Rhetoric is enjoying renewed popularity in Western culture. Users of the term rhetoric frequently define its nature and purpose, and the variety of definitions points up the essential dynamism that has marked its complex history. To the composition teacher, rhetoric is an "art" of writing which focuses the student's attention on the strategic nature of communication. To the literary scholar, it is a critical "apparatus" that covers all the techniques by which a writer establishes rapport with the reader. To the philosopher of language, it is a "study" of misunderstanding and its remedies. To the self-described rhetorician, it is a "method" of argumentation which looks to an audience to discover the means of persuasion.

The dynamic nature of rhetoric fascinated Richard McKeon. During his long career at the University of Chicago he investigated the intricate relationship between rhetoric and the extraordinary number of arts and sciences it has penetrated. The essays in this volume result from that lifelong pursuit of rhetoric's fundamental qualities. Moreover, these essays constitute the critical core of McKeon's intellectual activities and frame his consideration of topics and problems that at first sight seem far removed from any concern with rhetoric as it is commonly understood. For McKeon's perception of rhetoric goes beyond the verbal art of persuasion with which the
word is commonly associated. In these essays McKeon exposes a vibrant, vivifying rhetoric anchored in circumstances of application and understandable only in the context of ideas, assumptions, methods, and ends that condition its various uses throughout history.

Given the prodigious range of McKeon's intellectual curiosity, his longtime and pervasive interest in rhetoric suggests the unique place he assigns it in the scheme of humanistic arts. To limit rhetoric to an art of expression or to account for its continual rebirth in Western history by tracing the repeated appearances of its characteristic terms and concepts serves little purpose in his eyes. Rhetoric is not simply a verbal art; it is also a formative principle that both directs the systematic contemplation of any subject matter and contains the analytic tools necessary for the comprehension of diverse and often contradictory philosophic principles and systems. McKeon rejects the notion that rhetoric and philosophy are separate disciplines, each dedicated to different and even contradictory ends. Throughout history rhetoric has infused and ordered philosophy, and, more important, philosophy has often been an unknowing form of rhetoric. By bringing together McKeon's seminal texts on rhetoric and philosophy, this volume seeks to broaden the reader's appreciation of rhetoric as a central, critical method for the analysis of ideas.

McKeon produced few books, preferring instead the essay as the vehicle for his ideas. Among the approximately 140 essays he wrote between 1927 and 1985, one finds such a mixture of interests and directions that it is easy to see why commentators have had difficulty assimilating his work. Nevertheless, McKeon has profoundly influenced the method and content of our thinking about philosophy, rhetoric, education, culture, and the history of ideas. His long involvement with educators, philosophers, and academics from numerous countries and his leadership in international education circles exposed a large number of influential thinkers to his analyses and criticisms. Successive generations of his students have gone into the world as teachers, philosophers, and theorists, and their labors suggest the utility and scope of the rhetoric developed in these essays. McKeon's concern with the problems of communication in a culturally heterogeneous world contributed to the formation of UNESCO in the early years of the United Nations. In turn, his experience with international problems figured into his conception of rhetoric as a unifying, inventive method. These concerns inspired numerous conferences and seminars devoted to exploring the possibilities of world unity in an age of glaring political and ideological differences. Finally, his perception of the effects of technology on the grounding of knowledge have found expression in debates about the deleterious influence of rapid change on institutions of government, commerce, and education.

Richard Rorty's division of philosophy into two broad categories provides a framework for understanding McKeon's overall project. The first category, mainstream "systematic" philosophy, has been the preoccupation of most scholars and forms the subject matter of philosophy as a school subject. Centered in epistemology, it typically seeks one area, one set of practices that can serve as the paradigm of human activity. "In the mainstream of Western philosophical tradition, this paradigm has been knowing—possessing justified true beliefs, or, better yet, beliefs so intrinsically persuasive as to make justification unnecessary." Against this Rorty sets the second type of philosophic activity, peripheral "edifying" philosophy, which is based in a suspicion about the pretensions of epistemology.

On the periphery of the history of modern philosophy, one finds figures who, without forming a "tradition," resemble each other in their distrust of the notion that man's essence is to be a knower of essences. Goethe, Kierkegaard, Santayana, William James, Dewey, the later Wittgenstein, and the later Heidegger, are figures of this sort. . . . They have kept alive the historicist sense that this century's "superstition" was the last century's triumph of reason, as well as the relativist sense that the latest vocabulary, borrowed from the latest scientific achievement, may not express privileged representations of essences, but be just another of the potential infinity of vocabularies in which the world can be described.

Richard McKeon clearly belongs among these edifiers. In his

hands rhetoric is turned to an analytic purpose that sets the con-
tradictions and conflicts of philosophers and rhetoricians into a
manageable scheme for comparison and evaluation. McKeon ex-
plores themes not theses and, in Rorty's terms, is more interested in
"continuing a conversation rather than discovering a truth." \(^3\)

The purpose which I set myself, however, was not to present
and develop a "thesis"—the thesis of Aristotle or of any other
philosopher or even a thesis of my own—but to follow the evo-
lution of "themes" in which theses influence and transform
each other. The advantage of considering the themes within
which [philosophic terms] acquire a variety of meanings is that
interpretation is not limited to one aspect of discourse, and
alternative uses of "argument" which do not fit one's thesis are
not marked off automatically as erroneous or defective.\(^4\)

According to McKeon, philosophic thinking is manifested in four
ways: as personal statement, as social integration, as scientific for-
mulation, and as insight into fundamental values.

I had evolved a complete philosophy in the first sense, as per-
sonal expression, at the age of twenty. Indeed, I have never
since been able to construct a scheme of solutions of problems,
old and new, so nearly complete, certain, or systematic. . . . It
could be applied to any field of philosophy or to any subject
matter without the need of much effort to become familiar with
intricacies of the subject matter or its problems.\(^5\)

This complicated, ornate epistemology was badly damaged, how-
ever, by contact with philosophy

. . . in its second sense, in which it serves as an instrument to
treat problems in the specific forms which they assume in times,
places, and circumstances, and . . . in its third sense, in which
[philosophy] makes use of the methods and the accomplish-
ments of science to adapt itself as a form of knowledge to its
problems.\(^6\)

Inadequacies were further revealed, McKeon tells us, when he em-
barked on an inquiry into the problem of the "one and the many"
at Columbia University under the direction of John Dewey and Fred-
erick J. E. Woodbridge. These studies produced in him a clearer
sense of philosophy as a penetration of the problems of human val-
ues.

In the teachings of Woodbridge and Dewey the problem of the
one and the many is restated in terms appropriate to the prob-
lems of our times—not as a problem of essence and existence,
nor as a problem of reality and appearance, but as a problem
of truth and modes of formulation. The richness and diversity
required by the experience and the problems of our times . . .
revealed the tenuousness and poverty of the philosophic prin-
ciples with which I had been engaged.\(^7\)

The increasingly important role rhetoric came to play in Mc-
Keon's philosophic investigations marks his private passage from a
rational philosophy founded in universalizing vocabularies and de-
derived from fixed principles of being to a rhetorical philosophy based
in the circumstances of expression and conditioned by specific prob-
lems of action. His belief that the arbitrary separation of rhetoric
from philosophy colors how we come to terms with change and
transformation in the history of Western thought constitutes Mc-
Keon's most important contribution to contemporary philosophic
analysis. The divorce of rhetoric from philosophy, of expression
from content, prevents the intellectual synthesis essential to resolv-
ing the persistent problems of being, thinking, and acting. If we
enforce this split, rhetoric and philosophy bear little importance to
daily life. For McKeon, however, "philosophical issues are not
merely intellectual puzzles . . . a philosophy is called upon to il-
luminate human problems of freedom and its absence, of life and
death." \(^8\) Rorty's edifying philosophy is for McKeon rhetoric in its
highest form.

Although these essays share certain concerns and considerations,
they differ in the subject matter they treat, the principles they de-

scribe, the sources they draw upon, and the intentions they fulfill. No single essay contains the overarching statement of McKeon's philosophy of rhetoric. Rather, each sketches a particular reification of rhetoric by examining the philosophic conditions and pragmatic applications that unite to produce concrete expressions of rhetorical theory and practice. This approach produces a history of rhetoric that emphasizes rhetoric's volatility throughout Western history.

One theme that McKeon explores is that the many renaissances of rhetoric have shaped and been shaped by new ideas and perceptions of nature, life, art, freedom, truth, history, knowledge, and science. McKeon's history of rhetoric complements but vastly differs from the standard history. This traditional, overt history, the "pedantic explorations of . . . an art of persuasion and belief," preoccupies scholars who treat modern rhetoric as the heir of traditional terminologies, functions, and forms. Since it fails to acknowledge the differing matters and often contradictory ends marking rhetoric's earlier uses, it takes little note of "the consequences of basic philosophic differences" that determine the place of rhetoric in the larger scheme of human knowledge. Shifts in the application of rhetorical concepts are usually regarded as arbitrary because underlying assumptions about the nature and function of rhetoric are lost in the analyses of similar terms. Invention, disposition, and style, for example, are examined as if they have fixed, unalterable meanings, while the new meaning given the original conception in the context of its novel application generally passes unnoticed. Modern rhetoric is treated as derivative rather than as original or inventive and is assessed and applied according to its theoretic affinity to ancient models. And though our rhetoricians often employ the same key terms in their definitions of a verbal art of rhetoric, they often do so to different ends. The ambiguity surrounding the vocabulary of rhetoric translates into confusing descriptions of its past, since "communication," "discourse," "intention," "audience," "argumentation," "persuasion," and "invention" also serve as the linguistic signposts for tracing rhetoric's historical development.

McKeon's history of rhetoric, in stark contrast to this traditional history, does not have as its subject an art confined by fixed form, content, or terminology. Rhetoric is an art that lacks a unique subject matter but can only be understood in the context of specific uses and ends. This conception liberates the historical analysis of rhetoric from classically determined functions and forms. According to McKeon, a modern history ought to make meaningful the often contradictory purposes assigned to rhetoric in the arbitrary scheme of the sciences and arts. Properly developed, "such a history . . . might give significance and lively interest to the altering definitions, the differentiation of various conceptions of rhetoric itself, and the spread of devices of rhetoric to subject matters far from those ordinarily ascribed to it." 9

The traditional histories of a verbal rhetoric attempt to fix the past through microscopic inspection of rhetoric's role in the formation and spread of ancient cultures. Rhetoric, an archaic phenomenon, becomes clearer the nearer we approach its origins. McKeon's history is telescopic, projecting a role for rhetoric based on an understanding of the transformations and applications evident in past uses. The investigation of rhetoric along these lines reveals that we have not "moved away from the rhetorical world of classical antiquity" 10 but that the modern world is a product of rhetoric's pervasive and enduring influence.

McKeon's perception of rhetoric can be most vividly traced in the Middle Ages, when applications of rhetorical terms and concepts moved far afield of their classical subject matter. This no doubt will seem odd to the reader imbued with the traditional conception of rhetoric. How can an essentially argumentative art find room to grow during a period when universal truth conditions all aspects of life? Most modern historians beg the question by simply tracing the influences of the ancient rhetoricians and poets on medieval arts of letter writing, preaching, and poetry. Cicero's five divisions of rhetoric— invention, disposition, style, memory, and delivery—serve as focal points for the criticism of peculiar literary forms. The history of medieval rhetoric is marked, according to this approach, by a withering away of the exalted position the art enjoyed in Greece and Rome.

McKeon attempts to recover a history that reduces "the welter of

changes in rhetoric to a significant historical sequence." His analysis of rhetoric in the Middle Ages elaborately investigates the reflexive relationship between rhetoric, poetry, philosophy, and the other arts. McKeon's analysis opposes traditional histories by seeing rhetoric as a dynamic method rather than a static art. All rhetorical theories, classical, medieval, or modern, are of interest for the light they shed on philosophic disputes and for the transformations they work in concrete application. When rhetoric acquires a theoretical basis, questions of philosophic significance penetrate and inform arts of expression. When philosophy acquires a pragmatic intention, questions of rhetorical significance modulate and guide systems of judgment. By demonstrating that rhetoric can be fruitfully examined as the complex interplay of theory and practice, McKeon challenges the notion that the history of rhetoric has as its goal the development of a unitary body of knowledge "by more or less adequate investigations of a constant subject matter."

Common opinion holds that in the Middle Ages rhetoric all but died as a vital art. Medieval scholars vary in their adherence to this judgment, but most subscribe in some degree to the complaint that the works that have come down to us are nothing more than a "misapplication and perversion . . . of terms traditional in ancient rhetoric." Modern commentators seem to lament that there was "no medieval rhetorician who really advanced the study," consequently, they erect a tradition of rhetoric in the Middle Ages around disparate works on poetic and prosaic composition, preaching, and letter writing to promote the view that, busy as they were, medieval scholars never fully appreciated the ancient art with which they fiddled. One must await the Renaissance for the resumption of substantial work in rhetorical theory.

For McKeon, though, these analyses produce only "a brief and equivocal history of rhetoric in the Middle Ages." His purpose is to move the consideration of rhetoric beyond the well-worked ground of tracing Cicero's influence on medieval arts of composition and performance. To be sure, Cicero "fixed the influence and oriented the interpretation of ancient thought, Greek as well as Latin" during the Middle Ages. But rhetoric proceeds along another less obvious line of development in the tradition of philosophers and theologians "who found in Augustine a Platonism . . . formulated in terms refurbished and simplified from Cicero's rhetorical distinctions." Moreover, Cicero supplied a treatment of definitions and principles which informed a third line of development, the tradition of logic. Medieval thinkers in all the arts and sciences turned to rhetoric for methods, distinctions, and conceptions—not simply the ancient subject matters or vocabularies—to vivify their work.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance many of the oppositions and agreements of theology and dialectic, no less than the problems internal to each, were stated in language borrowed from or influenced by rhetoric and reflected theories by which rhetoricians had in antiquity opposed philosophers and logicians; surprising parallels were disclosed in theology and dialectic as well as in other arts and sciences . . . expressed in language familiar to the rhetorician.13

Rhetoric was "the source of doctrines which have since become the property of other sciences . . . and of particular devices which have been applied to a variety of subject matters." The practical uses of rhetoric, in the Middle Ages and the present, have identified it with and opposed it to logic and dialectic, sophistic and science, civil philosophy and law, psychology and literature, and philosophy itself. McKeon believes that to confine rhetoric to a single subject matter denies it a vital history, in the Middle Ages or at any time: "... the innovations that are recorded during that period in the arts with which [rhetoric] is associated suggest that their histories might profitably be considered without unique attachment to the field in which their advances are celebrated."

This principle directs McKeon's examination of poetry and philosophy in the Late Middle Ages, when philosophers often held conflicting opinions about the nature and purpose of poetic composition. Some felt that poetry "approximates closely the subjects and problems of philosophy," that the poet expresses the highest

ideas about man, his actions, and nature. Others claimed that the constructions of poets are the chief sources of error and immorality, that philosophy alone explicates the truth. Still others held that poetry is completely lacking in doctrine and that philosophy requires a precision of proof uncharacteristic of poetic forms. In the face of these medieval disagreements, it is misleading to reduce the distinction between poetry and philosophy to differences in modes of expression, rigor in treatment, or usefulness. "Despite the temptation to claim the scientific method for literary criticism," poetry and philosophy cannot be classified as "purely natural phenomena or things," since they are artificial constructions that express ideas about art and life. Philosophy is often cloaked in poetic form, and both medieval poets and philosophers worked on themes and problems drawn from the conflict between reason and faith. Poetry and philosophy share similar subject matters and purposes in the Late Middle Ages, and the common method binding them together "is rhetoric, which assumes many forms and uses in the twelfth century." Because rhetoric provided the link between doctrine and aesthetic, the determination of its history along lines laid down by McKeon reveals the important connection between thought and expression. In this, medieval and modern times share a common disposition: "... for poetry is related to philosophy today in methods and matters as different as existentialism, Marxism, and pragmatism, and it has returned to themes ... which recall that man is in a grave predicament, that words are ambiguous ... and God is mysterious."

Rhetoric informed methods for resolving conflicting assertions in canon law, theology, and philosophy. This facet of its medieval development is seen in the shift of rhetorical terms and concepts from questions of law to questions of faith. In the twelfth century rhetoric was directed to problems of sacred theology by Peter Abelard, whose Sic et Non adapted the traditional forms of canonic disputation to matters of mystic ambiguity. Abelard proposed that even the apparent doctrinal contradictions in the Fathers of the Church could be resolved through the judicious application of dialectic and rhetoric. Abelard was condemned to silence for his innovation, but his method was picked up by numerous imitators and controlled the curriculum of the schools in one form or another for three centuries.

Rhetoric also guided the historical, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical modes of scriptural interpretation. Augustine's On Christian Doctrine introduced a rhetoric aptly suited to isolating and transmitting universal Christian truth through an unfolding, variable human history. His distinction between divine and human things and signs provided the matrix upon which medieval commentators worked out their inquiries into ethics, the nature of sin and redemption, the purpose and structure of sermons, the character of preachers, and the analysis of audiences. Clearly, rhetoric enjoyed a lively and fecund history during the Middle Ages.

McKeon examines rhetoric's pervasive role in medieval arts and sciences to reinforce the notion that our knowledge and use of rhetoric must be distilled from its obscured history. He plays upon the ambiguities that have come to surround rhetoric's traditional nomenclature in order to demonstrate that the history of rhetoric is at heart the story of new applications in changed circumstances for borrowed words, concepts, and distinctions. The exercise is dizzying, especially if McKeon is read in terms of the traditional history of rhetoric, where ancient definitions form the standard of comparison. He investigates the shared heritage of rhetoric and philosophy, for example, by examining varying notions of a variety of rhetorical terms and concepts, especially commonplace.

The idea of the commonplace originated with Aristotle, who was the first to distinguish between the general nature of rhetoric and dialectic and the special nature of science, or philosophy.

Aristotle had differentiated rhetoric sharply from philosophy, and rhetorical persuasion from demonstrative proof, by means of the questions and the places proper to each. Rhetoric is a counterpart to dialectic. Rhetorical and dialectical syllogisms are concerned with places common to many sciences and subject matters. Proper places, on the other hand, are derived from propositions peculiar to each species and genus of things. ... To the extent that proper places are used, a science is produced different from rhetoric and dialectic, and if first principles are
encountered, the discussion has moved from rhetoric . . . to the science of which they are first principles.17

Subsequently, these conceptions were inverted. Rhetoric came to treat specific questions—this case, this cause, this effect—while philosophy and science came to treat general problems.

As devices of rhetoric, commonplaces have often served contradictory purposes. At times, they have referred to the seat of arguments and have been closely allied with the traditional rhetorical division of memory. At other times, they have referred to heuristic devices that suggest qualities, characters, and relations appropriate to all arguments. More recently, they have been identified with unvarying and repetitious formulae that offer an “easy substitute for the invention of a pertinent solution.” Commonplace invention thus has alternately encompassed common categories, distinct relations, and universal truths. Moreover, commonplaces have been applied by philosophers and scientists to construct histories of their fields, by moralists to order fundamental values, and by politicians to define their communities.

The history of commonplaces is marked by degradations, narrowings, transformations, and novel applications. When applied to memory, the commonplaces threatened to become as numerous as the things remembered. Commonplaces moved from meaning an empty place, as an aid in the ordering of things, to meaning a special matter, or subject, to be discussed. As instruments of discovery, commonplaces have shifted back and forth, from devices used for discovering something unknown to formulae used for recalling stock quotations to be applied in a familiar manner. As a result, “commonplaces were memorized rather than used for invention, and they were recited when the occasion arose rather than used when the circumstances required.”18

Invention and judgment have been joined at times within rhetoric and at other times within philosophy. They have also been separated to form distinct arts of knowing and telling. Invention has referred to things as well as words and has moved into all sciences and arts. Judgment is of characteristic qualities and virtues as well as of effective arguments. It directs the critical evaluation of behavior, experimentation, and first principles. For “. . . judgment adds to the demonstrative arts of deducing from assumptions, the deliberative arts of examining consequences, and the judicial arts of falsifying alternatives, while invention extends from the construction of formal arguments to all modes of enlarging experience by reason as manifested in awareness, emotion, interest, and appreciation.”19

The movement of traditional terms of rhetoric from arts of eloquence, where they determine the shape of arguments, to arts of analysis, where they determine the proper scope of subjects and the methods of inquiry, indicates the presence of rhetoric as a dynamic tool shaping modes of thought. This history has been determined to a great extent by the ancient distinction between knowing and doing. The problematic separation of arts of knowing from arts of expression led Cicero to attempt to rejoin wisdom and eloquence in a “civic” philosophy controlled by the reformation of a rhetoric appropriate to Roman law. His effort has been repeated many times in circumstances far removed from classical legal culture. Rhetoric has expanded and contracted to fit the preferences of individual philosophers who have set our to construct intelligible systems of discovery and explanation. In the curriculum of the schools rhetoric has been assigned a much reduced role when the motive has been to establish discrete disciplines marked by unique subject matters and methods. Conversely, rhetoric has organized the entire course of study when the goal has been to bridge the gap between distinct subject matters. “When the philosophic arts are conceived of as arts of being or of thought, rhetoric is not treated as a philosophic art, although it is used extensively in the controversy and refutation which constitutes communication among philosophies. When the philosophic arts are arts of communication and construction, rhetoric is made into a universal and architectonic art.”20

Inventions, discoveries, and judgments—of things, occurrences, phenomena, actions, accounts, systems, and statements—are expressed in language and genres of discourse. We determine our com-

18. “Creativity and the Commonplace,” p. 28.
monplaces, whatever our purpose, through fictive narration, objective description, articulated argument, and sensible exposition. In these essays McKeon points the way to explorations of the connection of language to subject, not only in philosophy but also in politics, religion, art, and science. The history of Western thought turns on the successive rediscovery and novel application of monplaces freed from the mindless repetition of things past, and rhetoric emerges as the crucial force in intellectual change. “The relevance of the methods of rhetoric to the problems of philosophy is due in part to the continuity of the influences, in which the methods of philosophy have influenced the methods of rhetoric and been influenced in turn by them, and in part to the orientation of contemporary problems to issues particularly suited to the methods of rhetoric.”

Clearly, rhetoric can be more than a verbal art, although expression has always been an important element. Most modern rhetoricians believe that words determine actions, that language is effective and affected. Rhetoric, for them, is essentially argumentative in structure and intent. As such, it has been widened to explain not only speech making and persuasive writing but also the argumentative aspects of film, fiction, and the entire range of artistic expression.

McKeon pursues another line of investigation. Invention refers not only to words but to facts, data, methods, and systems. Rhetoric is more than an expressive art; it is an organizational principle that provides the framework within which we can reveal and arrange the significant parts of any human undertaking. Ideas are expressed in structures developed to guide action—political communities, educational systems, business enterprises—as well as in the artifacts of literary or artistic creativity. Language is still an effective tool, but it follows from the creation of new ways of conceiving and acting upon change. That is, it trails the invention of new devices of science and new forms of cooperative action. The technological world literally “comes to terms” with the new after it has been uncovered by the application of scientific methods of discovery. Technological specialties shape our language, and thereby give rise to new ways of knowing, telling, doing, and being. Consequently, our monplaces need to be innovative rather than repetitious because discovery “is not the simple fitting, or passive addition, of further items of information to a collection of data or to a structure of theory.” Discovery leads to the creation of new forms, expressions, and ways of thinking rather than to doctrines grounded in the past.

McKeon believes that the expansion of rhetoric from an art of expression to a principle of organization makes possible the appreciation of diverse cultures, systems, and disciplines, since rhetoric seeks monplaces that transcend the narrow confines of special perceptions. The power of rhetoric resides in its ability to discover, in the materials at hand, language and modes of interpretation suitable to immediate circumstances. “The new art of rhetoric is the art of discovery. It is not a heuristic method or radical interpretation but an art of topics or a selection of elements which opens the way to the recognition of new facts and to the perception of unnoticed structures or sequences.”

McKeon calls this rhetoric an architectonic productive art, a description he draws from Aristotle who “gave a technical meaning to the ordinary Greek expression architecton—‘architectonic artist’ or ‘master craftsman’—and used it in his schema of the organization of the sciences.” McKeon’s use of the term shares some features with modern usage, where “architectonic” carries a special meaning of structural design or skill in architecture. McKeon’s sense of the word, however, is a residue of the more ancient definition. The rhetorician and the architect exist at two levels. As technicians, they are skilled with the tools of expression special to their trade—lines and planes for the architect, words and arguments for the rhetorician. As master craftsmen, though, rhetorician and architect transcend their specialties to take on greater responsibilities. They envision the formal design, coordinate the work of specialists, assess and assign the raw materials, and produce by their efforts the final product. An architecton—rhetorician or architect—employs an art different from that of the user, who knows only the form and func-

tion, because the master craftsman also knows the matter and makes the product. In Aristotelian terms, he commands the four causes: the formal, efficient, material, and final.

Rhetoric has always possessed an architectonic function, and it has grown or contracted according to the influence the art has assumed in relation to other methods and sciences. When rhetoric is a verbal art of persuasion, it is architectonic of attitudes and productive of arguments and words. Cicero divided the art of rhetoric into five parts and made disposition a major component. Once the key points have been discovered in the case at hand, they must be ordered to lead an audience to the desired conclusion. Ordering involves more than arguments, of course, since it also refers to the words and examples within the context of syllogistic structures. In terms of an audience the disposition of arguments produces the inclination to believe or disbelieve, accept or reject. When rhetoric moves beyond the realm of a verbal art, the concepts of disposition and ordering assume a more universal nature. They drop the specific subjects of argumentative communication and pick up the characteristic contents of whatever art or science they join. Cicero provides a ready example of this sense of disposition, for his "use of rhetoric as a productive architectonic art laid down the structure of a program of education and culture designed to reunite eloquence and wisdom in action."

Moreover, rhetoric is architectonic because, like Aristotle's Politics, it has its end in action, not knowledge. Since the "architectonic arts treat ends which order the ends of subordinate arts," rhetoric structures thinking about any subject matter. In this it is distinguished from all the other arts and sciences, including politics. "For Aristotle rhetoric is not a 'science,' because each science has a particular 'method' suited to its particular subject-matter and operative according to its proper principles." McKeon develops this point in the brief histories that open most of these essays. Rhetoric lacks any special subject matter, although its transmission in Western culture has always been through its association with other arts and sciences. Rhetorical terms and concepts have influenced and been influenced by many disciplines and circumstances. Indeed, circumstance itself is a rhetorical concept that has enlivened philosophy, law, and science. Innovation, in any discipline, arises by means of rhetoric, when old terms and ideas are transformed by new problems and uses. Invention, first linked to the creation of arguments, now stands for creativity in every realm of human thought and action.

Rhetoric is productive because it leads to actions, systems, and structures. In Aristotle the productive sciences, like poetics, have particular content and result in things made or produced—plays, poems, artworks, and the like. Architectonic arts, in contrast, lack special products and focus on the means of production. Since Aristotle, however, "the sciences have become . . . sources of production, of new matters and new forms, in need of organizing methods and principles." The Aristotelian differentiation of the practical, productive, and theoretical arts and sciences breaks down in the technological age because technical innovation forces changes in areas remote from the sciences that first gave rise to new tools and devices. Invention in the technological age carries with it consequences in practice and product as well as in theory.

The explosion of new techniques has wreaked havoc upon static institutions of government, commerce, and learning because modern forms of special knowledge cannot be guided by the principles of any one science. Technology reinforces the disruptive separation of words and things by creating special places for action. Disagreements between experts have a way of becoming political and social controversies to be resolved by generalists. The age of technology militates against the orderly institutions of Plato's Republic and we cannot rely on a select group of guardians to make our decisions for us. McKeon's conception of rhetoric as an architectonic productive art provides an intellectual principle to organize considerations of change and its attendant dissonance in the modern world. Verbal rhetoric produces only words and arguments reinforcing differences. McKeon's rhetoric collapses the distinction between words and things and seeks to remedy the division between wisdom and eloquence by inverting the traditional relationships of verbal rhetoric. Actions, situations, and organizations lead to the creation of new terminologies. Words do not determine actions; they bridge the gap between experience and the novel. Or, to put the matter another way, "The commonplace of commonplaces is the place in which
the certainties of the familiar are brought into contact with the transformations of innovation." 25 McKeon's is a rhetoric of invention rather than expression, and familiar commonplaces are transformed into instruments for perception, creation, arrangement, discursive exploration, and inclusion.

It is appropriate that commonplaces be transformed from collections of fixed and established, communicable clichés to neutral sources of new perceptions operative in new directions. Rhetoric again has assumed a dominant place in our thought and action. Whereas the rhetoric of the Romans took its commonplaces from the practical arts and jurisprudence and the rhetoric of the Humanists took its commonplaces from the fine arts and literature, our rhetoric finds its commonplaces in the technology of commercial advertising and of calculating machines. 26

The exigencies of a technological age force us to deal with problems of communication that transcend and subsume the requirements of mere persuasion. Rhetoric is productive of actions as well as words, and it connects disparate things—cultures, disciplines, sciences, languages, ideologies—by extrapolating commonality from the uncommon. The conception of rhetoric as an instrument of cohesion breaks free of earlier formulations of rhetoric as a separate art: form is related to matter, presentation to content, agency to audience, and intention to reason through the inquiry into what is the case, rather than to semantic analysis of what somebody else has said.

Rhetoric emerges in the technological age in two distinct, related forms. As a verbal art of persuasion, it shrinks to a collection of commonplace techniques of argumentative communication. Writing, and communication in general, is seen as an action in itself. As an inventive, organizing principle, rhetoric grows to meet the demand for unity amid technological fragmentation. Communication in any form is a residue of action. The twofold history of rhetoric shows that at every stage in its development in Western culture, rhetoric operates simultaneously at the verbal and the architectonic levels. In America, where culture is expressed in productive activity dominated by technological innovation, the new rhetoric grows out of and subsumes the traditional verbal art. Three realms of practical action—education, business, and politics—exhibit most clearly how rhetoric's twofold nature operates.

In education, the verbal art of rhetoric is the special discipline of the humanities and, as such, exacerbates the persistent division between words and things. Verbal rhetoric is an instrument of articulation and analysis which focuses on the products of human expression. It is used to teach writing, speaking, and literary criticism. In business, verbal rhetoric has found a place in corporate communications and advertising. The techniques of persuasion, culled from the long history of argumentative theory, are used to define audiences and sell the products of other arts and sciences. Verbal rhetoric is an instrument of differentiation and accommodation which seeks to match commercial appeals with special audiences. In politics, verbal rhetoric has found a place in legal reasoning, legislative debate, lobbying, and propaganda. It is an instrument of communication and negotiation which determines the realm of the possible in the allocation of limited resources among competing interests. The modes of commonplace invention focus on immediate judgments and decisions in order to convince dubious audiences of the similarity between present problems and past circumstances.

In each instance rhetoric is used to produce appropriate words and arguments. By searching for historical terms that can be made to fit existing conditions, rhetoric communicates established judgments or interprets what someone has said in light of what is known. It passively receives its content from precedent circumstances and uses. Most important, rhetoric proceeds here as a verbal principle, employing traditional language and concepts to configure new problems.

Architectonic rhetoric, however,

... should become a universal art, an art of producing things and arts, and not merely one of producing words and arguments... In an age of technology the diremption to be removed is the separation of theory and practice by the

26. "Creativity and the Commonplace," p. 34.
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constitution of a technology which is theory applied, the logos of techne. We seek to produce it in concrete experience and existence by rejoining reason and sense, cognition and emotion, universal law and concrete occurrence.27

In education, architectonic rhetoric organizes the entire curriculum of study as well as courses in writing, reading, and speech. Rhetoric has always been associated with systematic education. Cicero’s insistence that an orator be schooled in philosophy was intended to guarantee that the power to move men to act would derive from a knowledge of the nature and consequences of right action. The wise man who cannot speak is seldom helpful, he warned, and the eloquent man who lacks wisdom is always dangerous. Augustine sought to empower the Christian preacher to discern the truth among the flawed signs and ambiguous terminologies, analogies, parables, and examples of Holy Scripture by means of an interpretive rhetoric that organized learning and life in the Christian world. In the Renaissance Peter Ramus laid out several disciplines in his scheme for a rational system of education. Although he formally assigned style to rhetoric and placed invention under logic, the unifying framework for his division of the sciences is based on the five Cicernian parts of rhetoric. Richard McKeon, Robert Hutchins, Ronald Crane, and others developed a pluralistic and practical course of study at the University of Chicago in the 1930s which sought to overcome the tendency of interdisciplinary studies to succumb to subordination to one well-established or popular discipline. As McKeon explained: “I inclined to argue for a broader conception of the liberal arts... one that would strive to combine universality of judgment with particularity of application of rules by joining considerations of the functions of liberal arts as ideas and actions to their functions as words and things.”28

Architectonic rhetoric reorients the student to discover previously unnoticed connections between established disciplines. Current interest in “writing across the curriculum” is one expression of rhetoric’s potential: it seeks to move responsibility for expression back into academic departments where a premium has been placed on “knowing well” at the expense of “telling well.” Architectonic rhetoric rejoins knowledge and expression by incorporating the organizational aspects of rhetoric into the design and execution of all courses of study. It produces a pluralism of disciplines by establishing modes of discovery and discourse common to all sciences and arts.

In business, architectonic rhetoric organizes work among technologies isolated by their different languages, methods, and ends. By moving out of the marketing and sales division, where it is employed as a verbal art, rhetoric informs the conduct of commercial enterprise in all its phases. Modern business suffers from the fragmentation of internal processes and external audiences because the historic dialogue between special knowledge and common opinion in the technological age lacks an appropriate structure for its conduct. Communities of knowledge form around discrete and incommunicative special interests while control of rapid change, which spreads beyond the boundaries of its origin, is the product of chance, not art, in our time. The rise of “high tech” enterprise illustrates the point. Most successful undertakings are the work of a very few people who begin with a vision, however defined, and organize the instruments for its attainment according to ongoing adaptations to changing conditions. In other words, they conduct a dialogue between what is known and what can be done. This dialogue is shaped at every stage by “the calculation of uses that might be made of vastly increased available means.” It aims to devise new ends and to avoid errors based on previous misunderstandings. In form and function the successful high technology company is an elaborate, eloquent conversation between the present and the past, special places and commonplaces.

Architectonic rhetoric provides the conceptual basis for understanding and managing change within fragmented technocracies. Communities are formed and reformed according to the vagaries of changing situations, recent discoveries, novel devices, and new concepts. Because the technological age is also the information age, the effects of novelty spread rapidly throughout the organizing structures of society. Our contemplation of the new and our attempts to control the processes by which it becomes real are thus locked up

in a paradox. Novelty explained is no different from the familiar while discovery reduced to rules is indistinguishable from other actions guided by precept or habit. Facts tend to overwhelm judgments. Collaboration in a climate of mass communication is made inefficient by institutionalized misperception and misunderstanding. Rhetoric is a managing skill that creates commonplaces for systematic action out of the data, facts, and consequences of actual cases. As an architectonic productive art, rhetoric produces a pluralism of technologies by establishing structures, forms, and procedures that transcend the unique languages of specialized sciences.

In politics, architectonic rhetoric creates communities of informed action out of diverse cultures, polities, interests, and ideologies. This is particularly crucial in an age dominated by technology, for politics and technological innovation are often joined in an unholy alliance to promote the centralization of authority and the obliteration of real differences—cultural, political, racial, spiritual—in the name of efficient government. When political forms are unable to adapt to rapid changes in techniques, the entire structure of social relationships is damaged. As one observer has noted,

... social structures and political institutions are increasingly eroded by the impact of technological innovation which they cannot reject, regulate, or commit themselves to absorb. The technological society is not threatened by the inescapable conflict of technology and politics, but rather by an avoidable conflation of technique and shallow rationality... Reason in the service of technique, employing only the categories and conceptions of conventional politics, is indeed inept.

Architectonic rhetoric seeks to avoid the “conflation of technique and shallow rationality” by opening up the processes of dissent and divergence. More than an art of propaganda and conviction, rhetoric discovers commonplaces of unity and agreement rather than of opposition. It directs the inquiry into causes of political action in a manner sensitive to the influence of mass communication on a global scale. Rhetoric has always been concerned with the connection between stability and change, similarity and difference, and thus pays particular attention to the impact of technological innovation on the institutions of government and law. Architectonic rhetoric also looks to dissolve the traditional prejudices of past arguments about the means and ends of community by adjusting political structures and processes to changes in polity. Rhetoric alone among the humanistic arts can isolate and address problems peculiar to the circumstances of the present. The desire to come together, not the urge to persuade, is what makes politics rhetorical. Persuasion follows communication and the formation of communities since it is impossible to persuade “out of context.” Isolation from the causes and consequences of belief—“true believing”—admits no capacity for change.

Further evidence for the transcendent nature of rhetoric is found in On Christian Doctrine, where Augustine uses rhetoric in both its verbal and architectonic aspects to distinguish his Christian conception from Cicero’s classical art. As a verbal rhetoric On Christian Doctrine sets out precepts “for treating the Scriptures... so that students may profit not only from reading the work of expositors but also in their own explanations of the sacred writings to others.” The principles and distinctions of classical rhetoric are transformed by Augustine to fit the particular requirements of persuasion in the setting of the universal truth of Christian doctrine. As an architectonic art, however, Augustine’s rhetoric moves beyond the technical details of felicitous interpretation and suasive preaching. Through an evolutionary human history it encompasses the process of coming to terms with divine wisdom in the midst of confusing symbols of communication transmitted temporarily. On Christian Doctrine develops a rhetorical method by which unchanging truth can be isolated and employed according to the needs of an ever changing and specifically determined Christian community. Augustine focuses the problem of developing a truly Christian history by dealing “explicitly with the ties that had bound educated

Christians to the culture of their age." These ties assumed two forms. Some were symbolic and were manifested in pagan literature and art. Others were structural and were embodied in Roman administrative institutions and educational curricula. Augustine invented an architectonic productive art of rhetoric to recast, in Christian form and content, the intellectual structure of human history, culture, and communication.

Augustine's task resembles our own in many ways. Rhetoric is a form of symbolic action, and its employment in the political realm predates its use in any other area of human activity. It treats "potentiality" as well as "actuality" and can serve to promote as well as inhibit the formation of articulate communities. Richard McKeon was keenly aware of this aspect of rhetoric, for he saw it work with limited success in the early days of UNESCO. Our confidence in the dynamics of international dialogue, signified by the numerous institutions we have created to promote the discussion of common problems of survival, underlies the role for a rhetoric that takes its commonplaces from beyond the immediate requirements of persuasion. While debate, discussion, and controlled confrontation contribute to mutual understanding and can lead to collaboration and cooperation, McKeon believed that international bodies founded on the architectonic principles of rhetoric provide the context for shaping philosophic ideas as well as for transmitting technical methods of government, industry, and education. In the context of international communication, of life in the "global village," rhetoric can help uncover a body of cultural symbols appropriate to a world marked by cultural diversity, rapid change, instantaneous communication, and the potential for mass destruction.

Symbols, developed and used to make common values richer by the diversity of approaches to them and to make differences compatible by common courses of action that solve common problems even when the problems are differently conceived, provide the one practicable alternative to the imposition by force of a single set of symbols in the form of a single set of institutions interpreted by a single philosophy.33

The works in this volume stand opposed to the new sophistries of the marketplace where unprincipled eclecticism is aided by computerized access to the world's storehouse of philosophic, religious, and ethical commonplaces. The technological revolution, with its demand for greater specialization, destroys the integrated perception modern life requires. The growth of modern technological sophistries directly reflects the isolation of education from the conduct of daily existence, and signals our acceptance of the division between words and things.

As an architectonic productive art, rhetoric operates largely unrecognized in human creativity, where ideas are expressed in the structure of knowledge, the organization of work, and the definition of community. In a world ordered by technical innovation and mass communication, the principles and practices of education, business, and politics flow through and inform each other. The practical actions of managers form the subject matter for scholars in schools of business administration. Public policy emerges from the debates of politicians, the commentaries of analysts, the claims of vested interests, and the arguments of concerned individuals. Its applications are detailed in case studies constituting the curricula in schools of public policy. In business and politics the organization of knowledge in the schools reflects and affects the organization of knowledgeable skills in the workplace. Work itself acquires new meaning in the liberation from menial tasks and the primacy of special knowledge. Life and labor are structured around the search for cohesion in an increasingly disrupted world where diverse, specialized arts and sciences make competing claims about the nature of the "truth."

In the emerging community of the world the first problem of philosophy—the new metaphysics or at least the new prolegomenon to all future metaphysics—will expound the sense in which truth is one, despite the multiplicity of the forms of its expression, and the sense in which what is on some grounds or in some circumstances true is at other times false and dangerous.34

These essays address "the first problem of philosophy" by examining the relationship between thought and expression as it is

played out in a variety of philosophic circumstances. They describe a concept of rhetoric rooted in practical application but mirrored everywhere in theoretical speculation. And they detail the history of rhetoric as a tool for creating disciplines, arts, systems, and methods. Above all, these essays anticipate a renaissance of rhetorical theory and practice which promises to discover new uses for rhetoric in contemporary problems of community, communication, and action.

—Mark Backman