the narrative of human existence in the world and to speak of things human and divine.

These are not narratives in the fictional sense because they purport to have more than a temporal structure; they purport to show the necessary connections between things, to be able to say what was, is, and must be the case, to offer a knowledge *per causas*. To accomplish such a speech, we find the philosopher in fact using all the tropes, from metaphor to irony, and all the principles of rhetoric, including the ethos of the speaker. Philosophies viewed in this way are already rhetorical. Those that are deficient in this regard tend to be or are paltry things. The great philosophies of the tradition convince and remain because their language is by nature rhetorical and continues to communicate to those who will encounter it.

In the end, another way to say what I have said is that all the great philosophies of the canon, whether they claim to or not, and whether or not they openly dismiss rhetoric, do employ rhetoric. The great philosophies gain their authority, not simply from what they say but from how they say it, including those of Descartes, Locke, and Kant. They serve as models for philosophical speech. The great philosophies tend toward Hegel's principle that "the true is the whole" (*Das Wahre ist das Ganze*), and to express this they aim, consciously, or unconsciously, at the Renaissance principle to be "wisdom that speaks" (*la sapienza che parla*). To speak of the whole forces language toward eloquence. There seems to me every reason to say, of such philosophies, what Horace says of poetry and Cicero says of rhetoric: that they instruct, delight, and move.¹⁴

Notes

¹ Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., *Philosophy and Argument* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959); Stephen Edelston Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958); John Passmore, *Philosophical Reasoning* (London: Duckworth, 1961).

² Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., *The Problem of the Self* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970); and *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument: An Outlook in Transition* (University Park, PA: The Dialogue Press of Man and World, 1978).

³ Quoted in *Philosophy and Argument*, p. 73; see also *Validity and Rhetoric* p. 8 and p. 53.

⁴ Johnstone's examples are Norman Malcolm's "Ordinary language is correct language"; see *Validity and Rhetoric* pp. 53-61 and Socrates' argument with Thrasymachus in the *Republic*; see *Philosophy and Argument*, pp. 50-51.

⁵ *Validity and Rhetoric*, pp. 69-72.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ Ernesto Grassi, "Rhetoric and Philosophy," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 9 (1976), pp. 200-216.

⁸ Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980); republished, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000.

⁹ *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, p. 20.

¹⁰ Ernesto Grassi, *Renaissance Humanism: Studies in Philosophy and Poetics* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1988); and *Vico and Humanism: Essays on Vico, Heidegger, and Rhetoric*, ed. Donald Phillip Verene (New York: Lang, 1990).

¹¹ Stephen Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942); Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary*, trans. Colin Gordon (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

¹² Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 1.

¹³ Donald Phillip Verene, "The Limits of Argument: Argument and Autobiography," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 26 (1993), pp. 1-8; and *Philosophy and the Return to Self-Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ Horace, *Ars poetica* 333; Cicero, *Brutus* 185; see also *De orat.* II. 27.115.

Oh Popoi! Henry Johnstone, Homer, and the History of Rhetoric

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This essay explores a coincidence between the work of the philosopher and classicist Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., the study of Homer, and the history of rhetoric.

Professor Johnstone's bibliography has over 170 citations, and even though predominantly this bibliography communicates his core inquiry into philosophy and argument, it communicates as well his love of ancient Greek culture and its linguistic legacy, a love that is of considerable interest to the historian of rhetoric. An historian of rhetoric might find of most conspicuous relevance Prof. Johnstone's exploration of *ad hominem* argument in Locke and Whately,¹ and in Aristotle and Hegel.² An historian of rhetoric can see his contributions, as well, in his exploration of strife and contradiction in Hesiod,³ in his considerations of Homeric echoes in Plato,⁴ in his critique of truth and *anagnorisis* in argument,⁵ and in his study of *pankoimon* as a rhetorical figure in ancient Greek drama.⁶ If an historian of rhetoric is looking for good text, translation and commentary of the fragments of Parmenides, Heraclitus, or Empedocles, she would do well by locating Prof. Johnstone's Bryn Mawr commentaries on these ancient texts.⁷ For additional critique of Heraclitus and Parmenides an historian of rhetoric might find important Prof. Johnstone's work on invective and argument in these texts.⁸ And if an historian of rhetoric wants to know what Prof. Johnstone thought of the debate about the origin of rhetoric, she could read his response to Edward Schiappa and John Poulakos on this issue.⁹

While the number and diversity of Prof. Johnstone's work relating to the history of rhetoric are worth noting, the more remarkable point for elaboration is the way his ideas with few exceptions are driven by curiosities about the self. I will attend to one way in which these curiosities relate to the history of rhetoric, namely how Prof. Johnstone's philosophy of the self confronts the developmental presuppositions in many of our prominent histories of rhetoric.

Prof. Johnstone loved the unprogrammatic and the personal. So, to begin, I would like to draw attention to an incidental remark he once made to me. Over lunch one day, when the two of us were reading from Book 5 of the *Odyssey*, he looked up from his Oxford Classical Text at line 286 and grinned broadly at me as I read “ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ μετεβουλεύσαν θεοὶ ἄλλως ἄμφ’ Ὀδυσῆϊ ἐμεῖο μετ’ Αἰθιόπεσσιω ἐόντος!” When I acknowledged his grin, he pronounced his love of the expression, “ὦ πόποι (Oh popoi!).” I came to learn that I should never take in a trivial way Prof. Johnstone’s many incidental remarks to me. The double incidental nature of this particular remark (“Oh popoi!” is itself incidental because it is an apostrophe) seems a rich place to begin my inquiry. Why might Prof. Johnstone love the expression “Oh popoi!”? An easy answer might be that he appreciated the way it sounded when pronounced, or the way the drama of the pronouncement enhances the experience of the narrative. Perhaps both of these, but I would like to explore how these loves might be tied to a greater one for Prof. Johnstone, namely philosophy (an activity that he came to recognize as interwoven with rhetoric). What would make “Oh popoi!” philosophically/rhetorically significant? Homer’s *Odyssey* will be the primary text for this inquiry because this was the text of our greatest affection.

The combination of the word “πόποι” always with “ὦ” is likely an onomatopoeic exclamation of contextual surprise. In the *Odyssey*, this expression occurs 22 times, and is spoken by both gods and men. Plutarch, and other Latin writers, treat this expression as an invocation of the gods, believing that the Dryopians called the gods, “πόποι”, and that the “ὦ” functioned not as a mere exclamation but as a vocative.¹⁰ As in Latin, the vocative is the case of direct address. It is usually found in the interior of a sentence, but when it begins a sentence it is emphatic.¹¹ This might lead one to believe that “ὦ πόποι” opening a scene is an emphatic direct address to the gods on account of the speaker being surprised. However, the idea of “πόποι” meaning “the gods” is not generally accepted by modern writers who believe that the ideas about the Dryopian vocabulary are “probably invented.”¹²

If not to the gods, to whom is this emphatic address directed? Perhaps no one. This would be a dire possibility for one interested in exploring the rhetoric of an emphatic apostrophe, at least in an orthodox kind of way. The orthodox study of rhetoric has for some time been careful to distinguish rhetoric by its instrumentality and purposiveness, rather than

by its expressive capacity. Expressive speech, like saying "ouch" when a hammer falls on one's foot, is not rhetorical; it is merely expressive. In this orthodox interpretive paradigm, Poseidon's exclamation if undirected would lose its instrumentality and purposiveness, hence its rhetorical significance. Moreover, as a mere onomatopoeic expression of outrage, "Oh popoi!" is disconnected from the logical cause of the outrage. The reader must read further into the center of the verse to begin to understand the cause of this outrage. Privileging the logic of a speech act such as the explicit statement of causality, (a privilege afforded by the Aristotelian interpretive paradigm in the study of speech acts, something that will be addressed later in this essay) might lead a reader to subordinate that part of the act which is not explicitly part of the logic, such as an onomatopoeic exclamation. This, in turn, would lead a reader to pass over "Oh popoi!" as incidental to logic, hence insignificant.

However, ruling out the gods as audience does not require the emphatic apostrophe to be undirected. That the expression could be directed toward something other than the gods, to a different audience, seems likely because of the very movement of an apostrophe. This "strophe" characterized by "apo" is quite literally a turning away of a speech act to address some person or personified thing either present or absent. If not to the gods, or to some other "person" perhaps "Oh popoi!" is directed to the person who expresses it, who then becomes a personified thing that we might call "the self." I come to this possibility through Prof. Johnstone's ideas about the self.

Let's consider the occurrence of "Oh popoi!" that introduced me to Prof. Johnstone's love of this expression: "Oh popoi! The gods have certainly changed their purpose regarding Odysseus, while I was among the Ethiopians!" With this, Poseidon expresses his outrage that Odysseus is escaping his trial of misery. Poseidon's vision of Odysseus on the sea confronts him with contradiction. Poseidon thought Odysseus was to be kept on Ogygia away from home. He now sees something opposite to his expectation. As an expression of his awareness of this contradiction, Poseidon exclaims, "Oh popoi! etc."

That the self emerges as recognition of a contradiction and is maintained through the management of this contradiction is the idea that runs through a majority of Prof. Johnstone's 170+ publications. Prof. Johnstone argued throughout much of his life that the perspective that provides humans with awareness of contradictions in their experience is provided by the self.¹³ The self, for Prof. Johnstone, is the locus of contradiction. What

Prof. Johnstone once termed reflexive rhetoric is the rhetoric of the self, directed to the self, or better yet to the person, for the person will carry on after the resolution of the contradiction in which self-consciousness is evoked. Poseidon's exclamation of "Oh popoi, etc.!" might be seen as a speech act of Poseidon's "self" to his "person". Let's consider other such emphatic Homeric apostrophe's to explore further this possibility.

"Oh popoi!" has kin in the expression "ὦ μοι ἐγὼ (Oh moi ego)!". Take for example Eurycleia's expression of "ὦ μοι ἐγὼ" at 19.363-4: "ὦ μοι ἐγὼ σέο, τέχνον, ἀμήχανος ("Oh moi ego! You, child, I am incapable of helping!"). "Child" (τέχνον) here refers to Odysseus, who Eurycleia thinks is still far away, and not the man standing before her who looks like a beggar. "Moi" and "ego" are both first person singular pronouns, the latter in the nominative meaning "I", the former in the dative meaning "to or for me." An oblique case of "ego" (moi)—especially genitive or dative—implicates the self as agent. Eurycleia's apostrophe is as much about the "other" (τέχνον) as it is about the "self" (μοι ἐγὼ).

As a speech act, "Oh moi ego!" emphatically expresses Eurycleia's sense of herself. As Odysseus's loyal maid whose duties and life were defined by her ability to help Odysseus, Eurycleia has now found herself in a position unable to help. She suffers from the shame of her current position. Shame is the expression of a contradiction—between norms of behavior and one's failure to hew to those norms. The contradiction Eurycleia faces seems too much for her to bear, thus she cries out in shame, "Oh moi ego!", as if to call herself into being as a means of bearing the burden of this contradiction. The self is established not only as agent but also, and more importantly, as bearer of shame. As a speech act, "Oh moi ego!" calls attention to the emerging self arising to accept the burden of this contradiction. Perhaps we could even say that "Oh moi ego!" calls attention to the fact that Eurycleia has become an object to herself, and from this perspective she sees her present contradiction. This is the perspective that only the "self" can provide.

While, clearly, "Oh popoi!" does not employ personal pronouns as "Oh moi ego!", nonetheless it too can be heard as an emphatic performance of the Homeric self. Take for example Eurymachus' exclamation of his shame upon failing to string the bow: ὦ πόποι, ἦ μοι ἄχος περί τ' αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ πάντων (Oh popoi! Believe me, I am grieved for myself and for you all)!" (21.249). Eurymachus's grief derives not from his loss of Penelope's hand in marriage (for there are plenty of other women, he says)

but from his shame over falling so far short of godlike Odysseus in strength. The man who takes over Odysseus's kingdom should be expected to be at least as strong as the great Odysseus. For Eurymachus to fall short of this expectation and to recognize that all others fall short too, puts him and his comrades to shame, and again, shame derives from a contradiction—between norms of behavior and one's failure to hew to those norms. To the extent that "Oh popoi!" exclaims this sense of shame we can say that it calls attention to Eurymachus's recognition of this contradiction, hence his self-consciousness.

We might also see such an operation in Telemachus's expression of "Oh popoi!" at 21.102: "ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα με Ζεὺς ἄφρονα θῆκε Κρονίων (Oh popoi! Surely Zeus has taken away my wits)!" Telemachus continues with a reflective statement on his current situation: μήτηρ μὲν μοί φησι φίλη, πινυτή περ ἑοῦσα, ἄλλω ἅμ' ἔψεσθαι νοσφισσαμένη τόδε δῶμα· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γελῶ καὶ τέρπομαι ἄφροني θυμῷ (103-105). His dear mother, wise as she is, declares that she will follow another husband, forsaking their house; yet he laughs and is glad in his witless mind. "Oh popoi!" here introduces Telemachus's expression of his "paradoxical pair of awarenesses"¹⁴—on the one hand he is aware that laughing with gladness would not be a proper response to this news yet he is aware that he is laughing with gladness.

To the extent that emphatic apostrophes draw attention to contradiction,¹⁵ we can affirm their rhetorical significance beyond mere expression of an impassioned state. In all of the preceding examples the emphatic apostrophes have a more important function than saying "ouch" when in pain. The expression is not merely venting emotion, it is evoking self-consciousness. In Prof. Johnstone's language, this speech act drives a wedge between the person addressed and some of his stimuli. "Wedges separate. What has been separated must have at least two parts. The two parts separated by the wedge of rhetoric are the hitherto unnoticed items now brought into the focus of attention, and the self that does the attending. One cannot evoke an object of attention without evoking a self."¹⁶ All rhetorical transactions require this wedge. Prof. Johnstone once called this wedge an art of calling attention to a situation for which perspective is necessary, but he did not regard this call as having to be made by someone other than oneself: "When rhetoric is capable of flowing in two directions, it can flow both from me and to me. I can, in other words, be my own audience. I can drive the wedge between stimulus and sensation that is required to evoke my own

consciousness.”¹⁷

The self, as Henry Johnstone theorized it, comes into being in particular situations where contradictions need to be attended to, then dies upon the resolution of the contradiction. Because the self dies upon the resolution of the particular contradiction for which it arises, the self has no consistency or stability through time. The self is in this way particular and peculiar, momentary, incidental, and fleeting. The particular experience of the self can only become part of a person's knowledge if a person remembers the experience of the particular self. Only in this way does the incidental self become personal. Only through memory can the self be attached to the person, but this remembered self is not the self. This remembered self is a part of the person's self-knowledge, which is always removed from (albeit involved in) the experience of the self in a particular moment.

Let's consider further Eurycleia's case. Her apostrophe expresses her suffering consciousness of the contradiction that brings forth the experience of shame. Eurycleia's suffering consciousness will end, not when the pain subsides, but when the contradiction resolves in the acceptance of the externally derived norms of behavior. The resolution to accept one's failure to adhere to socially demanded norms of behavior seems more the result of coercion than choice. This is important to note because the coercion of the shame culture of the Homeric world might be used as a way of diminishing the idea of a Homeric self, or an interior mind-space where decisions or interpretations about one's behavior can be made. Homeric characters, it has been argued, are always defined from without, rather than from within—because there is no “within”, no internal mind space within which Homeric characters are able to make choices, or recognize themselves as agents in their own world. However, Eurycleia's recognition of her failure to hew to the externally defined norms for her behavior does not undermine the idea of her self-consciousness. From the perspective of Prof. Johnstone's work, the very act of recognition marks her self-consciousness. Moreover, from the perspective of Prof. Johnstone's work, that Eurycleia's self-consciousness dissolves upon the resolution of the contradiction would seem irrelevant as an argument against her being possessed with self-awareness in the first place. The relevancy of such an argument against the Homeric self could only be established by an idea of the self as a stable, unified, continuous, and independent construct that cannot fade away from human experience and understanding. This is not the understanding of the self that Prof. Johnstone invites us to consider. Neither the particular awareness brought to light by the perspective of the self nor the finite duration of the life of

the self are ways of arguing for the existence (or lack thereof) of the self. These instead are the very marks of self-consciousness—self-consciousness will bring forth a perspective on contradiction and will die upon resolution of this contradiction whether this resolution comes sooner or later, by whatever means.

Shame scenes are not the only scenes in which we can explore the reflexive rhetorical wedge of Prof. Johnstone's work in Homer. Scenes of temptation are also rich for exploration. Emphatic apostrophes can introduce these scenes as well (5.355-364; 5.465-473), but our point now is less about emphatic apostrophes and more about the idea of the Homeric self as it emerges in rhetorical activity.¹⁸ Scenes of temptation abound in the *Odyssey* but are most conspicuous in Odysseus's experiences. In these scenes Odysseus's agency is pronounced. Odysseus deliberates because a situation has arisen in which he is torn in two. This situation always arises from some temptation that Odysseus feels. Feeling this temptation gives rise to the need to make a choice in response. Deliberation is portrayed as facilitating this choice.

Let's consider the following examples: Odysseus is tempted to clasp Nausikaa's knees, to accept Leukothea's veil, to kill Iros, and to slay his handmaidens in vengeance. In each scene, Odysseus is portrayed as speaking to himself in the moment of temptation. Through these speeches he comes to recognize the contradiction between his current desires and the dangers presented to him if he pursues these desires. In the case of Nausikaa he tells himself that he risks frightening her. With Leukothea he tells himself that he risks being tricked by a goddess doing Poseidon's bidding. And with Iros and his handmaidens he tells himself that he risks blowing his cover. Such speech acts demonstrate Odysseus's capacity to objectify his experience and reflect upon the peculiarities of it. The self that emerges that gives rise to this perspective allows Odysseus to see his situation and deliberate about it with both circumspection and prudence. Deliberation marks the maintenance of the self. His decision marks the death of the self, the dissolution of attention to the peculiarities, paradoxes, and contradictions of a present situation. His decision is the result of choice, not coercion, but regardless the moment of decisive choice, like the moment of coercive resignation, marks the death of the self.

Odysseus experiences temptation because he is aware of the possibility of doing something other than what comes automatically. He recognizes the contradiction of his two ways of being, one desiring to change, and the other desiring to maintain. Through such recognition of contradiction

humans put themselves on the map of life, so to speak, moving them from immediate experience to inhabit a world. Only with such recognition can one interrupt oneself and feel tempted, without simply acting as a slave to impulse. Such recognition presupposes an imagination at work. This imagination allows one to see the possibility of doing something other than what comes naturally. The incentive to deliberate arises in a person who is able to recognize him/herself as fundamentally free from impulse and automatic urges. This recognition forces an interruption of the unity of the transaction between subject and object. Deliberation proceeds as a way of managing temptation when impulse fails to successfully dictate behavior.

I have explored now how Henry Johnstone and Homer coincide through the idea of the "self." Prof. Johnstone's "self" in the Homeric world, as well as in the human world in general, is a product of the performance of the rhetorical wedge. The rhetorical wedge is a phenomenon central to all speech acts that draw one's attention to the problems, paradoxes, and contradictions of one's experiences. I need now to explore how this perspective impacts the history of rhetoric. In particular, I want to explore how it confronts teleological assumptions in the history of rhetoric.

Teleology provides an account of human experience as moving towards a particular end in a continuous way. In the ancient Greek history of rhetoric, for example, teleology maps the progress of a rhetorical consciousness culminating in the technologizing of rhetoric. Aristotle's *Techne Rhetorike* can be understood as this culminating technology of rhetoric. In this work, speech acts are rationalized, codified, and systematized with an abstract philosophical vocabulary. Rhetoric is attended to as an efficient system designed to create the most likely outcomes in civic discourse, hence it is attended to as a technology of civic discourse. A teleological history of rhetoric presupposes that rhetoric develops into this technologized state.

When the *telos* of *techne* guides our histories of rhetoric, the study of the Homeric world is reduced to the study of a pre-*techne* world. In such a world, human experience has not yet come under the dominion of *techne* (what came to be called "art" and eventually, by some, "theory"). One such recent account of a pre-*techne* world is Prof. Edward Schiappa's account of Gorgias' world.¹⁹ Exploring the question of whether Gorgias had a theory of arrangement, Schiappa argues that Gorgias did not, that in fact Gorgias lived in a time prior to such explicit theorizing (108). Schiappa characterizes the time prior to the fourth century B.C.E. as unconscious of theory as a guide for or way of understanding human activities (like speech). Instead, Schiappa argues that speech activities were guided by imitation and evolving

oral patterns. Schiappa is careful to point out that it should not surprise us that oratory as a practice became fairly sophisticated through a process of imitation and evolution well before a technical vocabulary developed and before self-consciously held "theories" emerged (109). However, Schiappa's historiographical point is that we need a more nuanced way to describe the development of theory and theorizing. Schiappa argues that for us to differentiate Gorgias's culture as atheoretical and fourth century culture as theoretical presents a false dichotomy. At minimum, Schiappa argues, we need to identify at least three steps to the emergence of rhetorical theory of the type found full-blown in the texts of the fourth century B.C.E:

Nontheoretical texts describe texts where patterns and implicit rules may be found but no evidence of discussion or reflection on such rules. All writers operate with at least an informal sort of self-conscious aesthetic about what "sounds right," but this does not mean they all "theorize" about discourse. *Undeclared theory* may be a useful way of describing texts in which patterns emerge and there is some evidence of reflection about composition—such as the emergence of a rudimentary technical vocabulary—but insufficient evidence to attribute a distinct and self-consciously held "theory" to the author. It is possible to cull an "inferred" or "implied" theory or set of rules out of such texts, but without adequate evidence it is potentially anachronistic and misleading to call it a theory of rhetoric (or in this case, a theory of arrangement). The phrase *rhetorical theory* can be limited to texts containing explicit discussion of rules and principles of rhetoric, which may or may not influence the compositional practices of others. Clear examples of each would include Homer's epics as nontheoretical; Gorgias's texts for an undeclared theory of arrangement (through Gorgias articulates an explicit account of logos); and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* for rhetorical theory (109).

While clearly Schiappa's interest is in the development of rhetorical theory, he claims to be particularly interested in the "beginnings" of rhetorical theory. However, his search for the beginnings (*arche*) proceeds from the point of an established end (*telos*)—namely the theoretical culture of the fourth century B.C.E. that allowed Aristotle to produce his *Techne Rhetorike*. While Schiappa's method might do a great deal for the study of theory, it does very little for anything that comes prior to what we find in the fourth century B.C.E. Schiappa proceeds by using a given conception of theory as a norm by which all speech texts of and prior to the fourth century are measured. Some texts will be identified as conforming to this conception of

theory, and other texts as not. Homer becomes, then, one of the "others" who does not. In short, whether understood as "nontheoretical texts" or "undeclared theoretical texts," the texts of speech cultures prior to the fourth century are still being measured by the standard of fourth century rhetorical theory. If this conception of theory becomes the measure by which the various cultures of speech prior to the fourth century are measured, then we are left to view these cultures as less developed, primitive, or "proto-rhetorical." Such a measure would fail to assist efforts to explore the unique cultural situation of the Homeric epics in the history of rhetoric.

This teleological method in the history of rhetoric, exemplified by Schiappa, is very similar to the teleological treatment of self-consciousness in the larger body of scholarship on ancient Greek culture. For example, a long standing tradition in classical studies on Homer is grounded in early German philological work.²⁰ This work argues the emotion of the Homeric person breaks out spontaneously within him with unheard of force and rules him irresistibly. This emotion is regarded as not from the person but occurring in the person, in the *thumos*, or the *phrenes*, or the *kradia*. These inner parts are thought to be media of emotion, each acting as a separate agent. No unifying idea or organizing principle—such as a single, identifiable word for the "self"—is thought to render these parts coherent. Without this coherence, no idea of the *gesamtmüit* is thought to exist in the Homeric person. Without *gesamtmüit*, Homeric characters are regarded as unable to proceed with self-awareness of what they are doing. Without an awareness of selfhood and the agency it presupposes, Homeric people have "choices" made for them rather than by them (these then are not really "choices" but "coercions"). In this tradition, the Homeric person is treated as bound to the gods and to impulse because he has not yet roused himself to an awareness of his own freedom.

Teleological treatments of consciousness proceed to show that the human arousal of awareness of human freedom is a consequence of the development of technology. While "technology" can be broadly defined to include everything from a systematic account of human behavior in order to rationalize, predict, and control it to a philosophical, abstract vocabulary, I want to attend to the latter of these for just a moment longer. As evidence of the absence of the idea of the self, the early German philological tradition points out that no single, identifiable word for "self" exists in the Homeric epics. From this lexical absence, this tradition argues that Homeric people could not be aware of themselves as selves. This argument is quite similar to the argument in the history of rhetoric that regards cultures with-

out abstract vocabulary for speech acts as having a “nontheoretical” or “undeclared theoretical” experience of speech activities. In both traditions—the history of rhetoric in particular and the history of consciousness in general—the coming of abstract vocabulary (e.g. “rhetoric” and “self”) is linked to the actualization of human consciousness.

What I am exploring as a problem on an historiographical level could be explored on a speech act level in order to demonstrate the problem in another way. I would like to consider extensively the example of the classical ideal of sentence structure, namely the periodic style of Attic discourse.

Aristotle calls ideas that are added on to one another “running style” (*lexis eirromene*) and opposes this to the periodic style that comes to a natural end (*lexis katastrammene*):

The running style [*eirromene*] is the ancient one; for example, ‘This is the exposition of the investigation of Herodotus of Thurii.’ All formerly used this style, but now only a few use it. By running style [*eirromene*] I mean that which has no end in itself and only stops when the sense is complete. This style is unpleasant by its endless nature, for all want to see an end. For this reason, runners at the end of the course are out of breath and strength. When the end is in view they show no fatigue. Such is the running style; the turned down style on the other hand is the periodic style. By periodic style I mean a saying with an inherent beginning and end as well as a greatness that can be beheld at a single glance. That which is written in this style is pleasant and easy to learn. It is pleasant because it is the opposite of what is unlimited, and because the listener at every moment has the idea of securing something, by the fact that every moment is limited in itself. For having no anticipation of an end or not reaching the end of anything is unpleasant (*Rhetoric* 1409a.29-1409b.4) ²¹

Let us consider a particular type of the continuous style, parataxis. Paratactic style lacks grammatical connectors which work to express certain logical relationships between clauses. A good example is *Odyssey* 1.119-120:

Βῆ δ' ἰθὺς προθύροιο, νευμεσσήθη δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ ξεῖνον δεθᾶ
θύρησιν ἐφεστᾶ μιν·

He went straight for the forecourt, the heart within him scandalized that a guest should still be standing at the doors.

Parataxis puts ideas of different status beside each other, without added means by which certain logical relationships can be expressed. W. B. Stanford comments, "We frequently find in Homer two co-ordinate clauses where logically one is subordinate to the other."²² Stanford notes of 1.119-120 that later hypotactic style would be more closely knit together as "Then he went straight to the front porch, *because* he was indignant . . ." The naturalization of logical subordination is noteworthy in Stanford's comment. This naturalization conveys the idea that the text "contains" logically subordinate relationships but that the Homeric style is insufficient in its expression of these relationships. Homeric style is conveyed as too primitive to treat well the complex logic of subordination.

Easily recognizable paratactic scenes are those when the poet might be expected by a modern reader to establish a simultaneity in the text, but does not. The opening of Book five (5.1-115) of the *Odyssey* presents a good example:

5.1-20 At a second council of the gods Athena reopens the question of Odysseus' deliverance.

5.21-42 Zeus sends Hermes to order Calypso to send Odysseus from her island.

5.43-115 Hermes flies to Ogygia and delivers his message.

Some scholars believe that the Homeric running style made it impossible for the poet to picture events as taking place simultaneously, so that the poet never leaves one scene and moves to another by saying, "While these things were done here, such other things happened there." He always seems to say, "After these things were done here, those things were done there." Stanford notes that in the opening of Book 5, Homer prefers to begin again in Olympus instead of referring to Book 1 and portraying Hermes' journey to Calypso as simultaneous with Athena's visit to Ithaca. In other words, Stanford comments, "Homer's narrative style, like his syntax, is paratactic and εἰρομένη rather than hypotactic and κατεστραμμένη."²³

Lexis katastrammene, as Aristotle describes it, proceeds teleologically—from *arche* to *telos* (*Rhetoric* 1409^b1: λέγω δὲ πείσδον λέχιν ἔχουσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ τελευτὴν αὐτὴν καθ' αὐτὴν καὶ μέγεθος εὐσύνπτου)—from implying a "beginning" that clearly directs the listener to an end point. *Lexis katastrammene* creates an idea of pleasurable style as limited or bound-

ed by this *telos*. The opportunities for language to move are “turned down” so that the end, a pleasurable resting place, can be achieved.

In Aristotle’s account, *lexis eiromene*, the running style, is unlimited, therefore unpleasant, and stands in direct contrast to the bounded and pleasant periodic style. A problem becomes apparent when we consider that this perspective never views the running style as a distinct, dynamic phenomenon unique to itself. Rather it is defined in terms of the ideal of the periodic. It exists only in contrast to the ideal *lexis katastrammene*. Because it is perceived as less pleasant than this ideal, the running style becomes a negative model. Hence, the move from co-ordination to sub-ordination is much more than a stylistic tendency but a fully displayed developmental and hierarchical ideology. Aristotle proceeds by using a given conception of language as a norm by which all rhetorical style is measured. Some rhetorical style will be identified as conforming to this conception, and other styles as not. Homer becomes, then, one of the “others” who does not.

Those writing on parataxis in early Greek speech go so far as to identify Homer’s style as conveying primitive mindedness. *Lexis eiromene* has been linked to language of children and primitives, considered an unsophisticated stylistic tendency in Homer and in archaic language in general, and described as being subordinated to and replaced by *lexis katastrammene*.²⁴ In this early tradition of critiquing the place of Homeric style, we see parataxis described as a primitive stage of expression—precursor of more sophisticated stages in the development of both expression and human consciousness.

Even what is regarded as a revolution of this tradition of understanding Homeric poetry, namely the work of Milman Parry, does little more than mine more deeply the binary of archaic and classical cultures. According to Parry, Homer’s running style is a necessary consequence of the fact that oral verse is created under circumstances that are radically different from the circumstances of literate speech. Parry explains that the singer must order his words in such a way that they leave him free to end the sentence or draw it out as the story and the needs of the verse demand. Although Parry’s work allowed for new attention to oral style, it conveys the idea that *lexis eiromene* is a kind of necessary limitation resulting from the performance-based production of Homeric poetry. This performance creates a hurried thought. More complex thought, characteristic of an unhurried, literate mind, cannot be achieved in the production of oral verse. Moreover, Parry’s work still begins from the primacy of written language as a norm to which oral language does not yet conform. From a literate per-

spective, oral style can be seen only as the "embryonic stage" of what would develop later into literate style.²⁵

Returning to my earlier consideration of those histories that take "techne" (art/theory) as their guides, I would like now to point out that such histories are "katastrammene," a turning down of opportunities or "places" for rhetorical studies to contribute to distinct (i.e.. cultural) understandings of the human condition. If within the history of rhetoric we are only able to understand Homeric speech acts (what can be called rhetoric) from the vantage point of Aristotelian rhetorical theory, then we are indeed reducing our opportunities to understand Homeric speech acts. To attend only to Homeric culture by way of classical culture bypasses Homeric culture altogether and the opportunities for understanding distinct human experiences of what we might call rhetoric within this culture.

Prof. Johnstone's work helps us to confront such teleological assumptions in the history of rhetoric because it invites us to see consciousness beyond the technological consciousness as it came to be constructed in classical Greek culture. While indeed classical technological consciousness is a kind of consciousness, it is not the only consciousness, nor should it be the privileged consciousness, subordinating all other forms of consciousness to it. The scenes of shame and temptation that emphatic apostrophes introduce us to portray Homeric consciousness in and through speech acts, and by "consciousness" I mean an awareness of the peculiarities, paradoxes, and contradictions of one's experience. Moreover, as Prof. Johnstone once noted of Homeric speeches, they are as rational as anyone could want them to be: "They are not the speeches of madmen."²⁶

Exploring consciousness in the Homeric culture through the rhetorical wedge establishes a threshold from which Homeric epic can enter a history of rhetoric in a way that is coordinate to, not subordinate to the history of classical rhetoric dominated by concern for the coming of the *techne* of rhetoric. Such a coordinate history (a history that proceeds "*eiromene*") would provide another perspective on the place and power of rhetoric in the human condition. The elaboration of perspectives on rhetoric can be regarded as a manifestation of a love for rhetoric. Such a love desires to know more and more of the rhetoricality of being human. This is the love Prof. Johnstone and I came to know serendipitously as we explored the rhetorical wedge and the Homeric epics.

¹ Henry Johnstone, "Locke and Whately on the *Argumentum ad Hominem*," *Argumentation* 10 (1985): pp. 89-97.

² Johnstone, "Aristotle, Hegel, and *Argumentum ad Hominem*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 15 (1985): pp. 131-43. For additional works on *argumentum ad hominem*, an historian of rhetoric might pursue the following by Henry Johnstone: "Philosophy and *Argumentum ad Hominem*," *Journal of Philosophy* 49 (1952): pp. 489-98; "La régression à l'infini et l'*argumentum ad hominem*," *L'Argumentation: Colloque de Cerisy*, ed. Alain Lempereur (Liège: Mardaga, 1991), pp. 31-36; "Selbstanwendung in philosophischer Argumentation," in *Dimensionen des Selbst*, ed. Bertram Kienzle and Helmut Pape, trans. Marc Grünewald (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), pp. 416-442; "Philosophy and *Argumentum ad Hominem* Revisited," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 24 (1970): pp. 107-116.

³ Johnstone, "Strife and Contradiction in Hesiod," in *Intimate Conflict: Contradiction in Literary and Philosophical Discourse*, ed. Brian G. Caraher (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 35-38.

⁴ Johnstone, "A Homeric Echo in Plato?" *Mnemosyne*, Series IV, Volumen XLIV, Fasciculus 3-4, pp. 417-418.

⁵ Johnstone, "Truth, Anagnorisis, and Argument," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 16 (1983): pp. 1-15.

⁶ Johnstone, "Pankoinon as a Rhetorical Figure in Greek Tragedy," *Glotta* 58 (1980): pp. 49-62.

⁷ Johnstone, *Heraclitus' Peri Physeos* (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries, 1984), pp. vi-19; *Empedocles' Peri Physeos and Katharmoi* (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries, 1985) pp. 41-46; with David Sider, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr Greek Commentaries, 1986) pp. vi-24.

⁸ Johnstone, "Heraclitus and Parmenides: Invective and Argument," *Pre-Text* 10 (1989): pp. 87-89.

⁹ Johnstone, "On Schiappa versus Poulakos," *Rhetoric Review* 24 (1996): pp. 92-104.

¹⁰ H. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, and R. McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

¹¹ For additional commentary see Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (n.p.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

¹² See Liddell, Scott, Jones, and McKenzie.

¹³ In particular, see Johnstone, *The Problem of the Self*, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1970); and *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argumentation* (University Park: Dialogue Press of Man and World, 1978).

¹⁴ This phrase is used by Carroll Arnold in a tribute he once wrote to Henry Johnstone: "Johnstone's 'Wedge' and Theory of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 20 (1987), pp. 118-128.

¹⁵ In Richard Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), one of the definitions of "ὦ πόποι" is "a drawing of special attention to something."

¹⁶ Johnstone, "Rhetoric and Death," in Eugene White, ed., *Rhetoric in Transition* (University Park, PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), p. 68.

¹⁷ Johnstone, "Rhetoric as a Wedge: A Reformulation," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 20 (1990): p. 337.

¹⁸ I have written about this in "On the Idea of Reflexive Rhetoric in Homer," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 31 (1998): pp. 41-54.

¹⁹ Edward Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Ancient Greece*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). This work continues Schiappa's line of research in the history of rhetoric: "Did Plato Coin *Rhetorike*?" *American Journal of Philology* 111 (1990): pp. 457-70; "Neo-Sophistic Rhetorical Criticism or the Historical Reconstruction of Sophistic Doctrines?" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (1990) 22: pp. 192-217; *Protagoras and Logos: A Study in Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991). Schiappa's work however seems indebted to an earlier project, Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

²⁰ Joachim Böhme, *Die Seele und Das Ich im Homerischen Epos* (Berlin: [Verlag und Druck von] B.G. Teubner, 1929); and Bruno Snell, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Göttingen: Vandernhoeck, 1966).

21 To render this passage, I use translations by Kennedy and Freese as well as my own sense of the Greek: George Kennedy, *Aristotle On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); John Henry Freese, *The Art of Rhetoric*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).

22 Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Macmillan, 1947), pp. lxxxii.

23 Stanford comments further that this argument was generally used as a way to counter the perceived deleterious effects of the arguments against the unity of the *Odyssey*. This seems to be an example of an effort that while trying to save a text/culture/phenomenon ends up damning it.

24 See Egbert Bakker's summary of this writing on parataxis in *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 41-42.

25 Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Writings of Milman Parry*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). See also the critique of Parry and the privilege of literate style by Egbert Bakker.

26 Johnstone, "Response to Walter Donlan, Christopher Lyle Johnstone, and John Poulakos," presented at the Speech Communication Association National Convention, New Orleans, 5 November 1988, p. 3.

Prisoners of Conscience, Self-Risk, and the Wedge: The Case of Dietrich Bonhoeffer¹

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Every age has its monsters. They roam the corridors of power, populate our most revered institutions, stroll along public streets, and even abide in the house next door. Their evil manifests itself with brute force but also with cunning, as they break bodies and manipulate actions in their quest to subjugate the human spirit. No era, no civilization, no tradition is exempt, as Hitler taught our parents and grandparents, not even our own.

Every age has its dissidents. They may be banned from the halls of power, excluded from its institutions, forced off city streets, left to resist in the tenebrous haunts of society's underground or to rot in the hell holes of its prisons. But their presence reminds us that even in the face of the most horrific perversity, when confronted with the prospect of losing our human dignity or our life, it is possible to make a choice and, thereby, to assert our agency.

The choice of resistance is always an act of agency. The inducements to cooperate on those who would resist the agents of evil can be overwhelming. Monsters are not beneath exploiting personal circumstances of family or holding hostage the lives of loved ones. Incomprehensible pressure and uncompromising torture may lead a person to abandon resistance and cooperate. But, as Polish dissident Adam Michnik acknowledged from his cell in Biololeka Prison:²

The choice [of signing a loyalty oath] is always up to the individual—to the voice of his or her conscience and reason: no one can condemn anyone else's choice. Ostracism would play into the hands of the people in power, since this is precisely what they want—to break society's resistance and the solidarity of the people by creating divisions. To tolerate and understand, however, is not to decide the act of signing the declaration is in itself morally indifferent. It is not. Every loyalty declaration is an evil; and a declaration that was forced out of you was an evil that you were forced to commit, although it may, at times, be a lesser evil. So this

act sometimes deserves understanding, always compassion, but never praise.

The question of human agency, equally, is never far from serious discussions of rhetoric. Rhetoric's originating debates between the sophists and philosophers of ancient Greece were largely over questions of agency. Gorgias pleaded the case for Helen of Troy by urging that she was under the power of far stronger forces, not least of which was rhetoric's power to charm and manipulate her thoughts and feelings. Her elopement with Paris was excusable because she acted under the ecstasy of rhetoric's narcotizing spell. In his formulation, the one addressed was spellbound by the rhetor's words and no longer responsible for her actions.³ But if Helen were no longer possessed of agency, what of Paris? Did not Gorgias' formulation make him responsible for the calamities that befell the Achaeans as a result of his seductive speech? And by extension, is not his defense of Helen also an indictment of rhetoric?

Certainly Plato thought the sophistically arranged marriage between the seductive powers of language and the art of public argument was problematic. He also found a democratic politics based on the rhetorical accomplishment of public judgment dangerous. Both cases proceeded on opinion rather than knowledge, which compromised the possibility of responsible action. In this failing, he positioned rhetoric's mode of presenting ideas as part of a larger problem of agency. Plato offers a most telling expression of the importance of this problem to a well-lived life at the conclusion of the *Phaedrus* (274c-276a). In the myth of Thuth, the Egyptian ruler rejects the gift of writing because the written word cannot defend itself. The written text makes its appearance in the world without its author; its thought arrives in the world orphaned. Without a parent or guardian, writing provided expression without agency; it authored a text resistant to interrogation, unable to explain or protect its own meaning.

Against this view, which positioned agency on a foundation of knowledge, and limited knowledge to that which might withstand intellectual interrogation, Isocrates argued that it was idle to theorize human action other than in terms of the ever-present evocative and persuasive powers of discourse. He argued that philosophy was of consequence only insofar as it was situated in worldly practices; purely theoretical formulations counted for little. Philosophy was realized in and through the civic performance of rhetoric and, importantly, its authority rested on the agency of the rhetor. His *Antidosis* valorizes the rhetor who uses his powers of persuasion exclusively

in support of just causes. Then, after making plain the rhetor's call to advance the public good, he writes that the righteous advocate will feel the influence of his preparation of just causes not only in the quality of his discourse but in the quality of his life. For such a rhetor, "the power to speak well and think right will reward the man who approaches the art of discourse with love of wisdom and love of honour." In turn the public good will be served best by such a leader, since his agency, as expressed by his *ethos*, will influence the quality of his choices and the decisions of citizens. As he writes, "The man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honourable name among his fellow-citizens"⁴

Aristotle also positioned agency at the center of rhetoric, although in a different vein than Plato. Audiences exercised their own agency through judgments—what Aristotle considered the *telos* of rhetoric—based on their perceptions of the rhetor's agency, or *ethos*, as exhibited in habits of thought, action, and motivation manifested in the rhetorical performance itself. This sense of the rhetor's agency was so important that Aristotle maintained it was the basis for belief and, consequently, of accident in cases where the audience possessed no exact knowledge (1356^a).

Agency remains a central philosophical problem into the present, caught as our age is in the intellectual wars between competing doctrines of reason, structure, and identity that mark the modern/postmodern divide. Rhetoric is central to these debates because its concern with the evocative and persuasive dimensions of human symbolic expression entails concern for the ongoing constitution of a human world and the consequences of symbolic choice, or questions of responsibility.

At its heart rhetoric is, as Kenneth Burke wrote, the ever-present "*symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols*" (emphasis his).⁵ It is the ubiquitous capacity of symbols to make appeals; it exists because humans exist as creatures capable of belief and choice. Whether it is understood as the art of persuasion or as an evocation of consciousness, rhetoric enters human experience whenever a symbol is uttered or perceived as an appeal, however inchoate, however ephemeral. At that moment we experience the cycle of sentiments, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts directed, detected, acknowledged, and joined or rejected as a call of solidarity, oneness, identification, and cooperation. Such appeals may be twisted, demented, or coercive, but as long as the human spirit can respond, rhetoric cannot be eliminated. And wherever there is rhetoric, there are

questions of agency—the agency of the rhetor and the agency of the audience asked to respond, even when our rhetorical engagement is with a monster.

During the 20th century, the Western world experienced a range of struggles that, at least in principle, were victorious in their battles with monsters. However, judging by the extent of human rights violations recorded annually by such international NGOs as Human Rights Watch,⁶ monsters still roam more or less at will. The Nuremberg trials were not the end of genocide; they merely made a statement of international law against it. The spectacles of tribal warfare and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo are merely the more publicized of recent reminders that evil is never without a rationalizing justification in a world that often seems incapable of more than wringing its hands in horror. In the age of Pericles or Cicero, rhetoric of denunciation was understood as a mandate for action. Today it is a means for delaying action, a mode of indefinite deferral through, as Hans Blumenberg notes, demonstration of “its capacity to act . . . by displaying symbolic substitutions.”⁷

Against this backdrop we might hear the call of political dissidents, especially those who are prisoners of conscience, as recuperation of an agential presence reuniting words with deeds. They write to their fellow citizens as brothers and sisters in the struggle against political regimes they find oppressive. Their words are crafted to inspire and sustain alternative visions of political relations. Each reader is called to resist those who oppress them and to engage in the political practices that might subvert them. They craft their appeals as calls to duty. As such, the writings of these dissidents offer a particularly informative case of how rhetoric not only involves agency for the political actor but also can constitute it. I wish to explore this constitutive dimension as it is manifest in the dissident letter “After Ten Years” written by the German theologian and resistor to the Nazi regime, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Moreover, I wish to unpack this connection through the critical lens afforded by Henry Johnstone’s conceptions of *the self* and *the wedge*, two concepts that may give us purchase on the character of rhetorically constituted agency.

Johnstone’s Conceptions of Self and Wedge

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. is best known for his work on the nature of philosophical argument, with specific concern for the requirements of validity. His central claim is that all valid philosophical argument is *ad hominem*.⁸

By this he means that all philosophical argument is addressed and, consequently, has validity in the eyes of one's interlocutor only in terms of his or her own set of assumptions. This is another way of asserting that there is no pandemic philosophical position, argument, or, as it turns out, criterion for validity. Johnstone's position abandons a rationalist construction of validity, which focuses attention on the objective properties of an argument with an eye toward exposing an inconsistency in the interlocutor's position, to recast it as a regulative ideal. Framing validity as a regulative ideal opens the way for inspecting the rhetorical characteristics of argument, or its qualities as addressed to a particular person or group, and entails agency as one of its central concerns.

Every argument that seeks reasoned agreement is addressed.

Arguments, even those of philosophers such as Descartes addressing perennial philosophical questions such as the existence of God, are framed for a particular context of discourse with particular issues and prevailing positions at stake. Because they are addressed, arguments place us as arguers in a bimodal stance with respect to the assumptive base on which our conclusions rest. Valid arguments are both locked into our own position and require us to consider the consequences of our argumentation from inside the audience's position. The regulative ideal of validity thus requires that we stand both inside and outside the position being advanced or attacked, to encounter the argument and the question of its validity from two distinct perspectives. This bimodal stance implies three defining characteristics of validity as a regulative ideal.

First, a valid argument reflects a disposition toward the audience as beyond effective control. Valid arguments are *bilateral* in character; "the arguer must use no device of argument he could not in principle permit his interlocutor to use."⁹ They apply the Kantian rule of ethical imperative to argument by prohibiting tricks, deception, falsehoods, and the like, as would typify *unilateral* appeals. Although we might imagine situations where unilateral communication would be essential to avoid chaos, in the domain of argument, unilateral appeals are never permissible because the ideal of validity requires that our interlocutor freely accede as a result of her critical assessment of the argument. Free choice means that audience member's must be able to think and articulate their thoughts, reflect on what we say and offer reasoned assessments, and respond positively only because we have secured their agreement. They are not like robots or computers, who perform on appropriate command. They are not like children who can be instructed on how to behave. They cannot be regarded as objects of manip-

ulation through means of suggestion. Abandoning these strategies recognizes the audience's agency by placing it beyond the means of effective control; but it also makes an assertion of the arguer's agency by its commitment to abandon modes of communication that deny freedom of choice.

Assuming the audience is beyond effective control acknowledges its members have freedom of response. Consequently, by choosing to offer arguments in support of ideas, we run the risk of having our ideas defeated. The audience to which we offer arguments may ignore them, disbelieve them, or even refute them. At the same time, audiences responsive to arguments also risk having their behavior or beliefs altered. Johnstone characterizes people willing to run these risks as *open-minded*.¹⁰

The element of risk implies that arguers have an interest in the outcome of their arguments. The regulative ideal of validity requires that our arguments not be exercises in considering mere possibilities, but seek outcomes of reasoned agreement. Recognizing the validity of an argument carries consequences we must bear for our beliefs and conduct. That is why arguments carry risks. We do not have a stake in mere possibilities. Whenever we make arguments, we place our system of beliefs and values, the commitments of mind and of spirit that define the self, at risk. Arguments carry the specific risk of maintaining these significant commitments or changing them and, thereby, reassessing the self.

The addressed or rhetorical character of argument has a morale function, it place us in the dual context of considering a matter from both our own and our antagonist's position, to confront the contradictions that entertaining both brings to our own fundamental commitments, and to assume the risk of elaborating and defending our own fundamental beliefs. Considering both points of view subjects us to the tension between these respective calls and their mutual contradictions. This tension, Johnstone holds, is the locus of the *self*; it emerges from apprehending this tension of contradictions. Johnstone's theory of the self construes it as a dynamic hypothesis of self-understanding. It is not the public persona of our person, available to and understood by others. It is a consequence of the regulative ideal of validity. Although this regulative ideal creates an internal tension between self-maintenance and change, it is also responsible for argument's morale function, which allows us to transcend our individual and immediate experiences in order to inhabit a common world with others who share our interests.¹¹ The addressed character of argument "articulates a world of people and of things. It tells the self who it is and where it stands."¹²

If, as Johnstone writes, "argument reveals the self by confronting it with risk," it also entails responsibility for making choices, or agency. It is a call to accept the burden of the self, to always engage in self-risk as the way to the self's emergence. Agency, in short, is constituted through an expanded understanding of bi-lateral rhetoric as serving an evocative function. The point of the *argumentum ad hominem* is to adapt discourse to the other person's position, "by addressing the man where he lives, not by hitting him over the head with facts."¹³ This nuanced understanding of rhetoric's evocative power recognizes the necessity of arousing states of awareness in an audience in order for reasoned argument to proceed. The critical concept in his turn of mind is the *wedge*.

Johnstone maintains that a necessary condition for exercising reason is consciousness. For consciousness to occur, a person must be able to separate himself from the stimuli impinging upon him. Whatever introduces this gap between the person and a matter of conscious concern he calls a wedge. "Only when a wedge has been said to be driven between the person and the data he receives," he writes, "can he be said to be conscious of that data."¹⁴ For Johnstone, this separation of the person from impinging stimuli applies most obviously to our unconscious assumptions, such as an unconscious assumption we might make about the death penalty as a permissible punishment for some crimes leading to an uncritical response to the state's execution of criminals for capitol offenses. We need someone to call this assumption into question before we can have a conscious awareness of the death penalty as problematic in some respect. The need for someone to separate us from data leads Johnstone to claim that rhetoric "is a means—perhaps the only means—of evoking and maintaining consciousness."¹⁵ It is "the technique of driving this wedge between a person and the data of his immediate experience."¹⁶

More centrally for this discussion, Johnstone finds the wedge present even in cases where such seemingly non-rhetorical means as threats are used to coerce compliant behavior. In "Rhetoric and Death" he uses the reaction to a raised stick or a pointed pistol as more than a simple reflex. "A threat may be *considered*. Its victim can *decide* what to do,"¹⁷ (emphasis his) he writes. The threatened, for her part, does not make the threat to encourage reflecting on choices or to encourage negotiation. The threat is "intended as a barrier against wedges."¹⁸ It is a unilateral mode of rhetoric that declares its insensitivity to stimulation at the hands or its victim by driving a wedge in one direction. The victim, for his part, may decide not to cooperate, or may comply out a sense that it is the only course open to avoid injury or

death. But even in weighing these unhappy consequences the person is responding to the threat as a threat, not as a stimulus.

The case of the threat is important because it raises the question of agency in ways that encourage us to explore its complexity. At its heart, Johnstone's argument is that agency resides in choice: there can be no agency without choice, choice requires agency. They are flip sides of the coin of human freedom. Further, his argument makes agency a function of rhetoric. There can be no agency without conscious awareness; there can be no conscious awareness without a space in which to move freely, there can be no space that separates subject from stimulus without a wedge to create that space, there can be no wedge without rhetoric. Again, "Rhetoric . . . is a means—perhaps the only means—of evoking and maintaining consciousness. It accomplishes these ends by driving a wedge between subject and object. For it is the instrument that objectifies stimuli or presuppositions not hitherto perceived as objects."¹⁹

In the case of threat by the holdup man or the bully, there is a shifting sense of rhetoricality. Certainly it can be said that the bully threatens us with physical or psychological pain to alter our behavior. But it also is true that the bully seeks to fuse subject and stimulus to gain compliant behavior on command, much as a reflex reaction. If there is rhetoric here, it is to gain attention, and then to redirect it in a way that will modify our behavior, perhaps permanently. From the bully's point of view, at its best it is short-lived rhetoric that quickly moves its victim to automatic pilot. The bully wishes to remove agency from his victim, to naturalize his power in order to diminish a state of conscious awareness that there are alternatives to his command. From the victim's perspective things are different. On the one hand, the bully provides a Faustian bargain: comply and be spared, sacrifice your integrity to save your skin. Against this backdrop, I turn to the case of German theologian and political martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Opposition of Conscience

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German theologian who played a prominent role in the European ecumenical movement. He was a prolific writer and his theological treatises, which had a subtlety and maturity uncommon for someone so young, had earned him a reputation as one of the few figures of the 1930s conversant in both German and English language theology. Following his dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, completed after three years study at the University of Berlin (1924-1927) he wrote *Act*

and Being (1930) as his *Habilitationsschrift*, or qualifying thesis, which allowed him to teach at the University of Berlin.

Bonhoeffer's university position was secondary to his leadership in theological circles within Germany, England and the United States, which he used to speak out against the Nazis. However, his outspoken opposition proved ineffectual on his fellow pastors and, out of frustration with the Church's unwillingness to take a stand against Hitler, he left Germany to accept a pastorate in England, where he remained for eighteen months. As the Nazis increased their anti-Jewish activities, and as church leaders began to succumb to these pressures, Bonhoeffer increased his anti-Nazi attacks and his efforts to assist Jews who were arriving in England.

In May 1934 the Confessing Church was organized at Barmen, Germany, and Bonhoeffer returned from England in the spring of 1935 to assume leadership of its seminary at Zingst, which relocated later that year to Finkenwalde in Pomerania. In addition to the pulpit this position afforded, his extensive international contacts developed through his early travel to Rome, his curacy in Barcelona, and his post-doctoral year in New York (including regular work at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, as well as travel to Cuba and Mexico), opened Bonhoeffer to the ecumenical church, with appointments as youth secretary of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches (1931), and then as a member of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work (1934).

Bonhoeffer's theologically rooted opposition to National Socialism first made him a leader and an advocate on behalf of the Jews. His steadfast advocacy that Christian faith required rejection of Nazi anti-Semitism resulted in withdrawal of his authorization to teach on the faculty of the University of Berlin on August 5, 1936. Meanwhile, the Gestapo eventually uncovered all of the secret Confessing Church seminaries and closed them down. The seminarians were given the choice of enlisting or being sent to prison. When his own seminary was closed, Bonhoeffer became eligible for military service. It was at this point that his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnyani, proposed an alternative. By 1938, Bonhoeffer's frustration with the failure of the Confessing Church to pass resolutions with political repercussions, and its choice, along with the ecumenical movement, to follow a path of accommodation, had reached the point where, as a pastor, he ceased to propagate his ideals of pacifism and conscientious objection. Dohnyani proposed that as a private person he could carry forth his opposition to the Nazis by participating with the *Abwehr* group conspiring to crush the evil controlling Germany.

Abwehr was the counterintelligence agency of the German government. Since the late 1930s, those at the top of the agency had opposed Hitler's pursuit of power and persecution of Jews. Under the leadership of Gen. Hans Oster and von Dohnanyi, its chief legal counsel, *Abwehr* had engaged in counterespionage intended to inform the Allies of events in Germany and the military plans of the Reich. It also constructed ruses to help Jews escape. Among these was "Operation 7," Hitler's plan to infiltrate the United States with German agents. After Germany botched the initial attempt, Hitler proposed they use German Jews instead. Admiral Canaris, head of *Abwehr*, obliged him, sending the Jewish "agents" outside Germany with no orders beyond escaping. Von Dohnanyi initially involved Bonhoeffer with the *Abwehr* conspiracy as a facilitator of "Operation 7" and as a courier. In due course, the *Abwehr* conspiracy's activities expanded from counterespionage to plotting Hitler's assassination. Bonhoeffer was involved in these aspects of the conspiracy to depose Hitler, including the failed assassination attempt of 20 July 1944. Evidence of Bonhoeffer's participation in these activities was eventually discovered and he was hanged in the concentration camp at Flossenbürg on April 9, 1945, one of four members of his immediate family to die at the hands of the Nazi regime for their participation in the resistance movement.

Bonhoeffer spent the final two years of his life in prison, recording his thoughts in correspondence with his friend Eberhard Bethge.²⁰ His *Letters and Papers from Prison* contain not only profoundly radical theological insight but also provide an example of intellectual preparation for the reconstruction of German society through his unique understanding the interaction of religion, politics, and culture. The theological and historical significance of his prison writings is matched by their power to transcend their historical circumstances. They speak to the aspirations of subsequent generations seeking reconciliation between Christian faith with political actions when the struggle for social justice seems thwarted by the hegemonic forces of cultural inheritance and institutional religion. It is no accident that Bonhoeffer's popularity in the United States, for example, exploded in the 1960s among young adults active in the non-violent opposition of the civil rights and anti-war movements. Nor is it coincidental that his thought remains alive in current non-violent movements that draw on Christian faith as an ethical base for resistance.²¹ His letter "After Ten Years" is emblematic of the enduring human search for an Archimedean point for meaningful action in response to evil.

“After Ten Years”

Bonhoeffer's participation in the resistance did not rest easily with him. Support of *Abwehr* required that he perform acts of duplicity and advance plans of violence he found difficult to condone, including those to overthrow the government and to assassinate Hitler. Although famous for his dictum, “It is better to do evil than to be evil,” his commitments of conscience as a pacifist, as a Christian, and as a pastor were not easily reconciled with acts of violence and the risk of death for the sake of Christianity and Germany's honor. And yet, what was the morally correct course of action when evil had seized control of the nation and had seduced the people into cooperating in unconscionable acts?

For Bonhoeffer, morality was not an abstract consideration. Evil existed in the world and must be confronted by action in the world. The heart of his theology beats with argumentation for Christian moral agency manifested in worldly activity. Confronted by evil, civilized and cultured Germans, who were morally righteous Christian believers, had collapsed under the weight of their own ineffectual rationalizations. At the same time, acts that violated Christian morality for a righteous cause were still violations of fundamental commitments of his own conscience. He deals with this dilemma in “After Ten Years,”²² a letter written at the end of 1942 as a Christmas present to his *Abwehr* colleagues Oster, von Dohnanyi, his friend Eberhard Bethge, and shared with his parents, whose copy was found under the beams of their home in Charlottenberg. The letter is concerned with the first ten years of Hitler's rule, 1933-1943, and what he and his friends had tried to accomplish during them. It is an aria to agency.

Bonhoeffer opens his letter by declaring to his compatriots that they have lost a great deal during the last decade, but they have not lost time. Although they have been confused, and have not realized the lessons learned until much later, they have not been idle. The truths they had inherited from their culture, their national identity, their traditional virtues, and even their religion have not held under the present circumstances. Without sustaining guidance from old ways, they have had to re-learn lessons of the past from first-hand experience. It is only at a distance that they could recapture what they had lost and give it expression that might sustain them in their confrontation with evil. His intent, he writes, is “to give some account of what we have experienced and learnt in common during these years—not personal experiences, or anything systematically arranged, or arguments and theories but conclusions reached more or less in common by

a circle of like-minded people, and related to the business of human life, put down one after the other, the only connection between them being that of concrete experience" (1). His reflections are not presented as offering anything original but to explain what they have come to recognize during the past decade. The question before them is whether they can any longer find ground under their feet to engage in morally correct and effective action when every choice seems "equally intolerable, repugnant, and futile" (2), whether they can still be of any use.

"Are we still of any use?" is a question open to many answers. But any affirmative answer requires a foundation for support. For Germans who considered themselves Christians and patriots, conditions in Germany and the war exacted a cruel wage that tested their fundamental commitments. Bonhoeffer reviews the traditional grounds on which they stood to show how they were of little use in deterring the chaos of National Socialism. The spirit of Christian righteousness and the habitude of obedience engrained in German culture offered unsure footing. These basic moral and patriotic impulses that defined the Germans' national character were at odds, and each in its own way made Germans either ineffectual resisters or slaves to ideology. They deferred assuming responsibility for thinking their own thoughts and, in that way, locating grounds on which to gain a foothold for reconstructing the nation and ensuring the freedom of coming generations.

The problem of resistance went deeper than acting from moral conviction. Since "the great masquerade of evil has played havoc with all our ethical concepts" (2), being of use meant finding a moral anchor that would hold against the force of Nazi depravity. Nazism cast Germany adrift from its traditional ethical moorings; without a moral compass, it was disoriented against the onslaught of its present-day evil. Traditional German virtues, which placed community above the individual and encouraged acting out of duty, had proven ineffectual because they provided a rationale for the fundamental wickedness of the times. The qualities that had sustained earlier generations were like old swords grown rusty and useless. Bonhoeffer, foreshadowing the emphasis of his prison letters on this as *a world come of age*, captures this basic Kantian theme in his assessment of their dilemma. In "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" Kant had posited: "*Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his self-incurred minority [Unmündigkeit, immaturity]. Minority [immaturity] is inability to use one's own understanding without direction from another.*"²³ In this vein, the resister hoping to displace the authority of a state advancing a totalizing claim to

agency could no longer rely on the counter-authority of traditional Christian righteousness. *Reason, enthusiasm, conscience, duty, freedom, private virtue* had become quixotic weapons and, therefore, the wrong weapons for this battle. Each arose from a sense of its own efficacy for overcoming the monsters that had taken control of German life, only to find itself lost in the fog of self-deception and resigning in defeat. In making themselves the final test of responsible action, these qualities became disguised hubris. When defeated these qualities offered a rationalization for failure to stand with principle; they disguised the individual's complicity with the evil that had befallen the nation and its people. *Reason, enthusiasm, conscience, duty, freedom, and private virtue* offered the illusion of agency while leaving Germany bereft of civil courage.

To have civil courage Germans first had to recognize their illusions. Action based on bravery or service to the community rested on habits of obedience that disguised deep self-doubt. Submissiveness and self-sacrifice were susceptible to exploitation for evil ends. Confronted with their unwitting participation in the evils from which they sought to extricate themselves, the call to resistance became questionable and its principles tottered. In their disillusionment, German resisters either abandoned their principles to act with "an irresponsible lack of scruple," or became incapable of acting because frozen with "a self-tormenting punctiliousness." They lacked a sense of true agency. "Civil courage," he writes, "can only grow out of the free responsibility of free men." "Where," he wonders, "are these responsible people?" (4)

Bonhoeffer finds the path—he believed it was the only path—to responsible action through a non-religious sense of God. He made sense of Christianity only insofar as it was stripped of its religious premise. In one of his prison letters he writes: "Christ is . . . not an object of religion, but something quite different, indeed and in truth the Lord of the world."²⁴ By this he was, like Luther, insisting upon a deeply personal faith. Christians could not, as Karl Barth and the Confessing Church had advised, "entrench ourselves persistently behind the 'faith of the Church,' and evade the honest question as to what we ourselves really believe."²⁵ For nineteen hundred years Christianity had rested on a religious *a priori*.²⁶ But during the least hundred years, "Man has learnt to deal with himself and all questions of importance without recourse to the working hypothesis called 'God.'"²⁷ With only a religious understanding of Christianity, Jesus disappeared from sight, and with him the rationale for action found in the gospels. Stripped of religion and the institutional power of the Church, Bonhoeffer posits a

weak God, making sense only as in the world but not acting directly to shape it. Responsibility rested with humans; who must address present conditions guided by their faith. Bonhoeffer asks his collaborators:

Who stands fast? Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this when he is called to responsible and obedient action in faith and exclusive allegiance to God—the responsible man, who tries to make his whole life an answer to the question and call of God. Where are these responsible people? (4)

If the habituated character of traditional virtues had permitted the Nazi's to naturalize perverse political conduct, the only course to true agency had to reside elsewhere. Bonhoeffer situates authentic agency in the hierarchical ordering of responsibility in which God is the agent of agents. Yet such a construction also divided him from himself. If he had acted with civil courage, Bonhoeffer wonders how he was to reconcile the evil of plotting the death of another human with his commitments as a Christian, a pacifist, and a pastor? Could his revulsion at the evil of Hitler justify accepting the violence of assassinating him as the only solution to Germany's torment? In a deeply revealing observation on his personal anguish, he offers his readers an alternate frame for self-reconciliation. His sustaining self-atonement for performing acts he regarded as evil depended "on a God who demands responsible action in a bold venture of faith, and who promises forgiveness and consolation to the man who becomes a sinner in that venture" (5).

Bonhoeffer's inner strife with his own choices leads him to reflect on the context in which he and his colleagues have had to make them. Those who had become passive tools surrounded them. Some refused to face facts and lapsed into "dogmatic arm-chair criticism." Others chose opportunism in surrender to evil's success. In response to displays of folly and weakness before evil, still others tried to assert responsibility through the reckless pretense of heroic acts doomed to defeat. But quixotic heroics adhering to abstract principles that were blind to concrete reality abandoned responsibility as much as they embraced passivity. Agency comes from recognizing and accepting our responsibility to mold history. "The ultimate question for a responsible man to ask is not how he is to extricate himself heroically from the affair, but how the coming generation is to live" (6). Bonhoeffer thought this question, posing personal responsibility in terms of the future, was the only source for fruitful solutions to Germany's present discontents.

Nonetheless, facing facts as they did and acting with concern for the coming generation, the *Abwehr* conspirators had committed acts that called out for justification. Doubtless history would find them forgivable transgressions occasioned by the historically important moment. Although they violated the "impassable limits that are set to all action by the permanent laws of human social life, . . ." (10) their immanent righteousness justified them, provided "the law and the limit are re-established and respected as soon as possible" (10). As for the motivations in their hearts when committing them, only the eternal righteousness of God can judge. At the critical juncture of his introspection, where Bonhoeffer expresses clearly why their acts violate society's law and implies that history will vindicate them, he arrives at the insight that this is insufficient for the person of good conscience.

How should his righteousness be judged when he has acted with contempt for those who had caved before the Nazi machine and chosen a course of action for himself that required he become a master of equivocation and pretense? He answers that moral transgressions required of resistance can be performed without fear only thorough faith in a consoling God. He develops the principle of a consoling God by discussing his struggles with success, folly, temptation to contempt for humanity, immanent righteousness, confidence, a sense of quality, sympathy, suffering, living in the present for the sake of future generations, optimism, insecurity and death. These provide his vehicle for recounting experiences that have made him suspicious of others, secretive, less than truthful, and cynical. His opening question to his colleagues and himself, "Are we still of any use?" echoes in his anguish over participating in evil acts to save Christianity and his country's honor. The last ten years brought Bonhoeffer to recognize, only days before the Nazis took him into custody for treason, that in accepting and asserting his own agency he had become a prisoner of his own conscience and he wonders: "Will our inward power of resistance be strong enough, and our honesty with ourselves remorseless enough, for us to find our way back to simplicity and straightforwardness?" (17)

If Bonhoeffer's struggle is with his personal responsibility, his words are not limited to the anguish of his personal actions or his time. For his compatriots and for his readers today, "After Ten Years" calls attention to the problem of agency. We know as an historical fact that he is writing explicitly about Germany. But his words lack explicit mention of persons or acts or events. Their absence of specificity allows them to transcend the chronotope of Nazi Germany. The difficulty of knowing what to do in the face of evil confronts every age. Consequently, every reader can insert her-

self into the text and experience the difficulty of transacting personal agency within its moral economy. We can imagine ourselves attempting to combat evil with reason, enthusiasm, conscience, duty, freedom, or private virtue. By joining this imagined dialogue, we also become subject to the text's indictment.

Bonhoeffer's wedge focuses attention on the tension between naturalized practices that support evil through the *illusion* of agency and disruptive practices that de-naturalize our preconceptions of rectitudinous action through acts of genuine agency. We can imagine our own culpability in the victory of evil by confronting an unreasonable opponent with reason, or by self-exhaustion from attacking non-essentials out of misplaced zeal that played into the hands of a wily foe, or by our vacillating on principles before a mammoth foe whose appeals to common values elicit mass cooperation while leaving us isolated, or by a sense of duty to authority that subverts our sense of personal responsibility, or by freely compromising with evil to preserve a clear conscience rather than opposing it with morally problematic acts, or by retreating from the contamination of responsible action to maintain our private virtue at the cost of our peace of mind. By separating his reader from unthinking endorsement of habituated responses, he is able to turn on its head what we otherwise would regard as reasonable means to a good end.

Each alternative opens to a course of action we can envision as a platform for personal responsibility, only to discover that it is a platform for self-deception and a rationale justifying our failure to act. We may not have had Bonhoeffer's experiences with Nazi Germany, but we have done battle with monsters of our own and can insert them and us into his concatenation of failed attempts to act responsibly. The list of possible replies we might consider responsible and the specific reading he offers for their defeasibility bring us face to face with our own culpability. Each instance drives a wedge into Bonhoeffer's experiences, separating him from the deeds he had performed and confronting him with the internal contradictions that lie at the core of his own answerability for Germany's chaos. Each instance calls attention to the moral dimensions of action that seems to be righteous but supports evil, and that seems to be immoral but undermines evil. If this letter is a display of self-discovery by its author, its structure makes it equally an invitation to self-discovery by its reader. "Are we still of any use?" is a wedging question that transcends his person; it applies to Oster and von Dohnanyi and others who were part of *Abwehr*, and it applies to us. It is a wedging question that transcends his time; every age has its "prisoners of conscience" who must reckon with it, as must every per-

son who is to reckon with himself.

By inviting his readers to participate in an act of recollection, Bonhoeffer's wedge functions inventionally for them. He addresses his reader as a confidant who requires no arguments, no theories, nor even any connection among the parts. He assumes a knowing reader who has shared his struggle, has learned the same lessons as he, and accepts the burden of answerability with him. We share conclusions reached through years of shared encounters that mold a collective memory less of shared experiences than of *shared experiencing*. His letter retains its contemporaneity because it provides conclusions without statement of the facts or most of the steps of reason by which they are reached. The letter's enthymematic structure has the reader supplying these parts, but in supplying them we are led to discover the artificiality of society's functional system of beliefs and actions that define our sense of being reasonable, ethical, principled, virtuous, and even responsible. By focusing on what we have learned without resorting to the specific instances that taught us our lesson, he creates a space for his reader to move freely, supplying her own experiences to fill in the gaps. We have been in similar types of situations and witnessed responses that bring us to conscious awareness of how responses naturalized by tradition, culture, and even by structures of belief provide potent sources for our own unwitting manipulation and control.

Bonhoeffer uses the background understanding of the Nazi threat without explicitly mentioning it. He projects a reign of terror in harness with our responses in a way that forces our conscious awareness of the tension imbedded in apparently ethical acts of opposition. By bringing us to awareness of the contradictions in our traditions and habits, Bonhoeffer is able to exploit a weakness in the ethical foundation of resistance. His discussion of the vulnerability of resistance based on illusions of agency and his consideration of the difficulty of overcoming folly underscore the anti-wedging force of an environment of threat. Threats work only as they exploit fear, and the irrational fear of Jews that lay at the core of the Nazi regime of terror was only intensified by attempts to overturn it with reason. The genius of Hitler's rhetoric, as Kenneth Burke detailed in "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle,"²⁸ was its reliance on modes of essentializing his enemy. Once that was accomplished all "proof" justifying anti-Semitism was automatic. No matter how much evidence you might amass to refute its claims, for those under its spell there was an automatic explanation. Each attempt at refutation became further proof for an international Jewish conspiracy.²⁹ Hence, Bonhoeffer's discussion of folly makes the point that reasoning with

the fool is futile; folly is impervious to the wedge. His state of inner captivity made calls to consciousness futile, especially when "those in power expect more from people's folly than from their wisdom and independence of mind (9)."

As with Johnstone's analysis of the *ad hominem*, so with Bonhoeffer the wedge is the main apparatus in his analysis. One could do nothing to overcome the monstrosity of National Socialism unless one could drive a wedge. Hence, Bonhoeffer is relentless in exposing the futility of habituated practices tied to moral commonplaces. Without an understanding of their ethical basis, they are defenseless against appeals that satisfy their impulse, albeit in an immoral cause. On the one hand a misguided response to the threat as a threat, and not as a stimulus, carries the consequence of defeat, resignation, and compliance or complicity. On the other, an unthinking response is the means by which wicked men naturalize acts of terror against the targeted other. They fuse data and response to construct a world of mass compliance that serves as a barrier to wedges that might evoke conscious awareness of what we are doing.

Bonhoeffer is relentless also in undermining his readers' sense of the grounds of personal agency on which they stand by exposing their firmness as illusory. The only possibility for solid ground is a fundamental moral commitment that transcends shifting circumstances—the primacy of human dignity. His letter, prefiguring the rhetoric of liberation theology, moves us constantly toward accepting the proposition that the ethical imperative to act in accordance with this proposition—one he places at the core of non-religious Christianity—will free us from a conventional morality that has been subverted by a false sense of virtue and responsibility. Although Bonhoeffer situates responsible action under allegiance to God's call, even the non-believer who shares an ethical imperative of personal integrity based on the primacy of human dignity and can enter the letter's moral economy. "After Ten Years" forces the reader to consider the implausibility of maintaining an agency that in the face of evil is not itself morally flawed, given to acts that lack secure foundations, and that attempts to subvert the agency of the opponent. The chaos of Hitler's Germany is one for which his readers are answerable. He makes it unacceptable to relinquish responsibility through resignation to forces more powerful than oneself, through hoping for better times to come and thereby forgetting the present, or through a despair of better times to come that justifies the personal excesses of living only for the moment. We bear responsibility for the chaos of our times because we bear an unshakeable burden of responsibility for the structure of our society and for the world future generations will inhabit.

His wedge opens the possibility for him, and perhaps for us, of a non-religious God that forgives problematic action taken to claim a future of amity and hope rather than surrender it to his opponent.

And what of the wedge itself? Reading "After Ten Years" through its lens discloses rhetorical valences internal to Bonhoeffer's account of struggling with evil. As the foregoing has suggested, the "wedging" qualities of Bonhoeffer's letter provide non-prescriptive access to the inner struggle that courses through it and helps us gain insight into the conception of agency at its core. Bonhoeffer's call to self-assessment—have we acted responsibly, are we still of use—is not carried by its arguments but by eliciting from the reader a series of internal referents and arguments. His wedge opens the reader to self-persuasion. But while there is a long tradition going back at least to Aristotle that holds self-persuasion to lie at rhetoric's core, Bonhoeffer's wedging is not without gates and channels. The entire letter requires that the reader accept a stance outside a conventional, traditional understanding of morality and God. On the one hand she has to reject the ways of God to man as presented in religion. On the other she has to justify the ways of man to God. He leaves the reader with a society optimistic for its future despite its apparent subjugation by evil only if it has embraced at its core a commitment to the primacy of human dignity and an ultimate responsibility to act on that basis. In an argument that objects to the categorical dogmas of right and wrong offered by religion, he offers this as no less a categorical imperative. It is a wedge that encourages faith in a transcendental absolute while arguing against dogmatic interpretation.

The wedge also discloses Bonhoeffer's positioning of the agential stance outside an internal dialectic of ideological justification. Agency does not come entirely from within. We realize our identity and agency in acting. The externalities that others see are not the same as the internal experiences. Nor is our own external experience necessarily revealing of internal self-awareness; we can lapse into rationalizing our participation in acts of complicity to preserve a sense of innocence. Identity is based on self-awareness of acts in this world for which one has acted freely and takes responsibility. And here we come to the important recognition that agency entails becoming a prisoner of our own conscience.

We would do well at this juncture to recall the words of Adam Michnik quoted earlier: "No one can condemn anyone else's choice. . . . To tolerate and understand, however, is not to decide the act of [cooperating with a repressive regime] is in itself morally indifferent. It is not." If the traditions of our religion and the habitude of our culture fail to provide ground to stand on, then we cannot have agency as long as they are our sole guides.

Agency presupposes choice and we cannot have choice where our understanding is ideologically determined. We can have agency only as the possibility of wedging exists.

Bonhoeffer's discussion of folly also bears recalling here. It reminds us that we cannot have internal liberation until we are externally liberated. Nor can we have agency from within when our premises lack foundation. His epistolary search for authenticity in a world of manipulation by power elites transcends his particular historical situation to address this recurring human need. The search for ground on which to stand is a quest of every generation in conflict with evil and prisoner of its own conscience. Bonhoeffer's internal struggle between the tenets of religion that condemned his actions with *Abwehr* and a non-religious God that required them are a reflection of the larger dialectic between habituated behavior that has an *a priori* justification but is not in touch with reality. The dialectic between habituated behavior and reality frames the ethical problematic we still face in our present day confrontations with monsters. It is inherently *ad hominem*; if heeded it inherently requires self-risk.

By these steps we arrive at a position Johnstone had not fully developed in his discussion of the wedge. Johnstone had broadened his understanding of rhetoric from persuasion to evocation. It issued a call to consider the character of our assumptions and their implications. Rhetoric, in this sense, served the morale function he attributed to argument. But Bonhoeffer's analysis of the problem of moral action in a world adrift from its ethical moorings takes a step beyond Johnstone's to assert that agency is not only the product of the wedge—of conscious awareness—it is constituted by the possibility of engaging in rhetoric. That is to say, if rhetoric is the instrumentality by which a wedge is driven, and if the wedge is the precondition for agency, then agency flees from the scene without the possibility of rhetoric. Agency is, in this sense, rhetorically constituted. Bonhoeffer's insight bears remembering in a world still populated by monsters. There are many ways to oppose evil, but absent the prospect of successful armed resistance, most remain futile and lapse into forms of self-justification that do more to excuse a guilty conscience than provide ground to stand on. In such an environment, rhetoric provides the conditions of possibility for true agency to emerge. It took dissidents of Central and Eastern Europe two generations past Bonhoeffer to bring this insight to bear in the form of their "velvet revolution." It is an insight worth preserving.

Notes

¹ Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Seattle, WA November 8-12, 2000, and the Rhetoric Workshop at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

² Adam Michnik, "Why You are not Signing," *Letters From Prison*, trans. Maya Latynski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 5.

³ Gorgias, "Encomium of Helen," in *The Older Sophists*, ed. Rosamond Sprague (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 50-54.

⁴ Isocrates, "Antidosis," in *Isocrates*, vol. 2, trans. George Norlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), pp. 337-339. Unless the context of a discussion suggests a specifically gendered referent, my use of gendered pronouns is random.

⁵ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* [1950]. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963, p. 43.

⁶ See <http://www.hrw.org>.

⁷ Hans Blumenberg, "An Anthropological Approach to the Contemporary Significance of Rhetoric," in *After Philosophy*, eds. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 447.

⁸ See Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "A New Theory of Philosophical Argumentation," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 15 (1954), pp. 244-252; "Argument and Truth in Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 18 (1957), pp. 228-236; "Can Philosophical Arguments Be Valid?" *Bucknell Review* 11 (1963), pp. 89-98; "Some Reflections on Argumentation," *Logique et analyse* 6 (1963), pp. 30-39; "Truth, Communication, and Persuasion in Philosophy," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 23 (1969), pp. 404-09.

⁹ "Bilaterality in Argument and Communication," in *Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research*, eds. J. Robert Cox and Charles Arthur Willard (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), p. 95.

¹⁰ "Some Reflections."

¹¹ "Some Reflections."

¹² "Same Reflections," p. 9.

¹³ Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument: An Outlook in Transition* (University Park, PA: The Dialogue Press of Man and World, 1978), p. 137.

¹⁴ Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "From Philosophy to Rhetoric and Back," in *Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Literature: An Exploration*, ed. Don M. Burks (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1978), p. 58.

¹⁵ Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "Rhetoric as a Wedge: A Reformulation," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 20 (1990), pp. 333-38.

¹⁶ Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "The Philosophical Basis of Rhetoric," in *Validity and Rhetoric in Philosophical Argument*, p. 131.

¹⁷ Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "Rhetoric and Death," in *Rhetoric in Transition: Studies in the Nature and Uses of Rhetoric*, ed. Eugene E. White (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), p. 67.

¹⁸ "Rhetoric as a Wedge," p. 335.

¹⁹ "Rhetoric as a Wedge," p. 333.

²⁰ Bethge gives this account for how the correspondence was smuggled from Tegel Prison: "In November 1943 Dietrich had arranged for correspondence with me to be smuggled through Knobloch, one of his guards. I took along the letters from then until May on my trip back to Berlin, and we buried most of them in gas mask containers in Schleichers' garden." *Eberhard Bethge, Friendship and Resistance: Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Geneva: W. C. C. publications, 1995), p. 41.

²¹ An on line search at <http://www.google.com> for "Dietrich Bonhoeffer" + "nonviolent resistance" produced 28 web sites that link Bonhoeffer's thought to contemporary social movements.

²² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "After Ten Years," in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, revised, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 1-17. Subsequent references to "After Ten Years" are given in the text.

²³ In Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 17-22.

²⁴ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 164.

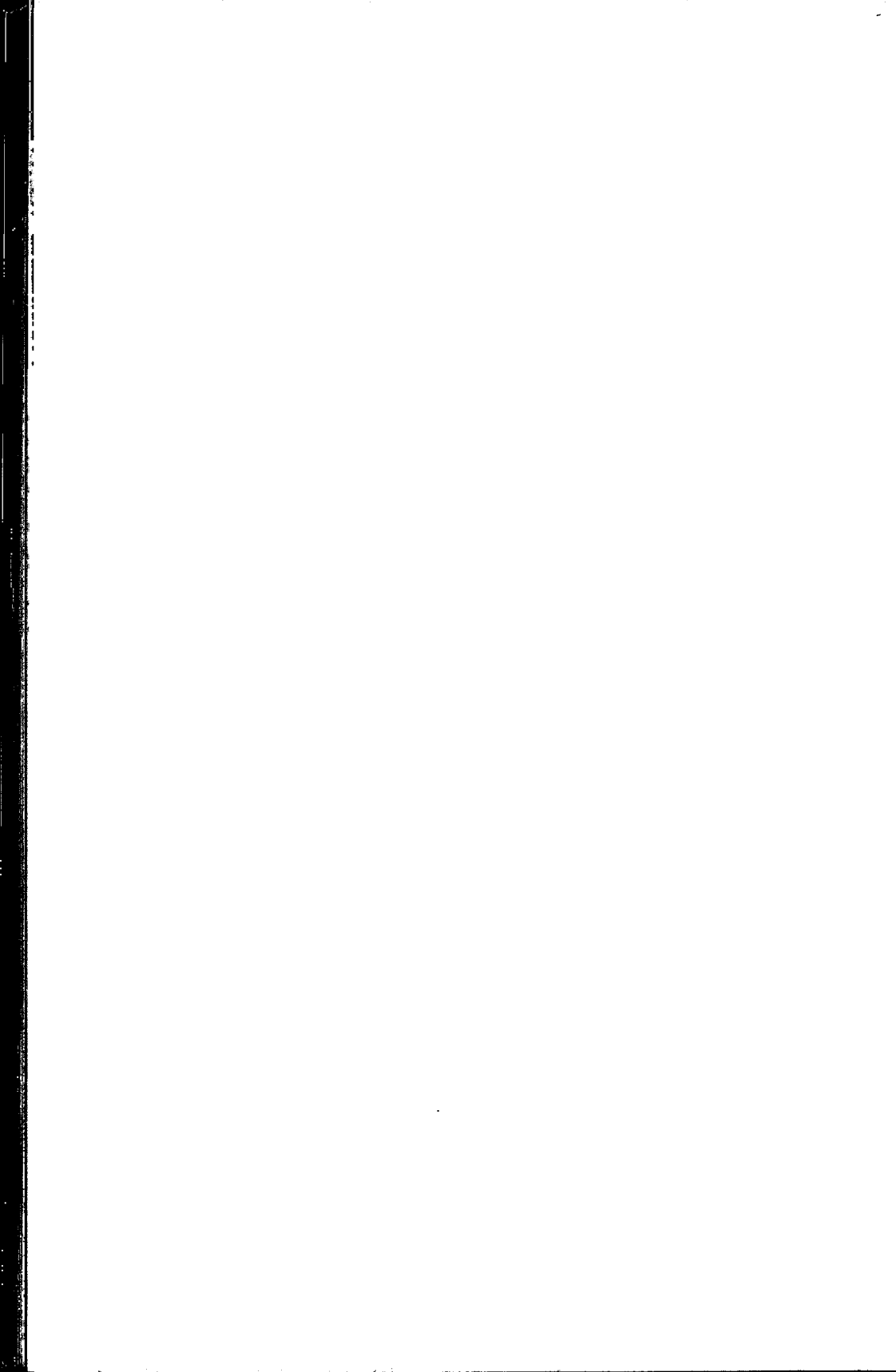
²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

²⁸ Kenneth Burke, *Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd ed. rev. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 191-220.

²⁹ Burke, pp. 194-95.



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