

JAMES CROSSWHITE

DEEP RHETORIC

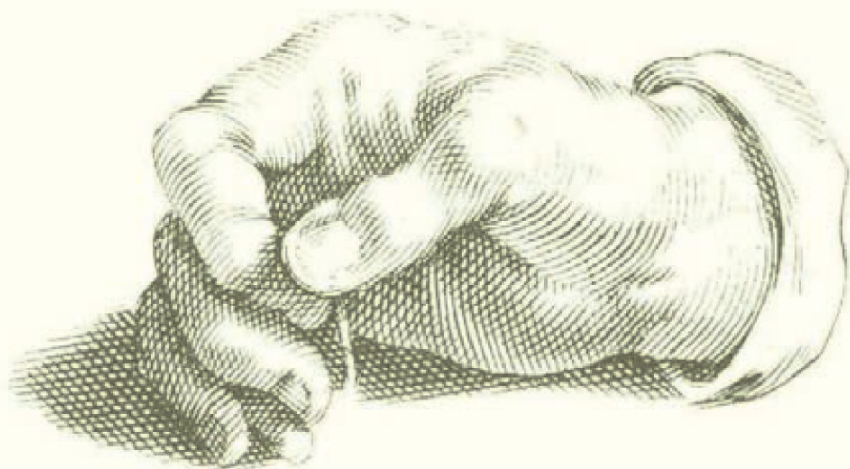
Philosophy

Reason

Violence

Justice

Wisdom



Deep Rhetoric

*Philosophy, Reason, Violence,
Justice, Wisdom*

JAMES CROSSWHITE

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Introduction

On June 12, 1806, John Quincy Adams, later to become the sixth president of the United States, was installed as the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard University. On that occasion, he presented an inaugural oration, which was eventually published as a preface to his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory* (1810). The address begins this way:

It is the fortune of some opinions, as well as of some individual characters, to have been, during a long succession of ages, subjects of continual controversy among mankind. In forming an estimate of the moral or intellectual merits of many a person, whose name is recorded in the volumes of history, their virtues and vices are so nearly balanced, that their station in the ranks of fame has never been precisely assigned, and their reputation, even after death, vibrates upon the hinges of events, with which they have little or no perceptible connexion. Such too has been the destiny of the arts and sciences in general, and of the art of rhetoric in particular. Their advancement and decline have been alternate in the annals of the world. At one period they have been cherished, admired, and cultivated; at another neglected, despised, and oppressed. Like the favorites of princes, they have had their turns of unbounded influence and of excessive degradation. Now the enthusiasm of their votaries has raised them to the pinnacle of greatness; now a turn of the wheel has hurled them prostrate in the dust. Nor have these great and sudden revolutions always resulted from causes seemingly capable of producing such effects. (Adams 1810, 11–12)

Adams successfully, if somewhat magniloquently, articulates rhetoric's basic conundrum. Rhetoric is, on the one hand, cherished, admired, and cultivated. The field of study has a

two and a half millennia history that runs from Ancient Greece through the Roman and Christian eras, through the higher Middle Ages, and then explodes with new life in the Renaissance and early modernity. It is lively and influential through the eighteenth century in Europe, where ancient rhetoric was both preserved and brought into productive contact with modern sciences. The teaching of rhetoric, too, has been a centerpiece of liberal education and often of professional training in law from the schools of antiquity, through the foundational trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric in medieval universities, through Renaissance humanist education, and into the eighteenth and even the nineteenth centuries. Rhetoric has, in our own time, resurged with new vitality in a number of different fields of study as well as in its importance for public life and in new media, as communication and its forms and issues become more central concerns in ever more interdependent economies, political societies, and cultures.

Rhetoric has also been despised and neglected, and its history shows cyclical declines. Rhetoric's origin is in the early democratic movements in ancient Greece, and George Kennedy (1980) has identified its phases of decline with restricted opportunities to speak to issues of public and political concern. Yet, following Adams's script, Kennedy also acknowledges the argument that in modern times rhetoric seems sometimes to decline in connection with expansions of democracy. It is difficult, as Adams says, to clarify the causes of these alternations. Another explanation sometimes given for rhetoric's modern decline places the blame on modern science and especially on the development of a science of politics. If there were found to be a scientific way of establishing the normative bases of politics (say, a substantive concept of justice), and a scientific-rational way to legislate and educate and otherwise manage human behavior to conform to these norms, then there would be a reduced need for what rhetoric offered: a capability for deliberation and judgment in conditions of uncertainty where there are conflicting conceptions of what is good. So, intellectuals and governments and universities oriented by this idea became much more focused on training for scientific-rational expertise than on cultivating the traditional rhetorical virtues of being able to discover and invent arguments on all sides of an issue, to make practical judgments about specific cases, to acquire common sense and a broad education. Most historians of rhetoric seem to note a distinct decline in rhetoric's status by the nineteenth century, and yet, following Adams's script once more, almost all have noted rhetoric's powerful resurgence, intellectually and institutionally, in the late twentieth century, and not only in Europe and North America.

I will discuss the late-twentieth-century intellectual resurgence of rhetoric in chapter 2, but here I would like to note at least briefly rhetoric's recent institutional resurgence.¹ Rhetoric's institutional decline in the last half of the nineteenth century has been broadly noted and attributed to many causes, most of which I will not consider here, but one of which was the increasing status of research in the newly emerging research universities and the decreasing value of teaching. Rhetoric, for all its vast scholarly and research interests, was always also focused on education and formation, on teaching. Education is simply an essential part of the identity of rhetoric as a field of study. This did not serve it well in the changing institutional setting in which it found itself. In the last half of the nineteenth century, it survived in fairly narrow and fragmented forms—mostly as a practice of remedial pedagogy in the teaching of writing, for example, and at best as a teaching of style as well. Class sizes were often very large. Teachers typically assigned papers that asked for personal narratives or for simple exposition of information. Teaching often consisted primarily of marking errors and focusing on correct grammar. Students were not educated to engage in inquiry or critical reasoning. They were not prepared to become informed citizens capable of participating in public debate or even of expressing themselves on important issues. The communicative capabilities students needed to take their places in work and social life were believed to be much simpler than the rhetorical tradition would lead anyone to expect. This destructive elitist attitude has not altogether disappeared, and in fact there are institutional and financial pressures that tend to maintain and reinforce it even against powerful arguments for better training in writing, speaking, and reasoning.

In the early twentieth century, in American universities, what was remembered of rhetoric was taught and to some degree studied in relation to courses on writing and speech in English departments. However, the internal tensions in English led to two important institutional divides. The first was the founding of the National Council of Teachers of English, which began as a kind of task force focused on educational policy regarding college admissions but gradually came to represent the teaching and educational concerns that were neglected by the increasingly research-identified profession of literary studies. The second occurred in 1914, when the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking split from the NCTE and became a professional organization for speech communication that promoted not only research and teaching but also the development of speech communication departments. The largest remnants of rhetoric were now divided into two separate disciplines, one

having to do with writing and one with speech, though parts of what had once been rhetoric would still be studied and taught in law, in business, in philosophy, in journalism, in advertising, and in other areas. Rhetoric as a specific field of study and teaching, however, often continued in the degraded forms into which it had fallen in the late nineteenth century.

This changed drastically in the second half of the twentieth century, when the teaching of writing gained power as a research field in English departments and quickly reconnected with the rhetorical tradition. At roughly the same time, cross-disciplinary relations began to be forged among scholars in classics, philosophy, English, speech, and communication, and an interest in rhetoric grew in literary criticism, cultural studies, and other disciplines.² The Rhetoric Society of America was founded in 1968, and now has over 1,200 members and publishes the *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. That same year, the journal *Philosophy and Rhetoric* published its first issue. Its editorial board included scholars from philosophy, speech, and English. That journal recently published its fortieth anniversary issue. The International Society for the History of Rhetoric was founded in 1977, holds biennial international conferences, and publishes *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*. The once seventeen-member National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking has gone through many changes but has now emerged as the National Communication Association. The NCA currently has 7,700 members and publishes ten different journals, including the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, a pillar of rhetorical studies for many years. In 2003, this explosion of work in rhetoric across disciplines led to the formation of an Alliance of Rhetoric Societies, which attempted to draw people studying and teaching rhetoric together into a loose coalition. But the resurgence has been difficult to organize, and it has not been limited to Europe and North America. In 2010, the Korean Rhetoric Society held its Second International Conference on “Cross-Cultural Conflicts and the Rhetoric of Communication” at Seoul National University. That society also publishes the *Korean Journal of Rhetoric*. The Rhetoric Society of China and the Chinese Rhetoric Society of the World also sponsor conferences. All of this is only a sampling of the recent growth in rhetorical studies.

The upshot of all this change is that organizing the resurgence of rhetoric as a field of study and teaching has become a serious challenge for contemporary American universities. The nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century decline of rhetoric has left many universities without rhetoric departments or even their fragmented remainders. In some cases, it has also left them with an institutional organization of the teaching of writing that is fraught with difficult tensions. Yet the last few decades have also

seen new departments of rhetoric and writing spring up at many universities. And many English, speech, and communication departments have adapted by expanding Ph.D. study in the field. Yet Adams's conundrum seems to persist as a quandary for many American universities.

However, the conundrum of rhetoric is not simply an institutional matter. The opposite judgments concerning rhetoric that Adams noted are also related to the way rhetoric has been conceptualized.³ Specific conceptions of rhetoric have produced specific conflicts about rhetoric and specific judgments about its value. There was from the start a conflict between the culture of rhetoric and the culture of the traditional heroic virtues of ancient Greece. There was also from the start a conflict between rhetoric and philosophy, and that conflict has continued over the course of rhetoric's history and is an essential part of that history.

The conflict between philosophy and rhetoric has taken many forms. Stanley Fish has given a famous characterization of it in his essay "Rhetoric," in which he derives a long list of dualities from Milton's description of the demon Belial. These dualities that are supposed to capture the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric include, to name just a few: inner/outer, deep/surface, essential/peripheral, unmediated/mediated, abiding/fleeting, reason/passion, things/words, realities/illusions, neutral/partisan. Underlying all of these, says Fish, are three other oppositions: a truth that is distinct from all perspectives, genuine knowledge that is independent of any system of belief, and a self that is focused outward toward truth as opposed to inward toward its own prejudices (Fish 1989, 474).

This particular way of describing the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric is endorsed most often by those who take rhetoric to land on the fallen side and take philosophy to belong to the divine contingent. These are they who, as Adams says, neglect, despise, and oppress. The rhetorical party is just as capable of demonizing the opposition, although it has not often taken that tack. It is also more than able to show itself to belong to the divine party, as it has often done. There is perhaps no reasonable expectation of a resolution to this conflict, at least not the way it has most often taken shape. There are now enough prefabricated arguments on both sides to keep debaters happy for a long time.

However, there may be some hope in not taking sides. In fact, that is what I propose to do in this book. The controversy with philosophy is internal to rhetoric; it is part of what rhetoric is. This ability to host controversy is in fact one of the most important and valuable things about rhetoric. In this, rhetoric is similar to philosophy, which carries in its own tradition questions and unresolved issues that seem continually

to take on new meaning. In fact, many disciplines are partly defined by the controversies they sustain. Law, too, carries conundrums. One leads to what Steven D. Smith calls “Law’s Quandary”—that law continues to appeal implicitly to natural law but that it has no clear understanding of how the idea of natural law can have survived the loss of the ontological commitments that sustained it. Another unresolved conflict we will confront later in this book is the conflict between law and justice, a conflict that appears in the works both of Plato in ancient times and of Chaim Perelman in the twentieth century, and which forms part of the continuing history of jurisprudence. Medicine, too, carries perduring conflicts about what health is, about the ways in which we should balance its costs against the costs of other goods, and about the degree to which we should sacrifice some of life’s pleasures in order to preserve health and life. There are essentially contested concepts in most disciplines and professions. In the arts and sciences and in the professions, too, it is often the unfinished theories and the living questions and the gaps and the controversies that are the most interesting and important things going.

Our well-being lies not in the general theoretical solutions we manufacture for these controversies—all of those fail in some way—but rather in how well we resolve them for a specific time and in a specific place and for ourselves, through our own reasoned choices. This allows us to make necessary practical choices while keeping the larger controversy alive, which is both the honest thing to do and the useful thing to do.

We have a low view of the enterprise of knowledge and of universities and of education when we think of knowledge simply as something that can be transferred like money from one account to another, and of education as a piling up of information and accounting procedures. We in fact diseducate when we are governed by such a model.⁴ Controversies are at the heart of many of the most important activities of human societies. Sustaining controversies and preserving competing perspectives is also part of what it means to preserve democratic culture, in which we continue to deliberate about the different goods we seek. Keeping some controversies open can be a way of insisting on our freedom, our freedom to change our minds or to create something new or to adapt to new conditions. Few of our achievements are unambiguously and absolutely good. Keeping the controversies in sight, and learning to live with them in a humane and intelligent way, is an essential ethical capability. It is a requirement for living with one another in a humane and intelligent way.

In what follows, I will address the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric, but not in a direct attempt to resolve the controversies as they have traditionally been formulated. My aim is rather to engage in a reconceptualizing of rhetoric in a way that develops its deeper philosophical dimensions. The aim is to attempt to go behind, so to speak, the historical and conceptual dissociation of rhetoric from philosophy and to retrieve and to reconstruct and to explore a more philosophical rhetoric, a deeper rhetoric. I am emphatically not attempting to construct a new rhetorical theory. If anything, the “aim” is to prevent theory, or, at least, to stay as independent from theorizing as possible. Theorizing is appropriate inside the separate disciplines of philosophy and rhetoric, but I am attempting to stay in the philosophical moment of rhetoric, “before” the separation happens. Of course, this cannot be a goal in the sense of an end point to be reached. It is quite impossible to prevent theory or to stay independent from it in any literal sense or any absolute way. Preventing theory is rather a kind of philosophical practice, trying to keep questions and possibilities open that theorizing attempts to close down and resolve.⁵ The chapters that follow will inevitably tack back and forth across deep rhetoric, a philosophical theory of rhetoric, and rhetorical theory. One movement of the work is to pursue rhetorical theory in order to discover and explore and activate its neglected philosophical background. Another movement is to pursue deep rhetoric for the purpose of preparing for more philosophically informed rhetorical theory.

One might say that, rather than attempting to construct a new rhetorical theory, I am attempting to paint a new rhetorical imaginary—a background against which we do our thinking about rhetoric and rhetorical theory. That would in some respects be accurate. I have, for example, chosen to pursue the relation of rhetoric to violence, justice, and wisdom, and these are probably not the first things that would spring to mind if one were to begin to think of the study and teaching of rhetoric. It is true that I am trying to change the context and the background against which we conceptualize rhetoric, and so I am calling up different images and associations and focusing on different primal scenes and examples. However, describing the aim this way does not capture the senses in which this is also a philosophical and scholarly labor.

The problem of method would loom large if this project were aimed at developing a theory or coming to some fundamental grounds for building a new philosophical rhetorical theory. But since the aim is to begin and to sustain a project of reconceptualizing rhetoric, something different from a conventional method is called for.

What I offer here, then, is not a systematic treatise but rather a series of closely related essays that develop the philosophical dimensions of rhetoric against the background of the history of rhetoric and especially the developments of the late twentieth century. Rather than building a theory or aiming toward a systematic development, it pursues conversations, reinterprets texts, renarrates histories, stages confrontations, offers close critical commentaries, and generally engages interlocutors, dead and living, who can contribute to conceptualizing the philosophical rhetoric that the book seeks. This approach should, at least, put the controversies about rhetoric in a new light, and give us more resources for considering the practical way we will resolve them for our time and place, and for ourselves.

Given the approach and the ambition of the project, it will be helpful to have a summary and roadmap as a guide. The book's first two chapters address the basic question: What is deep rhetoric? Chapter 1 begins with two apparently opposing approaches to rhetoric: Paul Ricoeur's view that the scope of rhetoric is limited by its generative seats in specific institutions and practices of ancient Greece, and Hans-Georg Gadamer's belief that rhetoric is "the universal form of human communication." Addressing this dispute requires addressing the question of the origin of rhetoric and treating the conflicting judgments on rhetoric found in Plato and Aristotle. The upshots are that there is a way of at least partially reconciling both Ricoeur with Gadamer and Plato with Aristotle, but it requires a reconceptualizing of rhetoric as deep rhetoric and a revisionist reading of Plato. Retrieving a more sympathetic Plato includes retrieving two essential Platonic notions. One is the very broad notion of *logos* that is at work in Plato and the sophists, according to which "logos" means speech, statement, reason, language, explanation, argument, and even the intelligibility of the world itself. Another is the notion, found in Plato's *Phaedrus*, that *logos* has its own special power, *psychagōgia*, leading the soul, and that rhetoric is an attempt to be an art or discipline of this power, or to in some sense master it, or to gain control of it, or to become the appropriate practice of this power. If *logos* is conceived in the broadest sense—that is, in all its senses—then rhetoric carries the very possibility of one thing's leading to another, so its scope becomes immense. The challenge for a deep rhetoric is to hold on to such a difficult pretheoretical notion without allowing it to become unformed, and to see where it leads.

The idea that rhetoric has to do with “leading the soul” by allowing things to lead to one another in specific ways immediately raises Platonic questions of where the art of rhetoric is leading. The second part of chapter 1 addresses this question by developing a coherent sense of purposeful leading even where ultimate ends may not be comprehensible. It takes on this task in challenging contexts, Plato and the Gospel of John, where logos would seem to be linked with theologies and teleologies that reify and absolutize ultimate goals. This section shows that the truth is more complicated than that. The first chapter continues in giving definition to deep rhetoric by developing a contrast between “deep rhetoric” and “big rhetoric.” A controversy over “big rhetoric” has recently erupted inside the discipline of rhetoric. The controversy is over the tendency of rhetoric to expand across the disciplines and become the rhetoric of everything. I note some similarities but also explain some important differences between deep rhetoric and big rhetoric.

Another potential objection to the project is that it develops a new kind of humanism, one in which deep rhetorical capabilities define human being. The next few sections of chapter 1 address this objection by affirming that deep rhetoric is a kind of humanism, but by also arguing that it is not the kind of humanism that is obviously vulnerable to contemporary attacks. This is worked out both in specific cases, by exploring and explaining the kinds of humanism at work in the new rhetoric project in the life and writings of Chaim Perelman and the very interesting Mieczysław Maneli, and in general by elaborating the rhetorical capabilities that lie at the heart of a deep rhetorical humanism. In deep rhetorical humanism, rhetorical capabilities are the capabilities by which we go on continually defining the human, especially by saying, in each new case, what human dignity is, and what the practices are that acknowledge it, and what the laws and institutions are that protect it.

Chapter 2 continues to address challenges to the notion of a deep rhetoric as a way of further developing and clarifying the project. One challenge is discussed here under the rubric of rhetoric and ideology. Since deep rhetoric reinterprets logos and reason, can it still carry out the enlightening and liberating projects of reason as it has been understood in the modern period? The answer is yes, and the answer is arrived at through a careful analysis of some of the assumptions behind the concept of ideology and an explanation of how a deep rhetoric calls some of those assumptions into question and offers a new understanding of the way in which reason is related to freedom.

Chapter 2 concludes by returning to a more direct account of a deep rhetoric, this time by way of an exposition of how significant parts of

the framework of a deep rhetoric were developed by twentieth-century philosophers. In the later twentieth century, after its near disappearance, the study of rhetoric returns as philosophy, often in the work of philosophers, and as a specifically late-twentieth-century kind of rhetoric. Burke, Perelman, McKeon, Toulmin, Gadamer, Habermas, and Walton are all treated in some way, but Gadamer is singled out for his development of a “kairoitic” ontology, and the Habermas/Gadamer debate is analyzed as an exemplary instance of how rhetoric returned as philosophy.

At this point, given what many have been taught, some readers may still find it difficult to think of Plato as a friend of rhetoric and to accept the idea that Plato has a continuing relevance for the development of a twenty-first-century philosophical rhetoric. So chapter 3 shows that the *Gorgias* can be read as a defense of a deep rhetoric rather than simply as an attack on rhetoric. To carry this out, the chapter reviews the recent literature on the *Gorgias*, much of which contributes to a very interesting rehabilitation of the sophists, and shows that, in spite of its insightful interpretations of Gorgias and the sophists, much of this literature nonetheless misses subtle though profoundly important Platonic attitudes, and so fails to catch sight of vital dimensions of the dialogue. Instead of focusing on the familiar exchange between Socrates and Polus, in which rhetoric is identified as a species of flattery, the chapter centers on the exchange between Socrates and Callicles, explains Callicles’ rhetorical narcissism, radically reinterprets the *nomos/physis* distinction at play in the dialogue, shows how a deep rhetorical conception of the “fitting” is developed by Socrates, identifies the way the concept of restraint places ethics prior to ontology, and highlights the very different attitudes toward *logos* that are expressed by the interlocutors. It turns out that Socrates, Gorgias, and Callicles are all assuming a very broad notion of *logos*, that Socrates is himself practicing the “fine” kind of rhetoric the dialogue seeks, a rhetoric that is not divorced from philosophy, and that the distinction between *mythos* and *logos* is fundamentally questionable since both can be fitting ways to lead the soul.

Chapter 4 begins to use the idea of deep rhetoric to explore and reinterpret and clarify issues that have attended the history of rhetoric but have not received the fuller attention that a deep rhetoric can provide. Here, the issue is violence. Is rhetoric, as many have claimed, a potential substitute for violence, a nonviolent way of resolving conflict? Is it the discourse of democracy, both in its historical origin and in the way it continues to inform education and public discourse? Or is rhetoric just another form of violence, a sophisticated practice of discursive power and coercion? Is violence in fact a feature of rhetoric from its origin onward?

This chapter addresses this dispute first through an extended commentary on the great myth of Protagoras, as it is offered by Plato. Protagoras claims that the rhetoric he teaches is equivalent to an education in political virtue itself and that it allows citizens to live peaceably in cities. According to the myth, the origin of rhetoric is an end to violence and the beginning of politics, as well as the birth of a new kind of human being. A deep rhetorical commentary on this myth requires drawing in the twentieth-century philosophers who wrestled with the question in a contemporary context, especially Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, who believe that some notion of a freedom from force lies at the heart of claims that discourse can be free and reasonable. This commentary on the myth of Protagoras ends with a sharpening of the question and a deeper and more detailed awareness of how central the idea of a freedom from violence is for the conceptualization of rhetoric and for reason itself, and yet how subtle and persistent the occurrences of force can be.

The second part of the chapter turns to Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," which argues that all rhetorical-political orders are grounded in and dependent on violence and that only a "divine" violence can end violence. This section offers a careful analytical commentary on Benjamin's essay, drawing in ancient and contemporary writers on rhetoric where they are helpful. The commentary ends with a deep rhetorical critique of the "Critique," partly on the grounds that it exaggerates its vision of violence and diminishes widespread practices of peace, which it relegates to a private sphere which is far too abstractly conceptualized as being entirely separate from the political order. Further, Benjamin's notions of violence and nonviolence are also too abstract; they are conceptualized as pure theoretical entities. His distinction between mythic and divine violence is even more abstract, to the point that he ends up reifying these violences in an ontotheological domain.

The chapter ends with an attempt to undo some of the abstractness with which the question of violence has been treated. It pursues the notion that violence is in some respects less a problem to be solved and more a form of human suffering, like pain. Pain and violence both attend human life, and neither can be completely eradicated, but all worthwhile lives and social and political orders attempt to mitigate both. Rhetoric is the mitigation of violence, not its eschatological terminus. To conclude this chapter, I explore this idea in connection with Aeschylus's *Oresteia* and a poem and a verse novel by Les Murray. The claim that rhetoric addresses the problem of violence is best understood not as a claim that rhetoric can lead to an end of violence, some condition of absolute non-violence, but rather that rhetoric mitigates violence by making possible

dynamic resolutions of conflict in discourse and in processes of justice that are practices of peace. The dynamic and incomplete justice of rhetoric that makes an active peace possible is elaborated in chapter 7.

Henry Johnstone, the founding and long-time editor of *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, once suggested that rhetoric was an attempt to be “philosophy without tears.” Chapters 5 and 6 drag rhetoric through the severest kind of tear-inducing philosophy, the thought of Martin Heidegger. The first four chapters prepare the reader for this, giving a good preliminary account of deep rhetoric, but before justice and wisdom can be explained in a deep rhetorical way, the idea of a deep rhetoric must be given more philosophical definition and power, and so it is developed and elaborated in an encounter with some essential challenges of Heidegger’s thought. These chapters are not about Heidegger, although there is much careful exposition here. They are rather about the way a deep rhetoric takes up certain Heideggerian challenges, the way deep rhetoric thereby achieves philosophical definition, and the way the project of a deep rhetoric exposes and corrects certain deficiencies in Heidegger’s thought.

A deep rhetoric draws from Heidegger’s penetrating critique of the way we ordinarily conceptualize being and beings, from his attempt to describe the specific kind of being of human beings, especially from his account of human being as a kind of transcendence, and from his continuing failed encounter with rhetoric and his usually constricted conception of logos—which a deep rhetoric aims to correct. It also aims to correct Heidegger’s conception of reasoning. Heidegger also comes in for criticism for his overemphasis on the isolation of individual human existence, the idea that only silence can be authentic, and for the fact that others appear only in ghostly fashion in his writings. Deep rhetoric corrects Heidegger with a much more robust account of sociality. Chapter 6 concludes with an examination of how Heidegger’s missteps and failures can nevertheless be read sympathetically as generating a challenging agenda for any conception of rhetoric that intends to endure philosophy’s tears.

According to Noemi Perelman Mattis, Chaim Perelman’s daughter, Perelman was reading Heidegger at the end of his life.⁶ One can only wonder what Perelman’s new rhetoric project would have been like if he had studied Heidegger before the project was launched. In some ways, chapter 7 imagines such a reality. It has been difficult for readers of *The New Rhetoric* to grasp Perelman’s philosophical ambitions, so this chapter both clarifies those ambitions and takes them further by tuning the new rhetoric project to the philosophical keys of its time and our own, thus making its innovations more widely audible. This chapter also clarifies

the senses in which Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's new rhetoric project, interpreted in the light of a deep rhetoric, is a kind of cure for what went wrong in Heidegger's project.

The new rhetoric project was closely connected with Perelman's philosophical work on the concept of justice, and the reinterpretation offered here shows just how intimately intertwined those two aspects of Perelman's thinking were. The chapter opens with a clarification of the idea of justice that is based on the notions of transcendence and world that were developed in the preceding chapters. A concern for justice is not simply a concern with such matters as compensable damages and the just distribution of valued goods, but also with what it means to do justice to each other's lives and experience. This requires taking into account the way our lives are invested in each other and in the world around us. To clarify this, I consider Keith Basso's writings on the Western Apache in *Wisdom Sits in Places* and Jonathan Lear's account of the fate of the Crow people in *Radical Hope*.

This leads to a deep rhetorical reconstruction of the new rhetoric project as a philosophical-rhetorical account of how argumentation can be understood to be a way of doing justice to each other's experience and each other's lives. Because argumentation is a way of doing justice, it can also be understood to be the practice of a dynamic peace. Chapter 7 addresses the questions with which chapter 4 ended by explaining how rhetoric can mitigate violence and be a practice of peace.

Since *Deep Rhetoric* claims to accomplish a *rapprochement* of philosophy with rhetoric, it seems more than fair to ask how it stands with deep rhetoric in relation to that ancient definition of philosophy as a love of wisdom. Chapter 8 responds to this question. It begins with a review of some of the ways wisdom has been conceptualized in the rhetorical tradition, and then it clarifies the question of wisdom through a reading of the *Eumenides*, which ends with a myth of the origin of rhetoric. There, two ways of knowing and judging come into conflict in a dispute about Orestes' killing of his mother: the ways of the Furies and the old gods, on the one hand, and the ways of Orestes and Apollo, on the other. Athena hears their cases, but she delegates her authority to a human jury that is responsible for deliberating and deciding the issue. This generates the question of wisdom: how does one know how to proceed when there are two conflicting ways of knowing and judging, when there is a reasonable case to be made on both sides?

Instead of simply rehearsing rhetoric's historical alliance with practical reasoning, I develop a different context for the discussion. I give (necessarily!) brief accounts of how this question of wisdom is developed

in Mahayana Buddhism, in an ancient Hebrew context, and in Plato's treatment of Socratic wisdom. The question of wisdom and the development of wisdom traditions have broad cultural and historical range, and this final chapter tries, in a small but specific and significant way, to connect with these larger concerns. Having developed this background, I show how Kenneth Burke addresses this question, primarily in "Four Master Tropes," an appendix to *A Grammar of Motives*, and then how Chaim Perelman treats it, primarily in his Genoa lectures on justice. In their encounter with the question of wisdom, both Burke and Perelman become progenitors of a deep rhetoric, and the chapter concludes by explaining how this is so.

A few final caveats are perhaps in order. I must ask readers for flexibility in my use of a couple of terms. The first is "logos." Part of the aim of a deep rhetoric is to step back from basic concepts that have already been subordinated to and defined in terms of specific theories. In this respect, it strives not to ground rhetorical theory but, at times, to prevent theory, to stay with philosophy in order to expand the question and deepen the sense of what is at stake. I will use the word "logos" in a variety of contexts and for a range of purposes. Rather than give a single definition for the term, I will do my best to provide definition in the specific contexts in which the term is used. Much the same can be said for the word "transcendence." It is used to name in a very abstract manner the general way *we are always moving beyond ourselves*, whether simply in time, or in history, or in language, or in our pursuits of our goals, or even in simple perception and thought. Again, rather than attempt a general definition, I will provide definition as the term arises in specific contexts.

Both of these terms will receive increasing definition in the chapters that treat Heidegger's challenges for rhetoric, but those chapters are themselves the subject of my last caution. Chapters 5 and 6 dig into some of Heidegger's texts in a way that demands a close and technical kind of attention. I believe that the dig is worthwhile, but I admit that it may require special patience from readers who are entirely unfamiliar with Heidegger's thinking. I have done my best to make those chapters available to anyone who gives them the time and attention, but I acknowledge that it requires more than usual effort. For those who make the passage, chapter 7, on reason and justice, will appear in a brighter light.

A central task of the book is to pull the rhetorical tradition into the present time, especially by consolidating and reinterpreting the development of philosophical rhetoric that occurred in the later twentieth century. I hope that this will give us a deeper respect for the resources of rhetoric in general and so a stronger sense of its importance as a field

of research and teaching in universities. I hope, too, that slowing down and exploring the philosophical dimensions of rhetoric will strengthen and inform the discipline of rhetoric itself. Rhetoric as a discipline has an important role to play in connection with how we understand many pressing matters, among them: developing democracies, new communication technologies, war and cultural and political conflict, the status of animals, environmental concerns, the task of setting free the capabilities of the disabled, public discourse that has increasingly global dimensions, and the language of market values that has come to pervade so many parts of our thought and our lives. It may also play a significant role in helping along a dialogue among the world religions. We all need all the help we can get in reasoning and communicating about these matters more wisely and clearly. And we need all the help we can get in educating the next generation to be capable of these new communicative challenges.

What Is Deep Rhetoric?

One way of approaching the question of deep rhetoric is to begin by explaining what ordinary rhetoric is and then to describe the difference between deep rhetoric and ordinary rhetoric. However, there is nothing easy or clear about that approach. The word “rhetoric” has over the last few centuries been reduced to little more than a derogatory term. Rhetoric is, in the popular understanding, a manipulative and dishonest use of language, a use of language that tries to trick or coerce people into believing something that they would not believe on the basis of the evidence alone. Or rhetoric is language that is used to lead people into doing something that, if they knew the truth, they would not do. Or rhetoric is a way of using language to manipulate emotions, to stir up anger or prejudice or fear, and so to lead people to make judgments that they would not make if they were calm and reasonable. In the popular, modern understanding, the goal is to “get beyond all the rhetoric,” or to “get behind it,” or to “set it aside,” in order to be reasonable, in order to have a chance at finding out what is true or which course of action is best.

Because this view of rhetoric is drastically out of line with much of the history of what has been written about rhetoric, drastically out of line with a long tradition of liberal education in which rhetoric has had a central place, and drastically out of line with the idea of rhetoric that will be developed in this book, I will start with a simple statement about rhetoric that contrasts drastically with the popular conception, let it stand, and then start again.

Rhetoric is a form of human transcendence, a way we open ourselves to the influence of what is beyond ourselves and become receptive, a way we participate in a larger world and become open to the lives of others, a way we learn and change. Rhetoric is also a way the world and others become open to us, open to our giving and our participation; it is a way we teach, a way we change our common conditions, a way we form relationships and bear the lives and experiences of other people. Rhetoric is a shape taken by Hebraic wisdom, who cries out in the streets, who was present at the creation of the world.¹ Rhetoric is a shape taken by John's logos, the logos that was from the beginning and through whom all things come into being.² Rhetoric is also a form of the logos about which Plato pondered, saying memorably, through the agreement between Socrates and Phaedrus, that there was a special power specific to it, the power of *psychagogia*, or leading the soul. Rhetoric, as the possibility of there being any leading or being led at all, is necessary for any finding of direction, any purpose. Yet rhetoric is also always something historically and materially specific, a specific shape taken by wisdom and word, a shape that has a special kairotic belonging to some times, some situations, some places.

We are rhetorical beings, and through rhetoric we give ways of being to each other and receive them from each other. Rhetoric is not a debased kind of communication; it is the reality of all communication, and it leads us into experiencing the world in some particular ways and not in all ways. Rhetoric is the inescapable event in all communication—the form and the direction of the influence we exert on each other. We exert such influence in every encounter because we never experience each other outside of a communicative event. Communication and the rhetoric that gives it form and direction grant us our being with each other and our being with ourselves. Ordinary rhetoric is connected with the way this influence and direction can be studied and taught, learned and used, criticized and improved. Deep rhetoric is connected with the dimensions of rhetoric that allow individuals, societies, human activities, and the world itself to take place—and so it brings the very possibility of philosophy and the sciences into its realm.

What Is Rhetoric?

Now, let us start again, differently. What is rhetoric? To begin, consider two apparently incompatible characterizations of rhetoric, both from

philosophers. The first is from Paul Ricoeur (1989). He offered it in a lecture titled “Rhetoric—Poetics—Hermeneutics” that he gave in 1970 in Brussels at the Institute for Higher Studies, whose president was Chaim Perelman, one of the authors of *The New Rhetoric*. Perelman was also in the audience. Perelman’s rhetorical theory develops a concept of rhetoric whose scope reaches to all nonformal communication, including inward deliberation. Ricoeur believes that this concept is too broad, that distinctions must be made among rhetoric, poetics, and hermeneutics. He argues that each has a different generative seat, a different origin, and he concludes that this limits rhetoric’s scope in a specific way. Ricoeur says that rhetoric was born with the legal reforms that took place in sixth-century BCE Sicily, and he believes that rhetoric is forever conditioned, shaped, and limited by the typical discursive situations in which it arose. In this context, he mentions Aristotle’s famous three: the deliberative, judicial, and epideictic contexts and genres of rhetoric. Deliberative rhetoric would be found mainly in legislative assemblies or similar contexts, forensic in the institutional settings for trials, and epideictic rhetoric would have its proper place on ceremonial occasions. Ricoeur acknowledges that there is an internal tendency of rhetoric to move beyond these contexts—specifically, he believes that rhetoric’s focus on argumentation as a kind of reasoning that takes place in conditions of uncertainty, in the vast domain between arbitrary deciding and certain proof, moves rhetoric’s scope outward without limit toward all discourse, even to that point of completion at which it incorporates philosophy. However, he also believes that the generative seats of rhetoric provide an unconquerable constraint on rhetoric’s ambitions. Rhetoric will always have a historical and situational and quasi-institutional character.

I have two reservations about Ricoeur’s account of rhetoric. First, it neglects the fact that the concept of rhetoric has a significant educational and formative dimension. The origin of rhetoric lies not simply in the new kind of speech made possible and necessary by early democratic reforms in Sicily, but also in the coincident recognition that this new artful communication could be learned and taught. This recognition spurred the development of teachers who became experts in the ways of the courts and assemblies and who offered to train young men in the arts of speech and persuasive reasoning—for a fee. But this educational dimension of rhetoric quickly grew beyond the needs of a specialized class. These arts came to be relevant to all spheres of life, from the household to the assembly. So powerful was the emergent idea of rhetoric that it spawned another transformation. The concept of an individual, free, fully developed citizen began to change to include a new kind of com-

municative competence, a competence that was very quickly conceptualized by rhetorical theorists as an essential competence for human beings, one without which they would be unable to develop their most human abilities. The early history of rhetoric, the history of its origin, was connected not only with specific changes in political institutions and social practices but also with new conceptions of education and of the specific nature of human beings. From the beginning, rhetoric had exceeded its institutional origins, exceeded Ricoeur's constraints.

Let me broach my second, related, reservation by moving on to some words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, originally published in 1977, words which characterize rhetoric very differently: "Rhetoric is the universal form of human communication, which even today determines our social life in an incomparably more profound fashion than does science" (1986, 17). Here is a very different definition of rhetoric, sweeping but subtle, like so much in Gadamer, apparently simple and almost hiding its central key paradox.³ I want to develop my second reservation about Ricoeur's account of rhetoric by exploring the paradox in Gadamer's casual-looking definition of rhetoric. The paradox is this. On the one hand, "Rhetoric is the universal form of communication." What could be simpler? When and where human beings communicate, for whatever purpose, rhetoric reigns as the form of that communication. There is no qualification about its scope's being limited by its "generative seats" or by specific occasions or situations. Rhetoric is simply the universal form of human communication. Well, not simply. For Gadamer adds that "even today" rhetoric determines our social life more profoundly than science does. This suggests of course that rhetoric's power to determine social life is a historical power that can wax and wane, and it makes clear that Gadamer's claim is that even though this power can wax and wane in its historical unfolding, it has not yet waned significantly, at least not in comparison with the power of science to determine social life. But if rhetoric is the universal form of human communication, how could it increase and decrease in its power to shape social life? How could it be in a kind of competition with science to shape social life? If it is the universal form of communication, and science is not, how could rhetoric ever not shape social life more profoundly than science? In general, if it is the universal form of human communication, it cannot at the same time permit of being "more or less" the universal form of human communication. It is either universal or it isn't. This is the paradox.

Gadamer starts to clarify the paradox while still in the course of articulating it, and then we can carry out the task out from there. Rhetoric is not really even commensurate with science in this matter of shaping

social life, for rhetoric conditions social life “in an incomparably more profound fashion than does science.” Rhetoric may have a history of some kind, and its shaping of social life may be altered in some way by science and its history, but rhetoric’s power as the universal form of human communication is somehow “incomparably” more profound. We can imagine human beings before modern science, and so we can perhaps imagine ourselves without it. However, there is something that Gadamer here calls “rhetoric” that we cannot imagine ourselves without unless we imagine ourselves as profoundly different from what we now are.

Origins of Rhetoric

To get a better idea of why Gadamer says this—even though, we must assume, he knows the stories of rhetoric’s origin as well as Ricoeur does—it might help to look at some of the early testimony about the nature of rhetoric. For the very nature of rhetoric was an issue right from the start.

To take this step embroils us in a little bit of relevant controversy, though, for Edward Schiappa has set forth a strongly historicist and quite thought-provoking argument about rhetoric’s beginnings that would make this step look like question-begging. Schiappa warns us not to look to pre-Aristotelian philosophy to understand rhetoric, because the concept of rhetoric was not really developed until after Plato coined the term and Aristotle refined the concept. In *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece* (1999), Schiappa urges us to give up our anachronistic accounts of rhetoric’s pre-Platonic history. Plato coined the word “rhetoric,” he says, and conceptualized it in a specific relationship to philosophy, dialectics, eristics, and other specialized Platonic descriptors of what was more generally referred to in terms of *logos*. Not until “rhetoric” becomes part of a discourse that organizes it as a term in relation to other terms do we begin to understand the history of rhetoric. Only when rhetoric is differentiated from some general art of *logos*, a differentiation that begins in Plato and is almost complete in Aristotle, do we really have “rhetoric.” So, if, in order to show that Gadamer’s philosophical approach to rhetoric has merits that go beyond Ricoeur’s more historicist approach, we appeal to what certain ancients said about the art of *logos* in general, are we not demonstrating that we have simply neglected the historicist challenge?

Well, no. And for two reasons. First, the historicist method employed here tends to be question-begging. Schiappa imagines three stages in the early development of what we now call rhetorical theory. A first stage, a

fifth-century stage, represented by the older sophists, was primarily concerned with *logos*.⁴ A second stage, represented by Plato, developed a new focus on an art of *logos* or speech, sometimes called by Plato “rhetoric.” By the end of the fourth century, with Aristotle, a third stage had been reached, in which the split between philosophy and rhetoric was complete. Schiappa urges us not to think of the early stages in this process as essentially concerned with rhetoric. As he says, “The meanings associated with *logos* and *legein* are such that one cannot argue they mean the same thing as was later conveyed by ‘rhetoric’” (1999, 34).

However, that is just the issue. If the older sophists spoke of *logos* in a general way, and Plato began to speak of *logos* and rhetoric and philosophy in such a way that there were both differences as well as identity, and then Aristotle systematized the differences so that there was not as much left to say about a general art of *logos*—well, what is the best or most helpful or truest or most desirable way to speak and write and think about these things? Schiappa seems to take the strong historicist view that we must understand the origin of rhetoric the way the people near its origin understood it, and especially the way Aristotle understood it. As he says at one point, the idea of “rhetoric derived from fifth century Greece is improbable. . . . Ahistorical definitions are misleading, unhelpful, or superfluous” (64). However, if we want to know whether a historicist or a philosophical approach to the question “What is Rhetoric?” is more helpful, we can’t simply decide the issue by historicist fiat the way Schiappa does here. So, the first reason not to go Schiappa’s way is that it begs the question. Our question is not simply a historical one. Our question is: What is rhetoric? And more specifically: Is rhetoric the universal form of communication or is it a particular kind of communication limited to particular times and places?

A second reason why we are not simply neglecting the historicist challenge is that there was a controversy at the origin of rhetoric about just what rhetoric is. Schiappa’s neat three-part progression that resolves itself in the “completion” of the conceptualizing of rhetoric in Aristotle is a tidy way to resolve this controversy, but it is hardly a satisfying resolution for those who believe that there is something philosophical in the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric. Plato was not merely at a half-way point between the older sophists and Aristotle in some three-part problem-solving process. In the *Phaedrus* (261a-b, Fowler trans.), Socrates poses this question to his young interlocutor:

“Is not rhetoric in its entire nature an art which leads the soul by means of words (*dialogōn*), not only in law courts and the various other public assemblages, but in private

companies as well? And is it not the same when concerned with small things as well as with great, and, properly speaking no more to be esteemed in important than in trifling matters? Is this what you have heard?"

That is, Socrates is asking: Isn't rhetoric an art of *logos* in general, an art whereby we have an influence on each other's souls, an art of teaching and leading one another, an art whose scope ranges from the largest public political matters to the smallest private affairs? In other words: Isn't rhetoric best understood in light of *logos* in general? Isn't rhetoric the universal form of human communication?

Phaedrus answers as a good student should, along the well-informed and knowledgeable paths that Ricoeur and Schiappa follow: "No, by Zeus, not that exactly; but the art of speaking and writing is exercised chiefly in lawsuits, and that of speaking in public assemblies; and I never heard of any further uses" (261b, Fowler trans.). Here Phaedrus gives the properly Aristotelian answer, jumping to Schiappa's stage three right in the middle of one of Plato's dialogues. He says: No, Socrates, rhetoric is not the universal form of human communication. One has judicial rhetoric, and then one has deliberative rhetoric, and so rhetoric has its institutional generative seats which limit it and so prevent it from rightly being characterized as the universal form of human communication. Rhetoric is a distinct art or discipline and not a kind of philosophy or general art of *logos*.

Socrates then carries the dialogue forward, examining the kind of speech that occurs in courts and assemblies, arguing that "the art of contention in speech [*antilogikē*] is not confined to courts and political gatherings, but apparently, if it is an art at all, it would be one and the same in all kinds of speaking" (261d-e). This is his beginning of a long argument for a conception of rhetoric as equivalent to an art of *logos*, a conception of rhetoric as something like the universal form of human communication. The long discussion eventuates in two very important claims in the *Phaedrus*. First, the attempt to conceptualize rhetoric as something that can be understood and learned independently of some more general art of *logos* is a mistaken effort, one that confuses the preliminaries or elements of an art with the art itself. Without understanding the purpose of an art of *logos*, a mastery of the techniques of *logos* is meaningless. Second, since it is the special power of *logos* to lead the soul, the art of *logos*, rhetoric itself, is the art of leading souls, and so, Socrates says, the art of rhetoric is a lot like the art of healing, and not much different from a philosophical dialectic. These are arguments for the claims that (1) rhetoric cannot be detached from deep rhetoric without losing its

purpose, which organizes it as an art, and (2) rhetoric cannot be detached from deep rhetoric without obscuring the fact that rhetoric is not just an external and optional activity but is also a matter of who and what we are intrinsically.⁵

The point of all this is that Plato has an explicit argument against conceptualizing rhetoric the way Schiappa and Ricoeur and Aristotle want to. There is an advantage in valorizing the Aristotelian approach. It yields a discipline of rhetoric that is fairly well-defined and mercifully distinct from philosophy and its eternal failure to define itself. The Aristotelian approach can give an answer to the question of what rhetoric is that for most people will not cause serious problems.⁶ On the contrary, for most rhetoricians, it will remove difficulties, and allow them to proceed with work in their discipline in a productive way. However, the approach does not offer a serious philosophical response to Plato, and it does not help with the project of trying to understand what a deep rhetoric would be. So it is at least an open question whether we should look at historical sources that seem to have a general, *logos*-oriented conception of rhetoric for help in answering our contemporary question: what is rhetoric?

When Aristotle subordinated and disciplined and so legitimated rhetoric, he at the same time disciplined philosophy—made it less than the whole. Plato knew that both rhetoric and philosophy were striving with a general conception of *logos* toward something like a genuine art or practice of *logos*, although the idea of an art or practice in this context is highly unstable because *logos* is not simply an optional attainment for human beings. We already participate in it in one way or another, and we could hardly be at all in its absence. Philosophy as Socrates and Plato practiced it is born in the matrix of dialogues that illuminate this *logos* that leads the soul but which is not susceptible to being mastered by a wisdom or a specific kind of knowledge. When Aristotle distinguishes between the different arts of *logos*, he converts an unmanageable truth into a problem to be solved—and he solves it in a masterful way. Rhetoric and dialectic are clearly distinguished and their separate spheres are explained. Rhetoric is subordinated, and philosophy is brilliantly elaborated and explicated, but philosophy is now a discipline to be executed and no longer a compartment—one akin to worship—toward a good that cannot be conceptualized or disciplined. The deep ethical and existential rigors of restraint and critique and intense dialogue between specific people with specific kinds of souls that need tempering and leading in specific kinds of ways in order for what is most worth pursuing to have any chance of showing itself—that kind of philosophy is forsaken for the philosophy that might plausibly make a claim to a general kind of knowledge.

One cannot deny that Aristotle's move was an advance that was productive for both rhetoric and the philosophical sub-disciplines as they are still known today. It is one of philosophy's fundamental achievements. Few people can read the *Nicomachean Ethics* now without being grateful, without wishing that those ideas were more widely understood and discussed in our own time. However, Aristotle's controversial solution is so functional that it has become identical not only with common sense but also with the structure of academic disciplines. "Ethics" is not part of the discipline of communication, but it is wise to have an "ethics of communication" course in a communication curriculum. This is rational, disciplinary compartmentalization. For Plato, ethics is not a compartment of human knowledge or a separate discipline. It is an essential dimension of all communication, in fact of all human action. Much of Socrates' critical force is aimed at the rhetoricians' attempts to separate ethics and philosophy from rhetoric, as if ethics could be something external to communication, or as if a careful discussion about what was really true and good in some case was an optional, value-added accessory to political deliberation.

Having made the case for the legitimacy of a conception of a rhetoric that preserves its deeper and admittedly difficult connections with *logos*, let us turn to the fourth century BCE, when Isocrates offered his "hymn to *logos*," an enduring account of an art of human discourse that is equivalent to reason itself. Here it is:

For in the other powers which we possess . . . we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; nay, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources; [15.254] but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish [15.255]. For this it is which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things honorable and base; and if it were not for these ordinances we should not be able to live with one another. It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul [15.256]. With this faculty we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are unknown; for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts;

and, while we call eloquent those who are able to speak before a crowd, we regard as sage those who most skillfully debate their problems in their own minds [15.257]. And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom.

Here in a nutshell is a concept of *logos* as equivalent to communication in its more profound senses, a concept of *logos* that does not divide the kind of reasoning we do in science and in intellectual inquiry from the kind of reason we use when we adjudicate disputes. As Isocrates says, with communicative reason, we not only deliberate about laws and invent arts and develop skills, we also educate the young and evaluate the claims of the wise. The reason with which we think when we are alone, lost in inner deliberations and arguments, is the same reason we use to speak before a crowd. As Isocrates concludes, “None of the things which are done with intelligence takes place without the help of *logos*,” without communicative reason, but in both action and thought, communicative reason is most used by those who have the most wisdom.

Here, say many, is the core vision of the classical liberal arts—that there is a common activity that both pervades all the particular sciences and reaches well beyond them, into civic life and into the individual uses of reason, and that this activity can be cultivated and nourished. We can train people to be better at it. Here is where Isocrates lines up with the older sophist, Protagoras, also an educator, who attributes the same importance to *logos*. Protagoras says that the art he teaches is the art of living together in cities, and he also says (at least in Plato’s dialogue) that before people discovered this art, they were unable to form societies, and were in fact less than human.

Toward a Deep Rhetoric

This takes us directly back to my first reservation about Ricoeur’s account of rhetoric. Protagoras and Plato and Isocrates were all educators, and at the heart of their educational projects was a conception of *logos*. They all explored the question of whether there was some essential power of *logos*, some role it played that nothing else could play, and they all developed a concept of what it might mean to be educated in such a way that one could somehow connect with its power, be shaped by it, and learn both

how to be led and how to lead the souls of others. Both Protagoras (at least Plato's Protagoras) and Isocrates accept the mythic view of rhetoric that informs the traditional account of the historical origins of rhetoric—the view that the origin of rhetoric was coincident with the advent of a specifically human kind of society, or, in more historical terms, that rhetoric originated in the democratic reforms that began in ancient Sicily.

It is at this point that we might see a slight convergence of Ricoeur's and Gadamer's views. Think of it this way. At some point in history, people begin to succeed in developing institutions and practices that are in some important respects democratic, especially in the respect that these new laws and institutions require new abilities of people, especially the ability to reason in speech with other people in order to make choices, choices about a significantly enlarged range of issues, choices once made by a tyrant or some other power or authority, but choices that must now be made by a broader range of people in a context of more open deliberation and reasoning.

We must pause here for a moment because this historical account is of course also a mythical story. Today, we would want to examine this apparent outbreak of freedom and discover what kind of unfreedom took force at the same time and supported it. We would want to focus on its effects on people who did not gain political freedoms and who were not eligible for the new education in communication. We would want to look at what communicative practices were available to them and how these were shaped by the changes going on in the assemblies and courts. We would also want to look at other societies at other times, at their own legal reforms and the communicative practices that looked similar. We would want the history to be much more complex and honest. However, we can want all this and still want to grasp why so many people of so many kinds over such a long time have used this particular historical event to wrestle with some ideas that come up again and again in many different historical contexts. For, as you know by now, it is the idea that I have set my sights on in this book—partly in order to bring it into a relation with a particular set of practices and issues in a particular time and place, our own.

When Hegel tried to think of a way to characterize the nature of these Greek legal reforms, he could say only that the Greeks seemed to come up with the idea that not one person, not a single authority, should be free, but that some larger group should be free.⁷ With this notion of a larger group of free individuals, one needs of course a way for them to resolve disputes among themselves, and so the legal reforms are coincident

with the recognition that more than one person should be free. However, the legal reforms are abstract and useless unless people have some real ability to use speech to resolve their disputes, to succeed in persuading one another, and so a conception of rhetoric arises both as the form of communication among free citizens and as the educational goal of the training of free citizens.

Thus, rhetoric arises in a historically specific situation, and its advent is coincident with certain laws and institutions and practices, as Ricoeur says, and yet rhetoric is also, as Gadamer says, the universal form of human communication among people who expect to be treated as free, that is, as capable and deserving of participating in deliberation and reasoning about some significant range of choices that must be made. Gadamer imagines that this expectation is still profound. If modern science has in some sense displaced rhetoric, if a culture of scientific expertise and a technology that seems to move faster than choice seem to have seized power, it is not the case that they have in any significant way weakened our expectations or our demands to participate in the choices that affect us. For, as Gadamer says in another context,⁸ there is implied in every theory of science itself the idea of self-justification, which compels it to go beyond itself, both into the hermeneutic domain of argumentation and communication, where competing theories and interpretations meet, and also finally into the philosophy of science. The expectations that scientific claims must be justified and that the communicative sphere in which this justification takes place must be designed to give human individuals a role in the choices and judgments that are made are evidence that science itself is supported by the same communicative expectations as those carried to us by the rhetorical tradition.

So Gadamer, or even Plato, and certainly Protagoras and Isocrates, can admit that rhetoric has a specific origin in particular institutions and historical developments. They can even admit that rhetoric continues to be “limited” or influenced by this origin. However, if the origin is conceived as a development of concrete historical forms of education and political life that are still connected with what are now widely held notions of reason and freedom, notions whose proper legal and institutional and educational forms are still being explored, then the original institutional matrix of rhetoric does not appear to be a constraint on the range of rhetoric; it appears to be quite the opposite. The idea of a deep rhetoric is the idea of a rhetoric that takes historically specific shapes, and which divides itself into forms of discourse, but which also has generative power that is in the process of exceeding those shapes and forms. Part

of this exceeding occurs in the attempt to realize the educational and humanistic ideals that rhetoric generates. Its effects are evident, too, in the universalities that it produces.⁹ One could say then that rhetoric has both a horizontal, historical axis in which it assumes the specific institutional shapes by which it seems to be constrained, and also a vertical axis along which it generates ideals of freedom and reason and nonviolence, and the humane formation of human beings, ideals which reach beyond specific situations and generate motives for changing them. This vertical axis is, of course, as historical as everything else, and its specific content changes as the situations it intersects change. Every historical situation has its own verticality, its own imagination of what goes beyond the situation.

We began this chapter by asking, what is rhetoric? The question presented an immediate obstacle, because the historical meaning of rhetoric has been largely lost in our time. We have only a degraded trace of that meaning flickering in our current uses of the word. We presented an initial account of rhetoric that would contrast with the degraded notion of rhetoric and give a sense of a conception of rhetoric in terms of which we might be able to articulate the meaning of a “deep rhetoric,” one that would lead to a rapprochement of rhetoric and philosophy. We considered Paul Ricoeur’s claim that rhetoric would always be limited by its institutional origins in ancient Greece, and we considered Gadamer’s counter-claim that rhetoric is the universal form of human communication. To gain perspective on this conflict, we considered how this same dispute arose among the Greeks during the period in which the word “rhetoric” was first used and in which the concept of rhetoric was being formed. I made a case that Plato’s argument for a conception of rhetoric as belonging to a general art of *logos* is one that cannot be dismissed, and that it is a framework for a concept of rhetoric that would open up the dimensions of deep rhetoric. I also made a case that the apparent conflict between Ricoeur’s and Gadamer’s views of rhetoric could be resolved. This clears the way for a deep rhetoric, a philosophical rhetoric that will not simply be in conflict with disciplinary conceptions of rhetoric but will instead help to interpret and explain and to some extent even justify and strengthen them.

Time again for some general, provocative statements, summarizing and projecting. “Deep rhetoric” is a conceiving of all rhetoric in the context of what the ancients would call a general art of *logos*. It is related to the *psychagogia* of Plato’s *Phaedrus* and the art of *logos* described by Isocrates. However, it is not the name of a specific set of techniques or methods or figures or schemes, but rather it is the name of a way of tran-

scendence, steered by logos. Rhetoric is a way of being human, a way of educating human beings, a way of nonviolence, a way of reason and freedom, a political way . . . and more. This way is in part a specific way, but it is always also just the event of forward movement itself, our constant transcendence beyond ourselves, toward something else. And so, an important question is, movement toward what? What makes change desirable or good? If rhetoric is the leading of the soul, then where is rhetoric leading the soul?

In a profound sense, this phenomenon of being led *toward* something just *is* the ethics of rhetoric. The question of whether rhetoric is ethically good or ethically bad, or what makes it which, takes for granted that rhetoric has an ethical valence, that rhetoric is readily recognized as a mode of human existence to which ethical judgments are always relevant and appropriate. Rhetoric is one of the primary ways we act ethically or unethically, in a way that accomplishes good or a way that does not. To say that rhetoric is a kind of violence or manipulation or trickery, and so a kind of wrong, is already to say that rhetoric is something that can be judged in ethical terms. From the standpoint of a deep rhetoric, rhetoric in general is always in a formal sense “ethical,” meaning that it is a way human beings accomplish good or evil. How some *specific* rhetorical action is to be judged—that cannot be foretold at a philosophical or even a sound theoretical level.

However, this leaves a central, legitimate concern unaddressed. I will in this work not only attempt to develop an understanding of a deep rhetoric, but I will also be defending rhetoric as an educational and intellectual and political pursuit, and I will make this defense in the context of the notion of a deep rhetoric which I will be working out. A legitimate question is: If rhetoric is a leading of the soul by means of logos, then where is rhetoric leading? Am I not somehow smuggling in some ultimate goal or value for this rhetorical leading? This question, along with the question of *how* rhetoric leads, will be a thread in all the remaining chapters. It will receive its most focused development and discussion in chapter 7, “Rhetoric and Justice.” In the remainder of this chapter, it will lead us into questions that are analogous to theological questions, and it will take us back once more to Plato, although once again interpreted in a way that goes against the usual reading. From there, it will lead us into a discussion of humanism, education, and another encounter with the disciplinary conception of rhetoric. We will also begin to work through a part of the philosophical groundbreaking that makes this work on deep rhetoric possible: Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca’s new rhetoric project.

Some Theologies and Teleologies of Rhetoric

A legitimate concern about a rhetoric that speaks of a general art of logos is that it will universalize and absolutize the purpose it seeks to accomplish, the value of the place to which it leads. In what follows, we will consider two classical sites for thinking of logos and its ultimate purpose: Plato and the Gospel of John in the New Testament. Both Plato and John are usually taken to connect logos with an ultimate being, an ultimate value, to which logos leads. In the case of Plato, it is the ultimate Form of the Good to which logos is thought to lead us, ultimately in an act of intellectual intuition. In the Gospel of John, it is the knowledge of the highest Being, God, to which Christ the Logos leads. However, a closer look will show that even here, in texts that are saddled by tradition with the crudest kind of ontotheology, there is a conception of logos that is defined precisely by its *not* leading to a knowledge of an ultimate being. Becoming attuned to this use of “logos” will help to keep deep rhetoric from falling into some disciplinary formation of philosophy or rhetoric, or into some particular religious formation. It will instead keep deep rhetoric philosophical, in question, and not secured and limited by its knowledge of some specific, existing, ultimate being or value or goal. Yet I hope to show that deep rhetoric will in no way be left purposeless or simply abstract.

In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, the art of *logos* is aligned with the special power of *logos* to “lead the soul” (261a-b, 271c, Fowler trans.). So, in the *Phaedrus*, the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus seeks the right kind of leading, a leading toward that which is the most genuinely attractive, toward what is best. At the beginning of the dialogue, Phaedrus is being led by a written speech of Lysias whose purpose is to persuade Phaedrus to gratify Lysias’s desires. Socrates uses speech to deflate Lysias’s prose and render it powerless to lead. He then uses several forms of logos, including myth and dialectic and humor and imagery, to draw Phaedrus’s attention first to himself, and then toward images, and then, insofar as possible, toward philosophy, a way of life guided by a deep affection for wisdom, and thus toward a form of love or desire. As Socrates insists elsewhere, this kind of love is not a possessing or grasping of its goal or its object but precisely a not-having, a way of comporting oneself *toward* but not a way of actually knowing or grasping or achieving the goal.¹⁰

In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, the *logos* is said to be *pros ton theon*, “toward (the) god.” However, we will see that with this logos, too, at least in some very significant receptions of it, the idea that it achieves

some possession or knowledge of an ultimate being, some end of its being toward and an actual arriving at its goal—that idea is precisely what it defines itself against. If one were thinking in an ontotheological framework, where one already knew that if there is a “leading” or a “toward,” then there must be an ultimate goal, an absolute endpoint, some final being or state of being toward which one was being led, then there would be grounds to suspect the idea of a rhetorical theory related to a logos that leads to this super-goal. And in the distortions of Plato and John handed down to us by those who need definite, certain, foreseeable outcomes for all their educational efforts, these endpoint-beings are the “Form of the Good” and “God,” named, conceived, known, and subordinated to the reigning ontology. This relieves the anxiety of some and inspires the critical energies of others.

But let us go forward, I hope, more slowly and with less certainty. In Plato’s *Republic* (506), Glaucon presses Socrates to give an account of “the Good.” Socrates is reluctant, and there’s quite a bit of discursive pushing and shoving between the two about whether this discussion can really be conducted. Glaucon accuses Socrates of being willing to speak of other people’s beliefs but not his own. Socrates replies: “Is it your opinion that it’s just to speak about what one doesn’t know as if one knew?” (506c). The verb for “know” here is *oída*, which means to see or to know. Socrates is denying that he has “seen” the good in the sense of having direct knowledge or intuition of it. He is insisting still, in the *Republic*, on his ignorance. Those who claim to see when they do not, those who claim knowledge where it is not available, are not seeing the Good, but are experiencing blindness and distortions. Socrates asks Glaucon: Are those the things you want to see, “when it is possible to hear bright and fair ones from others?” (506c). The contrast between seeing and hearing is in the Greek, and it is especially noticeable because it seems to suggest that one cannot see the radiant beauty of the Good but can only hear of it—that there is something like willful seeing and then there is something like receptive listening. Nevertheless, Glaucon continues his combative striving forward and demands that Socrates not withdraw before he has reached the ultimate goal—a direct exposition of the Good itself. He demands, “in the name of Zeus,” that Socrates continue. Socrates replies that he would like to be able to do what Glaucon demands, but that it is not possible, and that Glaucon’s spirited desire would simply lead him to do something laughable.

Instead, he says, he can speak of what appears to resemble an offspring or child of the Good, but he warns Glaucon: “Be careful that I don’t in some unwilling way deceive you . . .” (507a). This is because the

discussion now is focused on something that seems to be similar to the good but the language that is to be used of it will be deceptive if it is taken in the wrong way. What follows is a discussion of the intellect as something analogous to sight—an analogy that seems to work for mathematical ideas, and is said, in the discussion, to work for other forms, but which has already been indicated to be inappropriate for comporting oneself toward the Good, and, in fact, no such claim that the Good can be “seen” is made anywhere in the discussion. When it comes to the Good, there is no direct access. The Good is not a mathematical form. There is a way toward it, but it requires a special kind of ignorance, a knowing that knowledge is not sufficient, that the good cannot be grasped in that way.

In *God Without Being*, Jean-Luc Marion attempts to explain the difference between the idol and the icon by examining the relation between seeing and knowing. His account could have been written as a gloss on Plato:

The idol . . . by definition . . . is seen—*eidōlon*, that which is seen (**eidō*, video). It even consists only in the fact that it can be seen, that one cannot but see it. And see it so visibly that the very fact of seeing it suffices to know it—*eidōlon*, that which is known by the fact that one has seen it (*oīda*). The idol presents itself to man’s gaze in order that representation, and hence knowledge, can seize hold of it. . . . The idol . . . captivates the gaze precisely because everything in it must expose itself to the gaze, attract, fill, and hold it. The idol depends on the gaze that it satisfies. . . . The gaze alone makes the idol, as the ultimate function of the gazable. (1991, 9–10)

Marion is describing exactly what Socrates is trying to resist in Glaucon’s spirited demands for intellectual satisfaction—a kind of idolatry. So he will offer Glaucon something *like* seeing, and move him from seeing through the thinking and intelligence that are like seeing, *toward* the good, but the good will not itself be known this way. To be carried away by one’s desire to see here would be, in Socrates’ language, “shameful.”

To make an idol of Plato’s good is to miss both the kind of being or giving appropriate to the good and also to misunderstand what human beings must achieve in order to comport themselves toward it properly. The encounter with the good is not an intellectual intuition—that is too easy. If it were an intellectual intuition, then it could be shared, insofar as we all have intellects. We could also deduce properties or implications of the good from this intellection, the way we do from mathematical truths. Intellectual intuitions are cognitive. But this is exactly *not* the case when it comes to the good in the *Republic*. One of the ironies at the end of book 6 of the *Republic* is that the book concludes with a divided line

that distinguishes having opinions about things that are only imagined or at best believed from having knowledge by way of thinking and intellection about what really is—and yet this conclusion is reached by way of an untrustworthy opinion about an unreliable *resemblance* between seeing and knowing! The opinion is not knowledge and the resemblance is only apparent. These logoi are meant to be stepping stones, skipped over lightly, in just the right way. They are not meant to be foundations in the building up of a knowledge of the Good. They are not themselves a way of grasping or seeing the good. That would be a mis-leading. They are instead part of a path of logoi, a way of moving toward.

The issue comes up again in book 7 of the *Republic*, after the allegory of the cave and a long discussion of education based on the allegory and the divided line of book 6. Socrates draws the extreme conclusion of his lengthy, potentially deceptive development of the analogy between seeing things and knowing them, between the sun's relation to sight and the Good's relation to knowledge. He has already pushed the analogy to breaking at one point in book 6, where he observed that the sun not only allows for things' being seen but also for generation, growth, and nourishment. "Therefore," he reasons, "say that not only being known is present in the things, but also existence and being are in them besides as a result of it, although the good isn't being, but is still beyond being, exceeding it in dignity and power" (509b). If the good is not a being itself but is instead "beyond being," then pretty clearly it cannot be seen or known by any of the ways we see or know beings, and so the analogy has surpassed itself.

In book 7, Socrates pushes the limits yet again: "When a man tries by discussion—by means of argument [*logos*] without the use of any senses—to attain to each thing itself that is and doesn't give up before he grasps by intellection itself that which is good itself, he comes to the very end of the intelligible realm just as that other man was at the end of the visible. . . . Don't you call this journey dialectic?" (532a-b). Glaucon is agreeable, but again he wants Socrates to go further, to complete the task. He wants to know exactly what this dialectic is, this movement through logoi, and he wants a description of how it conducts us to the Good. "For these, as it seems, would lead at last toward that place which is for the one who reaches it a haven from the road, as it were, and an end of his journey."

And this is exactly where the analogy breaks down for the final time: "You will no longer be able to follow, my dear Glaucon . . . [because] . . . you would no longer be seeing an image of what we are saying, but rather the truth itself, at least as it looks to me. Whether it is really so or not can

no longer be properly insisted on" (533a). The point is that the Good is not a being that can be seen and then described accurately. *Logos* leads one toward it, but does not arrive at it as at a destination, as if it were traveling in a kind of spiritual-intellectual space through the lower forms, up through beauty and justice until finally it reached that highest being, the Good. All of that is simply an image, an image that one can indeed "see" in an "idolatrous" way. The Platonic *logos* is a leading, not a seeing or grasping or knowing. It is more a reverent way of inquiry than a method for reaching final conclusions or arriving at a knowledge of the final being. The latter can simply not be a realizable goal for a Socrates whose essential intellectual virtues include ignorance.

In fact, there are plenty of suggestions in Plato that ignorance and love are dimensions of philosophical rhetoric that keep one open and attuned to the good in a way that knowledge cannot. "Attuned" is of course a metaphor that tries to capture the comportment toward the good in light of the *Republic's* insistence that everything that is comes to be only by way of the good, which is then not a being but a kind of giving of being, something to which one must become attuned without actually seeing/knowing it as an object. And "attuned" seems to be appropriate, too, in relation to Socrates' dictum that the dialectic is itself a kind of song. The good does allow the dialectic, and life itself, to be experienced as a journey. And *some* kind of encounter of the good is clearly possible. However, it is not an intellectual intuition, and it is not simply cognitive. Whether it really is as it shows itself in the encounter or not "cannot properly be insisted." And yet moving toward "it" is the whole point.

Similarly, in the Gospel of John, in which the *logos* is said to be *proton theon*, toward God, there is a sense in which the *logos* never makes a final, journey-ending arrival at the god, or God. Instead, the *logos* is the dynamic movement toward and into G-d.¹¹ If it arrived at G-d as at a goal, as at the being named "God," it would no longer be in movement toward G-d. It would be one independent entity that had moved through some kind of space to arrive at another independent entity. Or it would be language or thought or reasoning that finally made God comprehensible, and so was responsible for God's being known. Then the *logos* would be the fulfillment of gnostic or rationalist philosophical-religious projects. Neither Plato nor John develop that kind of project. Both preserve the dynamic character of *logos* and the idea that that toward which *logos* leads will always exceed the forms of comprehension that lead toward it.

Many of the more neglected parts of the traditions of Christian theology focus carefully on this incomprehensibility of G-d, especially the

Orthodox traditions. However, even in the Western Latin tradition, this incomprehensibility is a persistent theme. For Augustine, in *De Trinitate*, faith in a comprehensible God is “feigned faith.” Throughout the book he wonders, just as he does in *Confessions*, whether the God he loves is the “true God,” something he could never know because he did not have sufficient knowledge of the true G-d. His “solution” in *De Trinitate* is to love the love with which he loves, for that love is G-d, for G-d is love, and the truest love is the love of G-d, which is just as present in love of neighbor (8.5.12; 253ff.). The sense in which love can be said to be true is a much more important one for Augustine than the epistemological sense of “truth.”

In *Confessions*, this movement away from a being that can be comprehended, grasped, known, is an indirect movement toward Augustine’s own intense, restless, passionate questioning, his seeking of God, as that wherein G-d is acting. In book 7, chapter 10, where Augustine recounts his search for God, his search outward through every means and his search also down through the labyrinth and deceptiveness of his own inwardness, his grand survey of everything that exists, he concludes that nothing of it was G-d. And yet, he says, in the long prayer that is the *Confessions*, that he was near G-d in this very searching: “You were what I heard teaching and guiding . . .” (7.10.65; 251). (Here is the metaphor of hearing again.) This hearkens back to the opening of *Confessions*, where, after puzzling over the paradox of seeking something that one does not comprehend, Augustine asks: “Or is calling for you itself the deep way to recognize you?” (1.1.1; 3).

The *Confessions* is a long *via negativa*, question answering question, with every concept of God found wanting, every appearance of God in creation found to be an illusion. Augustine is nothing if not consistent about this. The *Confessions* ends with a discussion of G-d’s goodness and rest. However, at this end, one achieves no knowledge and reaches no final goal. Instead Augustine asks yet more questions: “What man can explain this to another man? What angel to an angel, or what angel to a man?” As always, Augustine gives his ultimate answers in the guise of penultimate questions, for the “answer” is: “Only to you can we pray, only from you can we hope, only at your door can we knock. Be it granted, be it filled, be it opened.” Here, the book ends. It ends with questions, and it ends with praying, hoping, knocking—all forms of seeking and moving toward, not forms of arrival or fulfillment. There is no ultimate comprehension or experience of direct contact with a Superbeing for whom one is searching. There is prayer, towardness. This is, for Augustine, what we are:

a being-tilted-toward an ontologically fugitive and incomprehensible G-d who is not in any ordinary sense a goal or a being or a purpose from whom we can deduce the appropriate uses of logos.

In trinitarian philosophical theology, the being of G-d was sometimes described in terms of *perichoresis*, a word that names the way the members of the Trinity do not have their being simply in themselves but rather give being to one another, dynamically. In John's gospel, the *logos* is, like the Good in Plato, that by virtue of which anything has its being. It is that which gives intelligibility, the Johannine "light of the world." And what is perhaps most interesting here is that "in the beginning," the word (*logos*) was not only moving dynamically toward God, but that the word *was* God. That is, the "way" or "path" is also that toward which the way leads. This cannot be taken to be sheer, undifferentiated identity—that would be an ontotheological reification. It is beyond our purpose here to delve into the theological treatments of this issue, which are innumerable, but the concepts of participation and *perichoresis*, with their many inflections and forking trails of thought, would be the field into which such thinking would head. However, the issue is familiar enough. It is sometimes said of the Islamic hajj that each step of the journey must also hold its destination. Or, as Gary Snyder's Zen teacher told him, "The perfect way is without difficulty. Strive hard!" (1990, 149). That is, you are already in some sense at the end of the way, but responding to that fact is not easy. Understanding the nature of the participation, the way in which the being of the way and its end are given and received to and from each other—that is not an easy matter either for thinking or for practical reasoning. The issue appears repeatedly in theological thinking, and insofar as we press this question of an ultimate goal on the project of a deep rhetoric, such formal issues will arise here.

And so, a deep rhetoric will regularly encounter the phenomena of directionality and "leading," the question of purposefulness and goals—a kind of theological and teleological challenge. However, this encounter in no way requires its absorption into the ontotheological tradition. In fact, rhetoric's going deep requires just the opposite. It requires the struggle for thinking in which Plato and Augustine and Jean-Luc Marion and Emmanuel Levinas have all engaged, though each in a different way: a questioning of the priority of ontology on the ground that ontology is itself a communicative phenomenon, an effect of logos. The logos of rhetoric is always on the way somewhere, never arriving at a final end, traveling through time and human inwardness and making direction and purposefulness possible—and yet always taking place and taking shape at some particular place at some particular time in some particular circum-