

On Rhetoric and Wisdom

R A L P H T. E U B A N K S

SOME TIME AGO A colleague called my attention to a discerning essay on higher education in America entitled "Plucking Minerva's Owl" and authored by educator Frank R. Harrison, which concluded with this provocative statement:

Minerva was the ancient Roman goddess of wisdom, and the owl was her totem. Unlike Athena, her Greek counterpart, Minerva dwelled in a culture that developed into a bureaucratic, technocratic, consumptive aggregate of people. As time went on, there was felt in these circumstances not to be much need of, or use in, wisdom. And so, Minerva's poor bird was plucked and roasted as one more product to be consumed by an ill-balanced and ill-fated culture. Each culture has its Athena or Minerva. How it tends the goddess' owl is of the greatest practical importance in not only surviving, but surviving well.¹

In reflecting on Harrison's words, it occurred to me that, given the mindless drift of our own culture and the intimate relation between rhetoric and cultural ethos, our profession should be taking deeper thought about the question, How well are we tending the goddess' owl? Admittedly, the question is mind-stretching, and perhaps I shall be thought to be myself un-

wise in undertaking a consideration of it. Yet I believe we are at a juncture in our professional development when we must raise and agitate the larger question, whether or not we are yet prepared to offer finished and elegant answers.

Let us put our master question in perspective. The larger issue invites us to reflect upon a more immediate one: In what measure is the rhetoric we are promoting in our theorizing and in our pedagogy a rhetoric of wisdom? And to raise this question is to raise, *eo ipso*, a further one: In what measure are we truly nurturing the humane tradition in rhetoric, at the center of which is the timeless and resonant notion of "wise living"? One of the wisest of our humanist scholars, addressing the problem of renewing that tradition, once observed:

I believe that the humane tradition in rhetoric means that we must in our muddled times use our effort to train men and women who can make an authentic statement, an honest judgment, and display a contagious allegiance to truth, justice, tolerance, courage, and hope, all parts of man's work as citizen and statesman.²

In short, the question, How well are we tending the goddess' owl, translates to: How well are we nurturing the humane

tradition in rhetoric? As I have argued elsewhere, I believe the answer to this question must rest in the answer we are able to give to another: Is the rhetoric we promote one in which knowledge is ruled by wisdom, or by what the ancients called *prudentialia*?³ In my judgment this is the critical test of whether a rhetorical theory or a philosophy of speech pedagogy may be regarded as belonging to the humane tradition in rhetoric.

I wish in the present paper to offer a rounded statement of what I think is meant by a rhetoric under dominion of wisdom, considered generally as the good (or proper) use of knowledge. Our task requires first that we examine in some detail the nature of practical wisdom, or prudential knowing. Second, I wish to venture some thoughts on the problem of revitalizing in our teaching and our scholarship the ideal of prudential knowledge.

II

WE TURN FIRST to the nature of the ideal of wisdom and of its relations to the art of rhetoric, defined for our purposes as "the discovery of and the persuasion to right [or wise] action."⁴ May I say that it shall not be my object here to trace the ancient problem of the relation of philosophy to rhetoric; that has been ably done by Richard McKeon in his seminal essay on rhetoric as "an architectonic productive art."⁵ I wish rather to examine synoptically under our first heading the nature of prudential knowing and its relationship to the art of rhetoric.

As Aristotle might have put it, let us begin at the beginning. In any consideration of the nature of practical wisdom, or prudence, we are taken immediately back to pagan antiquity—to the Greeks and the Latins—of whom Alfred North Whitehead has written: "The ancients saw clearly—more clearly than we do—the necessity of dominating knowledge by wisdom."⁶ The ancient Greeks, for whom the term "philosophy" itself meant "lover of wisdom," made a distinction between "speculative wisdom" (*sophia*) and "prac-

tical wisdom" (*phronesis*).⁷ Yet to the Greek mind there was an intimate relationship between the notions of wisdom and moral action. That is to say: Knowing Man was also Acting Man. Even in Plato, the speculative thinker *par excellence* of the ancient world, philosophical knowledge and action were joined. As one writer acutely observes: "Plato makes the vision of the good the goal of a dialectic which ascends to wisdom, yet which does not rest there, but returns enlightened to the realm of action."⁸

Aristotle maintains in his writings a distinction between "speculative" or "philosophical" wisdom and "practical" wisdom, often rendered into English as "prudence." The former deals with the contemplation of truth, or the ultimate nature of things. Practical wisdom, on the other hand, has to do with the problem of choice, or "deliberate desire," and functions in the sphere of moral and political action.⁹ Again, on Aristotle's conception, "practical wisdom" is both intellectual and moral in its bearings. Of the Aristotelian view, one writer has observed:

That prudence is a quality of mind seems to follow from the fact that it involves deliberation, a kind of thinking about variable and contingent particulars of the same sort which belongs to the realm of opinion. That prudence is also a moral quality, an aspect of character, seems to follow no less from Aristotle's statement that prudence is not deliberation about the means to any sort of end, but only about those "which conduce to the good life in general."¹⁰

Professor Brownstein, in his provocative interpretation of Aristotle's "general conception of rhetoric," argues that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is conceived as "a capacity of the mind having no objective existence except in wise action (*prakton agathon*)."¹¹ But what is even more important to our present purpose is the same writer's observation of the close relationship in Aristotle between *phronesis* and the art of deliberative rhetoric:

There is [he says] a remarkable, but largely unremarked: affinity between *phronesis* and rhetoric. They have the same ultimate objective, the *prakton agathon*; for both, this is a product of their first objective, judgment or choice; both deal with the contingent; in both, reasoning starts from probabalistic premises, but each is "more than a reasoned state"; and both produce their ends by means of deliberation.¹²

In short, for Aristotle the practically wise man is one capable of advising well with respect to the conduct of human affairs. "Practical wisdom," he says, "must be a reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to human goods."¹³ Its provenance is right desire; its issue, concretely expressed, is "wise action." To illuminate his meaning, Aristotle offers a model: "...we think Pericles and men like him have practical wisdom, viz. because they can see what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general."¹⁴

Prudential knowing, as characterized by Aristotle, is a perduring ideal in Western thought. In ancient Roman culture the notion of *prudentia*—sound judgment in the conduct of human affairs—was a cardinal one.¹⁵ Centuries later, Aquinas, following Aristotle, refers to *prudentia* as "right reason about things to be done."¹⁶ Centuries later still, the modern philosopher Jacques Maritain, writing on the nature of practical philosophy, argues that "practical wisdom, *prudentia*, is a virtue indivisibly moral and intellectual at the same time...[and that] like the judgment of conscience itself...cannot be replaced by any sort of theoretical knowledge or science."¹⁷

The concept of the truth of practical intellect survives today in the notion of *wisdom*, which we earlier defined as the good (or proper) use of knowledge. Of this concept, the modern philosopher, Brand Blanshard has observed:

Wisdom in its broadest and commonest sense denotes sound and serene judgment regarding the conduct of life....It involves intellectual grasp or insight, but it is concerned not so much with the

ascertainment of fact or the elaboration of theories as with the means and ends of practical life.¹⁸

On the modern view of wisdom, two essential traits of mind characterize the person considered as "practically wise": *reflectiveness* and *judgment*. Blanshard has aptly characterized the first:

By reflectiveness is meant the habit of considering events and beliefs in the light of their grounds and consequences.... [The reflective mind] will be able to recognize some proposals for action as rash, partisan, or shortsighted because certain consequences have been ascribed to them falsely and others have been ignored. In some activities wisdom consists almost wholly of such foresight.¹⁹

We must not overlook the fact that in the realm of practical conduct the reflective mind seeks insight as prelude to foresight. In a word, what we think of as foresight—the capacity to predict the outcomes of given causes, and to envision the consequences of proposals for action—is the fruit of nothing else but insight, or understanding. The reflective mind has the habit of weighing and considering. And its guiding paradigm is Dewey's "pattern of reflective thinking," which proceeds from "a felt difficulty" to final "verification" of the solution deemed to represent the appropriate solution of the problem. Above all, in the sphere of practical conduct, the reflective mind asks, Will this proposed course of action bear good, rather than evil fruit?

Judgment, the second requirement for the good (or proper) use of knowledge, has to do with "the wisdom of ends," or "wisdom regarding intrinsic goods."²⁰ Judgment represents the capacity to choose between better and worse—to appraise and select worthy goals, both personal and public. May I say that I do not think that judgment, as an attribute of wisdom, is truly reflected in some Benthamite "utilitarian calculus" by which an action is measured in terms of the "pleasure" it

generates. Nor do I believe that the pragmatic notion of "success," taken alone, is the legitimate measure of "good judgment."²¹ In short, judgment, considered as a trait of the practically wise mind, honors the notion that goods are at last to be appraised in accordance with their power either to civilize or brutalize. It is, as I believe, wisdom, or the good life of knowledge, which is at stake when we pose the question: How well are we tending the goddess' owl?

III

WE ARE NOW in position to examine the major dimensions of our professional challenge. How, let us ask, are we to participate effectively as speech educators in the renewal of the ancient ideal of "wise living," at the center of which is prudential knowing? First of all, we must become something more than amateur students of the ethos of the culture in which we live and move. I think it supremely important that we understand our professional task in the broadest of cultural terms. To use the words of Lincoln in one of his debates with Douglas, "If we know where we are and whither we are tending, we can better judge what to do and how to do it."

Even the most casual inspection of our own cultural ethos reveals that the ideal of "wise living" is in deep eclipse. Men and women of light and leading have long observed that "modernism" is technosophic, not philosophic. The "mindscape" of modern man—to use Theodore Roszak's term—is under dominion of scientific and technical rationality. We are sophisticated in the ways of empirical and technical knowing, untutored in the ways of wisdom. It must seem evident to those who have reflected on the matter that the daily bread of our intellectual life consists for the most part in sheer knowledge, considered broadly as "justified true belief" and of what we are wont to call "expertise"—that is, specialized skill or technical knowledge.

The general condition of our cultural ethos has often been remarked, but perhaps never with more acuteness than by

Loren Eiseley, the scientist-philosopher:

We are [he says] a society bemused in its purposes and yet secretly homesick for a lost world of inward tranquility. The thirst for illimitable knowledge now conflicts directly with the search for a serenity obtainable nowhere on earth. Knowledge, or at least what the twentieth-century acclaims as knowledge, has not led to happiness.²²

Nor, we might add, has the application of sheer expertise to the formulation of public policy proven as efficacious as twentieth-century man might have expected. Are we not regularly astonished at the naive overreliance in the world of public administration upon sheer "technical rationality"—that is to say, upon impeccable procedure and "efficient means"? And are we not equally astonished at the remarkable absence in the broad field of public policymaking of "common sense" and of wisdom regarding intrinsic goods?

It is my distinct impression that the very structure of our society is inimical to the promotion of the "wisdom of ends," or judgment. Ours is a "pluralistic society" in which the tendency ever is for competing sub-cultures to fix goals on the basis of self-interest. Hence the incredibly rapid rise in recent decades of what I shall here call parochial rhetoric, wherein are largely missing the elements of statesmanship and sportsmanship. More importantly, our parochial rhetoric generates, in turn, a more sophisticated knowledge of means. Progressively, therefore, our practice keeps us separated from the great nourishing tradition of wisdom. Yet if this were not enough, we have witnessed in our times a shattering assault in the academy on the very theory of practical wisdom. I refer here, of course, to the modern positivistic movement which, guided by the mathematical model and the method of empirical investigation, has spawned the devastating assumption that value-judgments do not represent true knowledge. Thus, by a Ramist-like operation, the "wisdom of ends" was to be severed from the logos and consigned to the realm

of the irrational, thereby restricting "true" knowledge to means and empirical facts.

To repeat what deserves repeating: Our fundamental difficulty is that we have allowed prudential knowing, which is indivisibly logical and *axiological*, to fall into eclipse. We are thus bereft of that form of knowing which reveals to us the desirable ends of human life. From this cultural perspective, our professional challenge emerges in sharp outline. If it is our special function and duty as trained rhetors to put the *logos* in the service of the City of Man, then we are under the strongest obligation to assist in the recovery of prudential knowing. We are thus challenged, in second place, to develop and to teach a rhetoric in which knowledge and expertise are held under dominion of wisdom.

We consider first the implications for our theory, striving here to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. Since our theory is the well-spring of our pedagogy, we need to reflect upon the general character of our theoretical effort, inquiring, How well does it promote a rhetoric of practical wisdom? My decided impression is that for too long our theory has been married to the pragmatic view of the function of rhetoric. That is: We have tended to promote the strategic dimension of our subject, as against its moral dimension. Enchanted by the value-free theory of the nature of knowledge, we have striven for elegant value-free analysis at the expense of "qualitative judgment." But, let me hasten to add, our own professional field hardly represents in this regard an atypical case amongst the humanistic disciplines. As Harrison accurately notes: "Such a view of knowledge is not only widely embraced in science and technology, but it is also widely accepted in the liberal arts."²³ In short, much of our theorizing on the nature of rhetoric may be characterized as "methodolatrous." And, as I think, this fascination with process, analysis, and elegant paradigm has inhibited the development of a rhetoric of practical wisdom, or prudence.

Let me note, however, some recent encouraging signs in our field—signs which

may indeed suggest a new and brighter prospect for our theorizing. I have in mind particularly two recent efforts. The first, a rigorously argued piece by Lloyd Bitzer, explores the relations between rhetoric and "public policy," developing the thesis that "In general, rhetoric at its best sustains wisdom in the life of a public."²⁴ The second, a provocative essay by Walter Fisher, entitled, "Toward a Logic of Good Reasons," offers a set of criterial questions designed to broaden the concept of "good reasons" in rhetorical transactions. Fisher's concluding statement is closely related to my present argument; I should like therefore to quote it in full:

Since the time of Francis Bacon knowledge has been conceived largely as power over people and things. In my judgment, we have lost a sense of wisdom. To regain it, I think, we need to reaffirm the place of value as a component of knowledge—and that, too, is a function of a logic of good reasons.²⁵

On another occasion, I have argued for the adoption in rhetoric of a value stance associated with the classic ideal of "the good life in the good society."²⁶ It is my view that such a stance derives from certain high enduring values which, guided by the ideal of practical wisdom, serve to define the dual demands of the "right" and the "good." I am convinced that in our theorizing we can tend well the goddess' owl only insofar as we are able to refine our "sociological system of rhetoric" in such a way as to make it capable not only of "improving human relations,"²⁷ but also reestablishing the habit of practical wisdom and of—to use Lippmann's phrase—renewing "the wisdom of the good life in the good society..."²⁸

We turn finally to the challenge we face in the classroom, with its marvelous opportunities for coaching students in the ways of prudential knowing. My general impression is that in this effort we have too often lost to sight the ideal of a humane rhetoric. We have instead—for the most part—promoted a pragmatic rhetoric, which places highest premium on the

strategic, as against the moral dimension, of the art. Indeed, in our textbook literature when values are treated, they are commonly made to serve a sheerly instrumental and strategic role.

Our effort in the classroom on behalf of practical wisdom properly begins with a fundamental truth which, so far as I know, has been no better expressed than by the Belgian philosopher, Ch. Perelman:

The study [he says] not of what is but of what ought to be, what has the greater value, what is preferable, and what should determine our choices and our conduct can be abandoned to scientific methods only when we are dealing with purely technical problems.²⁹

In a word, prudential knowing, in both its reflective and judgmental dimensions, has to do centrally with reasoning about values. Additionally, values are at stake always in the exercise of practical wisdom with regard either to the choice of ends or the selection of appropriate means to realize those ends. Indeed, as Blanshard reminds us, the main tradition of Western philosophy "regards the judgment of values as a field in which wisdom may be pre-eminently displayed."³⁰

It should therefore be seen that rhetorical instruction, as a vital part of a university program of general education, makes its true contribution in preparing the student for wise action. But what is the unique nature of our task in educating for wise action? Some years ago, the late Robert Maynard Hutchins, in a classic essay on general education, offered what I think is our surest guide:

[Practical wisdom] is acquired partly from intellectual operations and partly from experience. But the chief requirement for it is correctness in thinking. Since education cannot duplicate the experiences which the student will have when he graduates, it should devote itself to developing correctness in thinking as a means of practical wisdom....³¹

Obviously we cannot here develop a full-blown instructional plan for the teaching

of "correctness in thinking." I shall therefore offer some broadly suggestive guides.

First of all, we can insist that the students who come to us receive a solid grounding in dialectic, the method of reasoning about matters human and contingent. As Ch. Perelman has abundantly shown, dialectic (or, as he prefers, "rhetorical reasoning") is the method *par excellence* in the realm of reasoning where practical questions are adjudicated—that is, the vast realm which lies between the self-evident and the merely arbitrary.³² We should, then, in our courses in rhetoric insist that our students have more than a cursory acquaintance with the leading techniques of argumentation described by Perelman in the co-authored treatise, *The New Rhetoric*.³³ In short, we must ourselves become students of "the logic of good reasons"; and we must teach our students its ways.

It follows then, on this conception of "correctness in thinking," that we are deeply involved with *judgment*, or the "wisdom of ends." Were we living in 4th century Athens, our task would be simple; for the intrinsic goods were largely assumed. Thus, Aristotle could say in the *Rhetoric*: "...men deliberate, not about the ends to be attained, but about the means of attaining these; and the means are expedient things to do."³⁴ But in our own confused world, where—as Richard M. Weaver once observed—we do not have "the minimum consensus of value" required for true community, we must teach our students to deliberate about ends as well as about means. We shall have accomplished much when a student in our course can say of a proposal he advocates, "It is in the name of true justice, not of apparent justice, that I am urging you to consider seriously this course of action."

Reflectiveness and judgment, *insight* and *foresight*, depend at last upon right reason about values, or the "wisdom of intrinsic goods." We must therefore in our classes in public discourse teach our students to discriminate among values. Beyond this, as I believe, we must guide

them into cognate courses for exposure to the theory of value and valuation. On most university campuses these courses are readily available—theory of value, ethics, aesthetics, perhaps also the philosophy of religion. At the same time, we must capitalize on the rich resources of our campus for the development of collaborative courses in axiology. At the University of West Florida, for example, our vice-president for academic affairs has recently taken steps to establish a cross-disciplinary symposium on values and valuation which will bring together in dialogue philosophers, rhetoricians, sociologists, and psychologists. I am convinced that imaginatively designed and executed cross-disciplinary courses can contribute handsomely to the development of prudential understanding.

In second place, we must seek to inculcate in our students an acute historical consciousness. Let us recall that our goal is to educate the student for “wise action.” And as we have seen, the cardinal requirement for practical wisdom is “correctness in thinking.” Again, correctness in thinking, as applied to discernment of worthy ends and proper means in the sphere of practical conduct, is sound rhetorical reasoning. Rhetorical reasoning, it seems to me, depends in more than one way upon acute historical awareness. Let us first observe that the questions and problems of practical reasoning, whether personal or public, are experiential and existential in nature. As the late Richard M. Weaver puts it in his classic essay on “The Cultural Role of Rhetoric”: “Rhetoric...depends upon history. All questions that are susceptible to rhetorical treatment arise out of history, and it is to history that the rhetorician turns for his means of persuasion.... Dialectic, though being rational and intellectual, simply does not heed the imperatives of living, which help give direction to the thought of the man of wisdom.”³⁵ Though rhetorical reasoning is in reality “reasoning about values,” Weaver’s warning is nonetheless well taken; for there is ever present in rhetorical reasoning, the temptation to retreat from

the existential world into the sheltered harbor of sheer cognition or of *eristic*, the name given by the ancients to argument for the sake of argument.

Second, an acute historical consciousness is needful to the work of practical reasoning because there are often to be found in “the wisdom of the past” sound guides to wise action for the future. Examples such as definition, precedent, and historical parallel come immediately to mind. Professor Waldo Braden, in his perceptive study of American public address as a humane study, has put the matter well: “By directing [our students’] attention to the past for its lessons and warnings, we hope that they will prepare themselves for the *should* and the *ought* of the future.”³⁶

There seems to me yet a third reason for concerted effort on our part to instill in our students a keen historical awareness. We can in this way, I believe, better ensure that the student, in his exercise of practical wisdom, will be alive to his duty to future generations. Never has there been a time when man stood more in need of a deep sense of responsibility to generations yet unborn. And I am convinced that in helping our students to develop a sense of history, we are better equipping them to take account of their duty to posterity in their advisory role as practical reasoners. It is just in this respect, I believe, that we are given one of our better opportunities for the renewal of prudential knowing—and, may I add, for the humanizing of our discipline. “Concern for the future,” writes the French scholar, René Dubos, “is the mark and the glory of the human condition.”³⁷ Such concern, as C. S. Lewis has reminded us, derives from the historically given *Tao*, the body of “practical principles” of prudential conduct “known to all men by Reason....”³⁸ Says he: “...our duty to do good to all men is an axiom of Practical Reason, and our duty to do good to our descendants is a clear deduction from it.”³⁹ All these things we shall do—and more—if our aim is to make, not a technical expert, or a “human engineer,” but a man or a woman of wisdom, qualified to offer sound

remedies for the ills from which the *polis* suffers.

How well are we tending the goddess' owl? Not especially well, in my judgment—certainly not in any way that could be thought superior to the practice of our sister disciplines in the academy. The conclusion bears, I fear, a painful irony inasmuch as rhetoric must be regarded—in Weaver's phrase—as “the most humanistic of all the disciplines.”⁴⁰ Yet the “alexin of our cure” lies ready to hand in a regimen of research and teaching calculated to restore prudential knowing to its rightful place in that art whose special function is the generation of “wise action.”

I remember to have first read, years ago as a graduate student, Plato's *Protagoras*.

*An earlier version of this article was presented as a special commemorative lecture, April 20, 1979, on the occasion of the retirement at LSU's Baton Rouge campus of Boyd Professor of Speech, Dr. Waldo W. Braden.

¹*Modern Age*, 21 (Spring 1977), 183. ²Marie H. Nichols, “Rhetoric and the Humane Tradition,” in *Rhetoric: A Tradition in Transition*, ed. Walter R. Fisher (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1974), p. 188. ³See my essay, “Axiological Issues in Rhetorical Inquiry,” *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 44 (Fall 1978), 13-14. ⁴See P. Albert Duhamel, “The Function of Rhetoric as Effective Expression,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, X (June 1949), p. 356. ⁵“The Uses of Rhetoric in a Technological Age: Architectonic Productive Arts,” in *The Prospect of Rhetoric*, ed. Lloyd Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1971), pp. 44-53. ⁶Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: Mentor Books, 1960), p. 41. Whitehead's further observation is instructive: “But, in the pursuit of wisdom in the region of practical education, [the ancients] erred sadly. To put the matter simply, their popular practice assumed that wisdom could be imparted to the young by procuring philosophers to spout at them. Hence the crop of shady philosophers in the schools of the Ancient World” (p. 41). ⁷“Prudence,” in *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Mortimer J. Adler and William Gorman (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), II, 472-3. Cited hereafter as *Syntopicon*. ⁸“Wisdom,” *Syntopicon*, II, 1102b. ⁹*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a, 20-25. Citations from this treatise are from W. D. Ross' translation (*The Works of Aristotle*, 12 vols. [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1908-52]).

In it I encountered one of those haunting Socratic questions that lingers in memory, and one which I think especially appropriate to my central argument. In the dialogue, you will recall, Socrates “puts questions” to one Hippocrates, a young man who is eager to receive instruction from Protagoras, the renowned Sophist of Abdera. Among the questions Socrates puts to Hippocrates is this: “Then about *what* does the Sophist make [a man] more eloquent?”⁴¹ The question echoes down the centuries to us and represents still our ultimate challenge as teachers of public discourse. And in the answer we are able to give to Socrates' question will ever be found the answer to the higher question: How well are we tending the goddess' owl?*

¹⁰“Prudence,” in *Syntopicon*, II, 473. ¹¹Oscar L. Brownstein, “Aristotle and the Rhetorical Process,” in *Rhetoric: A Tradition in Transition*, p. 20. ¹²Brownstein, “Aristotle and the Rhetorical Process,” p. 23. ¹³*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b, 20. ¹⁴*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b, 5-10. ¹⁵We note, for example, that Cicero gave *prudencia* a prominent place in his theory of rhetoric. See *De Oratore*, trans. J. S. Watson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1860), Bk. III, XVI (p. 209). Of Cicero's conception of the relationship between eloquence and prudence, Raymond Dilorenzo has written: “Crassus speaks of *eloquentia* as the power of a speaker's words. That is why he demands that *eloquentia* conjoin with *prudencia*. Giving such power to a man who does not have *prudencia* is like giving weapons to a madman.” “The Critique of Socrates in Cicero's *De Oratore*: Ornatu and the Nature of Wisdom,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, II (Fall 1978), p. 254. ¹⁶“Prudence,” in *Syntopicon*, II, 476a. ¹⁷“Action: The Perfection of Human Life,” *The Sewanee Review*, 56 (1948), p. 4. ¹⁸“Wisdom,” *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), VIII, 322b. We may with profit consider what it means, from the standpoint of intellectual education to acquire wisdom. Whitehead observes: “You cannot be wise without some basis of knowledge; but you may easily acquire knowledge and be bare of wisdom.” Wisdom, he concludes, suggests “mastery of knowledge”: “It concerns the handling of knowledge, its selection for the determination of relevant issues, its employment to add value to our immediate experience.” *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, p. 41. ¹⁹“Wisdom,” *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, p. 323b. ²⁰“Wisdom,” *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, p. 323b. ²¹In his masterly assessment of “pragmatic arguments,” Ch. Perelman argues: “In fact the result of appraising a thing only on the basis of its conse-

quences is to reduce it to the level of means which, whatever its efficacy, no longer has the prestige of that which is valued for itself." The unfortunate result of such an appraisal, he concludes, amounts to "a profanation of higher values." See *The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 206-7. ²²*The Unexpected Universe* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969), p. 5. ²³Harrison, "Plucking Minerva's Owl," 178. ²⁴"Rhetoric and Public Knowledge," in *Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Literature: An Exploration*, ed. Don M. Burks (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 67-93 (see esp. p. 68). Bitzer takes the view that "In principle, a spokesman for the public possesses and employs as premises of discourse those truths, values, interests, and principles located in the public's tradition and experience—*wisdom authorized or warranted by the public and part of the public domain.*" (p. 74). Ital. supplied. The term "wisdom" is here interpreted in one of its common senses—that is, as product, or as a fund of "truths, values, interests, and principles." ²⁵"Toward a Logic of Good Reasons," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 64 (1978), 376-84 (esp. 384). ²⁶"Axiological Issues in Rhetorical Inquiry," 11-24. ²⁷Professor Douglas Ehninger, in characterizing the contemporary system of rhetorical theory as "sociological," argues that its several strands of inquiry regard rhetoric "as an instrument for understanding and improving human relations." "On Systems of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1 (1968), 131-44. ²⁸Walter Lippmann, *The Public Philosophy* (New York: Mentor Books, 1955), p. 75. I

do not wish by my remarks to slight the work of those who for years have directed their energies to a *rap-prochement* between rhetoric and philosophy. This, I believe, has been the most salutary movement in our field—one for which chief credit goes to the Belgian philosopher Ch. Perelman and to the Penn State Circle. ²⁹*An Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking*, trans. Kenneth A. Brown (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 6. ³⁰"Wisdom," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, VIII, p. 323b. ³¹*The Higher Learning in America* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 67-8. ³²See, for example: "The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning," in *The Great Ideas Today* (1970), ed. Robert M. Hutchins, et al. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1970), pp. 281-88. ³³Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 185-459. ³⁴Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, trans. Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932), p. 29 (l. 5-6, 1362a). ³⁵*Visions of Order* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 55, 64. ³⁶"III. Public Address and the Humanities," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 41 (Winter 1976), 152. ³⁷*The Torch of Life: Continuity in Living Experience* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 140. ³⁸*The Abolition of Man* (Macmillan Paperback, 1965), p. 44. ³⁹*The Abolition of Man*, p. 54. ⁴⁰*Visions of Order*, p. 71. ⁴¹Plato's *Protagoras*, trans. Benjamin Jowett; extensively revised by Martin Ostwald; edited, with an introduction by Gregory Vlastos (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1956), p. 6 (312b).