

# Introduction



## This Thing Called “Rhetoric”

We all know what rhetoric is, don’t we? It’s vernacular for all those attempts to persuade us to buy some product or to vote for some candidate or ballot initiative. We are far more likely to use the term in the pejorative: a candidate’s speech was nothing but “empty rhetoric,” or “anodyne rhetoric aside, these bankers really are asking for a tax-payer bailout with no strings attached.” We like to think of ourselves as good at sniffing out mere “rhetoric” from “substance.”

The art of rhetoric, however, has been an ongoing course of study for 2500 years in the West, with a reputation that has risen and fallen more often than any other academic subject. But for most of that history, rhetoric (Greek for “oratory”) has been seen as a general art of “discovering in any particular case, the available means of persuasion,” so says Aristotle. Thus, rhetoric formed a basic part of any educated person’s training.

While pejorative uses are handy means of identifying, evaluating, and attending to that which we deem distasteful, even destructive, we do well to remember that the term applies equally to those practices with which we identify, evaluate, and attend to as tasteful, even inspirational. The scope of communicative practices falling within rhetoric’s ambit is much broader than is usually believed. This is not to suggest that everything is rhetoric, but it does imply that rhetoric is implicated in just about everything we do.

For present purposes, let us define *rhetoric* as the “practice that enables strategic discourse,” *rhetors* or *orators* as “those who practice it,” *rhetorical theory* as “the study of said practices” and *rhetoricians* as “those

who study these practices.” Let us position these designations relative to Kenneth Burke’s characterization thereof:

*Rhetoric is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic and continually born anew: the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.* ([1945] 1950: 43, italics in original)

The phrases of specific relevance to rhetorical minds are “essential function of language,” “wholly realistic and continually born anew,” and “inducing cooperation.” As we shall see, the rhetorical characteristics of language are not really superimposed on language but are constitutive of the very thing we call language. Such a view has not been self-evident among formal linguists and first-generation cognitive scientists. Yet, it can be asked: how different does higher-order cognition appear when we consider the study of rhetoric and the study of language as consubstantial? This book argues that the picture of human cognition looks very different from first-generation cognitive science. Rhetoric is “wholly realistic” by being an irrepressible attribute of human behavior. However, Burke means something more significant: rhetorical practices enable new social realities to emerge.

Counterintuitive though it may be, we are, each of us, engaging in the act of persuasion or of being persuaded when we either give or receive currency as remuneration for services rendered. If I am paid to do something, I am persuaded that this is an appropriate means of recompense. Others agree; for I can then take that payment and use it to pay others for goods and services. The good faith and credit underlying those fiat currencies have a proportional “persuasive value” relative to other numeraires. At present, US\$1 has a persuasive value of €0.94 and £0.79. On the international monetary stage, this means that the euro and British pound hold quantifiably greater persuasive value per unit than the US dollar (even though the US dollar in aggregate claims status as the preeminent world reserve currency). At the time of this writing, my house appraises at a slightly lower value than at purchase. From a rhetorical perspective, this means that my ability to persuade someone to pay the suggested retail price for it has diminished, although its value is still above the mortgage price, meaning that I am not dissuaded from continuing to make payments.

Wait a minute! You are now discussing currency exchange rates and real estate pricing—canonical topics of finance and microeconomics—under the new heading of “rhetoric.” Did you engage in rhetorical trickery by rebranding one thing as another?

I do not think so. Rhetoric does not replace these other areas of study, for they seek to understand the wholly realistic monetary institutions,

institutions “continually born anew” through each transaction. My point is merely to shift attention to the fact that such activities are inherently persuasive or dissuasive, however regimented and uniform. We know this to be true precisely in moments of crisis—when people no longer trust that entity X is worth Y and that they imagine it will be worth even-less-than-Y for the foreseeable future. As a holder of X, I can sell it for what I think it is worth now or I can hold onto it, believing that its value will be greater than Y in the future. Often, however, I am persuaded to sell Y at price P because I think it will be worth even-less-than-Y tomorrow. When significant numbers of market players believe that Y’s value is falling, they all begin to sell at the same time. If this happens across sectors, or within a dominant sector (such as real estate), then markets deflate. What does this mean? At base, it means that enough players (particularly the creditors) cease playing the game. They take their remaining currency and find another game, or stuff it in mattresses or other hedges against uncertainty, such as gold or guns. The uses of language and other sign systems are crucial elements in the game: markets respond, often dramatically, to the words of an authority, say, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, or a president tweeting negative comments about a company, thereby dropping its share price.

Recurring practices of persuading and dissuading go on like this, with “persuasion” being the inducement to cooperate and “dissuasion” being the inducement to stop cooperating. Human beings are fundamentally cooperative: we create alliances for numerous reasons, and we break those alliances for numerous other reasons. Persuasion happens at the level of individuals and higher. Rhetoric, therefore, is wholly realistic in persuading individuals and groups to cooperate, to annul cooperation, or even to seek the destruction of another. It is a process that is continually born anew. It is a process mediated by signs and symbols, which is continually born anew. Burke’s characterization of rhetoric suggests it as a defining feature of human beings. A more apt name for *Homo sapiens* may be *Homo rhetoricus*.<sup>1</sup>

Most rhetoricians are happy to place rhetorical studies in the center of the intellectual universe. Historically, they are correct. Rhetoric, even as Plato, Descartes, Kant, and other luminaries of first-order philosophy denigrated it, remains an essential field of study even among those who are only dimly aware of its intellectual and academic tradition. Rhetoric keeps resurfacing periodically as a buzzword in the humanities and social sciences (even among practitioners and philosophers of the natural sciences), in part because characterizations like Burke’s capture an essential human trait. Rhetoric should, therefore, play a more significant role in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science, but this happens

only as the paradigm of thinking about thinking moves away from its most cherished intellectualist prejudices.

## Thinking

The traditional view of mind and thinking in the West assumes that the most important and exciting thing about human beings is that we deliberate, we use propositions, and we reason. For Plato and later for Descartes, human beings perceive, evaluate, deliberate, decide, plan, and act; the well-tempered person does so precisely in that order. Descartes went so far as to suggest that evaluation and deliberation must proceed by systematically doubting every belief, however precious, in the service of reconstructing our systems of knowledge at their foundations. Only by such radical skepticism are we to achieve a more perfect rational mastery over ideas. Our truest nature is that we are thinkers, hence the designation *Homo sapiens*. This intellectualist stance has its merits. The advent of rational systems and institutions has conferred considerable benefits to humanity. Indeed, the ability to preserve the products of human thinking in document repositories for later reference and rational use is a preoccupation throughout the later chapters of this meditation.

Two consequences issue from this intellectualist view. First, it disregards the power of habit and context implicated in everyday thinking and acting—that human beings do not and cannot behave in this well-tempered manner for any but the briefest moments. The intellectualist view is mostly a rarified achievement. Second, the intellectualist view presumes that rational deliberation is, in fact, the most basic kind of cognitive process. It confounds a hard-won, rarified achievement for a primary condition. It misapprehends the nature of quotidian cognition and then doubles-down by substituting that which is derivative for that which is essential. The intellectualist achievement of rising above habit and context and of applying abstract principles with algorithmic accuracy mischaracterizes the very nature of rational deliberation itself. In short, the intellectualist view gets the ontology of human beings almost entirely wrong.

Plato and Descartes (and perhaps also Kant) are paradigmatic intellectualists. Not coincidentally, these are the philosophers who did the most to denigrate practitioners of rhetoric, with the sophists as Plato's (and Socrates's) favorite target and formal belletristic rhetoricians as Descartes's *bête noire*.

The renaissance of rhetoric as an academic discipline embraced by many scholars in the humanities and social sciences is due in part to the

intuition that Western philosophy has mostly missed the mark in capturing how people reason, and that the quest for certainty is, in fact, a fool's errand.

## **More Than a Symbolic Species**

From the moment we are born, others are shaping our capacity for mental agency. While this may be true of other primates and cephalopods as a matter of degree, interaction with others as cooperative co-agents is constitutive of *Homo rhetoricus*. Human cognitive development depends primarily on others to a scale unmatched by any other species ever known to have existed. Not only are we beings-in-the-world like all other organisms, but we are also beings who care about our own being-in-the-world. In this, we are aware that we care about our own being-in-the-world. To put it differently, we know that we have a stake our own being. This observation is far from new. In some ways, it is a naturalistic version of the "Great Chain of Being."

Along this naturalistic lineage, others have taken to calling us "the Symbolic Species" (see Deacon 1997). As we are, no doubt, the preeminent exemplars of a symbol-using animal (Burke 1966). However, we are also "symbol misusing animals," a point worth emphasizing.

By what measure can symbol use be regarded as a "misuse"? We can be led, individually or collectively, into thinking something or doing something that we could or would not otherwise do absent symbolic inducements, and these inducements can produce effects that blunt truth-seeking or compound human misery.<sup>2</sup> Use and misuse are terms of art for practices of persuasion and dissuasion. Therefore, the rhetorical species, a species governed by semiotic inducements, is the preferred moniker in these pages. Being so induced entails a stable sense of self as an organism embedded in an environment with a body type and specific biomechanical constraints, all of which are controlled by normative dimensions of a society or culture with local pragmatic histories (Tylén et al. 2013). Such are the conditions of mental agency and ownership.

## **Agents, Ownership, and Rhetorical Systems**

### **What Are Mental Agents?**

In a word, a mental agent is any organism that can act deliberately and with forethought, but with the added dimension of making use of several semiotic resources to hold the past, the future, the real, and the preferable in

mind for extended durations in order to play with possibilities, and even to conscript others in these endeavors.

Agency is a crucial notion in cognitive science. We are both owners and agents of our actions. This is the canonical view of quotidian existence. I have a desire to kiss my wife, and then I close in. Eventually, we touch lips. I am both owner and agent of this bodily action, as is she hers. The same compression of ownership and action can be extended beyond the body and across space and time. As owner and agent, I can bequeath all my wealth to my wife and children (or deny them this bequest), as long as I am presumed to be of sound mind, meaning, in part, that I am presumed to be both owner and agent of this symbolic action. There are several disorders, schizophrenia in particular, where one is not the owner of one's thoughts or actions, as such thoughts and desires feel as though they originate from the "outside." However, typically functioning human beings have a first-person sense of ownership and agency most of the time. As I will argue in later chapters, ownership is a personal phenomenon that does not correctly apply to subpersonal processes.

The same principles of agency and ownership can be gleaned in activities orthogonal to the personal dimensions of kisses and wills. Suppose instead that I am an investment banker working in JP Morgan Chase's investment office. To qualify for a sizeable bonus, I begin to make a series of massive bets in the derivatives market.<sup>3</sup> I strategically leverage positions on credit default swaps (CDSs). As an investment banker trained to think and speak in acronyms, I have JP Morgan Chase issue CDSs to several holders of residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBSs) and related collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) as insurance against a possible default. I am bullish on these securities and think the debtors will not default. I assess the risk as low; therefore, the likelihood of near-term default and the subsequent payout is low. Under this rosy scenario, JP Morgan Chase will continue to collect premiums from the CDSs over the life of the RMBSs. In fact, I am so bullish on this little corner of the derivatives market that I see little reason to worry about those investors with no stake in the bonds themselves, buying these swaps on the bet that the underlying asset will default. I regard the investors shorting the bond market as too pessimistic, so I gladly take their bets. So as an agent of JP Morgan Chase, I am pitted against the counterparties of RMBSs investors and shorting investors. If I am right, the firm will rake in hundreds of millions in premiums over the next few years. If the counterparties are right, JP Morgan Chase will suffer over six billion in trading losses, which would be very bad for other banks and investors, not to mention beneficiaries of pensions,

401Ks, and other fixed income products, and, of course, really bad for my career.

The principles of ownership and agency are much more complicated when the unit of analysis applies to group agents. JP Morgan Chase is the (pragmatic) owner of my (epistemic) actions, for they gain if my bet is right and lose if it is wrong. The institution itself has appointed me as an agent—I am owner and agent of these actions, but I am not the full owner of their effects. As owner and agent, I am rewarded with a bonus if my shorting counterparts are wrong. I am to be fired, however, if their predictions come to pass.

Even more disorienting to our sense of ownership and agency is the development by financial engineers of special investment vehicles (SIV). These entities allow JP Morgan Chase and other commercial banks to transfer the RMBSs, CDOs, and CDSs currently on their books as ‘leveraged assets’ to these new entities, thereby allowing the bank, as the originator of the loans, to take them off their books. In effect, they no longer have to count them in the asset-to-capital ratio, freeing up more credit to build more RMBSs, CDOs, CDSs, and other structured financial products. Structured investment vehicles are new types of entities that permit the bank to own something without owning it. (Such have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too situations are commonplace in the world of finance.) The foundation of this house of cards is paper: legal documents establishing the provenance of ownership and contractual terms. Behind every bond and trade are myriads of documents legitimizing these practices—of course, the system is only as just as the integrity of the recordkeeping.

### ***What Is the Moral of This Story?***

Homo rhetoricus has created elaborate symbolic environments for distributing and shifting risk across individuals and groups. I own my actions at the level of personhood, but the distinctive feature of Homo rhetoricus is the ability to cooperate and create “group agents” comprising a new social reality, a new environment.<sup>4</sup> As a practical matter, it is nearly unthinkable for these corporate agents to exist outside rhetorical systems, or systems for depositing, organizing, and searching documents. Indeed, one of the nasty side effects of mortgage-backed securities (particularly collateralized debt obligations or CDOs) is that it is very challenging to trace the original owner of the mortgage, as the original mortgage was bundled with other original loans and then divided into tranches, each of which form a part of the new financial product. In short, Homo rhetoricus can construct a niche that distributes the fruits

of labor well beyond the parochial concerns of self, kith, and kin. This is not to say that all members of this species live in document-bound civilizations, or have to. It is more likely than not that any member of the species will somehow be affected by these rhetorical document systems, a fact not fully appreciated by cognitive scientists of any school. Such states of affairs are facts more fully appreciated but less systematically studied by contemporary rhetorical theorists. But before we can fully appreciate and understand this modern circumstance, we must identify the default state of human minds as incorrigibly intersubjective.

### The Missing Second Person

Unique to the extent that it can induce cooperation among strangers, *Homo rhetoricus* is first and foremost a being who emerges from the care of others. When we first learn to walk, we do so with the help of our most intimate caretakers. When we learn to speak, we do so only to the extent that other intimates and consociates provide the necessary scaffolding. When we learn how to balance a checkbook, we often do so with someone looking over our shoulder. Such second-person engagements are a primordial part of our existence, but such engagements are typically treated as tangential issues in cognitive science and philosophy of mind. Much ink has been used to argue about first-person versus third-person explanations of mindedness. Either there is an irreducible first-person quality to mind and consciousness that entails the first-person explanation, or such first-person experiences can be reducible to third-person, objective neurobiological facts. Philosophy of cognitive science is overwhelmingly a conflict between first-person and third-person partisans.

These are not the only options, however. From the very start, our existence is bound up with others and in ways that are noticeably weaker among our closest living relatives. The developmental trajectory of *Homo rhetoricus* goes from initial “us” to “we” followed by an autonomous “I” at the other end. So why take the autonomous I as ground zero, as appears to be the case among philosophers, cognitive scientists, and many social scientists?

There is no good reason, of course, especially when we factor in evolutionary and developmental evidence (see Chapters 4 and 5). The second person is the fulcrum of higher-order human cognition. As such, it reorganizes understanding of and explanatory options for the human condition, one that puts rhetorical practice at the center of the action. Rhetoric is always oriented toward the other, even in cases of self-deliberation, where we have developed a capacity to talk to ourselves



as “the other.” It is, however, a mistake to see self-deliberation as a fundamentally solipsistic enterprise, as if we are stuck in one of Samuel Beckett’s monologues. Intersubjectivity is a necessary condition of higher-order cognition; and reorienting our explanatory models toward second-person interactions at the very least provides surplus heuristic value over models that regard others as theatrical extras.

Nearly everything that is interesting about higher-order cognition, from principally first-person phenomena of memory, dreaming, mental imagery, or viscerally emotional states to indubitably third-person social facts of status, ownership, or money are influenced by a second-person ontology. We exist by, with, and through others.

A second-person cognitive science articulated in these pages has several ontological commitments worth enumerating.

First, and most apparent, intersubjectivity is a constituent of human thinking, feeling, and acting.

Second, consistent with various forms of distributed cognition (see Chapter 1, “Three Waves of Cognitive Science”), a second-person cognitive science extends the unit of cognitive analysis to the non-neural body, other beings, and the built environment. Human cognition is an amalgam of these three components. Representations are less a product of individual brains than of brains in bodies, embedded in rich social, artifactual, and symbolic environments. Take away any one of these, and human cognition diminishes, perhaps irreparably.

Third, language is born from a crucible of interpersonal communication and possesses features unique from any other known animal. The phylogeny of *Homo rhetoricus* as an environmental sculptor par excellence and an ontogeny emphasizing intergenerational learning and apprenticeship serves as the evolutionary basis for languaging as the principal means of leveraging resources.

Fourth, second-person engagements form the basis of our complex social systems, yet, once established, complex social systems possess irreducible emergent properties. Thus, primordial interpersonal experiences can often serve as misleading guides for thinking about such social systems. Sovereign money is just such a social system.

Fifth, as a logical consequence of the fourth commitment, *Homo rhetoricus* acts most naturally within and among “institutional formations” of its own making. The fundamental question of how human cognition operates in different institutions is a focal concern of Part III of this book. We are creatures of norms, and these norms are properties of our being, and thus, the nature of institutional contexts for thinking, feeling, and acting rise to the top of this research agenda on agency and ownership.

## An Anglophone “Archeology” of Rhetorical Practices (with an Emphasis on Money)

Archeologists study the human past by recovering, interpreting, and contextualizing material culture. It is now common to think of texts as artifacts of human culture, as entities that are used for some purpose, and that purpose is, theoretically, recoverable. In the pages that follow, I will frequently refer to the following (and related) English and American (textual) artifacts throughout this book, which I now enumerate in a loose chronology.

A thane living in eighth-century England was at once a warrior and a worshipper. His first order was to his king, whose right to rule was predicated on the feudal system sanctioned by the Christian doctrine of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. If a historical Jesus ever existed, he did so as a Jewish peasant opposed to the Roman occupation of Judea, a personage far removed from the life and livelihood of an Anglo-Saxon thane helping to consolidate power among the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes of Brittany against the Viking tribes of Denmark north of Hadrian’s Wall. For such a person, the divine story must comport with his life as a warrior in service to his King.

The Anglo-Saxon poem, *Dream of the Rood* (perhaps composed by Cynewulf) narrates the story of the crucifixion in terms a thane can easily comprehend:

Hwæðre ic þær licgende  
lange hwile behēold hrēowcearig  
hælendes trēow, oð ðæt ic  
gehyrde þæt hit hlēoðrode.  
(Swanton 1970: 91, lines 23–26)  
[Nevertheless, I, lying a long time there,  
Gazed troubled at the Savior’s tree,  
Until I heard it speak.]

The cross is at one time covered in jewels and precious metals, at another time covered in the sweat and blood of the “Lord of Victories,” and enjoins the thane to retell the story of redemption to all. Special attention will be given to the speaking cross in Chapters 7 and 9.

Money ranks as perhaps the most powerful and scariest social invention of Homo rhetoricus. It indexes protection and jeopardy in equal measure. It is not mere coincidence that the sacred Rood is covered in jewels and precious metals, the latter of which comprise a typical but not universal material basis of currency: somehow the metallic content of coins can be regarded as consubstantial with the nominal value thereof,

much like wine for the sacrament. Money's historical relationship to religious ritual is palpable to this day (Wray 1998: chap. 1–3).<sup>5</sup>

Subjects trying to do business in England in the late seventeenth century began to find it increasingly difficult to find coins with sufficient silver content remaining in them. Since silver coins were the most efficient means of discharging all debts at the time, disruptions to the methods of payments throughout the Empire could threaten to undermine the gains of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. What was happening?

The price of silver bullion was increasing relative to the mint price, resulting in over three million pounds in coins in circulation showing evidence of clipping and filing. That is, the currency was being debased because the market value of silver bullion was approximately fifteen pence more than coined silver. Following Gresham's Law, "bad" money drives out "good" money, meaning in this instance, the commodity value of bullion increased relative to the nominal value of the coin itself, thereby incentivizing the adulteration of these tokens. What to do?

The Secretary of the Treasury, William Lowndes, who possessed at the time unsurpassed knowledge of the English banking system and its monetary history, was asked to deliver a report and proposal to Parliament on re-coinage. In 1695, Lowndes delivered his proposal to reset the mint prices by reducing the silver content of reminted coins by approximately twenty percent. Less silver content fixed to the newer market value of bullion would effectively eliminate the incentive to clip, file, or otherwise debase coins, for the penalty of being caught would far outweigh any financial gain. The solution is straightforward: reset the mint price to the market price for silver and debase the actual content commensurately. Coins with no visible evidence of clipping or filing will once again be trusted by bearer and recipient alike. The principle underlying Lowndes's proposal is that money and coinage are different: coins are losing their value not because they are losing their silver, they are losing their silver because silver is a coveted commodity.

Shortly after the issuance of his report, Parliament asked John Locke, the *éminence* grise on all matters of constitutional government, to respond. He did so with a scathing critique of Lowndes's proposal. The problem was with the dastardly coin-clippers, for money is silver, full stop. There is no difference whatsoever between currency and its constituent metal. In his words,

[Money] is the instrument of commerce by its intrinsic value. The intrinsic value of Silver consider'd as Money, is that estimate which common consent has placed on it, whereby it is made Equivalent to all other things, and consequently is the universal Barter or Exchange which Men give and receive for

other things they would purchase or part with for a valuable consideration: And thus as the Wise Man tells us, Money answers all things. Silver is the Measure of Commerce by its quantity. . . ([1695] 1824: 113)

For Locke, Money is merely an evolved system of barter—or contract—between two or more persons; adulterating the silver content of money was tantamount to violating the contract. In the end, Locke’s overweening reputation won out. Parliament adopted a complicated mechanism for new coinage based on the same proportion of silver. The details are intricate, but the result was a catastrophic economic depression, complete with debt deflation, loss of business confidence, and a considerable contraction in trade (Martin 2013: 122–37). In short, Locke won the debate in Parliament but at the price of bottoming out all monetary trust. The Locke-Lowndes debate will be revisited in Chapters 3, 7, and 9.

The Lockean view of money is difficult to deracinate from our minds, with broad consequences for how we are to think about human cognition. From a second-person perspective, notions of trust and their material manifestations are of deep and abiding relevance for an explanation. If I am to truck, barter, and exchange with strangers, the very means of that exchange must be beyond repute. Silver, gold, and other precious metals make brilliant redeemers. As many cognitive scientists are quick to note, artifacts extend cognitive capacity (Hutchins 1994, 1995) to allow us to think and act consistently in ways otherwise unimaginable by individual minds operating in isolation; yet, the flip side of this story is that material structures can oversimplify common understanding of a given process, particularly with respect to complex institutional systems (more on this later).

Over a century later on a different continent, Chief Justice John Marshall delivered the majority opinion in the case *McCullough v. the State of Maryland* ([1819] 2015), declaring:

. . . it is the unanimous and decided opinion of the court that the act to incorporate the Bank of the United States is a law made in pursuance of the constitution, and is a part of the supreme law of the land. . . . We are unanimously of the opinion that the law passed by the legislature of Maryland, imposing a tax on the Bank of the United States, is unconstitutional and void. . . . This is a tax on the operations of the bank and is consequently a tax on the operation of an instrument employed by the government of the union to carry its power to execute. Such a tax *must* be unconstitutional. ([1819] 2015, italics added)

With these words, a series of steps were set in motion to validate the existence of a national banking system impervious to interference from individual states. Marshall and his colleagues on the bench codified in

this decision the doctrine of judicial review, articulated previously in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), investing the Judiciary branch as the final arbiter of what is the law. Patient readers of this and other Supreme Court decisions will become especially sensitive to the variegated meanings of the modal verb *must*: at one time, it is taken as an order, at another time, it is taken as a logical conclusion, and sometimes, as in the instance cited above, it is ambiguously both a conclusion and an order. It is a unique attribute of Homo rhetoricus to create institutions, such as common law jurisprudence, wherein ambiguous modals do useful, even essential work. This and related passages from other Supreme Court opinions will be the subject of Chapter 8.

In 1844, the English Parliament instituted the Peel Act. Named after the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, the act unified all bank notes under the Bank of England. Instead of private banks issuing their notes (a practice that continued in the United States until the Federal Reserve Act of 1913), all notes became uniform obligations of England's Central Bank. By midcentury, London, or more particularly, Lombard Street in London, was the center of the financial world (understood largely as Europe, America, and the English colonies). What seems perfectly commonplace today (a uniform numeraire system of IOU's) was anything but at the time and continued to be a source of great political consternation in the ensuing decades. A timely and prescient treatise on the subject of banking and the central bank appeared in 1873, penned by Walter Bagehot. *Lombard Street: A Description of the Money Market* continues to this day to be a touchstone reference for economists, bankers, and policymakers. It presents a clear-eyed account of the role central banks play, particularly during financial crises. It is not surprising that Bagehot's treatise gained increased attention by the likes of Lawrence Summer and Ben Bernanke during the Great Financial Crisis of 2008. The single most important feature of this treatise is the articulation of what is now regarded as the Bagehot Rule to "lend freely to all comers at high interest rates" has come to define central banks as the Lender of Last Resort. Swift action by central banks operates like an automatic stabilizer for an economy in free fall. The economy itself is controlled by the convergence of beliefs and attitudes, and Bagehot was quite prescient to judge the swiftness by which such attitudes can disseminate through the financial system. The speed of convergence is because financial centers are, first and foremost, physical locations:

A place like Lombard Street, where in all but the rarest times money can be always obtained upon good security or upon decent prospects of probable gain, is a luxury which no country has ever enjoyed with even comparable equality before. ([1873] 2010: 4)

Lombard Street is more than a mere metonymy—the physical proximity of the banking sector increases the rate at which information flows from person to person; it is an institutional amplifier. Bagehot construes panic in resolutely second-person terms: a series of requests and refusals among “sound” and “unsound” borrowers, the effects of such refusals sending ripples through the banking community. Consequently, the signals sent from a central bank are, in fact, the loudest and clearest. We will hear more from Bagehot in Chapters 2 and 7.

March 1865 saw the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln for a second term as President of the, then divided, United States of America. At the time of his inauguration, the Civil War was all but over, claiming about 20 percent of all Northern males between ages 25–45 and 30 percent of all Southern males ages 18–40. General Sherman had “marched to the sea” and General Lee’s thinning and desultory ranks made continuation both tactically and strategically impossible.

Lincoln—regarded by many Americans as the United States’ greatest president, and whose biography will be pressed into service as a model of development in Chapter 5—had to turn his attention to the more difficult task of repairing a nation torn asunder by nearly five years of bloody internecine warfare. This is how he construes the present situation in this *Second Inaugural Address*, regarded by many as the best inaugural address by the office’s most noble occupant:

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to *saving* the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to *destroy* it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would *make* war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would *accept* war rather than let it perish, and the war came. (1865, italics added)

I am sure there was great temptation to gloat at the conclusion of such winner-take-all contests, yet nothing of the kind can be gleaned from these words; it is also clear that Lincoln communicates a forceful sentiment of the Northern states as the righteous party, that the war was as necessary as it was odious. Still, and to this day, one is pained to find any laudatory placards to Lincoln in the museums of Charleston, South Carolina, save perhaps the Old Slave Mart Museum. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the contrast between “make war” and “accept war” focuses attention on countervailing forces: one faction causes, the other prevents. Homo rhetoricus is unique in its ability to metastasize interpersonal conflict to a grand, even genocidal scale. When such events happen, the

winner controls the terms of debate, particularly about who was villainous and who was righteous. The rhetoric of warfare does not exist without heroes and villains. For better or worse, *Homo rhetoricus* can wreak havoc on its own environments and then use or misuse the symbols that inevitably give birth to, abort, cease, or justify the havoc wreaked. There is a homeopathic dimension to rhetoric. That which precipitates conflict likewise diffuses and even ends it. The guns eventually cease—but the symbols persist, and conflicts take on a more benign form.

By the early twentieth century, Wall Street in New York was fast becoming the center of the financial universe, displacing Lombard Street. By 1929, the stock market suffered a debilitating blow, and in its wake, a series of financial institution failures threatened the entire the banking system, just as newly inaugurated President Franklin D. Roosevelt takes the oath of office. His first task: to avert a total collapse of the banking system. His solution was to declare a “bank holiday,” which is an example of the linguistic structure, nominal compounding, more of which will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 7. FDR took full advantage of the emerging mass media of radio to inaugurate a series of “Fireside Chats,” speeches that brought the voice of the president into the living rooms, dens, dining rooms, and kitchens of American voters. Here is a snippet from the 12 March 1932 address:

By the afternoon of 3 March scarcely a bank in the country was open to do business. Proclamations temporarily closing them in whole or in part had been issued by the Governors in almost all the states. It was then that I issued the proclamation providing for a nation-wide bank holiday, and this was the first step in the Government’s reconstruction of our financial and economic fabric.

As governor of New York, Roosevelt, in facing a conservative Republican legislature, decided it was better to use the airwaves to appeal directly to his constituents. He pursued this strategy upon entering the White House, resulting in about thirty such chats over his presidency—the first one aiming to calm down the populace and thereby stabilize the faltering banking system. Using a common vocabulary and familial greetings, such as “Good evening, friends,” these addresses attracted some of the largest audiences during the Golden Age of Radio. With the phrase, “It was then,” Roosevelt signaled a temporal organization of events that give causal significance to his own actions, for the previous piecemeal efforts that seemed only to intensify depositor anxiety, because bank closure became an indicator of a specific bank’s ailment, even when it was not, in fact, “sick.” Thus, a blanket closure would eliminate in the near-term selective runs on banks, healthy or otherwise, until the government properly assesses the state of each institution.

On 3 February 1946, the United States Treasury sent a query to the United States Embassy in Moscow. The treasury wanted to know why the Soviets were not supporting the newly created World Bank and International Monetary Fund, two institutional structures developed to bring stability to financial systems after World War II. George F. Kennan, then Deputy Chief of Mission under Ambassador Averell Herriman, delivered on 22 February 1946, via telegraphy a reply to the White House outlining his views of the Soviet state under Stalin. He begins his address, thus:

Answer to Dept's 284, Feb. 3, involves questions so intricate, so delicate, so strange to our form of thought, and so important to analysis of our international environment that I cannot compress answers into single brief message without yielding to what I feel would be a dangerous degree of oversimplification. I hope, therefore, Dept will bear with me if I submit in answer to this question five parts. . . I apologize in advance for this burdening of telegraphic channel; but questions involved are of such urgent importance, particularly in view of recent events, that our answers to them, if they deserve attention at all, seem to me to deserve it at once. (1946: 1)

Colloquially termed the “Long Telegram,” this document soon gathered wide circulation within the top-secret corridors of power in Washington before being published as “The Sources of Soviet Conflict” in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947 under the pseudonym “X.” This account greatly influenced other official administration reports that were to become the Truman Doctrine known as “containment.” Here we have the first document pushing back against the current State Department policy of pursuing a friendship with the Soviet Union. It helped shape the new consensus that the Soviets did not think peaceful coexistence with capitalistic states was possible. A topic of discussion in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, Kennan’s missive generated the posture of containment that would serve as the dominant diplomatic stance toward the Soviet Union for the next forty years.

Homo rhetoricus is such a strange species when compared to the rest of the animal kingdom. We routinely produce, archive, copy, selectively quote from “pieces of paper” that influence, constrain, even determine how we think and act. And we do so “on the word” of strangers, and the deardeparted. Communication is one thing; communication for purposes of demonstration is a singular feat of Homo rhetoricus.

Consider once again the elusive social invention of money. It is second nature to think about money as a medium of exchange and store of value. Money as a part of a macroeconomic system does not fit comfortably within these user-based frames of reference. In point of fact, these deeply entrenched concepts more often than not lead us toward misunderstanding the nature of sovereign money. Recourse to props from very



different domains of experience can be used to dramatize the macroeconomic effects of money.<sup>6</sup>

In a brief financial news segment in Sydney, Australia, airing shortly after the inauguration of Donald Trump, the Australian-born economist Steve Keen is featured explaining money by exploiting the fluid dynamic properties of standard tools of the bartending trade to demonstrate the macroeconomic effects of sovereign and bank money on capitalist economies. Keen, with the help of his host, deploys the tools of the bartender's trade, including a wine glass, Collins glass, beer pint, and absinthe fountains, as props for dramatizing the stocks and flows of macroeconomic systems (see Figure 7.5). As will be explained in Chapter 7 the bar becomes a language- and gesture-space to talk about governments as issuers of currency and banks as factories of money. Fluid dynamic artifacts appear to be a useful means of presenting money from the issuer's perspective.

Not all uses of props are successful, however. One such failure was put onstage on 30 September 2012 at the Republican National Convention, when the famous actor/director Clint Eastwood spoke and listened to an empty chair next to his lectern, a chair imputed to be occupied by Barack Obama.<sup>7</sup> A dismayed Republican media establishment was quick to call this event an aberration, the ranting of someone who has apparently lost his mind. But the order of events is crucial to persuasion, and this speech by the special, secret keynote speaker set the stage for the party's nominee, Mitt Romney, and diverted attention from Marco Rubio's nominating speech.<sup>8</sup>

For several weeks following it, the image of an elderly man speaking directly to a chair was used by both friend and foe—but more effectively by the foes—to question not only the competence of the speaker but the wisdom and good judgment of the Republicans themselves. Fictive interaction (*prosopopoeia*) is a pervasive rhetorical device (see L. Brandt 2013; Fonesca, Pascual, and Oakley, in press; Pascual 2008a, 2008b, 2014; Oakley 2009; Oakley and Brandt 2009) in which one or more of the discourse participants is not present. I will explain more about fictive interaction in Chapter 7.

I have used it myself in some of my more effective moments as a teacher: graduate students have complimented me on effectively conjuring the presence of Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and others, and effectively debating them so that the students felt that a real exchange of views had taken place. It is one thing to conjure dead linguists and philosophers in classrooms to a group of like-minded trainees, quite another to conjure the image of a living, sitting president to a global television audience nearing a billion people. No doubt, the conceit

was successful for the live audience in Boston (the cheers were readily apparent). The television audience was less forgiving, however. One GOP strategist on MSNBC said, "It's unfortunate that he was out there. I feel bad for him. It was a mistake by the campaign to put him out there. He's an 82-year-old man. We should give him a break." In the Twittersphere, for instance, a new handle titled, #invisibleobama went up an hour after Eastwood's speech with an almost instantaneous following of twenty thousand. Very soon thereafter, a trend of posting memes of people pointing at empty chairs under #eastwooding began clogging the social media channels. Chapter 3 begins with an exploration of "eastwooding" as a form of representation.

A final example returns to money. Late in 2013, Congressional Republicans threatening not to raise the debt ceiling, an ordinarily routine procedural matter entrained to Congress since the institution of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 and the Liberty Bond Acts of 1917. An anonymous blog proposal started to gain traction among economists, policymakers, and Democratic politicians. Instead of raising the debt ceiling, President Obama should directly instruct the Secretary of the Treasury to "mint" a series of "Trillion Dollar Coins," deposit them in the government's account at the Federal Reserve, and then ask Congress to appropriate those funds for the public purpose.

The proposal went nowhere, but it did cause a great deal of debate, not in the least because public arguments laid bare some basic facts of our monetary system that run entirely counter to conventional wisdom: a government with a sovereign currency and a floating exchange regime can NEVER go bankrupt involuntarily; it can never become insolvent, a point emphasized by the Federal Reserve of St. Louis.

As the sole manufacturer of dollars, whose debt is denominated in dollars, the US government can never become insolvent, i.e., unable to pay its bills. In this sense, the government is not dependent on credit markets to remain operational. Moreover, there will always be a market for US government debt at home because the US government has the only means of creating risk-free dollar denominated assets. (Fawley and Juvenal 2011: 5)

A broadcast on MSNBC's program *Up with Chris Hayes*, titled "The Magic Coin," describes and debates the proposal. What is of key interest here is the extent to which entrenched views that the government's budget is just like any household or business budget appears in the language and co-speech gestures of even those sympathetic to the proposal. This suggests that we have created social institutions whose real-world operations and similar powers are not well understood. What is more, it leads to a discomfiting but necessary conclusion about human cognition: we create institutions

that extend our capacities for thought and action, but we are ill-equipped to understand and effectively control their operations. It may be the case that our visceral reactions to the notions of “debt” and “indebtedness” hinder our understanding of this complex social system. This sentiment will be the controlling theme of Chapter 10.

Each of these examples along with relevant others will reappear in different places in the ensuing chapters, for each reveals something about Homo rhetoricus as a symbol using and misusing animal. The reader will notice a bias toward the economic and financial. This is because questions of monetary and fiscal policy and operations bear direct relevance to commitments four and five outlined above (see “The Missing Second Person”). Each can be profitably regarded as cognitive artifacts operating in the distributed rhetorical systems that, however intellectual and detached, still influence our practical engagements with the world and others.

## What This Book Is and Is Not

There is plenty of analysis of linguistic and semiotic artifacts in these pages, but the goal is not to provide readings of texts. There are many excellent studies that aim to use findings from the cognitive sciences to understand and interpret literary texts and other cultural artifacts. Recently, there have been some studies showing how the study of literature offers significant insights to cognitive scientists, with the aim of bridging the gap between the scientific research and literary/rhetorical studies (V. Tobin 2018; Turner 1996, 2001, 2014). This book aims more for the latter than the former, although, in truth, it does neither for a simple reason: neither rhetorical theory nor the cognitive sciences are sufficiently stable philosophically and methodologically to be so easily integrated.

This book is an extended meditation on the condition of possibility of a species-wide interest in meaning-making and symbolic action. As a meditation, it seeks to *do* cognitive science by *doing* rhetoric.

My primary aim is to articulate a theory of rhetorical systems that contribute to basic research in the cognitive sciences. This book is not only an account of cognitive scientific research; it is a work of cognitive science—an intervention in a field even as it challenges many long-held assumptions.

Much rhetorical theory is a curatorial enterprise, with its practitioners seeking to understand a set of documents or to understand a particular cultural practice. The field of rhetoric studies, and its close cousin, critical theory, has produced an impressive range of studies in

the “rhetoric of X,” such as economics, science, and so forth, where the objects are specific texts in relation to field-defining controversies. The field also produces studies under one or other brand names, such as feminist rhetoric(s), eco-rhetoric, rhetorical bodies, and, of course, cognitive rhetoric. All these studies tend to be particularistic in nature, as they do not seek to go much beyond understanding the peculiar and parochial concerns of the documents and historical circumstances of their production and circulation.

I will resist providing yet another brand to an already overstuffed aisle of intellectual dry goods; hence, I hesitate to call this cognitive rhetoric, because this may lead to the expectation that the thing we call “rhetoric” is going to be explained by this other thing we call “cognition.” And in some circles, this is tantamount to stuffing rhetoric inside the head: a bundle of mental modules that are then used to infer, theorize, or simulate the mental states of others, all the better to manipulate them. This explanans/explanandum relationship is a greedy form of reduction that inevitably falls short; it sets up a subject-object relationship that fails to capture what it means to be fully human. At the same time, we should resist entirely reversing this relationship, with rhetoric as explanans.

There is no easy formulation of this relationship, but it goes something like this: the relationship between rhetorical practice and cognition is not causal, it is constitutive. Rhetorical practices innervate every facet of human interaction, so as to be, philosophically speaking, transcendental: a fixed viewpoint from which to construct meaning. *Homo rhetoricus* is a conscious organism who also happens to be conscious of “something as something for someone else.” This is the phenomenology of *Homo rhetoricus*, which the pages of this book seek to specify. I seek nothing less than to create a new subdiscipline: second-person cognitive science.

Given that no formal community yet exists, this book necessarily (and no doubt awkwardly at times) addresses several readerships simultaneously, which is why I plead for charity. The amalgamation of audiences affects the prosecution of my arguments. Terminology, standards of evidence, the ordering of arguments, all differ across fields, and readers will likely see some formation of their own discipline’s *modus operandi* only in bastardized form. Though not a virtue in itself, such bastardized nomenclatures are the necessary “hopeful monsters” generated by such couplings. I beg the reader’s patience. Someday, a better way of doing second-person cognitive science may emerge, rendering this quaint by comparison.

Though not intended as a reading of texts, this book nevertheless is grounded in a specific set of texts. This is for two reasons. First and trivi-

ally, as a meditation on higher-order cognition with language at the center, it needs to have some empirical basis of analysis and reflection, which may even inspire others to use such texts as a point of departure for future research. Second, and of greater consequence, second-person cognitive science is a critical component of scaling up from primordial, dyadic level interactions to an appropriate understanding of community-wide phenomena of considerable consequence to how we think, feel, act, and exist. The texts that form the cynosures of attention to the peculiarities of human thought and action also promise to reveal something significant about the institutional nature of *Homo rhetoricus*.

### Front-Loaded Second-Person Cognition

Most studies that bring together humanist predilections with cognitive science follow a single trajectory. They take a problem of interpretation in the humanities and show how a properly cognitive approach can offer scholars means of producing new and better interpretations (e.g., Freeman 2007). Cognitive studies offer better methods of doing literary and rhetorical criticism.

The ultimate goal of this book, undoubtedly unrequited, is to set the stage for a new movement that follows an opposite trajectory. Rather than having literary and rhetoric scholars draw retrospectively on work in cognitive science by cherry-picking those studies that support one or another attempt to understand a particular text or archive (a laudable enterprise, I stress), a new generation of humanistic, cognitive scientists should instead internalize procedures of close reading and attention to praxis inculcated in the rhetorical tradition and use them to build new and different kinds of study, be they experimental, empirical (e.g., ethnographic), or theoretical. The fundamental insight is that human beings are rhetorical beings. Some of this work has already been accomplished within the phenomenological tradition (see Heidegger [1927] 1962; Husserl 1964; Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1962). Inspirational though they may be, they have focused on everyday coping strategies of hammering nails, blind navigation with a cane, or seeing a tomato from one or more vantage points, while leaving the issue of higher-order coping to be an open field of investigation. But any real understanding of how fluid coping with the immediate environment links up with these more detached, counterfactual, or future-oriented processes is woefully under-theorized. My aim is to help front-load rhetorical theory into a second person cognitive science.

What is front-loaded rhetoric? It is the necessary process of getting the ontology of *Homo rhetoricus* right, and as an outcome, designing

new approaches to the study of human singularities that more reductionist philosophies of science could not even conceive. In fact, by the time you have finished reading this book, you will have a greater appreciation of the nuances and ambiguities inherent in specifying a clear boundary between human beings and our closest living relatives, despite the demonstrable chasm between us. What is more, I intend to persuade you that any cognitive science purporting to understand and explain human meaning-making has to look to rhetorical theory and practice for inspiration and insight.

Rhetoric, as conceived by Aristotle, is at the nexus point between practice (*phronesis*), skill (*poiésis/téchne*), and principle (*theoría*). Decision-making in human affairs takes place in specific situations in which people are acting for reasons. It is this in situ reasoning process that can be identified as the true explanandum of the human condition: the capacity for highly nuanced and skilled practices in rich interpersonal settings. Practice, then, is the “sweet spot” of cognitive science, for attention to skill on the front end and then theory on the back end, require a deliberative core of decision making not reducible to mere skill or lofty theorization. To deliberate about fundamentally uncertain matters, and thereby to act for reasons, and to experience and understand others as acting for reasons, is the basis of rhetorical practice.

## Preview

I have given myself ten distinct occasions to persuade you that the essence of human nature is rhetorical and that those who investigate the rhetorical dimensions of human beings should have pride of place in our thinking about cognitive science. Human cognition enables rhetorical practices, but it would be a mistake to stuff all the means of rhetorical engagement inside the head. Recent developments in cognitive sciences indicate that this claim should not be radical. Robust projects in cognitive scientific research claiming the radical embodiment of minds are already well represented, all of which claim that perception is not something that happens inside us, but that it is something that we do as the world “shows up for us.” Explanations of mind must instead be extended outward in the widening gyre of skull and body to the physical and social environment, and to the prosthetics we develop and deploy therein. These views are consistent with the views expressed here.

These are broad advertisements. At this point, you are doubtless clamoring for details. The details are to be divvied up into three parts. Part I, “Theoretical Prerequisites,” consisting of Chapters 1–3, provides a broad

orientation of the philosophical and rhetorical landscape informing the rest of the book.

In Chapter 1, “Starting Points,” I lay my cards on the table, so to speak, and provide an answer to the question: what kind of cognitive scientist are you? I am explicitly weighing in on such metaphysically loaded questions as: What is mind? What theories of cognition best track the skills of *Homo rhetoricus*? In these pages, I advance the view of an “amalgamated mind” (a phrase borrowed from Mark Rowlands 2010), which emphasizes that brain, non-neural body, and environment constitute the proper explanatory unit of analysis of human mindedness and that such a view sits comfortably within a naturalist and externalist metaphysic. The amalgamated mind thesis takes the view that social ontologies are real and must be part of the explanation of *Homo rhetoricus* but cannot do so within a purely nomothetic (law-driven) conception of science. A second-person cognitive science sits between the nomothetic aspirations of the natural sciences and the casuistry of the human sciences.

Chapter 2, “*Homo Reticus* as a Creature of Presence,” argues that human beings are creatures of presence—of modes of accessing the world. In this respect, human beings are continuous with other organisms. However, we can extend presence, spatially and temporally, with the aid of semiotic resources, and can do so in several different styles. Consciousness is not just one thing; they are styles of accessing the world. This chapter is also an extended meditation on the rhetorician, Kenneth Burke’s (1966) essay “Definition of Man” as a guide for drawing the broad outlines of *Homo rhetoricus*.

Chapter 3, “Representation and the Semiotic Circuit,” tackles one of the most daunting issues in cognitive theory and the philosophy of mind. The first generations of cognitive scientists followed the axiom: human cognition IS mental representation. Everything we perceive begins and ends with the construction, development, and modification of internal mental representations. Such a view underwrites artificial intelligence and cognitive neurosciences. This view can no longer be treated as axiomatic, and the present chapter aims to articulate a view of higher-order human cognition that does not entail internal (mental) representations at its core. A more fruitful position to take is the ecological perspective that human beings are just like any other vertebrate with a central nervous system: we evolved in order to move and interact in a three-dimensional environment. The human brain, for all its fascinating structure and function, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for mindedness, and that the human mind is unavoidably amalgamated, such that a proper unit of analysis involves brain, body, and world. Much of our human singularities arise from amalgamated minds—minds that

continuously interact with the world. This leads to the ecological view that *Homo rhetoricus* perceives affordances, turns those perceptual invariants into signals and signs of various types, which in turn can be internalized in the form of memories, mental images, and anticipations, and finally used as representations, meaning that signs can be used to represent that which is absent to satisfy a persuasive or dissuasive purpose.

If we are, indeed, rhetorical beings, then how did we get that way? Part II, “The Evolution and Development of *Homo Reticus*” consists of chapter 4–6. Chapters 4 and 5 offer phylogenetic and ontogenetic accounts thereof. My tentative answer is that the usual evolutionary psychological answers are inadequate because they make the mistake of trying to cram everything inside the head, or, even, inside the genome. I offer instead an ecological inheritance view consistent with niche construction approaches to evolution and development that get us to see rhetorical practices as part of the human environment.

In Chapter 4, “The Evolution of *Homo Reticus*,” I offer a (not so) just so story of the descent of *Homo rhetoricus*, the basic facts of which are best understood in terms of niche construction theory. A second-person cognitive science framework provides a heuristic method of assessing a significant problem in the evolution of behaviorally modern hominins. Anatomically modern hominins appeared 200,000 years ago while behaviorally modern hominins appear only around 100,000 years ago. Since behaviorally modern hominins are virtually identical to anatomically modern hominins, how can we account for a nearly 100,000-year lag between the two? How does niche construction theory help solve the “sapience paradox” (Renfrew 2008)?

Chapter 5, “The Development of *Homo Reticus*,” recapitulates phylogeny with a view of *Homo rhetoricus* from the perspective of cognitive development. This time, the focus of attention is on the forms of intersubjectivity uniquely unfolding in human niches. The ontogeny of *Homo rhetoricus* focuses on a four-fold intersubjectivity matrix characterizes typical human development, with a particular application to matters of personhood.

“The Language of *Homo Reticus*” is the title of chapter 6. Language is the term of choice in order to emphasize that language is, first and foremost, something we do together. Taking a more participatory perspective has radical implications for thinking about the evolution of language (perhaps the most hotly contested subject in human evolution). The point of this chapter is to meditate on the range of non-language specific but socially grounded cognitive capacities (some deeply rooted in primate evolution, some not) that lead to *Homo sapiens* becoming *Homo rhetoricus*.



Language-specific evolution, or the idea that the language faculty is a separate organ from all other forms of cognition, suggests that *Homo sapiens* become *Homo syntacticus* before becoming *Homo loquens* (talking being), and this talking being is really just a side-effect of internal brain processes. The present chapter suggests that such a view does not fit with the evolutionary or developmental trajectory as laid out in previous chapters. A more likely trajectory takes a second-person view in which intersubjective interaction and coordination are the basal conditions of language evolution. What is more, it is our general cognitive skills of joint attention and volitional bodily control that ultimately leads to semiotic control. Syntax and recursion are outcomes and not drivers of language evolution. This argument adjusts the traditional, first-person framework to emphasize that any internalization of languaging emerges from our second-person ontology.

For a second-person cognitive science to thrive, it needs a theory of language structure and function that earns its keep by offering analyses of language practices of sufficient methodological precision and detail as well as cognitive and sociological plausibility. Such questions are at the heart of Part III, “Discourse and Social Ontology”, consisting of chapters 7–10.

Chapter 7, “Language in the World of *Homo Rhetoricus*,” answers the question: what type of language theory does a second-person cognitive science need? In these pages, I offer a proof of concept of language analysis that explores methods from Cognitive Linguistic theory that comprises an integrated approach to language as a social-cognitive process. This chapter brings facets of language and discourse analysis together, including co-speech gesture, that I regard as necessary for the future advances in second-person cognitive science.

Chapter 8, “Institutions and Document Acts,” makes the transition from the second- to the third-person cognition. It is easy to overlook the fact that much of our thinking, talking, and acting takes place in institutions; equally easy to ignore is the fact that much of this activity takes place among perfect strangers (see Seabright 2010), an evolutionarily unique, if not wholly unprecedented occurrence. Institutions are so pervasive as to be a permanent part of the background unless things go awry. That we think in institutional terms is not in dispute, but just how institutions come into being, and just what their ontological status is concerns both rhetoricians and cognitive scientists alike. This chapter focuses on institutions and the problems of order that marries a linguist’s interest in a specific grammatical phenomenon (modal verbs) with a sociologist’s and historian’s interest in legal history. The present chapter shows how a particular use of modal verbs like “must” acquire

distinct and distinctive properties in the context of landmark opinions by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS).

Chapter 9, “The Lifeworlds of Homo Rhetoricus,” answers a question rarely posed in either cognitive science or rhetorical theory: what are human concepts? This question brings us in direct contact with the meaning of meaning. Meaning is an organism’s ongoing interaction with its environment. I answer the question by invoking the concept first articulated by Edmund Husserl: *Lebenswelt*. I do so by presenting a broad architecture of the semantic domains or lifeworlds of human involvement sketched by my colleague, Per Aage Brandt (2004). These domains are integral to the development of meaning. Although cultures vary significantly on the kinds of active domains, the semantic domain scheme outlined here is intended to be transcendental, laying bare some of the necessary conditions of meaning construction by limning out the areas of content common of human thought, action, and interaction.

Astute readers of recent cognitive science and the same astute readers of my previous work will assume that language itself is a means of effecting feeling and guiding judgment. They will, therefore, ask: what is the place of emotion in understanding rhetorical minds? This is the topic of Chapter 10, “Setting Up for ‘Setting Off’ Homo Rhetoricus.”

Since Plato and Descartes, the role of emotion in human life has been largely avoided, sometimes dismissed as mere sophistry. This fantasy was fueled by a desire to refine emotion and feeling out of human thinking. Thinking, according to the intellectualist ideal, is the work of calm, detached reason, not hot emotional engagement. Except that human beings can never escape emotion-laden contexts and situations. What is more, efficient thought needs an emotional, desiring component in order to give reasons for actions. Aristotle’s treatment of emotions in Book III of his *On Rhetoric* stands as the most enduring account of the social psychology of emotion. Since then, many have refined his ideas and given them empirical weight (not the least being Charles Darwin), but his treatise provides a heuristic for systematic thinking about the effect that remains underdeveloped among latter-day rhetorical theorists and cognitive psychologists. Chapter 10 seeks a remedy by offering a theory of rhetorical appraisals that builds on current work on emotion research that accommodates insights from evolutionary psychology and social constructionism.

The final contribution is an excursus on the emotionally loaded topics of national debt and deficit that animate the public sphere in the United States and Europe. The concepts of “debt,” “credit,” and “deficit” are inherently emotional notions capable of eliciting anger, fear (in the form of worry or panic) as a prelude to guilt and shame. This final chapter ex-

plores how affect shapes our conceptualizations behind the West's most trenchant policy debates.

These ten chapters paint a portrait of *Homo rhetoricus* as a biological organism occupying a uniquely rich symbolic niche that continually allows it to remake the environment to effect long-range changes to the world, for good or ill. To do so depends on particular features of human cognition that include the capacity of linking skillful coping to a capacity for reflective consciousness about time and space, both of which are linked to a set of symbols and symbol systems for constituting group agents and social ontologies that form the nurturing environment for new individual agents. Such environments then allow us to focus the emotional energies of others for specific ends. Human beings live within and among "symbol systems" that make us "rotten with perfection," (see Chapter 2, "Kenneth Burke's Definition of *Homo Reticus*") a desire to make the situation otherwise than it is. Such is the broad picture of us.

Taken collectively, these chapters comprise an extended meditation on human thought, communication, and action among the most complexly social of beings. It is a work of synthesis. As a systematic and extensive discourse, its ultimate aim is to point the way forward to a coherent research program to be developed in subsequent investigations, the subject of inevitable sequels.

## Notes

1. My first encounter with this binomial was in Richard Lanham's (1976) exposition of artfully trained orator. Closer to my usage is Peter Österreich (2009), who extends the range to language as such. I regard it as stylistically apt to use the masculine nominative singular as the default reference for the entire species, male or female, plural or singular, with "they," "we," or "our" as the most inclusive antecedent coreference.
2. For expository convenience, I am sticking to the more vernacular terms "symbols" and "symbolic" to mean "semiotic," even though a "symbol" is but one of several types of signs. More precision will be applied in later chapters, however.
3. Derivatives are products of financial markets where the price of a security emerges from the value of some underlying asset, e.g., a bond, such as a residential mortgage-backed security.
4. For a sustained analysis of group agency, see List and Pettit (2011).
5. Economic and monetary historians have identified four functional properties of money. Most familiarly, money acts as a "medium of exchange." As such, one can use money to exchange goods, as when you give a vendor a euro, and they give you something in exchange. Money functions as a "store of value" whenever you save. Saved money is a hedge against uncertainty, as you are conserving resources for

future need. Money works as a “method of payment” whenever you use it to settle a debt, as when you pay off a mortgage or school loan. Money as payment is distinct from a medium of exchange function, insofar as the payment effectively eliminates the debt, which, in turn, eliminates some portion of money itself. When your debt is “forgiven,” it ceases to generate income for the creditor. A method of payment is simply a method of changing the terms of the relationship between debtor and creditor. For sovereign (state) currencies, money functions as a “unit of account.” Modern monetary systems are denominated according to a unit of measure created, controlled, and enforced by an authority. As a citizen of the United States, most of my wealth and debts are denominated in US dollars; it is the unit of account I use as a method of payment (including taxes), a store of value, and as a medium of exchange. A final derivative function of money is as a means of scorekeeping. As the economist Thorstein Veblen (1899) painstakingly illustrates, a great deal of economic activity involves “invidious comparison,” how we socially position ourselves relative to others for whom we compete. For example, a Wall Street banker may balk at a year-end bonus of “merely \$500,000,” when he compares it to his rival’s \$600,000 bonus, or a starting running back for the American football team, the Pittsburgh Steelers, holds out in contract negotiations because he wants to be the highest paid running back in the league. L. Randall Wray (1998, 2015) provides a clear and concise discussion of money and its functions in a modern economy.

6. The economist Hyman Minsky is famous for flippantly saying: “Anyone can create money . . . the problem lies in getting it accepted” (Wray 2015: 94). He was actually making a serious point: money exists in many forms—coins, paper money, bank checks, treasury bonds, babysitter co-op coupons, mileage points on a credit card, an IOU on a sticky note, and, if we believe Adam Smith’s descriptions in Chapter 4 of *Wealth of Nations* ([1776] 2007), Scottish builders’ use of nails instead of coins. In each case, there is a putative issuer of the money as well as a putative user. An IOU written on a sticky note and signed by Todd Oakley will not be accepted by anyone beyond his circle of friends and family. Airline mileage points issued by a Visa card can be used only for an airline that can convert these points into another currency, such as US dollars or euros. Babysitter co-op coupons, on the other hand, can only be used by members of the babysitting cooperative to hire from a pool of co-op members to perform babysitting services. These are “hermetically sealed” credits that stay within the cooperative are not convertible to other currency (against the rules), and they are not to be used for any other service. In each of these cases, the money system originates from a non-sovereign issuer. What is interesting about the Scottish workman’s “nails-as-currency” example, is that the nails are denominated into English pounds. That is, a nail might be worth twelve pence, or one shilling, making twenty nails equal to one pound Sterling. If you are among Scottish builders, you can use them for trading goods and services among other tradespeople and their near associates, but, and this is important, you can’t use the nails to pay your taxes, fees, or fines levied against you by the state. All these instances of money fulfill second-person interactions as bearers of credit toward one another, but the issuer thereof has very limited jurisdiction.

Sovereign currency, on the other hand, is quite a different matter. Its jurisdiction can include an entire nation, or, in the case of the US dollar, most of the world, as nearly anything that is for sale in the world market can ultimately be purchased by

US dollars. The same is not true of the Hungarian forint, Serbian dinar, or Iranian rial. If you are a Hungarian citizen, the forint is the currency which you need to pay your taxes and buy goods in Hungarian shops. Importantly, it is the unit-of-account used by Hungarians in day-to-day living; the Hungarian treasury and central bank issue forints before they can get them back in taxes; the government, as the issuer of the currency, does not need to earn them; they spend them into existence. When I issue an IOU to a friend, I am spending it into existence. The difference between me and the Hungarian government is that my IOU is only good for my friend, and my friend cannot present my IOU to the government as payment of taxes. The Hungarian government, as an issuer of the currency, is not financially constrained, as it has the power of numerical infinity of forints. The operative question for them is whether or not the forint can acquire everything the government and citizenry need. If not, the government may choose to borrow money in euros or dollars. When that happens, the Hungarian government becomes a user of another currency; they have given up a portion of their monetary and fiscal sovereignty. Many developing nations find themselves in this macroeconomic predicament; their debts are not denominated in their own currency.

John Locke's mistake was to think of the British pound only from the perspective of the user. Lowndes, on the other hand, was thinking of the British pound from the perspective of the issuer. Lowndes perspective was true concerning the monetary system, but it was nearly impossible for him to persuade Parliament and the citizenry that Locke's position was wrong. Truth does not carry its own persuasion.

Recent works on money, its history, and functions include Felix Martin (2013) and Nigel Dodd (2014).

7. Copyright restrictions prohibit duplication of still photographs of the speech. For complete access to Clint Eastwood's address to the 2012 Republican Convention delegates, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DGl-4gByV4&t=11s>.
8. Readers should consult Oakley 2017a for a complete analysis of Eastwood's speech.
9. This phrasing comes from Alva Noë (2012, *passim*).