

Language

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Introduction

Among the many reasons for which it was celebrated, the Scottish Enlightenment period was notable for the heightened interest accorded to language as a phenomenon worthy of study. A renewed interest in humans as social creatures, and in the implications of human sociality for various questions of interest to contemporary thinkers, at least in part explained the Scottish interest in language as a uniquely central – and uniquely social – institution.

One of the concerns that the 18th century Scottish thinkers inherited from Bacon and Hobbes was a preoccupation with the ways in which imprecision in language could bedevil philosophical investigation by resulting in imprecision in thought. But Scottish thinkers recognized that, if the goal of philosophical argument is not merely to achieve truth but also to

achieve assent, apt use of language requires more than mere precision.

Indeed, in the Introduction to the *Treatise*, Hume laments that

There is nothing which is not the subject of debate, and in which men of learning are not of contrary opinions. The most trivial question escapes not our controversy, and in the most momentous we are not able to give any certain decision. Disputes are multiplied, as if every thing was uncertain; and these disputes are managed with the greatest warmth, as if every thing was certain. Amidst all this bustle it is not reason, which carries the prize, but eloquence; and no man needs ever despair of gaining proselytes to the most extravagant hypothesis, who has art enough to represent it in any favourable colours. The victory is not gained by the men at arms, who manage the pike and the sword; but by the trumpeters, drummers, and musicians of the army. (Hume 1888, xviii)

Hume suggests that it is not directness of argument, the cut and thrust of logical reasoning, that compels assent. Instead, it artifice, ornament, that appeals to listeners and wins followers. In other words, Hume contrasts two roles for language: as a tool for reason and as a medium for eloquence. Thinkers in the 18th century characterized the former role as the proper subject of logic, while reserving the latter as the proper subject of rhetoric.

This view of the dual functions of language fit well with the dominant schools of thought about one of the most pressing questions for 18th century thinkers about language -- namely,

how it was that language as a phenomenon arose at all.¹ For most Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, regardless of their specific views, the answer to the question of the origin of language had to do with the role of language in achieving human aims.

Thus, for example, it is to describe Adam Smith's theory of the emergence of language that Dugald Stewart coins the term "conjectural history" and notes that "it cannot fail to occur to us as an interesting question, by what gradual steps the transition has been made from the first simple efforts of an uncultivated nature, to a state of things so wonderfully artificial and complicated" (Stewart 1858: 33). Artifice and complication are qualities of rhetoric; the development of language traces a movement from more straightforward to more sophisticated rhetorical forms.

This chapter will investigate the status of language as a topic of study for Scottish Enlightenment thinkers by focusing on four central areas pertaining to language as an object of study: (1) evidence that facts about language might provide for conclusions about human nature, (2) speculations on the origins of language, (3) thoughts on rhetoric, and (4) the epistemic status of testimony. In each section, a few central texts will serve as the focus for more general observations on how Scottish Enlightenment thinkers addressed these topics, situating the conversation in Scotland within the larger intellectual context of the period.

1 Though Aarsleff sees the main axis of 18th century discussions of the origin of language as running between Paris and Berlin, he does note that "the debate also reached Scotland", and cites in particular the "distinguished" works of Smith and Monboddo (cf. Aarsleff 1982, 148).

Beginning with a brief sketch of the Lockean presuppositions of much of the Scottish discussion of language, the section on the origins of language examines Scottish enlightenment theories about linguistic origins through the lens of a consideration of Reid's scattered observations on the relation between language and the powers of the human mind, Smith's *Dissertation on the Origin of Languages* (first published 1761) and Monboddo's *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (1773–1792). For a consideration of Scottish Enlightenment theories of rhetoric, primary texts will be Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1762), Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), and Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783). Finally, for the section on the epistemic status of testimony, the central texts will be Hume's discussion of testimony in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), Reid's discussion of testimony in the *Inquiry into the Human Mind* and *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, and Smith's views on the role of rhetoric in social life. As will become evident in subsequent discussion, the core thread running through all of these discussions is the central role that 18th century Scottish thinkers accorded to the role the language plays in human cognition and in the social and civic lives of humans.

Speculations on the origin of language and on human nature

It is typical to distinguish roughly three schools of thought concerning the origin of language. Following Sapir (1907), we can term these the “theological”, “rational”, and

“naturalist” schools.²

Examples of the theological school in 18th century Scotland would include Kames and Beattie, who held that language was given by Providence to Adam. Thus, for example, both Kames and Beattie suggest that the divine origin of language can be made compatible with the fact of linguistic diversity, by appeal to the biblical story of the Tower of Babel.³

In contrast to the biblically-inspired conjectural history of a Kames or Beattie stand the naturalistic language theorists influenced by Locke, many of whom took their cue from the fable of Mandeville's "wild couple", who, isolated from infancy from the influence of others, is able to develop the institutions of human society solely on the basis of their natural powers.⁴

Locke and the Roots of the Scottish Discussion

It is perhaps unsurprising that Locke was so influential in 18th century discussions of language, since, famously, Locke came to see a study of words essential to clarity in philosophy. However, this was not his original view. When he set out to write the *Essay*, he noted that “when I first began this Discourse of the Understanding, and a good while after, I had not the least Thought, that any Consideration of Words was at all necessary to it” (*Essay*, III, ix, 21). By the time he had devoted more thought to the question, however, Locke came to appreciate that “the

² Cf. Wellek 1941; Sapir 1907; contrast Berry 1974, who suggests a four-fold division.

³ Cf. Kames 1807, 62-4; Beattie 1783, 374-85

⁴ Cf. Mandeville 1924, II, 285-94.

Extent and Certainty” of knowledge were so intertwined with the use of language, “that unless [the] force and manner of Signification of [Words] were first well observed, there could be very little said clearly and pertinently concerning Knowledge” (*Essay*, III, ix, 21).

This is not to suggest that Locke’s motivation in considering the significance of language for the expression of thought was to explore the ways that language might *aid* such expression. Rather, Locke sought to clarify the ways in which the expression of ideas in words limited, or occluded, the precise consideration of those ideas.

In this, Locke was expressing the common contemporary distrust of language exemplified by the motto of the Royal Society, “Nullius in Verba”, taken from Horace’s *Epistles* I, i: “Ac ne forte roges quo me duce, quo lare tuter,/Nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri,/Quo me cumque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.”

The foundation of Locke’s discussion of language is Locke’s empiricism. The basis of all ideas is experience, and experience thus forms the ultimate foundation of language:

Simple Ideas ... are only to be got by those impressions, Objects themselves make on our Minds, by the proper Inlets appointed to each sort. If they are not received this way, all the Words in the World, made use of to explain, or define any of their Names, will never be able to produce in us the Idea it stands for. For Words being Sounds, can produce in us no other simple Ideas, than of those very Sounds; nor excited any in us, but by that voluntary connexion, which is known to be between them, and those simple Ideas, which common Use has made them Signs of. (Essay, III, iv, 11)

At root, the fundamental function of words is to stand in for ideas: “*Words ... come to be made use of by Men, as the Signs of their Ideas; ... The use then of Words, is to be sensible Marks of*

Ideas; and the *Ideas* they stand for, are their proper and immediate Signification.” (*Essay*, III, ii,

1) Words, then, can only get at the true nature of things if the words by which language users referred to those things were imposed on speakers by Nature.

Locke denied, however, that language is determined by Nature. Evidence for this is, for example, the intranslatability of general terms between languages. Such intranslatability “could not have happened, if these Species were the steady Workmanship of Nature; and not Collections made and abstracted by the Mind, in order to naming, and for the convenience of Communication” (*Essay*, III, v, 8).

Locke’s view on the artificiality of language is evident also in his conviction about the fact that only the nominal essences of substances can be known. Even if it were possible to discover the “*real Essences* of Substances”, it would be unreasonable for us to

think, that the *ranking of things under general Names, was regulated by those internal real Constitutions, or any thing else but their obvious appearances*. Since Languages, in all Countries, have been established long before Sciences. So that they have not been Philosophers, or Logicians, or such who have troubled themselves about *Forms* and *Essences*, that have made the general Names, that are in use amongst the several Nations of Men: But those, more or less comprehensive terms, have for the most part, in all Languages, received their Birth and Signification, from ignorant and illiterate People, who sorted and denominated Things, by those sensible Qualities they found in them. (*Essay*, III, vi, 25)

There is, however, an ambivalence in Locke’s discussion regarding the role of language as

consisting in the communication of ideas.⁵ Though Locke's explicitly stated view is that ideas are prior to language, there are passages in the *Essay* that seem to suggest that the relation should be inverted, and that language shapes men's ideas. Thus, for example, Condillac sees in Locke an insufficient appreciation for the way in which language use might serve as a bridge from simple ideas to more complex ones — that is, that, without recourse to language, we would never have arrived at complex ideas at all.

Thus, in a passage in the *Essay* that, became, “after Condillac, ... the unquestioned rationale for all etymological searching for the history of thought” (Aarsleff 1967, 31), Locke notes

... how great a Dependence our *Words* have on common sensible *Ideas*; and how those, which are made use of to stand for Actions and Notions quite removed from sense, *have their rise from thence, and from obvious sensible Ideas are transferred to more abstruse Significations*, and made to stand for *Ideas* that come not under the cognizance of our Senses; v.g. to *Imagine, Apprehend, Comprehend, Adhere, Conceive, Instill, Disgust, Disturbance, Tranquility, &c.* are all Words taken from the Operations of sensible Things, and applied to certain Modes of Thinking. (*Essay*, III, i)

Eighteenth century thinkers saw Locke as alluding to at least two challenges in this passage, only to set them aside. The first is whether “we may give some kind of guess, what kind of Notions they were, and whence derived, which filled their Minds, who were the first

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Cf. the discussion in Aarsleff 1967, 30-32.

Beginners of Languages; and how Nature, even in the naming of Things, unawares suggested to Men the Originals and Principles of all their Knowledge” (*Essay*, III, i). The second is how it is that, although these words “have had their first rise from sensible *Ideas*”, they no longer express such ideas, but now “stand for Things that fall not under our Senses” (*Essay*, III, i).

For the 18th century Scottish context, one of the most influential statements of these questions concerning the origin of language is due to Rousseau. For him, the first question ultimately has to do with the relative priority of language and social relations. As Rousseau puts the problem in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inegalite parmi les hommes*, "je laisse à qui voudra l'entreprendre la discussion de ce difficile problème: lequel a été le plus nécessaire, de la société déjà liée à l'institution des langues, ou des langues déjà inventées à l'établissement de la société " (Rousseau 1915, 158). The second problem has to do with the relative priority of language and thought. Again, in Rousseau's formulation from the *Discours*, the question involves "si les hommes ont eu besoin de la parole pour apprendre à penser, ils ont eu bien plus besoin encore de savoir penser pour trouver l'art de la parole" (Rousseau 1915, 154).

Reid

Reid attempts to address the first of two questions sparked by Locke – that concerning the relative priority of language and sociality. Tied up with this question was the question of the universality of the underlying structures of language. Following the Port Royal grammarians, many of the 18th century Scottish thinkers on language held that the underlying structures of language were universal. This idea about the universality of the core structures of language,

however, comports better with some ideas about the origin of language than with others.

For Reid, for example, the fact of the universality of grammar provides support for the idea that human cognition is the result of innate intellectual powers, due to the fact that language has its roots in the God-given solitary and social intellectual powers of man. Reid states at various places throughout his work that "language is the express image and picture of human thoughts; and from the picture we can draw some conclusions concerning the original" (Reid 1812, II: 290; cf. Reid 1812, I: XLIIX). Furthermore, a study of languages reveals that there are "common opinions of mankind, upon which the structure and grammar of all languages are founded" (Reid 1812, I: 51). What this means, however, is that this uniformity of underlying linguistic structure reveals "the original powers and laws of our constitution", as language is one of "the various phenomena of human nature" through which such powers and laws might be explicated (Reid 1812, I: 11; cf. Reid 1812, I: 67-8).

If one ignores the formulation "solitary and social" in the enumeration of the intellectual powers, one might think that Reid's suggestion that language is an expression of man's intellectual powers is one that is compatible with Locke's understanding of language and its origin. Reid understands the Lockean view to be one according to which the invention of language is solely due to humans' greater capacity for reason: "Language is commonly considered as purely an invention of men, who by nature are no less mute than the brutes, but having a superior degree of invention and reason, have been able to contrive artificial signs of their thoughts and their purposes, and to establish them by common consent" (Reid 1801:92).

Reid, however, denies that such a view is plausible. Rather, language requires the

existence of innate, social powers, in addition to man's capacity for reason:

If nature had not made man capable of such social operations of mind, and furnished him with a language to express them, he might think, and reason, and deliberate, and will; he might have desires and aversions, joy and sorrow; in a word, he might exert all those operations of mind, which the writers of logic and pneumatology have so copiously described; but, at the same time, he would still be a solitary being, even when in a crowd; it would be impossible for him to put a question, or to give a command, to ask a favour, or testify a fact, to make a promise or a bargain. (Reid 1812 III:538)

For Reid, this is proof, furthermore, of the existence of a language of natural signs that must have existed prior to the invention of spoken language. In other words, spoken language required, for its invention, both a natural language of signs and innate social powers underwriting the social coordination of behavior. This is because "all artificial language supposes some compact or agreement to affix a certain meaning to certain signs; therefore there must be compacts or agreements before the use of artificial signs; but there can be no compact or agreement without signs, nor without language; and therefore there must be a natural language before any artificial language can be invented" (Reid 1810: 93).

For Reid, these natural signs involve "looks, changes of the features, modulations of the voice, and gestures of the body" (Reid 1812, III: 540). Of course, such signs bear no necessary connection to the social operations -- putting a question, giving a command, making a promise. Rather, the connection is innate, a "gift of God, no less than the powers of seeing and hearing" (Reid 1812, III: 540).

Reid's emphasis on the importance of "natural" language was highly influential.⁶ Thus, for example, in his lecture on the "Rise and Progress of Language" in the *Lectures*, Blair notes that

If we should suppose a period before any words were invented or known, it is clear, that men could have no other method of communicating to others what they felt, than by the cries of passion, accompanied with such motions and gestures as were farther expressive of passion. . . . Those exclamations, therefore, which by Grammarians are called Interjections, uttered in a strong and passionate manner, were, beyond doubt, the first elements or beginnings of Speech. (Blair 1823, I: 64)

Smith

Reid, then, seeks to demonstrate that the solitary intellectual powers are not sufficient for the invention of language. Smith, on the other hand, takes for granted that primitive humans would hit upon the idea of using language to solve problems of social coordination. What Smith seeks to explore is how, on the basis of the assumption of extremely limited solitary intellectual powers (to use Reid's term), primitive humans could invent the multiplicity of linguistic structures present in spoken language.

In setting himself this task, Smith is explicitly seeking to answer the second of the two questions prompted by Locke – the question concerning the relation of thought to language. He

6 Compare also Kames's suggestion that gesture and countenance naturally communicate emotion – one reason for which was to fix word meaning – in fn. 11.

does so by considering the problem in the manner of Condillac.⁷ Smith begins his discussion on "Considerations Concerning the First Formation of Languages" by employing what Dugald Stewart describes as a "conjectural" history. That is, it is not a history at all, in the proper sense, but rather a rational reconstruction on the basis of Smith's observations of human nature and behavior.

Ultimately, Condillac's way of interpreting Locke's question of the relation of thought and language concerns the question of how to explain the development of the parts of speech. Do we need to appeal to rational faculties, understood independently of the use and development of language, to explain how it was that highly sophisticated linguistic structures developed from what must have been very primitive beginnings, or did the development of those highly sophisticated linguistic structures contribute to the ever greater sophistication of human thought, through a reciprocal form of interaction?

Smith discusses this problem under the heading of abstraction; the question is, if we do not presuppose that primitive humans already possess the ability for abstraction prior to the invention of language, how can we explain how it is that such humans come to invent complex language? As Smith notes, "It is this application of the name of an individual to a great multitude

7 Although, in the "Considerations", Smith only refers to Rousseau by name, it is probable that he knew of Condillac's work, as he was conversant with other French thinkers on language, including Girard's *Les Vrais Principes de la Langue Française* and the *Encyclopédie* articles on grammar. Cf. Land 1977, 677; Berry 1974, 131.

of objects whose resemblance naturally recalls the idea of that individual, and of the name which expresses it, ... of which the ingenious and eloquent M Rousseau of Geneva finds himself so much at a loss to account for the origin" (Smith 1809, 467).

Following Land (1977), we can understand Smith's discussion as an attempt to sketch the genesis of complex language in terms of the mental operations of generalization, comparison, abstraction, and systematization. Smith terms these operations "metaphysical", and measures the evolution of linguistic complexity along an axis from less to more metaphysical -- roughly corresponding to an axis from lesser to greater abstraction.

Like Reid, Smith sees the powers of the mind as being reflected in the structure of language. Unlike Reid, Smith develops an evolutionary account of language and mind: as language becomes more sophisticated, this leads to greater powers of abstraction in mind, and this mental development leads to still greater sophistication in the development of the structure of language.

Broadly speaking, Smith conceives of the increase of abstraction within a language as involving the decreasing complexity of individual words and the increasing complexity of the sentence. For example, Smith thinks that the first languages consisted of single words that stood as the names for whole events: "in the beginnings of language, men seem to have attempted to express every particular event, which they had occasion to take notice of, by a particular word, which expressed at once the whole of the event" (Smith 1809, 483). In other words, these early expressions "preserve ... that perfect simplicity and unity, which there always is in the object and in the idea, and which suppose no abstraction, or metaphysical division of the event into its

several constituent members of subject and attribute" (Smith 1809, 480).

After the introduction of names for objects, however, the names for events could stand not for the entire events, but for the verb associated with the event (Smith 1809, 481-3). In this way, the next step of the development of language would involve the distinction between subjects and verbs. The original names, according to Smith, would be proper names; through the association of ideas, the earliest speakers would gradually extend the use of the proper name to other objects that resemble the original ones. For Smith, that is, "it was impossible that [these earliest speakers] could behold the new objects, without recollecting the old ones; and the name of the old ones, to which they bore so close a resemblance". In this way, "those words, which were originally the proper names of individuals, would each of them insensibly become the common name of a multitude" (Smith 1809, 466). In motivating this idea, Smith suggests that a consideration of how *children* use their rudimentary vocabularies prompts us to consider a different picture of the development of language.

According to Smith, what the child's early use of language demonstrates is that such early use involves not *reason*, but imagination. That is, the child imaginatively extends the use of a word he already knows to new cases. For example, "A child that is just learning to speak, calls every person who comes to the house its papa or its mama; and thus bestows upon the whole species those names which it had been taught to apply to two individuals" (Smith 1809, 466).

This, then, is Smith's solution to Rousseau's problem:

In this application of the name of an individual to a great multitude of objects, whose

resemblance naturally recalls the idea of that individual, and of the name which expresses it, that seems originally to have given occasion to the formation of those classes and assortments, which, in the schools, are called genera and species, and of which the ingenious and eloquent M. Rousseau, of Geneva, finds himself so much at a loss to account for the origin. What constitutes a species is merely a number of objects, bearing a certain degree of resemblance to one another, and, on that account, denominated by a single appellation, which may be applied to express any one of them. (Smith 1809, 467)

Of course, as the demands of life become more complex, the language of the child -- and, by extension, the language of the earliest language-users -- becomes more complex as well. In the earliest stages, each situation demands a different word; gradually, however, the grammatical structure of the language becomes more complex -- differentiating nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and other parts of speech -- while, at the same time, individual words become simpler.

After the introduction of nouns and verbs, the next stages of language complexity, according to Smith, would involve the introduction of inflexion -- first of gender, case, and number for nouns, and then for verbs. Following that, the complexity of the sentence would increase further, with the introduction first of adjectives, then prepositions, numbers, and pronouns.⁸

Thus, it is not the case that Smith completely eschews the use of abstraction in his

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Cf. Land 1977; Schreyer 1990.

explanation of the genetic development of the parts of speech. However, Smith sees highly inflected languages as not requiring "abstraction, nor any conceived separation of the quality from the subject", since

quality appears in nature as a modification of the substance, and as it is thus expressed in language by a modification of the noun substantive which denotes that substance, the quality and the substance are in this case blended together ... in the expression, in the same manner as they appear to be in the object and the idea. (Smith 1809, 471)

In this way, the increasing sophistication of language mirrors the sophistication of machine design. Whereas early machines are designed for very particular functions, later machines take advantage of simpler design principles, allowing for the standardization of the individual machine components:

It is in this manner that language becomes more simple in its rudiments and principles, just in proportion as it grows more complex in its composition, and the same thing has happened in it which commonly happens in regard with mechanical engines. All machines are generally, when first invented, extremely complex in their principles, and there is often a particular principle of motion for every particular movement which it is intended they should perform. Succeeding improvers observe, that one principle may be so applied as to produce several of those movements; and thus the machine becomes gradually more and more simple, and produces its effects with fewer wheels and fewer principles of motion. In language, in the same manner, every case of every noun, and every tense of every verb, was originally expressed by a particular distinct word, which

served for this purpose and for no other. But succeeding observation discovered, that one set of words was capable of supplying the place of all that infinite number, and that four or five prepositions, and half a dozen auxiliary verbs, were capable of answering the end of all the declensions and of all the conjugations in the ancient languages. (Smith 1809, 491)

Monboddo

In contrast to Reid and Smith, each of whom focus more exclusively on one of the two Locke-inspired questions regarding the genesis of language, Monboddo attempts to address both. Unlike many of the other Scottish thinkers who wrote on language, Monboddo embraced ways of thinking about the origin of language that had been rejected by his contemporaries as transgressing against the principles established by Bacon, Newton, and others for the practice of scientific thinking. In particular, Monboddo retained an allegiance to traditional rhetoric, an affinity for rationalism, and an acceptance of the Aristotelian theory of *faculties* – as distinct, say, from the Reidian notion of natural *powers*.

According to this theory, humans are endowed with innate capacities and develop those capacities by means of usage or habit into faculties. Rational action is the result of the employment of these human faculties. Monboddo did not see language as essential to human existence -- in contrast, say, to sense perception. For this reason, Monboddo considered language to be a faculty in the Aristotelian sense; though it is based on the activity of natural capacities, language is not itself a natural power of humans. Therefore, whereas many of Monboddo's

contemporaries regarded language as a divinely-given natural gift, Monboddo took language rather to be a human invention -- though one resting, no doubt, on divinely-given natural capacities. (Cloyd 1972, 64)

That Monboddo was distinctly in the minority in this view may be seen when one considers the views of his contemporaries on the origin of language. Thus, Kames writes that, were it not for the Tower of Babel, humans would still speak "but one language" (Kames 1807, I, 62). Beattie, with Monboddo's arguments as a foil, suggests that -- though it is true that it takes effort to acquire speech -- God gave language initially to the first man through divine inspiration, after which he passed it along to subsequent generations. (Beattie 1783)

For Monboddo, though the natural powers of humans are divinely-given, the reach of those powers is not sufficient to explain the invention of language, or of any of the other many social arts:

if we rightly consider the matter, we shall find that, our nature is chiefly constituted of acquired habits, and that we are much more creatures of custom and art than of nature. It is a common saying, that habit (meaning custom) is a second nature. I add, that it is more powerful than the first, and in a great measure destroys and absorbs the original nature. For it is the capital and distinguishing characteristic of our species, that we can *make* ourselves, as it were, over again, so that the *original* nature in us can hardly be seen; and it is with the greatest difficulty that we can distinguish it from the *acquired*. (Monboddo 1774, I: 24-25)

Though the basis of Monboddo's initial theorizing about language involved Aristotelian foundations, it would be wrong to suggest that Monboddo ignored empirical research. Although he did no field-work of his own, he acquired some familiarity with Sanskrit and even non-Indo-European languages, through the study of dictionaries and grammars of those languages available at the time. In this way, Monboddo was able to supplement examples drawn from his knowledge of Latin, Greek, and French with a wider range of source material -- including Huron, Algonquin, Galibi, Carib, Peruvian, Eskimo, Tahitian, and Amazonian. (Cloyd 1972, 66)

Since Monboddo held that language was not innate, but acquired, it was natural for him to study the conditions that contributed to the acquisition of language. These include, for Monboddo, the biological preconditions to produce the sounds needed for the physical production of language, the possession of ideas that can be expressed through language, and sufficient exposure to the society of others. It is worthwhile at least briefly to consider the latter two of these conditions.

Monboddo had a strong rationalist strain, in contrast to the strong empiricism of many of his contemporaries. Though he granted that, for humans, the intellect begins its activity with the raw material provided by the senses, Monboddo denied that such raw material amounted to *ideas*, which are less fleeting and more general than the impressions provided by the senses. Indeed, Monboddo observes that many animals -- such as dogs or horses -- have similar perceptual capacities to humans, but denies that we would speak of dogs or horses as having ideas.

Central to the formation of ideas, for Monboddo, is the ability to make comparisons. It is

through the power to make comparisons that we abstract away from the particularities of our perceptions and begin to construct more general notions. From these, we form theories, which are imperfect ideas. Through much effort, we may begin to form genuine ideas, pure abstractions untainted by any admixture from sensation. (Cf. Monboddo 1774, I, part I, bk. I, chap. 8)

Ideas alone, however, are not sufficient for the appearance of language. A solitary human would have no need to communicate those ideas, even if she was capable of producing the ideas themselves. Even if she were to be part of a social group, however, it does not follow that language would become a necessity. Simple social groups might well make do with other, more primitive, forms of communication, like gestures, grunts, or even pictures.

Given that Monboddo is attempting to establish that language is acquired, it would be helpful to his argument if he could demonstrate that language is not utterly *sui generis* -- that the conditions required for the acquisition of language exist along a continuum, both in non-human animals and in different human societies. To this end, Monboddo points to the existence of other social creatures, the political beavers and sea cats, as well as to primitive humans, among which Monboddo counted the orang-outangs.

Indeed, for Monboddo, humans themselves had to have progressed through all of the stages of development represented by other living creatures in nature:

... he appears at first to be little more than a vegetable, hardly deserving the name of zoophyte; then he gets sense, but sense only so that he is yet little better than a [mussel]; then he becomes an animal of a more complete kind; then a rational creature, and finally

a man of intellect and science, which is the summit and completion of our nature.

(Monboddo 1774, I: 182-3).

Monboddo suggests that both the existence of non-human animals of a high level of socially sophisticated organization and the existence of humans with a relatively low level of social sophisticated organization provide support for the idea that the ability to communicate through language is a capacity that is acquired gradually, in stages of development, rather than an innate or God-given natural power of humans alone.

That language is not innate to humans is also supported, for Monboddo, by the broad range of capabilities that humans display in vastly different cultures: "... tho' his nature may in some sense be said to be the same, as he has still the same natural capabilities as he had from the beginning; yet this nature is, by its original constitution, susceptible of a greater change than the nature of any other animal known" (Monboddo 1774, I: 443).

Because of this cultural diversity, Monboddo also rejects the idea that all human languages must have derived from a common ancestor. On the contrary, Monboddo seems to grant that the level of linguistic diversity existing in the present day might rather serve as evidence for the diversity of their origins as well. Thus, he notes that, "supposing language to be the invention of man, (and it is upon that supposition I proceed, I see no reason to believe, that it was invented only by one nation, and in one part of the earth; and that all the many different languages spoken in Europe, Asia, America, and the new world that we have now discovered in the south sea, are all derived from this common parent" (Monboddo 1774, 399).

Despite his conviction that there was no necessity that all languages be derived from a common ancestor, Monboddo did not reject that idea that many languages might well be so derived. He shared the conviction, common at the time, that Latin, German, Celtic, Persian, and other European languages were related. Where he was more original, however, was in his belief that the relation among the languages derived from the fact that all of the languages might be traced to an earlier, progenitor language, in contrast to the more commonly held contemporary view that the oldest of the European languages was itself the "parent" of the others. (Cf. Cloyd 1972, 82)

Furthermore, Monboddo was innovative in his suggestions for techniques that might be used in establishing the closeness of the connections among languages. (Cf. Monboddo 1774, 433-5) Indeed, Monboddo was one of the early forerunners of the historical linguists of the 19th century. Though not influential in Britain, it is possible that Monboddo had greater influence in Germany, as most of the first three volumes of the *Origin* were published in German translation, with an introduction by Johann Gottfried von Herder, in 1785.⁹

In his concluding thoughts to the first volume of the *Origin and Progress of Language*, Monboddo himself offers a nice summary of his theory of language origins:

... I have endeavored to shew, That no part of language, neither *matter* nor *form*, is natural to man, but the effect of acquired habit:--That this habit could not have been acquired, except by men living in political life natural to man:--That the political life

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Cf. Cloyd 1972, 84.

arose from the necessities of men, and that it may exist without the use of language:-- That the first languages were without art, such as might be expected among people altogether barbarous:--and, lastly, That if language was at all invented, there is no reason to believe that it was invented only in one nation, and that all the languages of the earth are but dialects of that one original language; although there be good reason to believe, that language has not been the invention of many nations, and that all languages presently spoken in Europe, Asia, and a part of Africa, are derived from one original language. (Monboddo 1774, 490)

Thoughts on rhetoric

If, as many of the preeminent Scottish theoreticians on the origin of language would have it, language developed as a tool to aid in human endeavors, then it would seem appropriate to study how best to employ that tool to achieve the ends for which it was developed. Traditionally, the study of how to employ language in the service of the speaker's goals was the province of *rhetoric*. In fact, many of the discussions of the origin of language in the Scottish context serve as introductions to discussions of rhetoric – for example, Adam Smith's "conjectural history" of the origin of language served as a set of introductory considerations for Smith's extremely influential lectures on rhetoric.

The Classical Background and the 17th Century Upheavals

In order to appreciate the contributions of 18th century Scottish thinkers to the study of

Rhetoric, it will be useful briefly to sketch the origins of the discipline.¹⁰ This is particularly the case, due to the fact of the uneasy relationship between philosophy and rhetoric, a relationship that can be traced back to the origins of both pursuits.

Indeed, to the extent that one takes -- as Whitehead famously did -- all philosophy to be a footnote to Plato, then one might see philosophy as founded in resistance to rhetoric. In the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*, Plato makes plain his suspicion of Rhetoric, claiming that it employed appeals to passion and emotion, rather than to reason. Plato did allow that it would be possible to pursue a "true rhetoric", one that would require that rhetoricians sought the truth above all things, formulated precise definitions of their terms, and studied human psychology so that they could adjust their addresses to their particular audiences.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, then, may be read as an attempt to respond to Plato's hints about "true rhetoric". It is Aristotle's text -- along with the work of the great Roman rhetoricians, most notably Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* -- that forms the basis of the tradition of classical rhetoric. Aristotle discusses a number of facets of Rhetoric in his treatise, including the common and special topics about which one might seek to influence an audience, and the specific techniques that one might use to persuade.

Aristotle distinguishes three modes of rhetorical proof: *logos*, an appeal to reason; *pathos*, an appeal to emotion; and *ethos*, an appeal to the character or personality of the audience. He

10 For the discussion in this section, I am particularly indebted to the "Introduction" in Golden and Corbett 1968, and to Kennedy 1980.

underscored the central importance of the ethical dimension, noting that, if an audience mistrusts a speaker, then no appeal to reason or emotion will prove effective. The Roman rhetoricians, if anything, emphasized the role of ethical appeals in rhetoric even more strongly, with Quintilian famously describing the effective orator as "a good man speaking well" (cf. *Institutio Oratoria*, Bk. I, Chap. 15, sections 33-37).

The classical rhetoricians divided the tasks of the rhetor into five offices. First, there was *inventio*, the investigation of which means of persuasion are available in a particular case. Second, *dispositio*, the arrangement of one's presentation. Over the centuries, this arrangement calcified into the rote organization of persuasive texts familiar to readers of works composed in the classical tradition: (a) an *exordium* or introduction, (b) the *narratio* or thesis statement, (c) the *confirmatio*, positive arguments in favor of one's thesis, (d) the *confutatio*, refutations of opposing arguments, and (e) the *epilogue*, in which one restated the thesis, summarized the support on its behalf, underscored one's ethical and emotional appeals.

The third office was *elocutio*, the literary style with which the rhetor presented his arguments. This included such aspects of language as diction, rhythm, word choice, and figures of speech. The fourth office was *memoria*, the task of the rhetor to memorize his carefully crafted presentation, and the fifth office was *pronuntiatio*, the practice of delivery -- including a consideration of both bodily movement and the modulation of one's voice to maintain an audience's interest, focus their attention on one's argument, enflame their passions, and underscore for the audience one's ethical standing.

This view of the role of Rhetoric lasted roughly until the 16th century, when the

discipline suffered the first of two pivotal disruptions. This was the displacement of Rhetoric at the center of education by the French humanist and logician Peter Ramus. In his highly influential logic, Ramus argued for the dissolution of the classical five-office structure of Rhetoric. In its place, Ramus suggested that the offices of *inventio* and *dispositio* belonged more properly to logic, as both of these offices were the province of reason; rhetoric ought, Ramus argued, be limited to the study of literary style and public delivery.

The second disruption was the onset of the scientific revolution. Prosecuted in England by Bacon and, after its founding in 1660, by the members of the Royal Society, the impact of this revolution was to hasten the ascendance of Ramus's proposed division of logic and rhetoric, with logic in ascendance. Furthermore, the Baconian movement advocated for greater stylistic clarity and fewer embellishments in delivery.

These developments meant that the 18th century was an unusually fertile period for the development of Rhetoric. Following Golden and Corbett (1968), we can distinguish four responses to the 16th and 17th century challenges to the classical tradition in rhetoric. It is useful to keep these in mind for the discussion of rhetoric in the 18th century Scottish context, although all of the thinkers discussed combine features from several of the traditions.

The first response was to reaffirm the tradition and to ignore the revolutionary forces threatening it. A second response retained all of the elements of the classical tradition, with the exception of the office of *pronuntiatio*, or delivery. Misleadingly, this office had come to be known in many of the English rhetoric texts under the heading of *elocution*. This *elocutionary movement* sought to reform what they saw as a careless attitude among 18th century Englishmen

with regard to articulation, pronunciation, and movement.

A third response to the 17th century challenges to rhetoric was to broaden the scope of Rhetoric, to include an investigation of a wider range of literary and artistic production, including poetry, drama, history, biography, and philology. This *belletristic* movement sought to encompass the study of Rhetoric under the broader category of Rhetoric and belles lettres. In so doing, advocates of the belletristic movement attempted to reinvigorate the study of Rhetoric and to argue for its importance by suggesting that its proper study belonged more to criticism and artistic appreciation, and thus to soften the blow of Ramus's appropriation of the rational offices of traditional classical rhetoric to logic, without, however, fundamentally contesting that appropriation.

A fourth response to the challenges to classical rhetoric attempted to take advantage of the growing sophistication among 17th and 18th century thinkers about the mind and the emotions. This *epistemological-psychological* movement impacted almost all of the traditional offices of classical rhetoric, from *inventio* to *pronuntiatio*.

Kames

The notion of “rhetoric” was, even in the 18th century, “an expansive phenomenon and a slippery term” (Fereirra-Buckley 2010). Many thinkers in the Scottish tradition that are taken to be primarily of philosophical import — including Hutcheson, Gerard, Kames, and Reid — were also deeply concerned in their own teaching and writing with rhetoric. Conversely, thinkers like

Campbell and Blair, who are known today primarily for their work on rhetoric, were also concerned with issues in the philosophy of language and mind. (Cf. Keefe 2014, Introduction)

For Kames, the fittingness of one's communication to its purpose is the responsibility of the communicator; failure to live up to one's responsibility results in displeasure on the part of one's audience. He notes that "Words being intimately connected with the ideas they represent, the greatest harmony is required between them: to express, for example, an humble sentiment in high sounding words, is disagreeable by a discordant mixture of feelings; and the discord is not less when elevated sentiments are dressed in low words" (Kames 1796, 392).

Campbell explicitly acknowledges Kames's influence (cf. Campbell 1776, I, 18-20), and Bevilacqua notes that "a number of the lectures on rhetoric by Hugh Blair and Joseph Priestley ... parallel similar discussions in the *Elements*, and indeed seem to have been written with that treatise in hand" (Bevilacqua 1963, 310). Kames influenced the development of Scottish Enlightenment rhetoric not only through his writing, but also through his patronage. It was Kames -- along with James Oswald and Robert Craigie -- who arranged for a young Adam Smith, only recently graduated from Oxford, to give a series of lectures on rhetoric in Edinburgh from 1748-1751.¹¹

As with his Scottish contemporaries, Kames holds that we ought to base our theories about rhetoric on our investigations into human nature, rather than on classical models. Thus,

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Letter from Hume to Smith, 8 June 1758. Grieg 1932, I: 280.

Kames repudiates the model of French traditionalists, explicitly singling out Bossu, because he "can discover no better foundation for any of [his rules], than the practice merely of Homer and Virgil, supported by the authority of Aristotle; Strange! that in so long a work, he should never once have stumbled upon the question, Whether, and how far, do these rules agree with human nature" (Kames 1796, I:21).

Following Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Kames thought that human nature included an innate sense of beauty---both of actions (moral sense) and of objects (taste). Hutcheson, for example, locates the origin of language in the internal senses, which include the moral sense, a sense of beauty, and a social sense. We apprehend works of art — including the belles lettres — through our internal moral sense, through which we apprehend “universal goodness, tenderness, humanity, generosity, ... beauty, order and harmony”, and “upon this moral sense is founded the power of the orator” (Hutcheson 1753, 262-3).

In other words, the laws governing human nature are fixed. Given this, we may derive facts about what humans find aesthetically pleasing. For Hutcheson, “as the power of communicating to each other our sentiments, desires, and intentions is one of the great blessings of the human species, so appositely joined with our social feelings and affections; nature has also implanted a moral feeling in our hearts to regulate this power” (Hutcheson 1755, II: 28).¹²

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Compare Kames, who suggests that every emotion is communicated naturally through gesture and countenance, and gives six reasons for this: to fix word meaning, promote society, improve social feeling, make disapprobation known, support

Thus, Kames attempts to bring about a Newtonian revolution within rhetoric by placing rhetoric on the solid foundation of the laws of human nature, just as Newton placed natural science on the solid foundation of the laws of motion.¹³ Given this, Kames belongs squarely in the epistemological-psychological camp of reformers of rhetoric.

The impact of this attempt to incorporate a scientific interpretation of aesthetic effects can sometimes, in Kames, seem ham-fisted. Thus, in a discussion of the way that emotions are stirred by one's environment, he suggests that, "a fall of water through rocks, raises in the mind a tumultuous confused agitation, extremely similar to its cause. ... A large object swells in the heart. An elevated object makes the spectator stand erect" (Kames 1796, I: 144).

This is not to say that Kames thought the laws governing human nature to be simple. Rather, "human nature is a complicate machine, and is unavoidably so in order to answer its various purposes. The public indeed have been entertained with many systems of human nature that flatter the mind by their simplicity: according to some writers, man is entirely a selfish being; according to others, universal benevolence is his duty; one found morality upon sympathy solely, and one upon utility. If any of these systems were copied from nature, the present subject might be soon discussed. But the variety of nature is not so easily reached" (Kames 1796, I: 37).

morality, and excite sympathy. (Kames 1796, I: 348-52; cf. Bevilacqua 1963, 317)

13 Cf. Randall 1944, 23-27.

However, he is also a representative of the belletristic camp. He engages frequently with examples from literature; Shakespeare is a common exemplar for discussions. Kames is also notable for prefiguring Coleridge's idea of the "willing suspension of disbelief". Kames refers to this with the notion of "ideal presence", which he describes as "*a waking dream*; because, like a dream, it vanisheth the moment we reflect upon our present situation" (Kames 1796, I: 77).

Kames's allegiance to the belletristic school is also evidenced by his willingness to expand rhetoric to include all literary pursuits that involve considerations of style, as may be seen in an essay of Reid's that was appended to Kames's *Sketches of Man*. In that essay, Reid acquiesces to the revolution that Ramus ushered in, when he notes that, "in compositions of human thought expressed by speech or writing, whatever is excellent and whatever is faulty, fall within the province, either of grammar, or of rhetoric, or of logic. Propriety of expression is the province of grammar; *grace, elegance, and force in thought and expression are the provinces of rhetoric*; justness and accuracy of thought are the provinces of logic" (Kames 1807, III: 94).

Although Kames argues for the supremacy of the new, scientific approach to rhetoric, Bevilacqua notes that "the method underlying Kames's rhetoric ... is more accurately described as derivative than as original. Rather than reasoning forward from psychological doctrines to a wholly new theory of style, Kames reasons backwards from stylistic concepts found in earlier rhetorics to their psychological explanations and justifications" (Bevilacqua 1963, 316-317).

Campbell

It is widely acknowledged by historians of rhetoric that "George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) is ... the most important work on the art of discourse written

during the English Enlightenment, and a turning point in the history of rhetorical theory" (Bevilacqua 1965, 1). This is the case despite the fact that, with respect to the rules for constructing persuasive oratory or pleasing verse, Campbell acknowledges that "there has been little or no improvement ... made by the moderns. The observations and rules transmitted to us from these distinguished names in the learned world, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, have been for the most part only translated by later critics, or put into modish dress and new arrangement" (Campbell 1776, I: 19). Campbell's innovation was to use the achievements of the classical tradition as a foundation, and to apply the philosophical innovations of his contemporaries -- particularly Locke, Hume, Kames, and Reid -- to extend the development of rhetoric. (Cf. Bevilacqua 1965, 2)

That innovation, as Campbell saw it, was an exploration of the nature of the human mind through scientific principles. Indeed, Campbell suggested that, once one appreciated the way that rhetorical strategies have, as their foundation, the responses that flow from human nature, one could use a study of rhetoric to illuminate the principles that govern nature. He writes that "this study, properly conducted, leads directly to an acquaintance with ourselves; it not only traces the operations of the intellect and imagination, but discloses the lurking springs of action in the heart. In this view it is perhaps the surest and the shortest as well as the pleasantest way of arriving at the science of the human mind" (Campbell 1776, I: 16).

In this, Campbell was expressing a view about the relation between linguistic expression and human nature that was common to his Scottish contemporaries. Thus, Smith also thought that "the best method of explaining and illustrating the various powers of the human mind ...

arises from an examination of the several ways of communicating our thoughts by speech, and from an attention to the principles of those literary compositions which contribute to persuasion or entertainment" (Smith 1799, x).

Campbell saw himself at the culmination of an historical process through which the study of rhetoric had been developed and refined. He characterized this process as a series of four steps, the first three of which had been completed; Campbell sees it as his task to undertake the fourth step. "By the first step the critic is supplied with materials. By the second, the materials are distributed and classed, the forms of argument, the tropes and figures of speech, with their divisions and subdivisions, are explained. By the third, the rules of composition are discovered, or the method of combining and disposing the several materials, so as that they may be perfectly adapted to the end in view. By the fourth, we arrive at that knowledge of human nature, which, beside its other advantages, adds both weight and evidence to all precedent discoveries and rules" (Campbell 1776, I: 18).

One of the areas in which Campbell recognized the value of the new science of human nature for rhetoric was in determining which types of argument are most successful at achieving acceptance in one's audience. Thus, he notes that "As men in general, it must be allowed there are certain principles in our nature, which, when properly addressed and managed, give no inconsiderable aid to reason in promoting belief. Nor is it just to conclude from this concession, as some have hastily done, that oratory may be defined, 'The art of deception.' The use of such helps will be found, on a stricter examination, to be in most cases quite legitimate, and even necessary, if we would give reason herself that influence which is certainly her due" (Campbell

1776, I: 186).

This is because it is never possible for humans to appreciate "the truth considered by itself". Rather, men's understanding, their attention, their memory, and their interest, must all be engaged in order to convince them of some proposition. For this reason, Campbell continues, "it is not ... the understanding alone that is here concerned. If the orator would prove successful, it is necessary that he engage in his service all these different powers of the mind, the imagination, the memory, and the passions. These are not the supplanters of reason, or even rivals in her sway; they are her handmaids, by whose ministry she is enabled to usher truth into the heart, and procure it there a favourable reception" (Campbell 1776, I: 187).

One of the principle ways for the orator to appeal to the audience -- *the* principle way, as we saw, for Quintilian -- is through his conspicuous goodness. Thus, Campbell observes that it is "a common topic with rhetoricians, that, in order to be a successful orator, one must be a good man; for to be good is the only sure way of being long esteemed good, and to be esteemed good is previously necessary to one's being heard with due attention and regard. Consequently, the topic hath a foundation in human nature" (Campbell 1776, I: 244). The basis for this, Campbell suggests, lies in the importance of sympathy for persuasion.

Sympathy, for Campbell, following the influence of Smith (and, through Smith, Hume), leads the speaker to be sensitive to -- and to esteem -- those qualities that his audience values. Campbell observes that, because "Sympathy is one main engine by which the orator operates on the passions," the speaker's self-assessment ought to be based "not [on] that estimate of himself which is derived directly from consciousness or self acquaintance, but that which is obtained

reflexively from the opinion entertained of him by the hearers, or the character which he bears with them" (Campbell 1776, I: 242).

A further innovation of Campbell's, due no doubt to the influence of Hume, was an emphasis on the importance of vivacity of expression.¹⁴ Campbell suggests that the four "qualities in ideas which principally gratify the fancy are vivacity, beauty, sublimity, novelty. Nothing contributes more to vivacity than striking resemblances in the imagery which convey besides an additional pleasure of their own" (Campbell 1776, I: 190). Of these four, beauty, sublimity, and novelty, had already been much discussed in works of rhetoric, following Addison's example.¹⁵ Campbell spends much of the *Rhetoric*, however, in emphasizing the centrality of vivacity for the orator's art. Indeed, the entirety of Book III is devoted to the importance of vivacity of style for eloquence.

Blair

Blair largely accords with Kames and Campbell in taking the study of rhetoric to depend on the insights into the human mind derived from the work of Hutcheson, Hume, and Reid. However, unlike them, Blair does not explicitly discuss those psychological and epistemological assumptions on which his rhetoric rests; rather, he presupposes that his audience would readily

14 On this, see Bevilacqua 1965, 11-12; compare Bitzer 1969, for a more detailed discussion of Hume and Campbell.

15 Addison 1712.

recognize the psychological and philosophical context for his discussions.¹⁶

Despite the fact that Blair's work may properly be said to be largely derivative of the work of Kames and Campbell, as well as of their philosophical influences, he might well be the most widely-read and influential of all of the 18th century Scottish rhetoricians. Blair's textbooks on rhetoric "went through sixty-two editions, fifty-one abridgments and ten translations in the century after its publication" (Bizzell and Herzberg 1990, 657).

Like the other Scottish rhetoricians, Blair celebrates that theirs "is an age wherein improvements, in every part of science, have been prosecuted with ardour". Given this environment, then, Blair sees theirs as a time in which

The study of composition, important in itself at all times, has acquired additional importance from the taste and manners of the present age. It is an age wherein improvements, in every part of science have been prosecuted with ardour. To all the liberal arts much attention has been paid; and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of every kind of writing. The public ear is become refined. It will not easily hear what is slovenly and incorrect " (Blair 1823, 4).

Blair suggests that the study of rhetoric is worthwhile not only for its practical benefits and for the development of taste, but also, since language was given by God as "the great instrument by which man becomes beneficial to man" (Blair 1823, I: 1), because the development of one's

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Cf. Bevilacqua 1967; Ehninger 1963.

linguistic gifts is intrinsically praiseworthy.

Refinement of taste, Blair asserts, is available to all who study rhetoric. For taste -- the "power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and of art" (Blair 1823, 8) -- is an innate human faculty, one that is "remarkably susceptible of cultivation and progress" (Blair 1823, 10). As in the case of Campbell, Blair's consideration of the models of "correct" style largely follow the example of Addison's discussion.

Blair seems to have followed his contemporaries in accepting Ramus's innovation of divorcing the task of *inventio* from rhetoric; according to the former the task of reason and to the latter the task of propriety of expression. For example, he notes that those whose "direct aim is to inform, to persuade, or to instruct ... address themselves, for the most part, primarily to the understanding", while he whose "primary aim ... is to please, and to move ... it is to the imagination, and the passions, that he speaks" (Blair 1823, 410).

Famously, Blair termed the role of rhetoric -- that of choosing the best means to express content that had been discovered by non-rhetorical, i.e., discipline-specific, means -- to be one of "management". He further argues that the role of rhetoric is properly limited to management:

Art cannot go so far, as to supply a speaker with arguments on every cause, and every subject; though it may be of considerable use in assisting him to arrange and express those, which his knowledge of the subject has discovered. For it is one thing to discover the reasons that are most proper to convince men, and another, to manage those reasons

with the most advantage. The latter is all that rhetoric can pretend to. (Blair 1823, 343)¹⁷

In this way, Blair would seem to deviate from the classical notion of rhetoric as oriented toward the truth, as exemplified in Quintilian's formulation of the rhetor as the "good man speaking well. For Blair, it is the role of the sciences to seek out truth, while it is the role of rhetoric to instruct as to how to influence men's beliefs and emotions:

the best definition which, I think, can be given of eloquence, is the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak. Whenever a man speaks or writes he is supposed as a rational being to have some end in view either to inform, or to amuse, or to persuade, or in some way or other to act upon his fellow creatures. He who speaks, or writes, in such a manner as to adapt all his words most effectually to that end, is the most eloquent man. ... But as the most important subject of discourse is action or conduct the power of eloquence chiefly appears when it is employed to influence conduct and persuade to action. As it is principally with reference to this end, that it becomes the

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Cf.: "One who had no other aim, but to talk copiously and plausibly, by consulting [the classical rhetorical rules on *inventio*], and laying hold of all that they suggested, might discourse without end; and that too, though he had none but the most superficial knowledge of his subject. But such Discourse could be no other than trivial. What is truly solid and persuasive, must be drawn '*ex visceribus causae*', from a thorough knowledge of the subject, and profound meditation on it. On this doctrine, therefore, of the rhetorical loci, or topics, I think it superfluous to insist" (Blair 1823, I: 429).

object of art, eloquence may, under this view of it, be defined, *The Art of Persuasion*.
(Blair 1823, 252-3)

However, it would seem that Blair was uncomfortable imposing a strict distinction between the offices of logic and rhetoric. Like Smith, Blair suggests -- to use a formulation of Bevilacqua's (1967, 153) -- "that improvement in rhetoric is intimately connected with improvement of the intellectual powers. In the study of composition, ... we are cultivating reason itself". Thus, Blair argues that rhetoric is of signal importance for the advancement of reason, since reasoning "is not the effort or ability of one, so much as it is the result of the reason of many, arising from lights mutually communicated, in consequence of discourse and writing" (Blair 1823, 1).

Additionally, Blair's conviction that there cannot be a strict division between logic and rhetoric was related to his conviction that the various forms of literature are related, rather than being utterly distinct pursuits. Thus, Ehninger and Golden suggest that Blair held "that the various forms of discourse -- oratory, poetry, history, philosophical writing, etc. -- are not independent species, but generically related branches growing out of a common parent trunk -- a trunk which itself is rooted in a subsoil of language and of style" (Ehninger and Golden 1952, 17).

Furthermore, like Smith and Campbell, Blair locates the development of taste in a reciprocal process in which we measure our own self-assessment in part through a consideration of others' judgments of ourselves. Thus, Blair argues that "it is from consulting our own imagination and heart, and from attending to the feelings of others, that any of the principles are

formed which acquire authority in matters of taste" (Blair 1823, I: 20).

Like Monboddo, Blair emphasizes the way in which taste is variable across peoples:

The Tastes of men may differ very considerably as to their object, and yet none of them be wrong. . . . Some nations delight in bold pictures of manners, and strong representations of passion. Others incline to more correct and regular elegance both in description and sentiment. (Blair 1823, I: 18)

In this way, taste can express national character.¹⁸

The expression of taste through style, of course, is not only evident in distinguishing national characteristics, but also in determining the characteristic way of thinking of individual writers. Blair notes that "there must always be a very intimate connexion between the manner in which every writer employs words, and his manner of thinking; and that, from the peculiarity of thought and expression which belongs to him, there is a certain character imprinted on his style" (Blair 1823, I: 230). Thus, to consider an example that Blair discusses, Shaftesbury's "coldness

18 Thus, for example, Blair suggests that "the Athenians, a polished and acute people, formed a style accurate, clear, and neat. The Asiatics, gay and loose in their manners, affected a style florid and diffuse" (Blair 1823, I: 115). This discussion of the linkages between style and national character was influential. As Clark 1955 notes, Herder, for one, was familiar with Blair's Lectures, in French translation. Cf. Clark 1955, 145.

of his character" is reflected in the "artificial and stately manner" of his writings.¹⁹ (Blair 1823, I: 249)

One striking aspect of Blair's Lectures is the extent to which Blair recognizes two sorts of excellence to which the orator can aspire. On the one hand, there is refinement of taste, a sort of excellence recognized by the other 18th century Scottish thinkers on rhetoric. On the other hand, Blair also recognizes the phenomenon of genius, which may sometimes outweigh a deficit of taste: "genius may be bold and strong, when taste is neither very delicate, nor very correct" (Blair 1823, I: 27).

Indeed, Blair suggests that the development of language is marked by an increase in refinement accompanied by a concomitant attenuation of force and sublimity. For Blair, language "is become, in modern times, more correct, indeed, and accurate; but, however, less striking and animated: In its ancient state, more favourable to poetry and oratory; in its present, to reason and philosophy" (Blair 1823, I: 78).

19 Interestingly, Blair's ambivalent description of Shaftesbury's style-- "excessive and sickly", "little warmth of passion", "few strong or vigorous feelings"--might reflect as well the contempt that Adam Smith apparently demonstrated for Shaftesbury in Smith's lectures on rhetoric. On Smith's view of Shaftesbury, see Phillipson 2010, 97-98.

Testimony

As noted in the discussion of rhetoric, Ramus's distinction between logic and rhetoric – the former being directed toward truth, with the latter being directed toward persuasion – was widely accepted in the 18th century Scottish discussion. One of the central debates among Scottish Enlightenment thinkers concerned the role of language in the communication of truths, discussed under the heading of reasoning on the basis of *testimony*. While all thinkers agreed that such reasoning was of signal importance, they differed with respect to the nature of the evidence that testimony provides.

There were strong precedents for skepticism about evidence derived from testimony. Thus, in his *Discourse on Method*, Descartes reports that he

thought that book-learning [...] gradually forms and multiplies itself on the basis of the opinions of different persons and is therefore not as close to the truth as the simple reasonings which a man of good sense quite naturally engages in with regard to the things which are before him [...]. [H]ence [he] thought it virtually impossible that our judgments should be as pure and well-grounded as they would have been if we had had the full use of our reason from the moment of our birth, and if we had always been guided by it alone.²⁰

And, in a famous passage, echoing the Royal Society's motto, Locke writes:

20 René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, in C. Adam and P. Tannery, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, vol. 6 (Paris, 1903), p. 21; translation mine.

I hope it will not be thought arrogance to say, that perhaps we should make greater progress in the discovery of [...] knowledge if we sought it [...] in the consideration of things themselves, and made use rather of our own thoughts than other men's to find it: for, I think, we may as rationally hope to see with other men's eyes as to know by other men's understanding [...]. The floating of other men's opinions in our brains makes us not one jot the more knowing, though they happen to be true. What in them was science is in us but opiniatrey. (*Essay*, I. iv. 24)

What the consideration of the evidential value of testimony suggests is that reflecting on the aims of language can lead to skepticism about the value of the evidence that testimony provides. If, as an analysis of the role of rhetoric might suggest, the aim of language is merely to help speakers to compel assent in their interlocutors then we would be wise to question all information gained through language. Even in the best case, in which speakers actually *believe* what they are communicating, we would only be relying on the “floating of other men's opinions in our brains”. And in the worst case, in which speakers *don't* believe what they are communicating, but are attempting to compel our belief for some other purpose, then we would be nothing more than *dupes*, actively misled in the service of some ulterior motive of the speaker.

Hume

The 18th century Scottish thinkers stand in strong contrast to the sort of pessimism about the value of testimonial evidence indicated by Descartes and Locke.²¹ That Hume acknowledged

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Although see Shieber 2009 for a corrective discussion of Locke's views

the centrality of testimony is evident from the following passage — the passage with which Hume introduces his discussion of testimony in Section X of the *Enquiry*:

we may observe, that there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful, and even necessary to human life, than that which is derived from the testimony of men, and the reports of eye-witnesses and spectators. ... It will be sufficient to observe that our assurance in any argument of this kind is derived from no other principle than our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. (Hume 1902, 111)

Here Hume seems to tie our reliance on testimony, in the normal case, to our general knowledge of facts about human psychology.

Hume accomplishes two tasks in this passage: he both underscores the centrality of testimony in acquiring reasons for belief, and asserts that we have reason to trust the beliefs that we acquire on the basis of testimony, given our knowledge of general facts about human psychology – in particular, “from our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses.” This suggests that, as in the case with the accounts of rhetoric of the period, the goal in discussions of testimony was to take advantage of the psychological discoveries of the day.

The context of Hume’s discussion in the *Enquiry* involves Hume’s argument that the belief rationally granted to an instance of testimony in support of the occurrence of a miracle can never be great enough to outweigh the incredulity that one should accord to the miracle’s having

on testimony.

occurred in the first place. Given this, it is important to note that Hume's general criterion for the rationality of one's belief in the deliverances of testimony does *not* involve one's having to provide inductive support for the probity of each individual instance of testimonially derived information.²²

That Hume isn't requiring specific inductive support for each instance of the acceptance of information by means of testimony may also be seen from the following passage:

Were not the memory tenacious to a certain degree; had not men commonly an inclination to truth and a principle of probity; were they not sensible to shame, when detected in a falsehood: Were not these, I say, discovered by experience to be qualities, inherent in human nature, we should never repose the least confidence in human testimony. (Hume 1902, 112)

That is, as with the discussions of the origin of language and rhetoric, Hume's discussion here would seem to rely on the existence of general facts about human psychology. In this case, the notions of the "inclination to truth" and "principle of probity" suggest that it is a fact of human psychology that testifiers generally speak truly, and that it is their audience's knowledge of this fact that underwrites the probity of the audience's acceptance of the speaker's testimony.

This reading of Hume might seem surprising, given a common reading of Hume's view

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Cf. Traiger 1993; Faulkner 1998. As this reading takes Hume to deny that there is a default presumption in favor of accepting testimony, but to assume that there is a general inductive argument available to justify the acceptance of testimony, I call this reading an *optimistic non-presumptivist* reading of Hume. Cf. Shieber 2015, Chapter 3.

about when it is that an audience is justified in believing a speaker's testimony. Perhaps the most famous Humean passage on testimony suggests that, "the wise man ... proportions his belief to the evidence ... And as the evidence, derived from witnesses and human testimony, is founded on past experience, so it varies with the experience, and is regarded either as a *proof* or a *probability*, according as the conjunction between any particular kind of report and any kind of object has been found to be constant or variable." And this has standardly been taken to suggest that audience's must use inductive reasoning *each time* they accept a piece of information on testimony – weighing up the evidence for the information based on the "particular kind of report".²³

In context, however, the Humean demand seems less stringent. The context of seemingly more stringent passage would seem to involve cases in which one's default reliance on testimony, based on one's general knowledge of the human psychology of testifiers, has been called into doubt. Prior to the passage, Hume notes that "a man delirious, or noted for falsehood and villany, has no manner of authority with us," and Hume continues:

There are a number of circumstances to be taken into consideration in all judgements of this kind; and the ultimate standard, by which we determine all disputes, that may arise concerning them, is always derived from experience and observation. ... This contrariety of evidence, in the present case, may be derived from several different causes; from the opposition of contrary testimony; from the character or number of the witnesses; from the manner of their delivering their testimony; or from the union of all these circumstances.

23

Most significantly in Coady 1992.

We entertain a suspicion concerning any matter of fact, when the witnesses contradict each other; when they are but few, or of a doubtful character; when they have an interest in what they affirm; when they deliver their testimony with hesitation, or on the contrary, with too violent asseverations. There are many other particulars of the same kind, which may diminish or destroy the force of any argument, derived from human testimony.

(Hume 1902, 112-113)

The context, then, is a discussion of the method “by which we determine all disputes” or where there is a “contrariety of evidence.” Where no “contrariety of evidence” exists in the case of testimony, however, the default is to believe one’s interlocutor. One’s rational support for that default is the general practice of testifiers in communicating truly.

It is worth underscoring how different this reading of Hume is from the standard one. On the more standard reading, there is no default presumption that audiences may believe what speakers communicate through testimony. Rather, as noted, the standard account requires that, in each instance in which an audience wishes to accept some information on the basis of testimony, she may only do so as the conclusion of an inductive argument in support of that acceptance. Such a view, however, is highly implausible with respect to human psychology, and – for this reason alone – it would be utterly surprising if Hume held it.

On the view recommended here, however, the audience default response to testimony is one of belief. It is only when that default position is no longer tenable, when contrary evidence arises to suggest that the testimonial exchange is not a standard one, that Hume would hold that audiences need to provide a specific inductive argument in support of a piece of testimony – either by assessing the underlying credibility of the claim, for example, or evaluating the honesty

or competence of the testifier.

Reid

On Hume's account, however, all instances of justified belief on the basis of testimony involves an underlying inductive basis. The difference for Hume lies solely in whether that basis is the general inductive support provided by one's knowledge of the psychology of testifiers, or the more particular sort of inductive support required for belief in cases in which the testimony on which that belief is based has been called into question.

As noted in the discussion of the origin of languages, however, Reid denies that the social operations of mind can be explained away by appeal solely to the solitary intellectual powers. Among the social operations – those that “necessarily suppose an intercourse with some other intelligent being,” (Reid 1812, 105) – are included, “when [one] asks information, or receives it; when [one] bears testimony, or receives the testimony of another [...]” (Reid 1812, 105) Since, however, the social operations, for Reid, “are neither simple apprehension, nor judgment, nor reasoning, nor are they any combination of these operations” (Reid 1812, 106), this would seem to suggest that belief on the basis of testimony, for Reid, does not depend for its justification on an inductive argument – certainly not a general inductive argument in support of accepting testimony in unproblematic cases.

The problem with Hume's requirement of inductive support for justified belief on the basis of testimony, Reid notes, is that – despite Hume's attempt to be sensitive to human psychology – Hume's requirement violates what we know about the way that children gradually acquire information through the testimony of those around them. Hume's inductive requirement,

Reid suggests,

would deprive us of the greatest benefits of society [...]. Children, on this supposition, would be absolutely incredulous, and, therefore, absolutely incapable of instruction[;] those who had little knowledge of human life [...] would be in the next degree incredulous; and the most credulous men would be those of greatest experience, and of the deepest penetration; because, in many cases they would be able to find good reasons for believing testimony, which the weak and ignorant could not discover. (Reid 1810, 424)

Rather, Reid argues, “the most superficial view of human life shews, that [...] a disposition to confide in the veracity of others, and to believe what they tell us [...] is unlimited in children, until they meet with instances of deceit and falsehood; and [this disposition] retains a very considerable degree of strength through life” (Reid 1810, 422). In other words, there can be no general requirement for inductive support of one’s acceptance of testimony, since children’s reliance on testimony precedes their ability to marshal such inductive support.²⁴

Hume was aware of Reid’s objections – at least through his reading of similar criticisms made by Campbell – and was puzzled by them. Hume granted that it is a fact of human psychology that children are impressionable; for him this is simply evidence that children don’t have justified beliefs. In a letter to Blair complaining about the tenor of Campbell’s criticisms, Hume writes that he

24 Cf. the discussion in Lackey 2005 and Shieber 2015, Chapter 3, Section 6, and Chapter 4, Section 8.

would desire [Campbell] to consider whether the medium by which we reason concerning human testimony be different from that which leads us to draw inferences concerning other human actions ... [o]r why is it different? I suppose we conclude an honest man will not lie to us, in the same manner as we conclude that he will not cheat us. As to the youthful propensity to believe, which is *corrected* by experience; it seems obvious, that children adopt *blindfold* all ... opinions ...; *nor is this more strange, than that a hammer should make an impression on clay.* (Greig 1932, I:349; my italics)

The fact that Hume speaks of the “youthful propensity to believe” being “*corrected* by experience”, suggests, then that Hume was denying that children can yet have justification. This is the point of Hume’s comparison of a child’s trusting acceptance of the testimony of others with the propensity of clay to receive the impression of a hammer that strikes it. What makes a child’s belief justified, when she comes of age, is her ability to *correct* her earlier *blind* acceptance of information through testimony, through the use of the sort of inductive argument that Hume recommends – either the general inductive argument in support of unproblematic instances of testimony, or the more specifically tailored argument for problematic instances.

The proper issue between Hume and Reid, then, is not whether it is a fact about human psychology that we – at least when we are children or untutored in the ways of the world – might accept a piece of information on someone’s testimony, without the benefit of an inductive argument in support of our acceptance of that information. The issue is whether we could ever be justified in believing that information.

In order to answer this question, Reid emphasizes a parity between perception and testimony. Just as perception is a natural human power, and a basic, irreducible, and fallible

source of knowledge, so – by analogy – is testimony. That Reid believed testimony to involve the operation of a natural power is evident from the following passage:

if Nature had left the mind of the hearer *in aequilibrio*, without any inclination to the side of belief more than to that of disbelief, we should take no man's word until we had **positive** evidence that he spoke truth. [...] It is evident that, in the matter of testimony, the balance of human judgment is by nature inclined to the side of belief; and turns to that side of itself, when there is nothing put into the opposite scale. If it was not so, no proposition that is uttered in discourse would be believed, until it was examined and tried by reason; and most men would be unable to find reasons for believing the thousandth part of what is told them. (Reid 1810, 423)

Reid now suggests that this principle, according to which one is justified in accepting the testimony of others, actually underwrites our very institution of language. This is because, without such an ability to be justified in what others attest, we would have no shared language at all:

... a difficulty occurs which merits our attention, because the solution of it leads to some original principles of the human mind, which are of the greatest importance, and of very extensive influence. We know by experience that men *have* used such words to express such things; but all experience is of the *past*, and can, of itself, give no notion or belief of what is *future*. How come we, then, to believe, and to rely upon it with assurance, that men, who have it in their power to do otherwise, will continue to use the same words when they think the same things? Whence comes this knowledge and belief—this foresight, we ought rather to call it—of the future and voluntary actions of our fellow

creatures? (Reid 1810, 418)

In other words linguistic communication requires that we are justified in relying upon a foundation of a shared language, and that this justification is not one that can be grounded by means of a separate argument.

Reid's strategy here is, in effect, to use a version of Hume's skeptical argument with respect to causal connection to establish the fact that our assurance about the existence of a language that we share with others is independent of any argument we might attempt to give in favor of such assurance, and is only justified if we are justified in generally accepting the testimony of others as true. Since we are justified in our assurance about the existence of a shared language, however, we must also be justified in generally accepting the testimony of others as true.

Reid's argument proceeds like this. We know by experience that men have used certain words to express certain things. At best, however, this can only justify us in our beliefs about how men have used such words in the past. In particular, that experience cannot, in itself, underwrite a belief in what will occur in the future. Given this fact, however, our confidence and belief concerning (or, better, this foresight) of the future voluntary actions of others must either be based on a promise on the part of the speaker or on the presumption of the speaker's truthfulness. Obviously, they haven't promised that they would never deceive us by ambiguity or falsehood. Furthermore, even if they had made such a promise, they would have to have expressed the promise by words or by other signs. If they expressed the promise by words or signs, however, we couldn't rely those words or signs unless we were assured that they were giving the usual meanings to the signs expressing their promise. Furthermore, if we're hoping for

some non-circular assurance that they're using their words or signs in the way we expect, however, we cannot simply accept their assurance that they are giving the usual meanings to the signs expressing their promise. Therefore, when we rely on someone's word or promise, we must be doing so on the presumption of his truthfulness.

That is, as Reid puts it, "there is, therefore, in the human mind an early anticipation, *neither derived from experience, nor from reason, nor from any compact or promise*, that our fellow-creatures will use the same signs in language, when they have the same sentiments." (Reid 1810, 419; italics mine)

Reid's argument here is of a general piece with his conviction that human linguistic behavior relies on irreducible social intellectual powers. While Hume grants that there is great commonality in human linguistic behavior, and that there is a psychological tendency to believe what others tell us, Hume holds that we need some further *argument* in order to justify those beliefs. In contrast, Reid holds that the very commonality in human linguistic behavior and the universality of the psychological tendency to believe what others tell us are evidence that no further argument in justification of our beliefs on the basis of testimony is necessary:

The wise and beneficent Author of nature, who intended that we should be social creatures, and that we should receive the greatest and most important part of our knowledge by the information of others, hath, for these purposes, implanted in our natures two principles that tally with each other.

The first of these principles is, a propensity to speak truth, and to use the signs of language so as to convey our real sentiments. This principle has a powerful operation, even in the greatest liars; for where they lie once, they speak truth a hundred times. ...

Another original principle implanted in us by the Supreme Being, is a disposition to confide in the veracity of others, and to believe what they tell us. This is the counterpart to the former; and as that may be called the *principle of veracity*, we shall, for want of a more proper name, call this the *principle of credulity*. (Reid 1810, 420)

In other words, Reid appeals to the existence of the social intellectual powers to explain the fact that there are shared languages *at all*. In particular, Reid suggests that these common dispositions must include dispositions, on the part of speakers, to speak truthfully (the *principle of veracity*) and dispositions, on the part of audiences, to believe speakers (the *principle of credulity*).²⁵

Smith

What the dispute between Hume and Reid obscures, however, is that neither Hume nor Reid seem to account for the fact that—at least often—a speaker’s motivation in addressing an audience isn’t merely to convey information, but rather to *persuade*. Given this, however, it seems to be surprising that Hume would simply assume that there in fact *is* good inductive support for a general argument in defense of the conclusion that humans, in normal situations, speak truthfully, or that Reid would think it unproblematic to suppose the existence of an innate principle of veracity. In order to fill this lacuna in the discussion, it will be useful to turn to Adam Smith.²⁶

25 Cf. Lewis's conventions of truthfulness and trust, in Lewis 1969, 1975.

26 Though the relevance of Smith’s thought to the debate in the epistemology of testimony has, as yet, gone unrecognized, others have begun to focus on the relation between

Smith followed the prevailing practice of his contemporaries in distinguishing between factually directed discourse and discourse aimed at persuasion. The latter type of discourse is the province of rhetoric. As Smith puts it, "The former proposes to put before us the arguments on both sides of the question giving each its proper degree of influence, and has it in view to persuade no farther than the arguments themselves appear *convincing*. The rhetorical again endeavours by all means to persuade us; and for this purpose it magnifies all the arguments on the one side and diminishes or conceals those that might be brought on the side contrary to that which it is designed that we should favour" (Smith 1963, 58).

For Smith, however, it would seem that practically all of one's social interaction is governed by "Rhetorical" considerations. Indeed, in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith goes so far as to suggest that "desire of persuading, of leading and directing other people ... is, perhaps, the instinct upon which is founded the faculty of speech, the characteristical faculty of human nature" (Smith 1809, 454).

Perhaps the clearest statement of Smith's identification of the pursuit of rhetoric as at the root of all social interaction, as it serves "the natural inclination every one has to persuade", is this passage, worth quoting at length:

Men always endeavour to persuade others to be of their opinion even when the matter is

Smith's rhetorical theory, his work on economic exchange, and the linguistic interactions of fellow citizens in a civil society. On this, see, e.g. Griswold 1999; Kalyvas and Katznelson 2001; Otteson 2002;

of no consequence to them. If one advances any thing concerning China or the more distant moon which contradicts what you imagine to be true, you immediately try to persuade him to alter his opinion. And in this manner every one is practising oratory on others thro the whole of his life. You are uneasy whenever one differs from you, and you endeavour to persuade him to be of your mind; or if you do not it is a certain degree of self command, and to this every one is breeding thro their whole lives. In this manner they acquire a certain dexterity and address in managing their affairs, or in other words in managing of men; and this is altogether the practise of every man in the most ordinary affairs. This being the constant employment or trade of every man, in the same manner as the artisans invent simple methods of doing their work, so will each one here endeavour to do this work in the simplest manner. That is bartering, by which they address themselves to the self interest of the person and seldom fail immediately to gain their end. (Smith 1978, LJ(A), VI. 56-7)

If virtually all linguistic interaction is "Rhetorical", and as such has as its primary aim persuasion rather than truth, this would seem to be a serious challenge to any but the most pessimistic view of the likelihood that one might gain knowledge through testimony. However, Smith himself offers a solution to this challenge -- a solution that is both interesting in its own right and because it has gone unrecognized in recent discussions of the epistemology of testimony.²⁷

As we noted in the discussion of Campbell's Rhetoric, Smith's notion of sympathy was the source for Campbell's view that the source of taste is a reciprocal relationship between speaker and audience, with the speaker gauging his own self-assessment against his assessment of the audience's judgment of his performance. This means that, for Smith, part of being constantly engaged in rhetorical performances in society, part of the constant struggle to persuade, involves not only attempting to be believed, but constantly striving to make oneself worthy of belief.

Thus, in the same passage in which he speculates that the desire to persuade may be foundational for language-possession, Smith writes in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* that "as we cannot always be satisfied merely with being admired, unless we can at the same time persuade ourselves that we are in some degree really worthy of admiration; so we cannot always be satisfied merely with being believed, unless we are at the same time conscious that we are really worthy of belief" (Smith 1809, 454).

Smith suggests, then, that the desire to compel belief through rhetorical skill is accompanied by a parallel desire to be worthy of being believed. He continues this passage by employing the strategy of considering the reciprocal interplay of one's self-concept and others' view of oneself in the case of unworthiness of belief:

It is always mortifying not to be believed, and it is doubly so when we suspect that it is

discussion, there are affinities between Smith's solution and Faulkner's suggestion that an audience's investment of trust in a speaker and the speaker's desire to be worthy of that trust.

because We are supposed to be unworthy of belief, and capable of seriously and wilfully deceiving. To tell a man that he lies, is of all affronts the most mortal. But whoever seriously and wilfully deceives, is necessarily conscious to himself that he merits this affront, that he does not deserve to be believed, and that he forfeits all title to that sort of credit from which alone he can derive any sort of ease, comfort, or satisfaction in the society of his equals. The man who had the misfortune to imagine that nobody believed a single word he said, would feel himself the outcast of human society, would dread the very thought of going into it, or of presenting himself before it, and could scarce fail, I think, to die of despair. (Smith 1809, 454-5)

The problem posed by Smith's view that virtually all linguistic interactions are governed by rhetoric, rather than the pursuit of truth, was that of how to invest any trust in such exchanges -- how to think that others' testimony could ever serve as a source of knowledge. The answer that Smith offers is that the reciprocal relation of speaker and audience is, through sympathy, internalized in the speaker himself. Through this process, the speaker comes to hold his worthiness for belief in as high esteem as his ability to command belief. The desire to gain others' trust leads him to desire to maximize his own trustworthiness. In this way, Smith believes that he has demonstrated how a self-interested desire for achieving persuasion can lead speakers to become worthy of being believed. Our trust in testimony is vindicated, because it is in speakers' individual interest to be worthy of that trust.

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