

Journal of Communication (1985)  
Vol 35 pp 74-89

Homo Narrans

# The Narrative Paradigm: In the Beginning

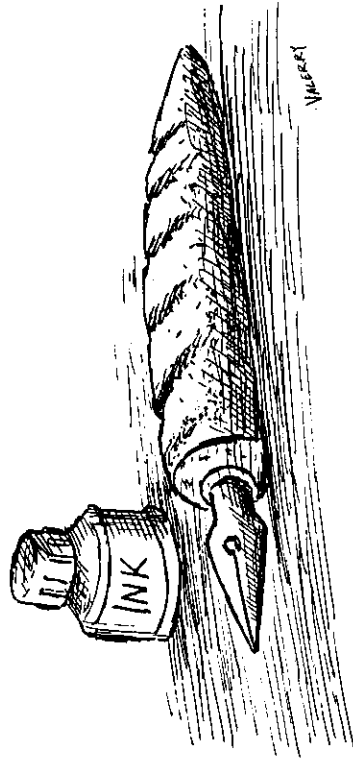
by Walter R. Fisher

*A history of the breakdown of logos and its component forms of discourse concludes with the proposition of a new model in which these components are reunited by the concept of humans as storytellers.*

In the beginning was the word or, more accurately, the *logos*. And in the beginning, *logos* meant story, reason, rationale, conception, discourse, and/or thought. Thus, all forms of human expression and communication—from epic to architecture, from biblical narrative to statuary—came within its purview. At least this was the case until the time of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, and Aristotle. As a result of their thinking, *logos* and *mythos*, which had been conjoined, were dissociated; *logos* was transformed from a generic term into a specific one, applying only to philosophical (later technical) discourse; poetical and rhetorical discourse were relegated to a secondary or negative status in regard to truth, knowledge, and reality; poetic was given province over *mythos*; rhetoric was delegated the realm where *logos* and *mythos* reign in dubious ambiguity; and a historic hegemonic struggle ensued that lasts to this day among proponents of each of the three forms of discourse.

The story of these events, which I will sketch in this article, is germane to an understanding of the narrative paradigm, the essential postulates of which are:

Walter R. Fisher is Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences, University of Southern California. This discussion of the narrative paradigm was begun in *Communication Monographs* 51 and elaborated in *Communication Monographs* 52.



humans are... storytellers; the paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communication is "good reasons" which vary in form among communication situations, genres, and media; the production and practice of good reasons is ruled by matters of history, biography, culture, and character along with the kinds of forces identified in the Frentz and Farrell language action paradigm [Quarterly Journal of Speech 62, pp. 333-349]; rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings—their inherent awareness of narrative probability, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing narrative fidelity, whether the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives. . . ; and the world is a set of stories which must be chosen among to live the good life in a process of continual recreation (23, pp. 7-8).

The story told in this article will explain why "the narrative paradigm . . . can be considered a dialectical synthesis of two traditional strands in the history of rhetoric: the argumentative, persuasive theme and the literary, aesthetic theme" (23, p. 2). It will indicate why I agree with Heidegger's statement in the "Letter on Humanism" (31) that "to think counter to logic does not mean to stick up for the illogical, but only means to think the *logos*, and its essence as it appeared in the early days of thought" (as quoted in 23, p. 16). It will also provide one half of the historical context behind the narrative paradigm; the other half concerns the evolving relationship between logic and the three forms of discourse (see 24). And it will demonstrate that the ancient conception of *logos*, when informed by the narrative paradigm, has validity and value for today and tomorrow.

The story of *logos* and *mythos* is parallel with the story of orality and literacy, as told by Ong (38). However, there is a fundamental difference in them. *Logos* may be applied to oral as well as written communication. At issue in the story of *logos* and *mythos* is which form of discourse—philosophy (technical discourse), rhetoric, or poetic—ensures the discovery and validation of truth, knowledge, and reality, and thereby deserves to be the legislator of human decision making and action. The issue in the orality and literacy story is how the mind is constituted and what are the consequences for human consciousness. The stories inform one another and both are necessary to a full realization of the relationship of communication and what humans are and can become.

Another parallel story is told by Samuel Ijsseling in *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (33). Its theme is "what is actually happening whenever something is said or written?" The narrative paradigm is a proposed answer to this question and, as such, might be part of Ijsseling's history—if it were extended. The theme of the present story is the transformation of the concept of *logos*, the character of the struggle over who "owns" it among proponents of the major forms of discourse, and how the narrative paradigm is a move beyond the struggle. The move itself, of course, involves struggle, but it is of a different sort. Acceptance of the paradigm shifts the controversy from a focus on who "owns" *logos* to what specific instances of discourse, regardless of form, provide the most trustworthy, reliable, and desirable guides to belief and to behavior, and under what conditions.

Prior to the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle, "mythos and *logos*, imagination and thought," were "not yet distinct." Truth was not then the province of privileged discourse, whether of argument or dialectic. "Living myth" was still considered "truth. . . the very instrument of truth, in the original sense of the Greek word *alētheia*. For in its saying myth lays open to sight what without it would be utterly concealed; it reveals, lifts out of primordial hiddenness and brings to light a whole world; it brings all things forth and gives them form: a visible palpable presence" (53, p. 2). The evolution from story to statement began with the pre-Socratics. "What they proceeded to do was to take the language of the *mythos* and manipulate it, forcing its terms into fresh syntactical relationships which had the constant effect of stretching and extending their application, giving them a cosmic rather than particular reference" (30, p. 21). Then came Plato.

Plato was not as much interested in the cosmos as were the pre-Socratics. Like the sophists and rhetoricians, his interest was human existence. Unlike the sophists and rhetoricians, however, he did not believe that argument based on probabilities was all the world had to offer or that it should be accepted as constituting *logos*. He certainly believed that it was not a proper foundation or guide to personal or

public life. His project, according to Havelock, was to formulate "an abstract language of descriptive science to replace a concrete language of oral memory" (29, p. 236). The epitome of this language was dialectic, the only mode of discourse that could ensure an apprehension of true ideas. His "contribution" to the transformation of *logos* was to technologize it, to make it a term appropriate to only philosophical discourse. The effects of his thought were to create "experts" in truth, knowledge, and reality; to establish the rational superiority of philosophical (technical) discourse; to relegate *mythos* to myth (meaning fictional); and to downgrade rhetoric and poetic. Dispersions were made for rhetoric and poetic; they had a place in the life of the community but they were not to be considered serious intellectual arts. They were to be controlled or informed by philosopher-kings.

Aristotle, Plato's pupil, reinforced the idea that some forms of discourse are superior to others by drawing clear distinctions among them in regard to their relationship to true knowledge. Only scientific discourse was productive of such knowledge, because it was the only one in which reasoning could be *apodictic*, that is, necessarily valid. Dialectic discourse could lead to knowledge but only to probable knowledge. Rhetoric, founded on contingent reason, was appropriate for "untrained thinkers." And poetic discourse did not function so much by reasoning as by "imitation" and cathartic participation. Thus, while Aristotle recognized the value of different forms of human communication in different domains of learning and life, he established a configuration that enabled later, and often lesser, thinkers to insist that their mode of discourse was superior to others and call on him for support.

*After the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle, the next most influential statement of the view that philosophical discourse reigns supreme over other forms of discourse is that of Francis Bacon.*

Actually, the effect of Bacon's thought (1) was to elevate scientific (technical expository) discourse over all forms of discourse, including philosophy. Philosophy retained a high status, but only as it focused on science. The "demotion" of philosophy was a concomitant of the new theory of knowledge—knowledge concerns the physical world and is strictly empirical—and a reversal in logic from an emphasis on deduction to induction. The new authority for knowing was not Aristotle or the Church but *method*, the procedures for proper empirical investigation. One of the major results of Bacon's ideas was to reconceive rhetorical invention, the ancient system for discovering the available means of persuasion, and render it a process of recovery of what was already known and make rhetoric into a "managerial" art; that is, its function

became the transmission of truths derived from other disciplines. Evidence of this trend may be seen in the works of Campbell (9), Blair (4), and even Whately (55), who attempted to revive Aristotelian logic in his *Elements of Rhetoric*.

Bacon cleared the field for the new science, but Descartes determined how it was to be plowed. Descartes' contribution was to perfect the method of empirical investigation by grounding it on mathematical demonstration. He esteemed "eloquence highly, and loved poetry," yet he felt that "they were gifts of nature rather than fruits of study" (18, p. 5). Other studies were rejected because they were based on traditional philosophy, which allowed a diversity of opinions, where "no more than one of them can ever be right" (18, p. 6). The eventual result of Descartes' views was the doctrine of the logical positivists, who held that no statement could claim knowledge unless it was empirically verifiable—at least in principle. The doctrine also entailed the notion that values were "non-sense." Technical experts and their discourse were thereby constituted as the only serious form of human communication; rhetoric and poetic were considered irrational, if sometimes amusing, forms of human transaction.

Aiding and abetting Bacon and Descartes was John Locke, whose aim was to establish that knowledge is "real only so far as there is a conformity between ideas and the reality of things" (35, Vol. 2, p. 228). Like his predecessors, he attacked the value of the syllogism, the topics (guides to rhetorical invention), and all forms of ornamental speech. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he wrote: "if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow, that all the Art of Rhetoric, besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else, but to insinuate wrong *Ideas*, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgement: and so indeed are perfect cheat" (35, Vol. 2, p. 146). Thus, the only form of discourse for learned study and communication was exposition.

There is, perhaps, no more instructive statement of the ideal form of scientific communication than that of Thomas Sprat. After dismissing rhetoric and poetic, he declared that the "new" form of communication would return "to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many *things*, almost in an equal number of words." The style was to be a "close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear sense; a native easiness: bringing all things as near Mathematical plainness, as they can" (50, p. 114). It is not difficult to see in this statement an impetus to twentieth-century general semantics.

Today there is much ferment about these views—the concept of knowledge that denies a role for values, the separation of logic from everyday discourse, and the privileging of "experts" and their discourse. The narrative paradigm, as an affirmative proposal against these moves.

is a case in point. These views have also been attacked by a host of philosophers, including Bernstein (2), Gadamer (25), Habermas (28), Rorty (43), and Schrag (45, 46). But it is not only humanists who have been and are questioning these ideas. Following the challenges of Gödel and Heisenberg to scientific certainty, scientists and philosophers of science have joined the fray. The direction of this opposition (or rethinking) may be seen in Toulmin's *Return to Cosmology* (52) and Capra's *Turning Point* (10). One cannot predict the outcome of the struggle, but one can hope for a concept of *logos* that approximates that of the ancients, one that regards all humans and their communication as not irrational and as deserving of respect.

*It is not to be supposed that proponents of poetic and rhetoric were silent in the audience of those who extolled philosophy and technical discourse.*

Nor is it to be assumed of those who made the most eloquent assertions of the significance of poetic that their only argument was its permanence and beauty, its powers of providing aesthetic pleasure. As early as the fifth century B.C., during the time of the pre-Socratics, Plato, and the sophists, Aristophanes was insisting that the standard of excellence in poetry was not only "skill in the art," but also "wise counsel for the state." In *The Clouds*, he caricatured Socrates as a sophist, a teacher of false and irresponsible logic. That Socrates was not a sophist is beside the point that Aristophanes was making: the teachings of drama were germane to life here, now, and for eternity.

Like those who spoke for rhetoric, who will be considered below, those who spoke for poetic were divided between those who claimed the primacy of their art over other forms of discourse and those who claimed supremacy only in a particular domain of life. For proponents of poetic, the domain tends to be personal knowledge or consciousness; for rhetoricians, the domain tends to be public knowledge oriented toward decision making and civic action.

One of the most eloquent voices for eloquence in the history of writings about human communication is Longinus. His *On the Sublime* (36) does not extol one form of discourse over another; it celebrates qualities of communication that may appear in any genre. He is included here because the attributes he identifies are not strictly rhetorical (there is no mention of argument, for instance) and they are in sharp contrast to those prescribed by Thomas Sprat in regard to expository discourse. "The effect of elevated language," he wrote, "is not persuasion but transport. At every time and in every way imposing speech, with the spell it throws over us, prevails over that which aims at persuasion and gratification" (36, p. 43). To prove his point, he cited passages from

drama, poetry, epic, history, philosophy, and oratory. The sources of sublimity were five: the "power of forming great conceptions"; "vehement and inspired passion"; "formation of figures"; "noble diction"; and "dignified and elevated composition" (36, pp. 57-58). While any form of discourse might display these qualities, "mere rhetoric" and technical discourse would not; they would find their natural home in great literature.

Much clearer in his assertion of the primacy of poetic was Boccaccio. Writing in the fourteenth century, when the dominant mode of discourse was theological, he aligned poetry with the Church's doctrine that truth could be allegorical: poetry "veils truth in a fair and fitting garment of fiction" (5, p. 39). He acknowledged that poetry was informed by rhetoric (and grammar), but he declared that "among the disguises of fiction rhetoric has no part, for whatever is composed as under a veil, and thus exquisitely wrought, is poetry and poetry alone" (5, p. 42). At the same time, however, he insisted that poetry could serve rhetorically. If necessary, he wrote, poetry "can arm kings, marshal them for war, launch whole fleets from their docks, nay, counterfeit sky, land, sea, adorn young maidens with flowery garlands, portray human character in its various phases, awake the idle, stimulate the dull, retain the rash, subdue the criminal, and distinguish excellent men with their proper need of praise" (5, pp. 39-40). Not only did he claim truth for his art, he also held that it "is a practical art, springing from God's bosom," and was therefore moral as well (5, p. 42).

Sir Philip Sidney, writing in the sixteenth century during the rise of science, did not specifically react to the new discipline. Like Boccaccio, he claimed that poetry is the supreme form of discourse, that its function is to foster virtue, and that its appeal is universal; it offers tales "which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner" (49, p. 416). He did, however, attack learned (historical and philosophical) discourse. He wrote that "no learning is so good as that which teacheth and mooveth to virtue; and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as Poetry" (49, p. 421).

By the end of the eighteenth century, the challenge of science was sorely felt by those who spoke for aesthetic communication. Friedrich von Schiller summarized the situation in this way:

*Once the increase of empirical knowledge, and more exact modes of thought, made sharper divisions between the sciences inevitable, and once the increasingly complex machinery of the state necessitated a more rigorous separation of ranks and occupations, then the inner unity of human nature was severed too, and a disastrous conflict set its harmonious powers at variance. The intuitive and the speculative understanding now withdrew in hostility. . . . While in the one a riotous imagination ravages the hard-won fruits of the*

*intellect, in another the spirit of abstraction stifles the fire at which the heart should have warmed itself and the imagination been kindled* (44, p. 419).

The effects of this severance were to fragment society and the individual, to create a struggle between sense and intellect, the "sensuous drive," which "proceeds from the physical existence of man," and the "formal drive," which "proceeds from the absolute existence of man, or from his rational nature" (44, pp. 419-420). To restore balance, full humanity, Schiller held that society and individuals should celebrate "play," the ludic impulse, which is the subject of Johan Huizinga's classic *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (32). (It is also a major theme in Gadamer's *Truth and Method*.) Schiller wrote: "Man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and he is only fully a human being when he plays." Aesthetic expression, he maintained, is "the most fruitful of all in respect of knowledge and morality" (44, p. 426).

By the end of the nineteenth century, proponents of poetics could not, or did not, challenge science's claim on the domain of the physical sphere of life. Instead, they reconceptualized knowledge, so that it pertained to poetic as well as physical existence. Benedetto Croce, for instance, held that "knowledge has two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge; knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect; knowledge of the individual or knowledge of the universal; of individual things or of the relations between them: it is, in fact, productive either of images or of concepts" (17, p. 727). It is clear that the distinction is between art as expression and science as impression.

Seventeen years later, in 1926, I. A. Richards took exception to the idea of "regarding Poetic Truth as figurative, symbolic; or as more immediate as a truth of Intuition, not of reason, or as a higher form of the truth as reason yields" (41, p. 519). In his *Science and Poetry*, he held that "it is not the poet's business to make true statements" (41, p. 517). Poetry is composed of "pseudo-statements" whose function it is to give order to attitudes and experience. Scientific discourse is composed of referential statements that produce "genuine knowledge," which, however, are limited to increasing "our practical control of Nature" (41, p. 518). Rhetorical discourse is composed of "mixed statements" that appear in pragmatic communication. While each of the major arts of discourse is given its place in the scheme of things, Richards insisted that "Poetry is the completest mode of utterance" (42, p. 163).

After rejecting Matthew Arnold's attempt to put science and poetry on an equal footing, Charles Morris's semiotic interpretation of poetry, and the early Richards of *Science and Poetry*, which he considered too much influenced by positivism, Allen Tate endorsed Richards's view

that poetry is the most complete utterance among those that could be made by any of the arts of discourse. He claimed, in "Literature as Knowledge," that the result of poetic statements is "complete knowledge." But, he insisted: "The order of completeness that it achieves in the great works of the imagination is not the order of experimental completeness aimed at by the positivist sciences, whose responsibilities are directed towards the verification of limited techniques. . . . No one can have an experience of science, or of a single science" (51, p. 104). The completeness of Hamlet, he averred, "is not of the experimental order, but of the experienced order." His final claim was that the "interest value" of poetry is a "cognitive one" (51, p. 105).

Just as there is ferment today regarding science, knowledge, and praxis, so is there controversy about science, knowledge, and aesthetic experience. The sharpest divisions are among those who represent poststructuralists and deconstructionists and those who speak for the literary tradition, like Gerald Graff in *Literature Against Itself* (26), and hermeneuticians, like Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, who think that poetry has cognitive significance. The narrative paradigm is in league with these latter writers and their theme.

*Of the proponents of rhetoric as the central form of discourse, the most articulate in the ancient world was Isocrates, who was opposed but admired by Plato.*

It has been conjectured that Aristotle chose to lecture on rhetoric not only to complete his treatment of all subjects, but also to contrast the philosophical view of rhetoric with that of the rhetoricians, as represented by the teaching of Isocrates. For Isocrates, according to Norlin, *logos* was consubstantial with discourse, because discourse reflected "both the outward and the inward thought; it is not merely the form of expression, but reason, feeling, and imagination as well" (34, Vol. 2, p. xxiii). Isocrates' defense of his art in the *Antidosis* includes a statement that can be considered not only a declaration of his "Philosophy," but also a manifesto of the rhetorical tradition (so long as it was exclusively concerned with oral communication, which was at least until the sixteenth century):

*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: 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. For this is which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things*

*honourable 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 sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul. 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 skilfully debate their problems in their own minds. . . . none of the things which are done with intelligence takes place without the help of speech. . . 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 (34, Vol. 2, pp. 327-329).*

This statement is not only central to the rhetorical tradition, it is also an inspiration for the humanistic tradition "fathered" by Cicero. The two traditions were, in fact, virtually synonymous through the Renaissance and the rise of scientifically oriented thinking.

Echoing Isocrates' thought in *De Oratore*, Cicero wrote: "For the one point in which we have our very greatest advantage over the brute creation is that we hold converse one with another, and can reproduce our thought in word" (16, p. 25). He conceded jurisdiction over "the mysteries of nature" and the "subtleties of dialectic" to the philosopher, but he insisted that rhetoric was supreme in the sphere of "human life and conduct" (16, p. 51). The only reason he conceded the two domains to the philosopher was the "indolence" of rhetoricians in regard to them. Perhaps the clearest statement of his view of the orators was this: "But in an orator we must demand the subtlety of the logician, the thought of the philosopher, a diction almost poetic, a lawyer's memory, a tragedian's voice, and the bearing almost of the consummate actor. Accordingly no rarer thing than a finished orator can be discovered among the sons of men" (16, pp. 89-91). Thus, the orator was foremost a statesman, a person of near universal knowledge and extraordinary gifts whose mission was to elevate civic life through action. He was, in a sense, the obverse of Ralph Waldo Emerson's scholar—Man thinking: "Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can never ripen into truth" (20, p. 128). The practicing rhetorician is: Man acting on knowledge to further truth.

After Bacon, Descartes, and the emergence of scientific thinking as the dominant trend in the intellectual arts, Giambattista Vico rose to defend the rhetorical-humanistic tradition. Writing in 1709, he held that "young men should be taught the totality of science and arts, and their

intellectual powers should be developed to the full." This meant that they should not only know the procedures of science, but also "the art of argument" (54, p. 19). This position put him in opposition to the prevailing monistic concept of knowledge and Cartesian method; it put him firmly in the camp of Cicero. Vico believed that one needed common as well as technical sense. He characterized scientific education as being generative of speculative criticism, of which he wrote:

Now, such speculative criticism, the main purpose of which is to cleanse its fundamental truths not only of all falsity, but also of the mere suspicion of error, places upon the same plane of falsity not only false thinking, but also secondary verities and ideas which are based on probability alone, and commands us to clear our minds of them. Such an approach is distinctly harmful, since training in common sense is essential to the education of adolescents, so that that faculty should be developed as early as possible; else they break into odd or arrogant behavior, when adulthood is reached.

Common sense, Vico held, is the "criterion of practical judgment" and is the "guiding standard of eloquence" (54, p. 13).

Vico's twentieth-century counterpart, Ernesto Grassi, carries the argument of rhetoric's supremacy even farther, deeper. A philosopher, Grassi delves into history and the nature of human thought to conclude "the primacy of 'topical' philosophy ('topics' as the theory of the finding of arguments) over 'rational' philosophy and . . . the primacy of rhetoric—imagistic speech and thereby dialogue—over rational speech and thereby monologue" (27, p. 8). He assigned to rhetoric *ingenium*, "the sphere of wit and acuteness," the main task of which "is to 'decipher' the world without which reality would remain unknown and mute; *ingenium* is hence an activity that lets the divine shine" (27, p. 16). Like Vico, Grassi ultimately retains a distinction between philosophy—technical discourse, which he calls "rational speech"—"that which strictly, 'mathematically' explains or infers what is implied in premises"—and rhetorical speech, which is "dialogue" rather than monologue and is imbued most importantly with metaphor (27, p. 113). The realm of rhetoric, for Grassi, is, then, *logos*, a combination of religious experience, *pathos*, and ontological perception of human existence.

This view differs from the one I have proposed for the narrative paradigm in that I do not agree that what Grassi calls rational speech is purely monologue. Philosophical-technical discourse is a form of communication; it is not expressed to stand by itself; it is addressed to others and has its own mode of strategic appeal. Part of that appeal is metaphor and other forms of *mythos*. Furthermore, *ingenium* as insight is a possession of no particular field of inquiry; it is a necessary act of mind for any creative thought, whether in science, philosophy, art, religion, rhetoric, and so on. At the same time, I think that Grassi's consideration

of rhetoric as philosophy is a significant statement, one that serves to overcome the notion that *logos* is attendant only on the privileged discourse of scientists and certain philosophers.

*Paralleling the attempt by proponents of poetic to advance their art by aligning it with knowledge has been the move in recent years by rhetoricians pursuing the theme of rhetoric as epistemic.*

Beginning with Robert L. Scott's "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic" in 1967 (47, 48), there has been a stream of articles exploring the nature of rhetoric and its relationship to knowledge (3, 6, 13, 14, 15, 19). Most important among them are those by Lloyd F. Bitzer (3) and Thomas B. Farrell (21), who offer specific definitions that contradict the conception of Bacon and his followers. Bitzer proposed the idea of "public knowledge": "a fund of truths, principles, and values which could only characterize a public." By rhetoric he meant "a method of inquiry and communication which seeks to establish correct judgments primarily in the areas of practical and humane affairs, for the speaker or writer and for the audience addressed." He held that "rhetoric generates truth and values," "gives voice to interests and principles," and "serves as an instrument with which to test public truths" (3, p. 68). Bitzer explicitly distinguishes personal and public knowledge, and implicitly distinguishes technical and public knowledge.

Farrell concentrated on "social knowledge": "conceptions of symbolic relationships among problems, persons, interests, and actions, which imply (when accepted) certain notions of preferable public behavior." Social knowledge is clearly distinguished from "technical or specialized knowledge." They differ in that social knowledge concerns human decision and action by an audience, while technical knowledge is "actualized through its perceived correspondence to the external world" (21, 22). Thus, in both Bitzer's and Farrell's conceptions, rhetoric retains its traditional jurisdiction—civic conduct.

Each of these conceptions has its critics. Michael Calvin McGee and Martha Anne Martin (37) contrast Bitzer's "idealistic" view with a "materialist's" perspective. Walter M. Carleton (11, 12) attacks Farrell's distinction between social and technical knowledge, arguing that all knowledge is rhetorically generated and sustained. Regardless of who "wins" these disputes, the status of rhetoric is enhanced; its historic connection with *logos* is reaffirmed.

The fullest, most systematic development of the relationship of rhetoric to knowledge is that of Chaim Perelman. He advanced the thesis that rhetoric should be "the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the thesis presented for its assent" (40, p. 14). In Perelman's theory, rhetoric is

given jurisdiction over all practical reasoning—informal logic and argumentation. He acknowledged that “in a great many areas of knowledge the ideal of truth must prevail over other considerations,” but he insisted that in the domain of justice, right and wrong, rhetoric as argumentative reason must rule over demonstrative reason (39, p. 142). As with the other rhetoricians who have been cited here, Perelman denied a special privilege for those who assert absolute standards for truth, knowledge, and reality—at least in the public sphere of judicial decision and action. He also made values a central feature of his work, implying that they are a necessary constituent of knowledge, of practical wisdom.

The most revolutionary move in the twentieth century regarding rhetoric is that of Kenneth Burke. Viewing rhetoric as the symbolic function of inducement, rather than a discourse form, he sees rhetoric as an attribute of all symbolic expression and action (7, pp. 19–46). “Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric and wherever there is meaning,” he wrote, “there is persuasion” (7, p. 172). He would allow that one can make distinctions among discourse forms, but they could not be absolute, for there is no genre without appeal, the “arousing and fulfillment of desires,” the anticipation and gratification created by “the sequential unfolding of the discourse” (8, p. 124). Rhetoric, for Burke, is not purely an epistemological transaction; it is more fundamentally an ontological experience. It works by identification rather than demonstration. As his theory recognizes reason as well as aesthetic qualities in all forms of human communication, it recaptures and reinforces the original sense of *logos*.

The narrative paradigm is fully in accord with these views. It differs from dramatism in two ways. The first difference is subtle but important; it concerns the precise part played by people in the interpretation and assessment of meanings in the world and in their choice of behavior in given situations. Dramatism implies a prescribed role for people; they are actors performing roles constrained or determined by scripts provided by existing institutions. The narrative paradigm sees people as storytellers—authors and co-authors who creatively read and evaluate the texts of life and literature. It envisions existing institutions as providing “plots” that are always in the process of re-creation rather than as scripts; it stresses that people are full participants in the making of messages, whether they are agents (authors) or audience members (co-authors).

The second difference derives from the first. The notion that people are actors leads to the supposition that human behavior is to be assessed by a presentational standard: how well one performs one's various roles. This is not, of course, Burke's personal view. He would seem to hold that good communication functions not only to surmount division, but also to engender humane, reasonable action. The norm of humane, reasonable action, however, is not intrinsic to dramatism; it is Burke's own commitment and the motivating force behind his theory. Not all success-

ful identification results in humane, reasonable action. No theory can ensure such an end, but the narrative paradigm is designed to further it by incorporating the concept of identification to account for how people come to adopt stories and adding the concept of narrative rationality, a “logic” intrinsic to the very idea of narrativity. That people's symbolic actions take the form of stories and that they assess them by the principles of coherence and fidelity are the essential points of difference between dramatism and the narrative paradigm.

With all due regard for the proponents of the major arts of discourse, what this sketch reveals is that, since the time of the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle, they have been involved in a great contest that might be called: “*Logos, logos, who's got the logos?*” One cannot blame all the ills of the world on this historic struggle. Yet, it is safe to say that it has contributed to the contemporary condition by repressing the realization of a holistic sense of self, by subverting the formulation of a humane concept of rationality and a sane praxis, by rendering personal and public decision making and action subservient to “experts” in knowledge, truth, and reality, and by elevating one class of persons and their discourse over others. The moral I would draw is this: Some discourse is more veracious, reliable, and trustworthy in respect to knowledge, truth, and reality than some other discourse, but no form or genre has final jurisdiction over them. Some persons know more than others, are wiser, and are more to be heeded than others. But no one knows all there is to know even about his or her own area of specialization. Human communication in all of its forms is imbued with *mythos*—ideas that cannot be verified or proved in any absolute way, including metaphor, values, gesture, and so on—as well as, on occasion, clear-cut inferential or implicative structures. *Mythos* has cognitive as well as aesthetic significance. Liberation of the human spirit would seem to call for an acceptance of these facts. They are intrinsic to the narrative paradigm, which is a response to the exigence created by their denial.

In the beginning was the *logos* as a concept that incorporated these facts, and so it shall be in the future—if the narrative paradigm or some similar construct comes to command the adherence of those who study and practice the arts of human communication.

#### REFERENCES

1. Bacon, Francis. *Advancement of Learning*. Joseph Deves (Ed.). New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1902.
2. Bernstein, Richard. *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
3. Bitzer, Lloyd F. “Rhetoric and Public Knowledge.” In D. Burks (Ed.), *Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Literature: An Exploration*. West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1978, pp. 67–83.
4. Blair, Hugh. *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belle Letters* (2 vols.). H. F. Harding (Ed.). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965.

5. Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Genealogy of the Gentle Gods*. In Boccaccio on Poetry. C. G. Osgood (trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930.
6. Brinton, Alan. "William James and the Epistemic View of Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68, May 1982, pp. 158-169.
7. Burke, Kenneth. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. New York: George Braziller, 1955.
8. Burke, Kenneth. *Counter-statement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
9. Campbell, George. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. L. F. Bitzer (Ed.). Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963.
10. Capra, Frithof. *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1983.
11. Carleton, Walter M. "On Rhetorical Knowing." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, May 1975.
12. Carleton, Walter M. "What is Rhetorical Knowledge? A Reply to Farrell—And More." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64, October 1978, pp. 313-328.
13. Chervitz, Richard. "Rhetoric as a 'Way of Knowing': An Attenuation of the Epistemological Claim of the 'New Rhetoric.'" *Southern Speech Journal* 42, Spring 1977, pp. 207-219.
14. Chervitz, Richard and James W. Hilkins. "John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*: Implications for the Epistemology of the New Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, February 1979, pp. 12-24.
15. Chervitz, Richard and James W. Hilkins. "Beyond Rhetorical Relativism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68, February 1982, pp. 1-16.
16. Cicero. *De Oratore* (2 vols.). E. W. Sutton and H. Rackman (trans.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959.
17. Croce, Benedetto. *Aesthetic as Science Expression and General Linguistics*. D. Ainslie (trans.). In H. Adams (Ed.) *Critical Theory Since Plato*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, pp. 726-735.
18. Descartes, René. *Discourse on Method*. L. J. Lafleur (trans.). New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956.
19. Ehniger, Douglas. "Science, Philosophy—and Rhetoric: A Look Toward the Future." In J. L. Golden, G. F. Berquist, and W. E. Coleman (Eds.) *The Rhetoric of Western Thought* (3d ed.). Dubuque, Ia.: Kendall/Hunt, 1983, pp. 454-464.
20. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The American Scholar." In A. C. Baird, *American Public Addresses, 1740-1952*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956, pp. 122-137.
21. Farrell, Thomas B. "Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62, February 1976, pp. 1-14.
22. Farrell, Thomas B. "Social Knowledge II." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64, October 1978, pp. 329-334.
23. Fisher, Walter R. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." *Communication Monographs* 51, March 1984, pp. 1-22.
24. Fisher, Walter R. "The Narrative Paradigm: The Connection with Logic." Unpublished manuscript, Los Angeles, 1985.
25. Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. New York: Crossword, 1982.
26. Graff, Gerald. *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
27. Grassi, Ernesto. *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980.
28. Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Vol. 1. T. A. McCarthy (trans.). Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.
29. Havelock, Eric. *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963.
30. Havelock, Eric. "The Linguistic Task of the PreSocratics." In K. Robb (Ed.) *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*. LaSalle, Ill.: Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983, pp. 7-82.
31. Heidegger, Martin. "Letter on Humanism." In R. Zaner and D. Ihde (Eds.) *Phenomenology and Existentialism*. New York: Capricorn/Putnam's, 1973, pp. 147-181.
32. Huizinga, Johan. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. R. F. C. Hull (trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950.
33. Jusseling, Samuel. *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict: An Historical Survey*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976.
34. *Isocrates* (3 vols.). C. Norlin (trans.). New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1928.
35. Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (2 vols.). A. C. Fraser (Ed.). New York: Dover, 1959.
36. Longinus. *On the Sublime*. W. R. Roberts (trans.). Cambridge: at the University Press, 1907.
37. McGee, Michael Calvin and Mantha Anne Martin. "Public Knowledge and Ideological Argumentation." *Communication Monographs* 50, March 1983, pp. 47-65.
38. Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Methuen, 1982.
39. Perelman, Chaim. "Authority, Ideology, and Violence." In *The New Rhetoric and the Humanities: Essays on Rhetoric and Its Applications*. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979, pp. 138-145.
40. Perelman, Chaim and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca. *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*. J. Wilkinson and P. Weaver (trans.). Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969.
41. Richards, I. A. *Science and Poetry*. In M. Schorer, J. Miles, and G. McKenzie (Eds.) *Criticism: The Foundations of Modern Literary Judgments*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958, pp. 505-533.
42. Richards, I. A. *Coleridge on Imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965.
43. Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
44. Schiller, Friedrich Wilhelm von. *On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature*. J. E. Cabot (trans.). In H. Adams (Ed.) *Critical Theory Since Plato*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, pp. 417-431.
45. Schrag, Calvin O. *Radical Reflection and the Origins of the Human Sciences*. West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1980.
46. Schrag, Calvin O. *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
47. Scott, Robert L. "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic." *Central States Speech Journal* 18, February 1967, pp. 9-17.
48. Scott, Robert L. "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic: Ten Years Later." *Central States Speech Journal* 28, Winter 1976, pp. 258-266.
49. Sidney, Sir Philip. *An Apologie for Poetrie*. In M. Schorer, J. Miles, and G. McKenzie (Eds.) *Criticism: The Foundations of Modern Literary Judgments*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958, pp. 407-431.
50. Sprat, Thomas. *The History of the Royal Society of London*. J. I. Cope and N. W. Jones (Eds.). St. Louis: Washington University Studies, 1959.
51. Tate, Allen. "Literature as Knowledge." In *Essays of Four Decades*. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968, pp. 72-105.
52. Toulmin, Stephen. *The Return to Cosmology: Postmodern Science and the Theology of Nature*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
53. Veysey, Laszlo. *Man's Measure: A Study of the Greek Image of Man from Homer to Sophocles*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982.
54. Vico, Giambattista. *On the Study Methods of Our Time*. E. Gianturco (trans.). New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.
55. Whately, Richard. *Elements of Rhetoric*. D. Ehninger (Ed.). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963.