Contents

TO

Arthur A. Houghton, Jr.,

who delights in the interrupted speech

of good conversation

PART ONE

Prologue

CHAPTER I

The Untaught Skills

• 1 •

How do you make contact with the mind of another person? In what way should that other person respond to your effort?

Sometimes it is through cries, facial expressions, gestures, or other bodily signals, but for the most part it is by the use of language—by writing and speaking, on the one hand, and by reading and listening, on the other.

These four uses of language fall into two parallel pairs. Writing and reading go together; so, too, speaking and listening. The members of each pair are obviously complementary. Writing gets nowhere unless it is read; one might as well shout into the wind if what one says is not listened to.

Everyone recognizes that some individuals are able to write better than others; they have more skill in doing so, either through talent or through training or both. But even the most skilled writing remains ineffective when it falls into the hands of unskilled readers. We all realize that the ability to read requires training, and we acknowledge that some individuals have much more skill in reading than others.

The same would appear to be true of speaking and listening. Some individuals may have native endowments that enable them to become better speakers than others, but training is required to bring such talent to full bloom. Likewise, skill in listening is either a native gift or it: must be acquired by training.

Four distinct performances are involved in the process by which one human mind reaches out to another and makes contact with it, and skill

in each of these performances is required to make that process effective. How many of these skills were you taught in school? How many are your children being taught?

Your immediate response will probably be that you were taught how to read and write, and so are they. You may add at once that you do not think that the training received is up to what it should be, but at least some effort is made at the elementary levels to give instruction in reading and writing.

Instruction in writing continues beyond the elementary level; it goes on in high school and even in the early years of college. But instruction in reading seldom goes beyond the elementary level. It should, of course, because elementary skill in reading is totally inadequate for understanding the books most worth reading. That is why, forty years ago, I wrote *How to Read a Book*, in order to provide instruction in the art of reading far beyond the elementary level—instruction that is for the most part absent from our schools and colleges.

How about instruction in speaking? I doubt if anyone can recall being given such instruction in elementary school at the time that some training in writing and reading occurs. Except for special courses in what is called "public speaking," and help for those with speech defects, which may be found in some high schools and colleges, there is no instruction in speech—the general art of speech—anywhere in the course of study.

What about listening? Is anyone anywhere taught how to listen? How utterly amazing is the general assumption that the ability to listen well is a natural gift for which no training is required. How extraordinary is the fact that no effort is made anywhere in the whole educational process to help individuals learn how to listen well—at least well enough to close the circuit and make speech effective as a means of communication.

What makes these things so amazing and extraordinary is the fact that the two generally untaught skills, speaking and listening, are much more difficult to acquire and more difficult to teach than the parallel skills of writing and reading. I think I can explain why this is so, and I will do so presently.

Widespread and indignant are the complaints about the level of skill that our school and college graduates attain in writing and reading. There are few if any complaints voiced about the level of skill that they attain in speaking and listening. Yet, however low the level of writing and reading is today among those who have the advantages of twelve or more years of schooling, much lower still is the level of skill in speaking that most people possess, and lowest of all is skill in listening.

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In the centuries before Gutenberg and the printing press, speaking and listening played a much larger part in anyone's education than writing and reading. That had to be, because, in the absence of the printed page and with written books available only to the very few, those who had some kind of schooling—either by individual pedagogues, in the academies of the ancient world, or in the mediaeval universities—were compelled to learn by listening to what their teachers said.

In the mediaeval universities, teachers were lecturers in a different sense of the word "lecture" than the one that is now generally in use. Only the teacher had the manuscript copy of a book that contained knowledge and understanding to be imparted to his students. As the etymology of the word "lecture" indicates, lecturing consisted in reading a text aloud, accompanied by a running commentary on the text read. Whatever the students learned, they learned by listening, and the better they were able to listen, the more they were able to learn.

In the great mediaeval universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Paris, Padua, and Cologne, basic schooling involved training in the arts or skills that were first called "liberal arts" by the ancients. These arts included the various skills in dealing with language, on the one hand, and in dealing with operations and symbolism of mathematics, on the other hand.

Plato and Aristotle thought, and the mediaeval universities followed them in thinking, that the arts of grammar, rhetoric, and logic were the skills that had to be acquired for learning how to use language effectively

in writing and reading, in speaking and listening. The arts that had to be acquired for learning how to measure, calculate, and estimate went by the names of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

These were the seven liberal arts in which mediaeval students were supposed to acquire proficiency in order to become certified as bachelors of art. The word "bachelor" did not mean that they were unwed males, not yet initiated into the mysteries of marriage. On the contrary, it meant that they were sufficiently initiated into the world of learning to go on studying in the higher levels of the university, in the faculties of law, medicine, or theology.

The B.A. degree was a certificate of initiation, a passport into the world of higher learning. It did not signify that those thus certified were learned, but only that they had become competent as learners by virtue of having acquired the skills of learning—skills in the use of language and in the use of other symbols.

Most people today who use the phrase "liberal arts" or refer to liberal education do not have the faintest notion of what the liberal arts once were or the role they played in ancient and mediaeval education at the level that we would today call basic schooling.

One reason for this is that, in the course of modern times, the liberal arts have all but disappeared from the course of study.

Anyone who looks up the curriculum of the educational institutions in this country in the eighteenth century will find that it included instruction in grammar, rhetoric, and logic, still conceived as arts or skills in the use of language—skills in writing and speaking and also reading, if not in listening.

By the end of the nineteenth century, grammar still remained, but rhetoric and logic were no longer part of basic schooling, and in our own century, instruction in grammar has dwindled away, though vestiges of it may still remain here and there.

The liberal arts as recognized elements in basic schooling have been replaced by instruction in English. It is the so-called English teacher who gives elementary instruction in reading and elementary and more advanced instruction in composition. Unfortunately, the latter usually

lays much more stress on what is called "creative writing" than it does on writing that tries to convey thought—ideas, knowledge, or understanding. Some students receive instruction in public speaking, but this falls far short of training in all the skills required for effective speech. None, as I have said before, receives any instruction in listening.

• 3 •

Those who complain about the low level of skill in writing and reading that is now attained by most graduates of our schools and colleges make the mistake of assuming that if these deficiencies were remedied, all would be well. They assume that, if a person has learned to write well and read well, he[I] will of course know how to speak well and listen well. That is simply not the case.

The reason why is that speaking and listening differ in remarkable ways from writing and reading. Their difference makes it much more difficult to acquire the requisite skills. Let me explain.

On the surface, it would appear that speaking and listening perfectly parallel writing and reading. Both pairs involve uses of language whereby one mind reaches out to another and that other responds. If one can do this well by means of the written word, why should there be any more difficulty in doing it well by means of the spoken word? If one can respond well to the written word, why cannot one respond as well to the spoken word?

The fluidity and fluency of oral discourse is the reason why that is not so. One is always able to go back over what one has read, read it again, and make a better job of it. One can improve one's reading endlessly, by reading something over and over again. I have done this in my own reading of the great books.

In writing, one is always able to revise and improve what one has written. No writer need pass on a piece of writing to someone else until he or she is satisfied that it is written as well as possible. That, too, has been part of my own experience in writing books or anything else.

In the case of both reading and writing, the essential element in the requisite skill consists in knowing how to improve one's reading or writing. That essential element plays no part in the skill to be attained in speaking and listening, because speaking and listening are transient and fleeting like performing arts, as writing and reading are not. The latter are more like painting and sculpture, the products of which have permanence.

Consider such performing arts as acting, ballet dancing, playing a musical instrument, or conducting an orchestra. In all of these, a given performance, once it is given, cannot be improved. The artist may be able to improve *on* it in a later performance, but during the time he or she is on stage, that one performance should be as good as it can be made. When the curtain goes down it is finished—unamendable.

The situation is exactly the same in speaking and listening. One cannot go back over what one is saying orally and improve it, as one can go back over what one has written and improve it. Unlike writing, ongoing speech is generally unamendable. Any effort to take back what one has said while one is speaking often turns out to be more confusing than letting the deficiencies stand.

A prepared speech is, of course, amendable before being delivered, as a piece of writing is. An impromptu or improvised speech is not.

One may be able to do a better job of speaking at some later time, but on a particular occasion, whatever excellence one is able to achieve must be achieved right then and there. Similarly, there is no way of improving one's listening on a given occasion. It has to be as good as it can be right then and there.

A writer can at least hope that readers will take as much time as may be necessary to understand the written message, but the speaker cannot cherish any such hope. He or she must contrive what is to be said in such a way that it is as understandable as possible the first time around. The time span of speaking and listening coincide. Both begin and end together. Not so the time spans of writing and reading.

All of these differences between reading and writing, on the one hand, and listening and speaking, on the other, may be the reason why I did not immediately follow up *How to Read a Book* with a companion volume on how to listen. I have put off that much harder task for more than forty years, but I think I should do so no longer, because I have become so aware of the almost universal defects in listening that are manifested on all sides.

It is possible to set forth the rules and directions for reading well without including rules and directions for writing well. That is what I did in *How to Read a Book*, and it was justified by the fact that I was then mainly concerned with reading the very best books, which are, of course, all well written.

When we turn from written to oral discourse, we are confronted with a different state of affairs. One can deal with writing and reading separately; in fact, that is the way they are dealt with in our schools. That is not possible in the case of speaking and listening, if for no other reason than the fact that the most important kind of speaking and listening occurs in talk or conversation, which is a two-way affair that involves us as both speakers and listeners.

It is possible to deal with uninterrupted speech by itself. Skill in that performance can be acquired without skill in listening. So, too, is it possible to deal with silent listening by itself. Skill in that performance can be acquired without skill in speaking. But it is impossible to acquire skill in conversation—in talk or discussion—without learning how to speak and how to listen well.

I. The reader should be advised that when I use the word "man" or the masculine pronouns "he" or "him," I am referring to all human beings, both male and female, not just males. I do not always use "he" and "him" instead of "he and she" or "him and her," my choice of which to use in a given sentence being determined solely by stylistic considerations.

CHAPTER II

The Solitary and the Social

• 1 •

Our dealing with the minds of others can be either solitary or social. Our use of free time for the pursuits of leisure can be similarly divided. We engage in them either entirely alone or in the company of others and with their cooperation.

It would appear that the use of one's mind to deal with the minds of others would always turn out to be social rather than solitary. Solitary uses of the mind would appear to be confined to those uses that do not involve another mind, as when we study the phenomena of nature, examine the institutions of the society in which we live, or explore the past and speculate about the future.

But, of course, reading and writing can be done in a solitary fashion, and they usually are—in the solitude of one's study, at one's desk, or in one's armchair. The fact that in writing we are addressing ourselves to the minds of others does not make the writing itself a social affair. The same is true of reading. Getting at the mind of the writer through the words he or she has put on paper does not make reading a social event.

In contrast to writing and reading, which are usually solitary undertakings, speaking and listening are always social and cannot be otherwise. They always involve human confrontations. They usually involve the physical presence of other persons, the speaker speaking to listeners who are present while he or she speaks, the listener listening to a speaker who is right there. This is one of the things that makes speaking and listening more complex than writing and reading—and more difficult to control for the sake of rendering them more effective.

While they are always social, the social aspect of speaking and listening may be aborted or consummated. It is aborted when the confrontation of speaker and listener involves the suppression of one or the other. When that happens you have uninterrupted speech and silent listening. It's something like a one-way street, with all the traffic going in one direction.

You have the same result when someone addresses a public audience, when someone reports to a board of directors or to a committee, when teachers give lectures to students, when candidates for public office make formal speeches to the electorate, and when someone holds forth at a dinner party, monopolizing everyone's attention for a time. These are all varieties of the one-way street.

That public addresses, lectures, and political speeches can now be made uninterruptedly to a silently listening audience widely dispersed by means of television changes the picture in only one way. When the silent listeners of uninterrupted speech are physically present in the same place as the speaker, there is always the possibility that the one-way street can be opened up for traffic in both directions—the silent listener asking the speaker questions or commenting on what has been said to elicit some response. That cannot happen when the silent listeners are sitting in front of the television screen.

The social aspect of speaking and listening is consummated rather than aborted when uninterrupted speech and silent listening are replaced by talk, discussion, or conversation. All three of the words I have just used—"talk," "discussion," and "conversation"—have enough common meaning to be almost interchangeable. What is common to all three is the two-way traffic in which individuals are both speakers and listeners, alternating from one role to the other.

• 2 •

When I first thought of writing this book, I was going to entitle it *How to Talk and How to Listen.* I soon realized that while talking always involves speaking, the reverse was not the case. We speak *to* others, but

when our speaking involves us also in listening to what they have to say, we are engaged in talking *with* them. We say "Let's talk together," never "Let's speak together."

The word "talk" is sometimes misused as a synonym for "speech," as when someone says "I was asked to give a talk" instead of saying "I was asked to give a speech." Strictly speaking, you cannot give a talk. You can have one, but only if someone else talks with you. You can give a speech even if the audience that is physically present only appears to be listening to you.

The word "discussion" escapes such misuses. We always use it to refer to the two-way traffic of alternating interchanges between speakers and listeners.

The one difference between the meaning of the word "discussion" and the meaning of "conversation" lies in the notion that a discussion is a conversation carried on with a definite and even stated purpose and that it is guided or controlled in some way to achieve the goal that has been set. While all discussions are conversations, not all conversations are discussions, for they are often carried on with no particular objective and with little or no direction or control.

"Conversation" is the word I shall use most frequently because it has the widest application, covering highly purposeful and controlled discussions at one end of the spectrum (including even formal debates or disputations) and the idlest of talk at the other end (such as cocktail chatter or what we sometimes call small talk).

"Communication" is the jargon word of the social scientists and of electronics specialists who have developed elaborate "communication theories." Fortunately, there is no "conversation theory," and that is why I much prefer "conversation" to "communication."

There is communication among brute animals in a wide variety of ways, but no conversation. There is even a sense in which any physical thing that sends a signal to another physical thing that receives it and responds to it in some way can be said to be in communication. But the sending and receiving of signals is not conversation, talk, or discussion. Brutes do not talk with one another; they do not carry on discussions.

The one aspect of communication that I wish to preserve in my consideration of conversation is the notion of community that it involves. Without communication, there can be no community. Human beings cannot form a community or share in a common life without communicating with one another.

That is why conversation, discussion, or talk is the most important form of speaking and listening. If the social aspect of speaking and listening were always aborted, as is the case in uninterrupted speech and silent listening, there would be little or no community among speakers and listeners. A lively and flourishing community of human beings requires that the social aspect of their speaking and listening be consummated rather than aborted.

In several respects, written discourse parallels the two-way traffic of conversation: in sustained correspondence between persons who write letters to one another that genuinely respond to what the other person has written; and in polemical interchanges, as when an author challenges an adverse review of his book and elicits a rejoinder from the critic.

• 3 •

The three main parts of this book accord with the threefold way in which I have divided up speaking and listening. Part Two will deal with uninterrupted speech; Part Three with silent listening; and Part Four with conversation. Of these three, the third is both the most important and the most difficult for human beings to do well.

Conversation may be playful as well as purposeful, and it may turn from being one to being the other. When playful it may be relatively mindless, as it usually is in idle chitchat. Even when playful, it may be mindful of ideas and rich with insights.

Sometimes conversation is relatively uncontrolled, as at dinner parties or in drawing rooms, and sometimes it is highly controlled, as in business negotiations, business meetings, conferences of all sorts, political debate, academic disputations, church synods, councils, or other

ecclesiastical conclaves, and in the kind of teaching, so rare today, that consists in carrying on discussion.

• 4 •

I said at the beginning of this chapter that the use of our free time for the pursuits of leisure can be divided into the solitary and the social. Cooking, carpentry, gardening, when done for pleasure (the satisfaction of work well done), not for profit, are examples of solitary leisure pursuits. So, too, are writing and reading, looking at pictures, listening to music, travelling and observing, and above all, thinking.

The leisure pursuits that are preeminently social include all acts of friendship and, above all, conversation in its many forms. In my judgment, engaging in good conversation—talk that is both enjoyable and rewarding—is one of the very best uses that human beings can make of their free time. It brings to fruition much that has been gained through other leisure pursuits. It is their true fulfillment.

That is why it is so important for human beings to enrich their lives by having both the skill that is required for engaging in good conversation and also the will and motivation that impels them to devote much of their free time to it, replacing many of the things that they now resort to in order to fill empty time.

PART TWO

Uninterrupted Speech

CHAPTER III

"That's Just Rhetoric!"

•1•

Shortly after the explosion of the first atomic bombs, President Hutchins of the University of Chicago instituted a Committee to Frame a World Constitution. Among the eminent persons who composed the group were two men of quite opposite temperaments—one, the Professor of Italian Literature at the University, himself a poet of renown, Guiseppe Antonio Borgese; the other, James Landis, the staid, prosaic, matter of fact Dean of the Harvard Law School.

On one occasion at which I was present, Professor Borgese addressed his colleagues on a subject dear to his heart. As he warmed to his subject, his voice rose, his eyes flashed, and his language became more and more forceful, reaching a crescendo of poetry and passion that left all of us spellbound—all except one. In the moment of silence that ensued, Dean Landis fixed Borgese with a cold stare and said in a low voice, "That's just rhetoric!" Borgese, equally cold but with anger, and pointing a finger at Landis that might have been a pistol, replied: "When you say that again, smile!"

What did Dean Landis mean by his remark? What could he have meant?

Certainly not that Borgese's speech was ungrammatical and illogical, leaving it no qualities of utterance at all except those which were rhetorical. Though English was not his native tongue, Professor Borgese was a master of the language. From having engaged in many arguments with him, I can vouch for his analytical prowess and the cogency of his reasoning. He had a flair for embellishing his remarks with imagery,

with metaphors, with well-timed pauses and staccato outbursts that riveted attention on what he was saying and drove home the points he was trying to make.

Therein lay the rhetorical power of his address, a power that the equally well-phrased and well-reasoned remarks of the reserved Anglo-Saxon Dean of the Harvard Law School almost always lacked. Why did the Dean object to this quality in his Italian colleague's utterance? What was wrong with it? He may have restrained himself from resorting to the devices so skillfully employed by Professor Borgese, but their temperamental difference in style did not justify his dismissing the speech of Borgese as "just rhetoric."

To put the best face on the criticism that Dean Landis levelled at Professor Borgese, we must interpret it as meaning not that the latter's oration was *just* rhetoric, but rather that it was *more* rhetorical than the occasion required.

Borgese was not on a platform addressing a large audience of strangers, whom he was trying to persuade. He was sitting around a table with colleagues who were engaged with him in an undertaking the underlying presuppositions of which they all shared. The issue under consideration called for the examination of a wide assortment of facts and the weighing of many reasons pro and con.

That, in the view of Dean Landis, could only be done well by sticking, closely and coolly, to the pertinent matters, eschewing all irrelevant digressions that added more heat than light to the discussion. Hence his curt rebuff to Borgese that, in effect, said: "Cut the unnecessary rhetoric out!"

Unnecessary because it was too much for this particular occasion? Or unnecessary because it is never needed at all? It can hardly be the latter. To think so amounts to thinking that speaking grammatically and logically always suffices for the purpose at hand. That it almost never does. One might just as well say that speaking to others never requires any consideration of how to get them to listen to what you have to say or how to make what you have to say affect their minds and hearts in ways that you wish to achieve.

In all these areas, as well as in politics, we may find ourselves trying to sell something to someone else. Practical persuasion in all its myriad forms is salesmanship. I am, therefore, going to adopt the lowly phrase "sales talk" as the name for the kind of speaking to others that involves persuasion with an eye on some practical result to be achieved.

What name, then, shall we adopt for the other kind of speaking to others, the kind that involves persuasion with an eye on some purely intellectual or theoretical result? Teaching? Instruction? Yes, though it should be remembered that instruction takes many forms. Sometimes the teacher is not simply a speaker addressing an audience that consists of silent listeners. When teachers perform that way, they teach by telling rather than by asking. Teaching by telling is lecturing, and good lecturers are just as much concerned with persuading listeners as good salespeople are.

Though persuasion is involved in both instruction and selling, the one for a purely theoretical or intellectual result, the other for a practical result, I think it most convenient to adopt the following terminology. I will refer to all attempts to achieve a practical result as "persuasive speech," and all attempts to achieve a change of mind (without any regard to action) as "instructive speech." What I have called the "sales talk" is persuasive speech. The lecture is instructive speech.

I shall discuss these two main types of uninterrupted speech before I consider special variants of each of them: in the next chapter, the sales talk; and in the one following, the lecture.

• 3 •

Such terms as "sales talk," "persuasion," and even "rhetoric" carry invidious connotations for those who think that to engage in selling, in persuasion, or in the use of rhetorical devices is to indulge in sophistry.

Fortunately, those who harbor this view are mistaken. It would be very unfortunate, indeed, if sophistry could not be avoided, for then no honest or morally scrupulous person could, in good conscience, have anything to do with the process of persuasion. Yet most of us find

ourselves inclined or obliged to try to persuade others to act or feel in ways we think desirable and honorable. Rare is the person who can completely bypass the business of persuasion. Most of us, in our daily contacts, are involved in it most of the time.

There are some skills that can be used for good or evil purposes. They can be used scrupulously, in good conscience, or unscrupulously. The skill of the physician or surgeon can be used to cure or maim; the skill of the lawyer, to promote justice or to defeat it; the skill of the technologist, to construct or destroy. The skill of the persuader—the political orator, the commercial salesman, the advertiser, the propagandist—can be used with a high regard for truth and to achieve benign results, but it can also be as powerfully employed to deceive and injure.

Sophistry is always a misuse of the skills of rhetoric, always an unscrupulous effort to succeed in persuading by any means, fair or foul. The line that Plato drew to distinguish the sophist from the philosopher, both equally skilled in argument, put the philosopher on the side of those who, devoted to the truth, would not misuse logic or rhetoric to win an argument by means of deception, misrepresentation, or other trickery.

The sophist, in contrast, is always prepared to employ any means that will serve his purpose. The sophist is willing to make the worse appear the better reason and to deviate from the truth if that is necessary in order to succeed.

In ancient Greece, the sophists were teachers of rhetoric for the purpose of winning lawsuits. Each citizen who engaged in litigation had to act as his own lawyer—his own prosecutor or defense attorney. To those who regarded success in winning a lawsuit as an end that justified the use of any means, whether honorable or not, the sophistical misuse of rhetoric recommended itself.

That is how rhetoric first got a bad name, which it has never been able to shake off completely; it is important for all of us to remember that sophistry is an unscrupulous use of rhetoric. The thing misused is not itself to be condemned.

There can be honesty and dishonesty in selling, or in other efforts at persuasion, as in many other human transactions. A sales talk need not resort to lies and deceptions in order to be effective; nor need successful selling employ the devices of the con artist. What I have just said about selling applies to other forms of persuasion and other uses of rhetoric.

I am aware that, in certain quarters, these terms—salesmanship, persuasion, rhetoric—are terms of ill repute. But once it is understood that their connection with sophistry is adventitious, not inescapable, I see no reason for giving the terms up. They refer to activities in which all, or most, of us engage and can do so without recourse to reprehensible trickery, lies, or deception.

CHAPTER **IV**

The "Sales Talk" and Other Forms of Persuasive Speech

• 1 •

The title of this chapter may arouse the reader's misgivings. What does a philosopher know about how to make a sales talk? That is hardly a subject which falls within his ken.

To set the reader's mind at rest on this score, I am going to start right out by doing what Aristotle, who was also a philosopher, recommended as the first step to be taken by anyone trying to persuade anyone else about anything, especially in the sphere of the practical.

Many years ago, when the Institute for Philosophical Research was established in San Francisco, an invitation came to me as its Director to address a luncheon meeting of the associated Advertising Clubs of California. They asked me in advance for a title. I suggested that it be "Aristotle on Salesmanship," a title I thought would be sufficiently shocking to them. It was. No one had ever before connected the name of Aristotle with salesmanship—or with advertising, which is an adjunct of selling.

The speech I delivered began by explaining the title. Advertising was a form of selling, was it not? I asked. They nodded assent. And was not every form of selling an effort at persuasion, in this case an effort to persuade potential customers to buy the product advertised? Again they nodded.

Well, then, I went on, Aristotle is the master of that art—the art of persuasion—about which he wrote a lengthy treatise entitled "Rhetoric."

To boil down its essential message for the occasion, I told them that Aristotle pointed out the three main tactics to be employed if one wished to succeed in the business of persuasion. There are no better names for these three main instruments of persuasion than the words the Greeks used for them: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos.* That, in a nutshell, is all there is to it.

Before I explain the tactics these three words name, I must report that the advertising experts assembled at that luncheon were so impressed by Aristotle's know-how about their own business that, as I learned afterwards, the bookstores of San Francisco were besieged that afternoon by members of the audience trying unsuccessfully to buy copies of Aristotle's *Rhetoric.*

The Greek word *ethos* signifies a person's character. Establishing one's character is the preliminary step in any attempt at persuasion. The persuader must try to portray himself as having a character that is fitting for the purpose at hand.

If, facing an audience of one or more persons on a particular occasion, you wish others to listen to you not only attentively but also with a sense that what you have to say is worth listening to, you must portray yourself as being the kind of person who knows what you are talking about and can be trusted for your honesty and good will. You must appear attractive and likeable to them as well as trustworthy.

To achieve this result with my audience of advertising specialists, I told them two stories about myself. The first was about a conversation I had had with one of Encyclopaedia Britannica's bankers at the time that that company was spending large sums of money on the production of *Great Books of the Western World* and the *Syntopicon*, of which I was editor.

The banker came to that meeting highly skeptical of the saleability of the product on which the company was spending so much money, and especially skeptical about this strange thing called the *Syntopicon* that threatened to consume more than a million dollars—a lot of money in those days—before it was completed. What good would the *Syntopicon* do anybody that might arouse their desire to purchase the set with the *Syntopicon* attached to it? "I, for example, am interested in buying and

praise for certain qualities that you hope your listeners will also attribute to you.

Two classic illustrations of the role of *ethos* in persuasion are to be found in the speeches made by Brutus and Marc Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar.* It is, of course, somewhat incongruous to refer to these two great orations as sales talks. They are instances of political persuasion, in which the attempt is to move the listeners to take one or another course of political action.

Nevertheless, practical persuasion is always selling, whether it be in the market place or in the political forum, across the counter or in a legislative chamber, in a commercial transaction or in a campaign for public office, in the advertisement of a product or in an appeal for a public cause or a political candidate.

In Shakespeare's play, you will remember, Julius Caesar has just been assassinated. The citizens of Rome, gathered near his dead body in the forum, grieving for their loss, angrily demand an accounting. Brutus, one of the conspirators who took part in the assassination, mounts the rostrum to address them:

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.