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The Dialectical Convergence of Rhetoric And Ethics: The Imperative Of Public Conversation

Prefatory Remark

Man is a rule-making, rule-governed creature—he is, as Aristotle put it, an animal defined by and within a community of speech.¹ The two disciplines of ethics and rhetoric and the cultural activities they engage are instrumental to this defining activity of human life. If moral life is riddled with ambiguities, theoretical understanding of it is no less plagued with an ambivalent relationship which rhetoric and ethics have to each other, despite their mutual concern with the practical affairs of human beings. To argue a necessary convergence of rhetoric and ethics for an understanding of moral life, it is ironic and paradoxical that the primary models of convergence are the two original thinkers who created the divide. Despite their celebrated differences, Plato and Aristotle² share a common belief that the structure and functional activity of speech constitutes individual identity and public community.³ Their complex discussions of rhetoric and ethics is analytically relevant to contemporary “problems” of relativism⁴ and the conceptual tangles of privatism.⁵

I. Three Basic Intuitions, or Philosophical Biases:

(1) Rhetoric, as a fundamental engagement of language and world, is more than a device for communication or “style”—how to say better what is already, elsewhere, “given.” To make rhetoric wholly germane to modern ethics, however, it is perhaps important to acknowledge an absence of metaphysical anchor: there need be no final datum of meaning or value outside the activities and language of mutually engaged sensibilities, presumptions, judgments, and justifications. Rhetoric, availing us through language of the means of persuasion, *is* the basic tool of practical affairs and is thus essentially connected to ethics.

(2) Rhetoric centers public discourse and public opinion, shapes community through persuasion—and thus is doubly connected to the moral life of the individual and community. How we perceive an issue at the very outset determines, *ceteris paribus*, how the whole of our thinking must proceed. In the initial conditions of moral perception, everything is contained—even what will count as “fact,” what is relevant or discountable.⁶ So too, terms which are to decide any dispute which may arise, are set at the outset by terms of agreement about what is at issue. The language with which we frame moral choices, conflicts, and resolution is not eternal but communal and contingent: it is the domain of ordinary language, of public opinion and persuasion, the domain of rhetoric and ethics. A current expression for this field of experience, the focus of moral discourse, is the “*lebensfeld*”—the world of appearance in which consequences are real.

How one “sees” an issue, or even *that* one sees something *as* an issue, always depends on both context and categories—on language use. If language, *qua* language, is necessarily public

(as Wittgenstein has argued at length, and which in this essay I presume),⁷ the publicity of meaning places community as the central focus of moral inquiry. Community is the conceptual space in which language becomes the connective tissue of thought and action.

If there are no “givens,” no over-arching language to verify some “final vocabulary”⁸ of truth or goodness, then rhetoric, as the *techne* or art of finding the available means of persuasion, is what will both constitute a community as human, and provide the model and means for keeping that community healthy, open to changing language and values.

(3) Relativism, widely believed to be the stumbling block to the authority of ethical discourse, is, under the above conditions and in its usual and obvious complaint, neither a very serious nor terribly interesting problem. We must mark, however, a conceptual difference between moral and philosophical relativism. The latter is, perhaps, built into the task of philosophy and necessary to review the possible scope of moral language and agency. But the former is, in its typical expression, a “category” mistake.⁹ Moral relativism is a confusion of moral agency and philosophical theory—a confusion of modes or tasks. Philosophy may describe or explain; morality must decide. One cannot *begin* with relativism, even if that is, *qua* theory, where one likely ends up. This does not prejudice the case one way or another regarding agency. The moral individual may well have a “final language” not open to the ethical theorist who, after all, is not pressed with the contingency (or imperative) of action. This is to say that moral life (not theory) invites if not requires charter and commitment. The “final language” of the individual is principle made operational. Such stuff may be relative to her life, but not in her life.

It is important to understand the philosophical point of “no overarching” language—no “final vocabulary” which says how the world is. This leaves us with only ordinary language to reach decisions or resolve disagreements. Individuals, *qua* moral agents, may have a resolved vocabulary in which to make life decisions, but this is a “functional” or “existential” terminus, not a theoretical or metaphysical one. Whether such a “final vocabulary” is a religious or moral one is a matter of decision, not discovery—of contingency, not necessity.

In the absence of a final or universal language, in any sustaining community there is a common language. This also means that no language, person or discipline can claim authority to settle a moral dispute in a different culture. This does *not* mean “laissez aller”: one needs to argue her case, try to persuade the other, having first framed some common point of reference. There is also a lesson in this fact. It is presumptive of anyone to imagine she has either competence or entitlement to intercede outside of her shared culture. Such intercession may be a political exercise of power; it cannot be one of moral justification. This does not mean I cannot in good conscience intercede in the context of a culture not my own, to save a life or oppose cruelty; only that my actions cannot be universally defended as moral. A shared language carries within it many levels of commitment, prescription, and justification. That and how we use language, engaged in mutual persuasion, constitutes a moral “form of life,” a community of values. A community becomes rule-governed not only in the language of command, but in the language of deliberation, negotiation, judgment and justification, and, on the other side, in the

language of excuse, mitigation, and forgiveness. Language is used to condemn and exonerate, to redeem and rehabilitate.

Rhetoric centers, then, in the acknowledgment of the diversity of means, and in the plurality of modes in which persons interact with language. It is not merely thoughtful action which defines ethics (thinking what it is we are doing), it is, as well, the linguistic foundation of community, of interaction between thoughtful persons—the grounds and interface of moral agents. Both are the legitimate domain of rhetoric as it impinges upon, overlaps, and intergrates the concerns of ethics.

II

A common ground between Plato and Aristotle regarding rhetoric, not merely as a refined art, but as a common and obligatory practice in human community, may be found in the *vita activa*.¹⁰—the shared activities open to all members of a community. There is nothing esoteric or especially refined, inquiring into this common ground. Whatever other dimensions rhetoric has, the point at which it intersects with ethics, and the point which both intersect with the deliberation and action of persons in community, is the coarse fabric of civic life. The relationship of language and speech to rule and action, functions to frame, facilitate, and resolve problems of conflict which arise in human community.

The meaning of moral discourse requires more than a logic of attribution and justification.¹¹ A circumspection is needed of the means by which a community of persons with differences is persuaded to adopt, sustain, defend, and amend a language that facilitates and governs their relationships and ideals.¹² It is not that philosophy must abandon logic for rhetoric; it must assimilate both into a broader conception of cultural activity which creates and sustains the informal polity from which values emerge.

The alleged “fault” of rhetoric for Plato was essentially a *moral* one: rhetoric fails to acknowledge truth as the primary value, function, and presumption of all language and discourse. Such an allegation complains that rhetoric presumes to replace logic, knowledge, and truth with persuasion, opinion, and belief. There are many ways to put the traditional case against the “popular but defective” appeals of rhetoric, and, perhaps, as many ways to defend rhetoric. A version of Aristotle’s defense in *The Rhetoric* will do for our purposes, where he persuasively argues that rhetoric does not oppose logic (“analytic”), but that, indeed, the presumptive confidence as well as persuasive force of discourse in general (and certainly the deliberative and juridical speech crucial to rhetoric) depends on the “logic” of argument.¹³ Aristotle argued that the “middle ground” of meaningful discourse is dialectic—that which binds the structure and concerns of logic and rhetoric to experience and world.

Theoretically and practically, rhetoric and ethics come together in dialectic. The structure and practice of argumentative inquiry, whether on one’s own or with others, form ethical values which in a given culture, for a given time, bind persons to finding common solutions to common problems. What makes this possible is the press of shared language.

Aristotle’s analysis, sufficient to neutralize the philosophical bias against rhetoric, also suggests a fruitful avenue of inquiry for an appreciation of rhetoric in the moral life of

community. To underscore the imperative of community, and to clarify the possible interdependencies and contributions which ethics and rhetoric can make to each other, we will focus our concern on public conversation. Ethics here becomes the domain, and rhetoric the idiom, in which problems and solutions are framed. The convergence respects freedom and persuasion without prescriptive sanction and coercion.¹⁴

The major cultural hurdle to any project of ethics in the modern world connects with a concern shared by the ancient and classical world. The stumbling block to both sense and sensibility in ethics is not relativism but privatism— alienation from community through the demise of genuine public discourse. This issues now, as then, in the lost possibility of a shared form of active life—the *vita activa*. In Aristotle’s distinction, a life of action, the highest universally available to all men, contrasts with the “higher” *vita contemplativa*, the life of the mind, a domain that does not engage common community and is only available to a few.

The philosophical bias against rhetoric from the beginning has been its association with sophistry, the art of persuasion grounded in the pejorative context of “making the worse appear the better case.”¹⁵ So construed, rhetoric persuades to one’s own advantage, indifferent to (in Plato’s view, at the expense of) the needs or well-being of community. Plato and Aristotle, in different ways ambivalent about rhetoric, both recognized the enormous import for either good or ill of its employment. Aristotle’s more favorable analysis of “deliberative rhetoric”¹⁶ as the critical understanding and use of *public discourse*, is the general and positive sense of the term as it is used in this essay.

For both Plato and Aristotle, the sophists’ use of rhetoric is objectionable primarily because it is alienating and debilitating of community. The sophist undermines the classical sense of the “polis” as a public space in which free and equal persons come to create and disclose, through word and deed, the fullness of their humanity.¹⁷ This is, no doubt, a special sense of the interdependency of individual and community, but as one which Plato and Aristotle shared, it bears weight as a classical paradigm useful for comparative analysis. Aristotle’s familiar view that one cannot be an individual except in community¹⁸ (a “grammatical” remark, as most of Aristotle’s are) perhaps requires argument. However, the priority of these correlative concepts suggests a major and prior order of obligation of the individual to the community, the necessary context in which the person becomes “visible” and unique. The joint complaint is that the sophists promoted a cultural strategy for successfully converting public space into an arena of personal competition for advantage, one where “community” is reduced to the hustle for self-promotion.

However natural it now seems to think in terms of a cost-benefit “enterprise” system of community, the *polis*, understood as the context for Socratic dialogue and the *vita activa*, represents a critical touchstone of inquiry. Despite the apparent difficulty (or impossibility) of instantiating the “polis” today, it is analytically useful to think through the possibility of *moral* community, one in which what we profess to value could hold true and find correspondence in the very structure and constitution of the community. Within such a context, and freed from the stigma of sophistry and private appropriation, rhetoric, even as, simply, the “art of persuasion,” can be seen in its proper and positive ethical light.

The gap between ethics and rhetoric is arguably not wider than that between morality and ethics, and the problem of disjunction is the same in both cases. The appeal of privacy and the

loss of community makes the individual vulnerable both to manipulation and alienation.¹⁹ In both cases, where the individual is isolated, she becomes a non-participant and suffers privation from the public realm of discourse. Where there is a loss of public conversation entirely, or where “public” discourse is a private affair of professionals who gain and retain political power through the manipulation of media (as is often the case in contemporary society), then we suffer a degeneration of both ethics and rhetoric. The “sophists,” now in technical service to a social or political elite, have “won.” Under these conditions, however, no one can win anything in the end, for the strategy is parasitic and nothing sustains the host.

The resolution of the ethical and rhetorical problem of privacy calls for a clear sense of viable community and of the *vita activa* that sustains individuals within that community. This, in turn, requires a conceptual integration of rhetoric and ethics—public discourse and public values. What was a matter of presupposition for the Greeks, is, in our time reversed; genuine value tends to be defined in the private sphere, activity valued only as it serves to escape from the common or the public. A brief review of classical Greek thought returns this focus and clearly presents the interdependency of public and personal, ethics and rhetoric, and also incorporates rhetoric and dialectic into the service of the ‘logos’. This “logic of truth” is no longer an eternal or overarching language, but is grounded in the common shared language which constitutes and sustains human community.

The exercise of practical reason, as philosophy now conceives of it, first centered in the activity of public (political) discourse. The discourse of Socratic inquiry shares common ground with Aristotle’s conception of the *vita activa*. Both acknowledge the definitive characteristic activity (*ergon*) of man in the exercise of practical wisdom (*phronesis*).²⁰ This latter “wisdom” identifies the critical exercise of public speech which constitutes human community. Rhetoric and ethics clearly converge in this vital enterprise. It will be useful here to consider the “public dialogue” connection between Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Plato’s early “Socratic” dialogues yoke speech and conduct in an intimate personal context—the pursuit of wisdom, *sophia*—in a way parallel to Aristotle’s connection of word and deed in his public philosophy. The latter more formally integrates the concerns of the *praxis* and *techne* of speech—rhetoric—with the end of Socratic inquiry. Aristotle’s centering of moral activity in the common and universal, the practical and applied domain of the *vita activa*, does not distort the Socratic intent and envisioned moral community. Both differ in an important way from the option of the mature Plato to the extent that they do not presuppose, nor perhaps allow for, moral experts. The universe of actual discourse for Socrates and Aristotle remains the publicly accessible—the domain of *endoxa*, public opinion.²¹ This is the domain in which ethical man, universal man, has his home.

I do not wish to diminish the importance of “transcendence” for any of these thinkers. It serves them, and us, in various utterly crucial ways: minimally, as the source of impulse, aspiration, and wonder, without which moral inquiry and community would lose point and life. Even so, we can leave, as does Aristotle, the *vita contemplativa* to another time, and merely here acknowledge its final importance as a *telos* concerned with the complete fulfillment of human possibility. For the purpose of ethics we must attend rather to the *arche* of public discourse: what is accessible, what *we* begin with, and on which we must *mutually* rely. Whatever the eventual outcome of the quest for and satisfaction of what is “higher” in the life of the mind, the *episteme*

remotely discernible, perhaps, to the speculative authority of the expert—ethics and rhetoric remain interdependently rooted in the common and universal convergence of speech and conduct.

Aristotle's firm and persuasive counsel locates the *arche* of all discourse in *endoxa*, public opinion.²² This becomes the starting point of any inquiry, including the scientific development of abstract notational languages in the pursuit of exact knowledge. He means by "endoxa" the current, developed consensus of historical knowledge, the residual dialectic of public discourse. It is this dialectic of experience which must form even the "first principles" of science, after which, science independently pursues its own ways and ends of systematic explanation.²³ In ethics, however, public opinion becomes itself the field of inquiry, the first task of which is to understand "what it is we are doing" in the exercise of public discourse. This conceptual connection between the language of science and ethics, in socio-political use, is not limited to Aristotle and ancient philosophy. It has been reconstituted for contemporary philosophy in Wittgenstein's reminder that all explanations must both begin and end somewhere in common ground and agreement. He argues that this is best represented in the notion of "ordinary language" and not in the notations of an abstract calculus.²⁴ The latter, in any event, has its derivations from and must always be grounded in the practical activity of shared language and form of life.²⁵

The relation of rhetoric and ethics is misconceived if it yokes together two heteronymous disciplines. A more useful procedure conceptually integrates two forms of inquiry concerned with public discourse. The focus of language as a social and political activity in Socrates and Aristotle, as well as the later Wittgenstein, testifies to the long tradition in philosophy which informs this task. There is both a practical and theoretical matter at stake in this undertaking. We are not likely to make any headway either in common understanding or in the resolution of actual value-conflicts unless, and until, we clarify and establish the common conceptual ground and cultural community of speech and action.

he immediate benefit of centering value-inquiry in ordinary language, in the activity of public discourse and the exercise of practical reason, is that no person or community is thrown into a final dependence upon either an abstract notation or the expertise of superimposed authority. Neither is there a forced resolution of those conflicts which beset pluralistic society. In a polarized and divided world, the first concern of public philosophy—of both rhetoric and ethics—is the repair of the rent fabric of language, the whole conceptual cloth required for a sense of shared values.

We must be careful here not to beg the crucial question of the relation between public discourse and both substantive and procedural values. A common sense view of value questions in major parts of both Plato and Aristotle find currency in the later Wittgenstein.²⁶ An unusual exchange in Plato's dialogue the *Protagoras*²⁷ has the mature sophist respond to Socrates—to the pressing questions of an impatient youth—that the teachers of virtue are those persons who are the teachers of language. By "teacher" here, Protagoras does not intend the specialized sense of the professional sophist who is the teacher of language; he means rather all those from whom one learns the common language which forms his life and community. There are many different interpretations of this passage,²⁸ but there is a tone of respect, unusual in Plato's treatment of sophists, written into this whole dialogue which suggests something special about this particular

sophist and his views. Whatever the extravagance or perversions of the professional “teachers,” Plato seems to acknowledge the elemental connection between ordinary language and values reminiscent of Alkibiades’ famous portrait of Socrates in Plato’s *Symposium*.

Aristotle confirms this in a detailed analytic expression of the same perspective. The whole of his public philosophy (*Ethics, Rhetoric, Politics*), is grounded in his composite insistence that Man is *defined* as an animal with speech, a *zoon logon ekhon*. Indeed, anticipating the insights of 20th-century philosophy of language, Aristotle claims that man not only looks at the world through language, but is brought together in community by this shared bondage to language. Man shows his organizational genius through his (linguistic) ability to constitute himself under rule governance in the laws of the state. The moral to be drawn from this, which Aristotle expresses in many different ways, is that only to the degree to which we share a common language can we share common values, share a form of life. Indeed, one who is cut off from this shared community of language—a barbarian, no less than one deliberately rejecting the form of public discourse of a given community—is like a piece isolated in a game of draughts, useless.²⁹ “Useless” is a word of wide circumspect for Aristotle, as evidenced by his reference, in a similar mode, to Homer: “...he who neither knows himself nor heeds The words of others, is a useless man.”³⁰

But, what *is* “public” discourse, and is there but one of them even within a given culture? Wittgenstein, the major modern figure who argues the case for the grammatical (logical) necessity of public language, speaks of “language games”³¹ as characteristic of and grounding mutual engagement in meaningful discourse. His concept of “family resemblances”³² further suggests an indefinite multiplicity of language uses, requiring concrete purpose and specificity of context to be grounded. For Wittgenstein, the very sense of language is anchored in a shared form of life.³³ Although there may not be one thing common to any particular set of concepts, there is a shared social activity and practice of language common to its users which accounts for how we can understand each other. Even when we cannot say what it is that our understandings have in common, we can indeed *show* mutuality and meaning through coherence of the complete activity of language use. Wittgenstein, again reminiscent of Aristotle, speaks of the “natural history of language” on which we can (and do) depend for an understanding of that form of life which draws together and expresses a consensus of the human.³⁴ Wittgenstein’s “social theory of language,”³⁵ is, in the complexity of its expression, what I take Aristotle to mean by the joint expressions of “practical reason” and “public discourse.”

Aristotle’s acute sense of the critical (dialectical) activity which shapes public language is his major contribution to the historical conversation in public philosophy. His systematic inquiry into public language and activity discloses rhetoric as the *techne* of “discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion.”³⁶

Aristotle’s public philosophy first frames the subtle but fundamental and linguistically binding relation between ethics and rhetoric. Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*³⁷ lists concrete and specific connections to ethics. Not all of these are convincing. For example, his claim that a speaker who has a proper knowledge and exercise of rhetoric would prevent the triumph of fraud and injustice surely requires moral concern as well as rhetorical skill. Our interest, however, is in the implication of the common ground between dialectic and rhetoric, not only as forms of

argumentative discourse, but as necessary bridges from the particular case to the universal, from the personal perception of value to the imperative of individual and communal interdependence.

When Plato finally addressed rhetoric as an independent topic, he was concerned to show the “ethics” of its employment—what were the good and bad uses of the instrument of persuasion.³⁸ Aristotle, rather, analyzes rhetoric as having both procedural and substantive ties to values through its relation to the dialectics of discourse. He thus views rhetoric as a source of values, not merely as an independent instrument of their expression. A major task of a public philosophy, in Aristotle’s terms, is to see how rhetoric (and dialectic) connect to substantive values and hence to ethics. Failing this, it may be as Plato seems to suggest in the *Phaedrus*, that the ethical question is a quite independent one.³⁹

Here as elsewhere, Plato is a source for argument on both sides. If, as suggested by Protagoras in Plato’s dialogue, we learn “values” as we learn the language, then, in turn, as users of the language, we shape the values we have. This is a familiar enough phenomenon in the law, where we are accustomed to the prescription of behavior and the ascription of rights. It is so in the sciences as well, where conceptual development extends the franchise of even ordinary language—at times dramatically changing what it makes sense to say about hearts and minds, no less than seaweed and space. Wittgenstein has persuasively argued that, with respect to the meaning of words, children for the most part are given neither formal definitions nor specific references in the language they learn. They simply (or not so simply) “pick it up,” and not just word by monitored word, but in whole chunks of usage.⁴⁰ Children learn language *games*, engage in an activity which, developmentally, involves grasping rules of use rather than behavioral adherence to correct reference. Wittgenstein argues a network of grammatical and logical concerns but shows, no less, that the learning of language is a dynamic and indeed inventive if not creative activity of *making* sense. Piaget’s account of the development of moral language makes a similar point, which may be cited as empirical corroboration for Wittgenstein’s conceptual thesis: children are active participants in the appropriation of rules under which they come to govern their own group and activities (in Piaget’s case, “marbles”).⁴¹ To press Wittgenstein’s point in Piaget’s context: children (in groups, at different ages, playing roles of both learners and teachers, litigants and judges) are not merely learning how to play marbles, they are learning the language game of making and following rules, they are already—in the words of the Protagoras—both teachers and learners of values.

This active and communal aspect of language and value is the ground upon which to build the more complex concern with moral and political community. The language activities of adult life have formation and continuing roots in just those simple situations of children learning language. The negotiated meanings of moral rules and expressions and the political compromise with which we resolve our differences are formed at the outset in the crucible of this speech activity. Whatever we go on to say about the meaning, refinement, or power of discourse must still have its anchor here.

This is not a modern insight. Both Plato and Aristotle clearly had a sense for the importance of communal linguistic activity in the shaping of value. The *dramatic* setting and characters of Plato’s “public” discussions (dialogues) are crucial, and not incidental, to the import of his philosophy,⁴² a concern paralleled in Aristotle’s centering of distinctive human activity in the informal polity of the *vita activa*. Whatever one may say of the late works of Plato,

his early and middle dialogues clearly model a dialectical enterprise of public discourse which requires the *actual* “touchstones” of knowledge in the dramatic “person” and character of different interlocutors. Socrates’ critical inquiry into the shared domain of conflicting values is plainly conducted in the “common” language of speech. His rule for the active generation of moral sense and sensibility requires only a community of persons of intelligence and good will interested in pursuing any question at all. Genuine dialogue commits each participant to the constituting virtues and practices—political and moral—of discourse. Simply to *engage in* dialogue to the end of understanding and discovery requires one to say, recognize, and sustain what is the case—that is, both speak and consistently respect the agreement of truth. Indeed, even a monologue, *to make sense*, must follow this “public” rule. This is, simply, another instance in support of Wittgenstein’s argument against the intelligibility of “private” language.⁴³

The connections between language and value, learning and use, thought and action, rhetoric and ethics, are all thus an elaboration based on the fundamental insight of the publicity of language. Supportive examples abound in the history of moral philosophy. For example, Kant’s “categorical imperative” (or “categorical declarative,” if we consider the commands of reason as “grammatical” remarks) is rooted in the same point: it minimally describes what one *is* doing, when one *is being* moral.⁴⁴ It does not constitute an hypothesis about what morality is, but declares the rational boundaries of sense in the language game of moral discourse, which in turn is bounded by and binds the rational community of language users. The latter are those who are “both subject and sovereign” in the “kingdom of ends”: that is, are both rule makers and rule governed within the language bonds of the community of discourse and values which comprise human society. This does not, of course, replace the fact of differences in experiences and perception, or the need for reasoned interpretation. Kant’s concern is groundwork of morals, not a consistency of _____ application.

Wittgenstein’s argument against “private language” thus forms a cornerstone for contemporary ethics no less valuable than its more advertised aid to epistemology.⁴⁵ Its moral and conceptual importance lies in reconnecting contemporary and classical thought, to show that what is necessary to a healthy moral sensibility is confidence in a public domain, a shared form of life, a community of language and action in which a continuing public conversation addresses common and changing values. Socrates and Aristotle, in their different ways, model public discourse, not to put an end to all disputes and conflicts, but to *center* disagreements in civil dialogue. Public dialogue, in either the Socratic or Aristotelian sense, does not eliminate differences, but centers and frames, against a common background, the possible or available terms of resolution in a particular case. An important characteristic of moral discourse, as distinct from moral decision, is that it does not mandate closure, but that participants *remain open* to change and difference. Understanding and toleration can be structured in, but not commanded. It is neither rational nor sensible to expect a moral *solution* to every problem manifest in human difference. It is, however, reasonable to actively pursue moral *resolution* of actual conflicts through continued public dialogue and civil persuasion. For this, both ethics and rhetoric are needed, grounded in the imperatives of language and community.

Most of what is worthy and useful in the history of ethics has been keyed to *both* reason and community—that is, to the task of mapping the logic of persuasion. As we have seen, even the apostle of individual autonomy, Kant, requires not only the conception of community but, in

the categorical imperative, requires placing any personal motive into the context of universal law—that is, into the justificatory frame of public discourse. This same model is perhaps more familiar in the Supreme Court, whose function it is not to definitively put an end to public debate over contested values (whether, for example, that of political dissent, abortion, or capital punishment), but rather to *center* a continuing discussion of the matter in the complex activities of the informal polity. Such public discussion will in its turn issue in legislative enactments, educational reforms, or social programs. The major task of the Supreme Court is to keep in mind, through both judgments and dissenting opinions, the greater good of continuing a republic responsible and responsive to the individuals who constitute it.

Whether we employ the modern Kantian focus on “right” and “rule,” or the paradigmatic Greek language of “good” and “life,” what is common is a procedural commitment to the persuasion of public discourse, and the substantive acknowledgement of the imperative of community.

IV

In this way, ethics and rhetoric, properly understood, establish and maintain public discourse in community. The interdependency of individual and community, of speech and action, must converge in a continuing public conversation. We have yet to consider the concrete problem of making such discourse effective in terms of participation and action. Can public discourse convert effectively to public dialogue? Can it issue in decisive policy and practice of import to the *ethos*, or public character, of the community? Once again, we will draw upon Aristotle’s analysis which defines rhetoric, within public discourse, as the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion.

Three concrete matters crucial to moral community and public ethics distinguished in Aristotle’s model are relevant to our concerns: the setting of agenda for policy and action, the preserving of value plurality, and the diffusion of possible violence. The first two relate to the “discovery of available means”; the latter follows from an understanding of persuasion itself, and, since this has ever been the focus of complaint against rhetoric, I will begin there. We must counter the general notion that rhetoric, limited to persuasion, lacks the force of legitimate authority to offset suspicion of its contamination from deceit and flattery.

The American philosopher and mathematician A. N. Whitehead once memorably remarked that a nation is civilized to the extent it substitutes persuasion for power. Adlai Stevenson echoed this in the public realm when, as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, he responded to criticism of the United Nations—that it was nothing but talk—with the rejoinder that talk, where its absence would lead to the unthinkable disaster of nuclear war, is of inestimable worth. He added that a motto might well hang above the Security Council Chamber: “Only keep talking!”

It is well to remind ourselves, in contexts of academic refinement of discourse, that the language (and values) of communal life, in which persons are deliberating, negotiating, and deciding issues, is predictably rough-grained. The normal means of setting and solving the community agenda do not provide for the leisured recognition of ultimate truths arrived at through the exact logic of studied inquiry. As the world goes, we must settle for less than the

ideal Plato promised when he dismissed the rhetoric of the sophists as an art defectively limited to appearance, opinion, and belief. The setting of modern politics is the shared world of appearance and opinion which, for better or worse, is its fundamental power and its agreed premise is the exercise of power. The basic modality of policy becomes coercion, and the state is that institutional authority within a society which has a legitimate monopoly on violence. Sophistic persuasion, under these ironic acknowledgments of modernity, seems an attractive, benign, and benevolent alternative, worthy of our deeper consideration.

With only slight distortion, one can depict the devolution of political culture from the Greek *polis* to the present as a movement from the aristocratic pursuit of truth through logic, to the professional exercise of power through sovereignty. Before the ethical theorist dismisses rhetoric as rude, mundane, or banal, it will be well to reconsider the whole contemporary fabric of democratic interest in the relationships of people in society. It would be interesting to speculate how Greek ethical theorists who disdained rhetoric might realign were they confronted, not with the philosophical option of leisured truth, but with the escalated technology of contested sovereignty. The important historical point which must reorient us toward the art of persuasion is, that since the advent of the modern state (theoretically with Bacon, Machiavelli and Hobbes), we may have good theoretical reasons to be differently disposed toward rhetoric and the infamous art of persuasion. I do not mean that persuasion, particularly in an era engrossed in media *techne*, is without public menace. But, as a mode of open public discourse, persuasion merits *prima facie* value over any policy mode without it.

Rhetoric as the art of persuasion, in short, has ethical import on the simple grounds that it is an alternative to, and substitutive mode for, coercion. To the extent that it may serve to diffuse conflicts from precipitating violence, it is arguably a policy imperative. Aristotle himself, in distinguishing deliberative and juridical rhetoric,⁴⁶ underscores the positive ethical character of a modality open to possibility and future action, one in which judgment is exercised in the absence of coercive sanction. Arnhart argues that in replacing even legal coercion with persuasion, deliberative rhetoric shows “the better side” of politics.⁴⁷ It is this aspect of “deliberative” rhetoric that we earlier identified as the primary structure and resource of informal polity. The imperative of public discourse increases with the loss of direct participation in, and lack of response from, formal government.

The means of persuasion discussed by Aristotle, include the elemental moral values of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, (argumentation, character, and passion). Rhetoric’s concern to clarify and sustain mediating dimensions of resolution between the polarities of formal reason and physical force recommends a liberality essential to the growth and health of a community. Finally, this understanding of rhetoric, committed to a plurality of means of persuasion, preserves options and possibilities of choice of vital interest to both the scope and depth of the public conversation. It provides at least a conceptual touchstone against the routine of bureaucratic entrenchment.

The interest in public philosophy, including ethics and rhetoric, finally cannot be satisfied with merely an historical or conceptual survey, no matter how complete. Although we can only provide a preliminary clarification of the basic conceptual frame which joins rhetoric and ethics in the sector of public discourse, we must at least try to address the current state of their union in the terms we have set out. The problem of “community” in contemporary culture is clear

enough.⁴⁸ Commensurate with the temper of a “pluralistic” mentality, there is, conceptually, no single referent, but rather many communities, different in both kind and degree, none of which seem comprehensive, cohesive, or fulfilling of even individual needs. Persons typically belong to, or more usually associate with, any number of “communities,” depending on variables ranging from current interests, age, and health, to job, profession, and family connection.⁴⁹

Exclusive identification with one community, much less a primary commitment *to* community, is not a recognizable priority of contemporary American life. There is evidence that the separate social and institutional agencies that have grown into the gaps left by diminishing community have further fragmented and undermined the autonomy of the individuals and group units (e.g. families), which professional managers now displace and service.⁵⁰ This underscores a second concern about diminished community: the loss of both the practice and sense of participation vital to a public realm, which now is believed to be either impossible or undesirable. Further, the emergence of technical managers of human resources, as well as institutional agencies systematically structured and insulated by the status of expert authority, does nothing to restore a sense of community and public discourse. What is created instead is a sense of isolation and client dependency.⁵¹

All of this points toward the final realm of “democratic” dependency, a population governed by a remote professional class of political managers, responsible, if at all, to various “interest groups” defined in terms of their conflict with, or disassociation from, other rivals for the distribution of public wealth. The formal polity, as well as the formalization—that is, institutionalization—of social resources has left the correlative concepts of individual and community almost without substance or meaning in contemporary life. What makes matters desperate is that the whole of this fragmented, atomized conflagration of private lives is orchestrated in terms of the illusion of community—a vast network of consumers—by the corporate commercial enterprise of mass media. Here, finally, we have come to the most insidious distortion of “rhetoric” in which private and isolated lives become wholly vulnerable to the manipulation of media that now controls values, in a sense familiar from Marx’s critique of the concentration of ideological power through control of the means of communication. Once again, we are under the rule that the teachers of value are the teachers of the language. If that language has now no other end than the manipulation of consumption—and periodic manipulation of the electorate—it is clear to see how far we have devolved into what de Toqueville, no less than Aristotle, feared in democracy.⁵² The modern “individual” is in danger of becoming nothing but an isolated pawn in an abstract, automated, commercial game of draughts.

There is no easy solution to these problems, the residuals of the decay and demise of community. Conceptually, however, a sense of shared community and language is both possible and necessary within which an informal polity may emerge. Genuine dialogue can then generate mutual concern for the quality of individual and community life. Aristotle’s requirement for genuine moral community and active political life, in the modern context, must be elaborated within this notion of an informal polity, a public space in which discourse is not managed by professionals, but in which some kind of active participation restores meaning to moral autonomy and public sovereignty.

To my knowledge, with the exception of Arendt and Habermas, there are few contemporary theorists who envision the practical realization of a universal public domain characterized by, or open to, universal participatory action. It is at this critical juncture we must hope that what is not apparently open to deed may still be open to speech. Is it possible that a developed *techne* of language may be structured to provide a universe of discourse in which an active public may participate? While modern governance allows fewer and fewer public actors, there is not a similar restriction to participation in public *discourse*.

Hannah Arendt characterized political philosophy as “the attempt to think what it is we are doing.”⁵³ She represented this as the imperative of modern civilized life—the imperative to connect, in a meaningful way—that is, political and public—thought and action. She characterized its opposite as the most banal and destructive form of evil: bureaucratic mindlessness. Adolf Eichman is Arendt’s example of this. His crime is aptly, if artfully, described as “thoughtlessness,” the inability to think. In this way the decay of moral community and individual responsibility is traced to the decay of *public language*, as well as discourse.⁵⁴ Arendt did not present this as an original insight but rather recalled the constituting *logos* of the Greek *polis*, the model of Periclean Athens, and the analytic center of Aristotle’s public philosophy. Thucydides’ account of Periclean rhetoric, cited also by Aristotle, is the paradigm of genuine political speech: “We weigh what we undertake, and apprehend it perfectly in our minds, not accounting words for a hindrance of action, but that it is a hindrance to action to come to it without instruction of words before.”⁵⁵

The major modern occasion for public interest and concern about rhetoric remains the popular focus on political speech, particularly in “media” elections. A continuing obstacle for the integration of political discourse into the potential public forum of education is the traditional and often warranted suspicion about political speech as the attempt to make the worse appear the better case. Too often “rhetoric” is dramatized as a manipulative art of persuasion and disuasion based on the familiar sophist yoking of rhetoric and self-promotion. All this has led to a deprecation of rhetoric as a tool of deceit and manipulation, and to a denigration of political life and language as well. It is important to see, however, that genuine political language can and does operate independently of professional politics in a way to *constitute* a “universalizable” public form of life. The import of language so used does not merely “move” people, or serve to connect thought to language. Political use creates a “universe of public discourse,” shared space in which individuals and communities can frame problems of mutual concern. This familiar process, if now less than decisive, forms the basis of values and language we in fact share. With critical attention, it could further structure and direct the deliberations and decisions of public policy, as well as public dialogue.

I said at the outset that a major problem with contemporary moral thought was that of privacy, of privation from public community. Such a community cannot exist in the absence of an effective public discourse. It is a familiar and general complaint that modern life is less a choice of retreat to the private sector than it is a forced alienation from the means of participation in public life. Morality, to be more than individual adjustment to the feeling of powerlessness to control the present or affect the future, can benefit from this public, participatory conception of rhetoric. Moral judgment is a winsome and whimsical thing in the absence of moral community,

which in turn requires at least the conceptual reality of a public world. Rhetoric, properly understood, opens the way to this larger dimension of moral life.

V Concluding Remarks

The convergence of ethics and rhetoric both hinges on and makes possible an understanding of the relation of moral life, community, and language. “Understanding,” here, is a broader notion than “knowledge,” traditionally explicated in science and as the subject of epistemology. The concept of “*verstehen*” suggests a more comprehensive and positive mode of apprehension and acquisition. This essay has employed a range of meanings of “understanding” from Greek philosophy to the present. Wittgenstein’s notion of “grammatically, make sense of,” and Kierkegaard’s “to appropriate” are modern expressions related to diverse conceptions in Greek philosophy. For example, the complex meanings of “understand” in Plato’s dialectical discourse, and Aristotle’s practical requirement that ethics can be understood only by being made a “part of the learner’s very nature” are parallel conceptions toward an effective public discourse.

Understanding, in its most direct sense, is rooted in the ordinary and accessible language of moral life and human community. The correlative philosophical principle is that the limited framing of an issue or question determines what sorts of things will count as an answer. The convergence of ethics and rhetoric thus turns on an assembly of “grammatical” remarks—about language and value, speech and action—arranged in such a way to form a perspicuous and coherent whole. The connections in question are “given” at the outset—that is, already present in the interlocking language and activity of ethics and rhetoric, and needed only to be understood and shown. The consequent convergence in public discourse and community depends on the coherent meaning of the two concepts and activities, not on special knowledge.

The second part of the case depends on something akin to an empirical question. The credibility of any remarks on ethics and rhetoric which focuses on the public character of language must be placed in context and hold practical plausibility. Ethical inquiry, although grammatically grounded, must also be empirically tethered—tied to the factive, not only the fictive. We thus connect the conceptual imperative of grammatical understanding with a continuing practical, factual context of presently lived lives. There is a certain risk in this. Many argue that it is not the task or within the competency of philosophical inquiry to question or decide the practical viability or political currency of language. Not to do so, however, is to leave open the possibility that, for example, grammatical distinctions clear in Greek thought are quaint residuals of no consequence for our own language and time. I have argued, rather, that the Greek analysis of “ordinary” language must be brought into line with changes in social technology. But meaning and sense work both ways: however much the structure of contemporary relationships may have shifted, it must be brought into a fundamental coherence with whole living traditions of language, thought, and action.

Classical paradigms are valuable in making conflicts in our present language intelligible and in measuring the direction of cultural change. Clarifying contemporary use shows what has been altered or rejected, exhibits inconsistencies, and dramatizes the cultural cost in the loss of moral, aesthetic, or spiritual sensibility. The goal of this confluence of classical and contemporary analysis is cultural integration of what is vital and of worth to the human project of civilized life.

But can it be said that a given direction in ethics is either better or worse? What if, in fact, there no longer exists a moral community in any genuine sense, or if there no longer exists a genuine “public” sphere in which the individual can participate? If no informal polity exists, what can provide the necessary grounding of moral life?

I said at the outset of this essay, excepting moral agency and community policy, there is no “final vocabulary,” nor overarching language in which to place current or connect past moral judgments and justifications. There is no basis on which to settle disputes about what will count as morally “correct” about final judgments, moral or otherwise. What can be achieved, however, is a centering of our concerns, so that genuine understanding of differences is possible and so that resolution of conflicts remains always a possibility. The dangers which beset this project are both cultural and theoretical. Those which can be addressed through an analysis of ethics and rhetoric are at least these three: privatism, relativism, and skepticism. These must be drawn into the dialogue of public discourse. All depend, as negative obstacles to moral resolution, on the viability of private options, sustained against a community. Such private options are tolerable, only as exceptions, and only if they at the same time acknowledge the priority of community for the sense of their own positions.

If we can secure this concession, it may be enough. The convergence of rhetoric and ethics in genuine political discourse and community provides a locus of involvement for all practical discourse which structures contemporary life. It settles the terms, if not the outcome, of our conflicts and disagreements. It is not everything—there is no everything—but it is something and it is essential.

Notes

1 Aristotle, *Topics* 899a 2, *Politics* 1253a 9, see also *De Anima* 536b 1. All reference to the words of Aristotle will be from *The Works of Aristotle*, W. D. Ross ed., Oxford University Press, 1928.

2 There is a tension of ambiguity in the work of both thinkers. Plato is critical of rhetoric at the same time he is perfecting its use in his writing, and we are shown major characters succeeding in the dialogues precisely in ways Aristotle will define as rhetorical—e.g., persuasion by virtue of the character of the speaker. So too, Aristotle limits the employment of rhetoric: it is excluded from “science,” but of major use wherever there is argumentative discourse between persons in community.

3 Plato's early dialogues, particularly the *Crito*, argue for the priority which community demands in order for individual life to have importance. This is supported throughout the dialogues by Plato's commitment to the drama of interacting persons in community and to the public character implicit in the dialectical format of his writing and thinking. Aristotle defines the human in terms of the imperative of community and language in the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, but also his remarks on the logic of discourse generally in the *Analytics*, *Topics* and *Rhetoric* all testify to the vital relation between speech and moral community.

4 Philosophical relativism is distinguished from moral relativism on “grammatical” grounds. The idea of *moral relativism* seems to confuse the problems of agency and action (where “relative” may simply announce default) with that of explanation (where “relative” serves a “meta-language”). In the latter we have withdrawn to a perspective of comparing and contrasting cultural “systems,” and different “vocabularies”—e.g., Eskimo vs. European. However, where the context is moral, one is either in a situation as a European, or not, and the complaint of relativism does not excuse choice.

5 Privatism - Christopher Lasch's book *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (Norton, New York, 1979) details the widespread contemporary *withdrawal* from public life.

6 We may, of course, change our minds and judgments in the “persuasive” course of deliberation. A common language prevails in the ordinary context of moral confrontation. The “revolution” of moral paradigms is rare indeed, and even, then, must grow out of the germ and structure of ordinary discourse.

7 L. Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*, transl. G. E. M. Anscombe, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1957) #269, #275. See also S. Kripke, “Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language” in L. Block, ed., *Perspective on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* Blackwell, 1981, pp. 238-312.

8 “Final vocabulary” is a useful locution which R. Rorty introduces (in an unpublished paper) to refer to both first order language of moral agency and second order language of metaphysicians—a vocabulary in which one can say “how the world is.” But there is a problem: what guarantees *this* vocabulary to be the one? And in what language can one express *that* fact or connection?

9 The familiar concept of “category mistake,” taken from the work of Wittgenstein, has wide use in Anglo-American analytic philosophy from Gilbert Ryle to the present.

10 Aristotle (as types given in the *Eudemian Ethics* 1216a 27-29; as “action” given in *Politics* 1265a 25).

11 Logical positivism, which reduced all language to verificational logic, enjoyed a brief span of credibility but gave way to “Linguistic Analysis” as a philosophical “school” which continues. More recently Davidson and Rorty argue the continuing need for a more complex view of language even within Anglo-American analytic and pragmatic philosophy, both influenced by the appeal of language reform under the paradigm of logic.

12 Wittgenstein will be a general reference throughout; a consensus account of his work is presented in *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations*, G. Pitcher ed., MacMillan, London, 1968.

13 For an excellent discussion of the connections among rhetoric, public opinion and public discourse, see *Aristotle on Political Reasoning: A Commentary on the “Rhetoric,”* L. Arnhart, Northern Illinois University Press, De Kalb, 1981, p. 28 ff.

14 *Aristotle on Political Reasoning: A Commentary on the “Rhetoric,”* Arnhart, p. 12 ff.

15 Plato. *Apology*, trans. W. Lamb, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1914, 18; cf. *Gorgias* 459; 463.

16 Aristotle. *Rhetoric* 1354 b.

17 For an analysis of the relevant linguistic and historical connections, see H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 19 ff. The discussion of “erga” (lasting “word/deed”) in footnote 22 is further developed on p. 27 ff.

18 Aristotle. *Politics* (1253 a 25), cf. (1371 a2).

19 The primary worry for the Greeks is that the art of persuasion will lead to political misuse in manipulation of the ignorant. The primary modern concern (whether de Toqueville or Marx) acknowledges the same problem, but emphasizes both the prior and resulting isolation and alienation of the “independent” individual.

20 The *Ergon* (function, characteristic activity) of man, is *phronesis*, prudence or practical wisdom. This central concept in Aristotle’s public philosophy finds its definitive statement in the *Ethics*, (1141 b23 - 1142 a31). cf. *Politics* (1277 b), and *Rhetoric* (1378 a 8).

21 This view clashes somewhat with much received and well argued scholarship. The case argued here rests on distinguishing Socrates, engaging in public discourse and dialogue with actual interlocutors, from Plato’s developed position, (after the *Meno*, certainly) of employing only the abstract

critical touchstone of “reason,” i.e. of imagined objections. This serves to integrate at least the *search for Sophia* (wisdom) within the reach of prudential concerns and practical affairs.

- 22 Aristotle. *Rhetoric* 1355 A 20-23. See also *Politics* 1253 a 5-18 and *Topics* 1606 17-23.
- 23 Aristotle, *Topics* 100 a 18 - 100 b 21; see also 101 a 37 ff.
- 24 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 3.
- 25 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #241 ff (p. 88); see also Wittgenstein, *Notes on Knowledge and Certainty*, ed. Anscombe and Von Wright, Oxford, Blackwell, 1969, #34, 140.
- 26 The transition from the Greeks to the present connecting thought and action is well-documented, e.g. in the major categories of words and deeds, dialectical rhetoric and politics. Following Cicero (who was following Aristotle), the tradition of humanism, from Latino to Vico, appropriates into the modern cultural context the idea that in *Words and Work* are found the two sources of human community and history. See E. Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980, p. 72.
- 27 Plato. *Protagoras* 327 a.
- 28 P. Friedlander, *Plato* (Pantheon), 1964, Vol. 2, p. 17, has a very different view, particularly harsh on Protagoras’ remark, which he assumes “to derive from the stock in trade of those who think that true education is superfluous or impossible.” There is however, a major issue of the need to distinguish not only *formal* and “true” education, but also whether or not *virtue* (not mathematics) can be taught. It is a separate question, from teaching, whether virtue can be *learned*. This distinction is not intended to argue against Socrates’ technique of critical confrontation, but only to question Plato’s exercise of absolute educational authority on the basis of a “synoptic vision,” a “final vocabulary.”
- 29 Aristotle, *Politics* 1253 a 6.
- 30 Aristotle, *N. Ethics* 1095 b 10.
- 31 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, “language games” as primary: #656; as what must be accepted, Part II, p. 200.
- 32 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #65-67.
- 33 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, p. 174.
- 34 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I, #25, #145. See also Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Foundations of Mathematics*, Oxford, 1964, I, 141.
- 35 D. Bloor, *Wittgenstein Social Theory of Knowledge*, MacMillan, 1983, Chps. 1-3.
- 36 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355 b 36.

37 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355 a 35.

38 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 260 D.

39 Even more than most of his dialogues, Plato's *Phaedrus* is notoriously open to radically different interpretations. Plato shows, as is his custom, two very different faces of discourse, first, in what is argued, and then, in what is dramatized. Although his arguments favor the rigorous *logoi* of *sophrosyne*, the self-control of restricted discourse, there is at the same time a dramatic plea for creative sharing as well. See M. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge, 1986, "Madness, Reason and Recantation in the Phaedrus," p. 231 ff.

40 Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford 1969 p. 17. See also *Philosophical Investigations* # 180 and *Zettel*, Oxford, 1967, #601.

41 J. Piaget: *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, in *The Essential Piaget*, H. Gruber and J. Voneche, New York, Basic Books, 1977, p. 159 ff.

42 P. Freidlander is one model of this kind of interpretation, but this is now a major tradition in Platonic scholarship and perhaps needs no further argument.

43 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, #243, 256, 269.

44 Kant, *Grundlegung Zur Metaphysik der Sitten* 1785, in *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Indianapolis Library of Liberal Arts, 1959, p. 38 (footnotes 8 and 9). In calling Kant's critical analysis of the moral law a categorical *declarative*, this simply brings out the later point of Wittgenstein without the "grammar" of expressions as binding.

45 E.g., S. Kripke, "Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Languages" in I. Block ed. *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1981, p. 238 ff.

46 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1355 b 36.

47 Arnhart, *Aristotle on Political Reasoning*, p. 6.

48 Christopher Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York, Norton, 1979) is one representative among many that document this. See also L. Trilling, "Authenticity and the Modern Unconscious" in *Commentary*, September 1971.

49 Most recently the book *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah, et al., New York, Harper and Row, 1985) has provided sociological pictures of the problems of association in a "pluralistic" society.

50 Keneth Kenniston, *All Our Children: The American Family Under Pressure*, the Carnegie Council on Children, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1977.

51 Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart*, p. 130 ff. This provides a moderate discussion of the therapeutic as a social disposition. For a more radical critique, see Thomas Szasz, *Law, Liberty and Psychiatry*, New York, MacMillan, 1963.

52 A. de Toqueville, *Democracy in America*, Lawrence trans., J. Mayer ed., New York, Doubleday Anchor, 1969, p. 305 ff.

53 H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, "Prologue," p. 5.

54 H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, New York, The Viking Press, 1963, p. 287 ff.

55 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, p. 40, Penguin Classics, 1954, trans. Rex Warner, p. 147.

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