

**Business? It's All Rhetoric.**

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Most organization theorists presume organizations exist. I want to question this without being insulting, especially here in a business school with its easy talk of organizations like Banco Santander or IBM. I offer a methodological individualism for org theorists rather than Austrian economists and propose that as far as a manager's most fundamental work is concerned, individuals exist, not organizations. Organization is a way to refer to manager-created purposive relationships between individuals such as employees, bankers and customers. Though there are many other kinds of relationship, our organizational relationships are surely the most important we enjoy, even as we take art, integrity and the bourgeois virtues into account - an assertion I shall attempt to justify later.

Introducing her term 'effectuation' Sarasvathy (Sarasvathy, 2008) has reminded us that as we focus on the creation of organization rather than on the direction of something that already exists, we draw closer to the entrepreneurs or strategic leaders who organize others and so bring economic activity into our world. In contrast, Professor McCloskey has argued that to understand innovation and economic growth the analytic net must be cast much wider, in particular to the rhetoric that connects all involved (McCloskey, 2009).

Along these lines, I reject Saravathy's narrow focus on the entrepreneur, and offer a broader micro-complement to McCloskey's rambunctious macro-analysis. The importance of a rhetorical climate conducive to economic growth, explored as the bourgeois virtues and dignity, seems obvious. Also is the complementary need for entrepreneurial individuals to push that growth forward. My focus is on the rhetorical or organizing processes that embrace those through whom the entrepreneur's ideas become manifest as collaborative innovation - and as growth. Ideas, they say, are ten-a-penny. The managers' challenge, as Jean-Baptiste Say said, is to transform them into profit.

The possibility of complementing McCloskey's argument arises because the rhetorical processes behind economic growth go beyond persuasion and the management of meaning.

They also transform those who relate and spur them into collaborative action. I seek a psychological complement to an analysis that is predominantly historical - if I read it aright.

**So to my thesis.**

Organizational relationships differ from market relationships because of their extra-rational dimensions. This not about power in the Weberian model, organization is not rationality infused with force. Nor is it about authority, the odd notion of power's acceptance. Rather, organization means that employees, by one means or another, have been transformed into the active agents of those who determine the organization's goals and practical rationality. By agency I mean human beings' capacity for imaginative action in an under-determined situation, action that makes a difference in an uncertain world.

It is a big methodological jump from certainty and uncertainty, from probability to the core to Frank Knight's argument (Knight, 1965). To understand organization, then, we must look to how agentic action resolves uncertainty rather than look to rationality, power and conformance. Bureaucracy lays out a system of interconnected certainties that capture the employees' rationality and rule following, not their agency. While much of this can be understood within a rational framework, the fly in the bureaucratic ointment is Knightian uncertainty. Hence to what Professor McCloskey calls the remainder; the essence of organizing that lies beyond the grasp of a purely rational analysis.

Simon followed bounded rationality, which I see as Knightian uncertainty refracted through Simon's singular thinking, by attending to the employees' extra-rational values, though he meant something different from what we might assume. Having the right values boils down to being re-shaped towards the organization's goals. Following the American psychologist Tolman, Simon called the employee's ability to absorb these different values their 'docility'. Sarasvathy, who worked closely with Simon towards the end of his life, uses the term 'lability'.

## Docile Man

Docile Man is but a distant cousin to Rational Man, and thereby hangs my tale, as does Simon's. Under conditions of uncertainty organization cannot survive on rationality alone, even a rationality re-constituted in a Bayesian manner, just as McCloskey points out prudence alone can never make for a full life (McCloskey, 2006). Abstract rules can never fully determine human action - the point here being the gap between the general and the particular. Employees, and the others in the value-creating networks in and around the organization, actually keep things moving with 'workarounds', a homely way of talking about their agency.

Management is then less about rule-making and conformance than about ensuring that when employees act agentially - outside all rules - they do so in the organization's interest rather than their own, as individuals do in markets. The organizational challenge is to make sure this happens even when the managers do not fully understand the action in question. Principal-agency theory cannot help us for it focuses on the agent's rational response to the principal's rationally conceived incentives and structures, and these fail under Knightian uncertainty.

Rhetoric becomes a topic as a powerful means of shaping others' agency into directions determined by the rhetor. This is rhetoric as the comprehensive spur to human action, not simply persuasion. It entails facts and meaning with a passion that demands action. To the streets and ramparts rather than the reading rooms and coffee houses.

Thus managers employ rhetoric to harness the docile employees' agency and create the un-personal and possibly unnatural 'association' or collaborative activity we call organization. The result of shaping others' agency, illustrated in Whyte's *The Organization Man* or Burawoy's *Manufacturing Consent*, is individuals who are no longer their 'natural' selves.

Coase defined firms as domains in which the price mechanism has been superseded. I would paraphrase Coase and redefine organizations as domains in which the employee's natural

or personal agency has been co-opted, where their self-interest has been superseded by another's. While markets are about principals and self-interest, organizations are about a population of agents and how their agentic capacity might be co-opted without, at the same time, shutting it. It thereby becomes harnessed to organizational goals.

### **Theories of Organization**

Methodological individualists are interested in the price to be paid when we assume organizations exist, for it leads us to overlook the vital business of bringing them into being. What is an organization's ontology? Org theory is littered with answers. Among the leading ones are (a) systems, (b) organisms, (c) cognition and sense-making, (d) politics and power, or (e) chaos and self-organization. Each has a literature devoted to isolating its axioms. Systems theory has the greatest market share, a tribute to Talcott Parsons and before him Herbert Spencer and, of course, to the 19th century's favorite explanatory paradigm - the Newtonian machine. It is more or less the Academy of Management's official position, validating its enthusiasm for positivist models and statistical analysis. The alternatives are regarded with pained condescension - even though today's explanatory paradigm is the organism. But the brute fact is that we have no agreed theory of organization.

If we accept Org Theory has no clothes, the challenge raised by methodological individualism, is to choose whether to look at organizations as naturally occurring entities (such as systems) or as reflections of the participating individuals. We go back to 1710, to Giambattista Vico and his reworking of the argument that we can know things in different ways - *etic* and *emic*, perhaps. He argued we can only know Nature and her doings as observers, never fully, for to have certain knowledge would be to enter Nature's (or God's) mind. And so we go to Popperian notions of science as tentative falsifiable conjectures about the real; all else being metaphysics. But Vico also believed we could know our social institutions, such as language, Law and organization, in a quite different way, as insiders - for they are our creations. If correct, organizations can have no properties other than those we put into them. As Pogo might say, we have met organization, and it is us, nothing more.

If so, the theorist's question is no longer 'what are organizations?' but rather 'who are we?' Micro-economists like Demsetz are more honest than we are as they readily admit they have no satisfactory theory of the firm. Again we see a variety of moves, imperfect markets, team production, transaction costs, indivisible resources, ownership, etc. OK, this is a search for axioms to a practical microeconomics, but it also entails a view on why organizations exist. Invariably this takes us beyond rationality or U Max itself. If, to take just one hypothesis, firms exist because of market failures, the explanation must lie in these failures rather than in the organization's presumed rational nature. Yet, driven by our scientific aspirations, we seem to believe organizational phenomena must be explained on the basis of Rational Man's participation in model-able deterministic systems.

### **Weber's Legalistic Orientation**

The history here is interesting. Obviously something like organizations were needed for the Pyramids, Machu Picchu, and so forth - even though what we mean by organization may not relate well to these olden days. Perhaps the benefits and limitations of slave-use were better understood in a society based on coercion. Thus part of the Vichian puzzle is to theorize how the organizations we create interact and integrate with the non-organizational aspects of the society we also create.

But to wonder why we take organizations so for-granted is to confront Max Weber's influence. In May 1889, just 24 years old and done with his second stint in the army, Weber presented his doctoral dissertation, *The History of Commercial Partnerships in the Middle Ages* (Weber, 2003). At its core is a distinction between Roman and Germanic commercial law. Incidentally, he taught himself Italian, Spanish and Catalan to do the research. In the Italian law of the 14th and 15th centuries Weber found the concept of a limited partnership with a separate capital fund. Contradicting his doctoral supervisor, Germany's Roman Law guru, Weber argued this separation of people and property was not present in Roman law. There, partnerships were arrangements between principals without limited liability, with no separate capital fund.

He argued the new arrangement was European and originated in medieval times in urban family-based manufacturing. At that time domiciles were large and embraced several generations - and what family members owned individually had to be distinguished from what was owned collectively, only the latter being committed when one of the family signed - hence '*firma*' and the notion of the family firm. The impersonality of this capital fund implied its rational management - hence Weber's life-long attachment to Prussian-style bureaucracy and his inattention to the issues of Knightian uncertainty. This history may not strike you as important, but its bottom line is that organizations exist at law, at least in our legal system. They can make contracts, be sued and so forth. So the org theorist's question is 'is it useful to elevate a legal fiction into the assertion that organizations exist with their own ontology?'

I think not, of course, for doing so leads us to overlook the hugely revealing process of creating organization. But to deny organizations their own ontology, that sought so hotly in our A journals, is to frame a new managerial task. Now we have to find the nature of organizations in what people are and in what managers do with and through them.

### **To Rhetoric**

This is the point at which rhetoric gains relevance in researching what managers do, driving a wedge between rhetorical and rational discourse, between entrepreneurial actions and decision-making models. It is curious to observe how much of the contemporary discussion of 'organizational rhetoric' (e.g. Cheney, Christensen, Conrad, & Lair, 2004; Grant, Hardy, Oswick, & Putnam, 2004; Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007) successfully ignores the distinctions between *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. It seems narrowly focused on the master tropes; metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy and irony - essentially the search for more effective communication within the bureaucratic model. Even in non-managerial compendia on rhetoric, such as Lucaites, Condit & Caudill (Lucaites, Condit, & Caudill, 1999) or Jost & Olmsted (Jost & Olmsted, 2006), there is little analysis of how rhetoric reaches the places rational argument cannot, to borrow the Heineken metaphor - or should that be metonym?

So what, exactly, is rhetoric and why are Aristotle's distinctions important? For my purposes, rhetoric is constructive, much as we speak of 'social construction'. Here the rhetor is

doing it to an audience - or more precisely, getting the audience to do it to themselves. Rhetoric seems focused on the interpersonal processes of construction, less on what gets constructed, whether this be an argument, social order or the listener's self.

Behind the idea of talk-based power and control and the construction of social or organizational order is the construction of meaning; especially the construction of groups who share meanings, as in a culture. Meaning is a problem in that it cannot be communicated directly, as data. It has to be generated indirectly - by the conscious and imaginative listener in a process that cannot be determined by the rhetor, merely shaped. Meaning questions presuppose an ambiguity, lack or void into which the listener's imagination is thrown in an act of agency. The personal-ness of this leads to the sense of flow which, following Csikszentmihalyi, is noted by both Nonaka (Nonaka, Toyama, Hirata, & Bigelow, 2008) and McCloskey. Many see rhetoric as the art of dealing with contingent situations where there is no certain knowledge to be had. It is about talk and about dealing with uncertainty collaboratively. There can be other kinds of talk, pointing up the long-run struggle between rhetoric and dialectic, the second being argument from certainty, formal logic chopping wherein the listener is left with no choice - it's simply QED (Conley, 1990).

I am distinguishing between persuasion as the process of convincing right-thinking people of the truth of something, where that can be separately established, versus the process of shaping others' thinking towards the rhetor's - when that cannot be otherwise warranted. To rephrase this, for me rhetoric is less about the communication of facts than about the process of molding or constructing the audience's meanings and values. It follows these values must be situated in the audience's life-world and practice. Hence *inventio*, the first part of rhetoric, is about the rhetor 'reading' the situation to get a sense of how the audience might be persuaded to view it otherwise, to reveal its previously hidden possibilities. Henri Fayol called this 'sizing up the situation', the strategist's first task (Fayol, 1949).

Obviously I seek a concept of organizational relations freed from the constraints of Rational Man, following up on Simon's critique. But whereas Simon appealed to organization-

contingent values and stopped, I propose management as the active practice of shaping others' docility. As an aside, I am amazed to find no mention of rhetoric in Simon's work, or in his biography (Crowther-Heyck, 2005), given his astonishing intellectual appetite and early interest in docility.

Rational Man is not at all docile, indeed is unchangeable - precisely the reason he is so valuable to economics. In contrast, I am dumping him and adopting the model of the individual (Mol) I find in rhetorical theory, an elaboration of Isocrates's belief that Man's most fundamental characteristic is that he can persuade and be persuaded - be either 'dociler' or 'docilee'.

Thus my main thesis is that under the conditions of uncertainty which bring agency into play, the rhetor deploys extra-rational means of communication - *ethos* and *pathos* - to shape the meanings and values that listener's must create agentically for themselves. This moves them into a different life-space. With a nod to Wittgenstein and the complex relationship between meaning and practice, we see non-verbal means of communication matter when we are in a context of institutionalized practices - when practices are 'infused with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand' - to use Selznick's phrase. Actions then speak louder than words and, with the employees' agency harnessed to management's purposes, organization happens. Leadership can then extend its strategic grasp to take on further uncertainty, the greater opportunities for profit central to Knight's *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*.

### **Why are there Employees?**

Before getting into how *ethos* and *pathos* might achieve this 'fundamental transformation', there is the matter of why employees might be able to do things the leadership cannot do for itself, i.e. what makes collaborative agency so axiomatic to organization.

Organization, as Adam Smith told us, stands on the division of labor, a necessary but not sufficient condition. Like Smith, I presume specialization enables those immersed in practice to learn, apply their agency, and so 'facilitate and abridge their labor' - and thus increase the nation's wealth. Immersion helps provoke innovation, the reverse of the flow process. Thus my idea of organization goes beyond subdividing and integrating tasks into mechanical collaboration - we need four men to lift the grand piano up the stairs. It goes beyond solidarity and mutual support - the human relations amendment of Scientific Management. Rather, given the uncertainties of real situations, organization always demands plunging past the analyses and plans that always fail and into shaping the agentic contributions of those engaged, the opposite of organic self-organization. It calls for focused people management, the application of rhetorical practices, both verbal and non-verbal - if we can tolerate that idea - to shape the workarounds towards organizational ends rather than, as with 'gold-bricking', those of the employees themselves.

There are a couple of twists here. First, when I spoke earlier of human agency as 'natural' some of you may have winced - appropriately. There may well be something stable within us - but rhetoric demands we problematize the self. Rhetoric's relevance cannot be stopped at the uncertainties of the activity's context. It must be carried through to the rhetor's audience too, to their docility. By this I do not mean they have no sense of self. On the contrary, we are necessarily imprinted by life experience. My inclinations here are Vygotskian - our physical and communicative relations with others shape our consciousness and tacit practice. Crucial, though, is that our sense of self is never entirely coherent. We are healthy only when it is open, not closed. The very lack of coherence makes change possible - shaped by others' rhetoric especially. We can learn and so live. It is Lewin's unfreezing and refreezing model all over again, but not its extremes. Rhetoric indicates a middle inter-subjective space in an under-determined, agentially constructed world. In this sense there can never be a theory of rhetoric, merely a collection laboriously discovered heuristics, as Simon might say.

In short, organizations do not exist as distinct entities with their own ontology. Their nature is active, transient and derives entirely from us and, in particular, our docility.

But who or what we are is equally uncertain - uncertainty that disappears when we adopt Rational Man. This certainly makes rigorous positivistic theorizing possible - but at too great a price, for the resulting theorizing is irrelevant to the creation of organization. To put this another way, rhetoric is part of a humanist discourse more or less illegitimate in positivistically inclined business schools, though hopefully not in the liberal arts, an issue that takes us back to Vico, the *Methodenstreit* and the 19th century struggle over historical method.

### **The Impact of the Enlightenment**

My second twist is to the historical method. For the Ancient Egyptians or even today's Amazon Indian tribes, organization is not what we theorize. If organizations are rhetorical reconstitutions of us, they must change as we change. Yet Rational Man cannot change. Any change in our sense of self demands a change in how we might come together in purposive collaborations. If this is correct, then just as Weber saw differences between Roman and German law, we should see differences between pre- and post- Enlightenment modes of organization, both political and commercial. We know that in 1831 De Tocqueville observed a people with a new sense of self, egalitarian, 'free' and individualist, engaging in new forms of organization he called 'association', committed to goals beyond self-interest. Did these Americans invent the modern organization as they are rumored to have invented management education? Probably not.

Some argue the Catholic Church is the template for all modern organization, especially if we emphasize bureaucracy (Davis, 1961). I think this overlooks the evolution of medieval European thought about property and self, especially in post-Aquinas and post-Benedictine thought and the widening acceptance of labor as an individual's freely given gift.

So when and where do we see the first post-feudal commercial organizations emerging? History suggests the late 1500s, in Holland, in what became the world's first modern economy (e.g. Banning, 2007; de Vries & van der Woude, 1997; Goldgar, 2007; Israel, 1995). Here, while I am a distinctly amateur historian, I hope I see eye to eye with Professor McCloskey's vast and

insightful research. Management theorists are tempted to finger the *VOC* (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) or what we English call the Dutch East India Company, incorporated in 1602, as the earliest modern organization. It was formed to manage the Dutch East Asian colonies, politically and economically, and did this 'splendidly' for almost 200 years. It was huge, both for the wealth produced and the jobs created - over a million in all. But I think it an inappropriate exemplar.

After the expulsion of the Spanish, Holland's federalized political structure merged religious, military, political and commercial matters in ways unfamiliar today. Thus the *VOC* had a State charter allowing it to arm its ships and employ soldiers to colonize. All had to take an oath of allegiance, just as those entering holy orders or the military do. It was really a mercenary outfit to which the management of the Dutch colonies had been outsourced. But its size and historical importance tends to overshadow what I think more relevant to today's discussion.

By 1640 the Netherlands was Europe's go-to place. The economy had urbanized and was exploding (McCloskey, 2009). Government supported secular education balanced the influence the clerics and attracted outstanding students from all over the world. Literacy was higher than elsewhere. Wages for most lines of work were higher and more stable, sucking in skilled immigrants of all types. Art blossomed on the commissions to be earned. The political and religious freedoms let those who wished focus on commerce, trade and technology.

The structure of the economy was modern, with significant manufacturing and administrative activity balancing agriculture, fishing and trading. Industry employed around 40% of the workforce - in transportation, printing and bookbinding, textile weaving, bleaching, dyeing and finishing, pottery and tile making, sugar refining, brewing, sail making and, of course, diamond cutting and polishing. There was ample fuel, Dutch peat at first and later coal imported from Northern England. There were hundreds of manufacturing concerns - what we now call SMEs - in all a fine example of what Sargent Florence called 'industrial swarming'. But

numbers cannot tell us why the previous feudal means of organization, legal bondage, were inappropriate for these concerns - which is the reason for this excursion into history.

What made the Dutch economy modern rather than merely large was its capital intensity, its technological and commercial aggressiveness and its labor market; one of specialist skilled workers and semi-skilled casual workers. It was a new socio-economic configuration or paradigm, with advanced technologies deployed - precisely what nations hope for with their innovation policies today. The complex Dutch harbor system became the *entrepot* for most of the European trade in staples. Markets and trade flourished, dominating Europe. But, as Professor McCloskey might be the first to point out, there is no explanation of economic growth here - no more than facilitating conditions at best.

Rather than consider rhetoric generally, I want to focus on managers and their commercial rhetoric. Technologically innovative economies are not all alike and the Dutch Republic's eventual decline, beginning as the British Industrial Revolution kicked in around 1740, tells us something about their techniques. Post-Braverman we know to contrast regularizing technologies that constrain and deskill the workforce against the productivity raising tools and processes Adam Smith reported. While Britain, and later America, adopted deskilling extensively, what we now call Fordism, the Dutch of the Republic, whose industry grew initially by extending craft-based family enterprises, focused more on endogenous up-skilling. Indeed some historians attribute part of the Republic's decline to its inability or unwillingness to adopt Fordist methods. But at first it was competitively superior to anything the world had seen.

My hypothesis is that when these Dutch craft-based businesses expanded beyond the point at which their owner-managers could be all-knowing and all-controlling *paterfamilias*, they were forced to rely on skilled others, non-family members hired in from a vigorous labor market that provided plenty of other opportunities. Here I echo Weber's hypothesis about why capitalism did not develop in China as it did in Japan.

To absorb non-family professionals and grow these 17th Dutch managers deployed rhetoric, appealing to the non-pecuniary or intrinsic *ethos* and *pathos* aspects of the organizational relationship - such as we see with professionals today. As Barnard and later Penrose told us so crisply, a firm's rate of growth is limited by its management's capacity to learn. In other words, along with inventing the modern economy, the 17th century Dutch also invented modern management and the modern professional labor contract. We may forget that at that time labor contracts were mostly based on 'indenture' whereby the employee effectively sold his 'human capital' and agency as the property of the employer, and could be pursued at law, and fined or imprisoned for failing to deliver (Steinfeld, 1991). The 17th Dutch outlawed bondage contracts, making it impossible to reduce a person's agency into the property of another, putting a person into a state of non-freedom. This set the modern economy's course towards what lawyers now call 'free labor' (Bordo & Cortés-Conde, 2001). It follows that, unable to own the employees' agency and make it subject to legal and physical force, managers were forced to rely on persuasion alone (Steinfeld, 1991 p.148).

This is all pretty speculative and requires proper historical work, but you get my drift. Nor should we be surprised these Dutch entrepreneurs, casting beyond strong family and feudal ties, harnessed rhetoric to their commercial projects. Much of European rhetoric's history passes through *Devotio Moderna*, Dutch Ramism, Erasmus and the other Dutch rhetorical scholars (Conley, 1990). Plus rhetoric was central in the new humanist universities, such as Leiden, by then Europe's most vibrant. Plus there were the 'chambers of rhetoric' (*rederijkerskamers*), where local worthies engaged in debating, poetry and drama, lodge-like societies which had significant social and economic implications for their members (Israel, 1995; Jacob, 2006). History does not offer proof, of course, just *pisteis*.

### **Concluding Questions**

Those sympathetic to my argument - that managing is about more about organization-making than organization-operating - might have been pondering a similar argument about market-making versus market-engaging - market-making being often mentioned in real markets but seldom in economic textbooks. But market-making is about the rhetorical shaping of agency

too. In short, if we bring Knightian uncertainty and the shaping of others' agency center-stage, market-making and organization-making converge in a single rhetoric-based discussion - but that is for another day.

In the meantime, if rhetoric is to illuminate how managers harness others' agency under the conditions that lead to market and administrative failures - and to innovation in a Lachmannian world - two questions command attention.

First, the ethical one. Are there limits to what a skilful rhetor can achieve, to what 'free' people can be persuaded to do? This is about the differences between rhetoric and brain-washing, questions unresolved since Cicero and Quintilian about whether the effective rhetor must be a person of good character - an issue for the 20th century too, as illustrated in, say, Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* or Levi's *If This is a Man*. My point being that if we are to have a viable theory of organizing it must be as applicable to the death camps and killing fields, as it is to General Motors, IKEA or a Spanish SME.

The second question is about the MoI (model of the individual) embedded in rhetoric. Just who is this person? Rhetoric implies a problematic self. But how might such a puzzle held together? Is it more muddle than model? A direct appeal to rhetoric as the source of social or organizational order threatens a vicious tautology - people get defined as entities shaped by *logos, ethos* and *pathos*. In turn this suggests leaders are unlike us, beyond being shaped, Supermen perhaps.

We might be able to break out of the tautology by psychologizing the subject. This is easy with Rational Man; just bring his sole characteristic, logicity, into the open. Herein lies rationalism's appeal when everything else seems to be sliding. But Rational Man takes no part in the life we lead. So we touch on core issues in *The Bourgeois Virtues* - a viable model of the living individual and, behind this, the possibility of a stable virtuous core that might, perhaps, constrain the rhetor's powers.

We can argue Western psychology began with Descartes and Locke, and both took part in the Dutch Republic's intellectual life. But there is no psychology without a philosophy to frame it. Digging into rhetoric's *Moi* means exploring the different philosophies in which it has been hung over the centuries. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) Adam Smith, a professor of rhetoric before there was economics, proposed a theory of the individual, its core being sympathy - what today we might call empathy - our willingness to give advice to some and take advice from others. Its inter-subjective shaping implies effects similar to classical rhetoric's. Smith embraced love, justice, temperance and prudence as further virtues.

In 1776, the same year as *The Wealth of Nations* appeared, Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* extended Locke, suggesting we have five 'natural' powers - understanding, memory, imagination, passion and will. Rhetoric, Campbell argued, impacted these. Rational Man, in contrast, has only one power, understanding, and maybe not even that. But the parallel between classical rhetoric's parts and these five powers is interesting, especially because Campbell is proposing a philosophy of capabilities (as we might call them today) rather than one of virtues.

But in general the search for a philosophy of rhetoric is a search for a philosophy of agency or selfhood, a philosophy of subjectivity rather than objectivity. We pick up a thread that runs from Locke to Nietzsche and on to Freud and Lacan. Isocrates presumed mere docility, without solid ground, and this cannot hold. But do any of Campbell's capabilities provide a solid base for self-identity, beyond deception, that still center Descartes asserted in *cogito ergo sum*? Probing here, perhaps, we might uncover faith and hope - and rhetoric's limits.

This search is also the methodological individualist's penance. Presuming human beings alone exist, we can skirt the questions of self and presume it is unproblematic, as is Rational Man. Then the discourse gives us organization as social machinery and renders rhetoric redundant. 'Just rhetoric' becomes a pejorative phrase. Positivism becomes our philosophy and method. For a century organization theorists have explored this Weberian agenda. But

whatever its achievements, its limitations are now blindingly clear, especially to practicing managers and anyone theorizing innovation.

Fifty years ago Simon told us such models fail under the conditions of bounded rationality that are managers' everyday experience. But bounded rationality simply problematizes both situation and individuals - and threatens incoherence. So if the ancient art of rhetoric is to be recovered as an apparatus for encouraging modern free people to associate, as what De Tocqueville called the Mother Science, harness others' agency as the driver of economic growth, we have to ponder on how it works, on whom and who might use it. That our agency is the ultimate driver is no new assertion. It was key to Smith and those of his colleagues rebutting the Physiocrat's assumption that Mother Nature was the source of all wealth, and explicitly reformulated in 1861 in Cattaneo's *Intelligence as a Principle of Public Economy* (Cattaneo, 2007).

To conclude; earlier I suggested organizational relationships are our most significant. I shall be among the first to sign up for love, temperance, and justice. But I believe organization's priority results from its brute impact on our lives. Purposive agentic collaboration is surely our species' most spectacular achievement. Our capacity for organization delimits our ability to shape our condition, to provide food, health, meaning and protection, to create the brute conditions in which faith, hope and the others virtues can flourish. Without organization we are savages without virtue. Virtue's deliverable is agentic collaboration as well as an inner life. Yes, markets work and we can be moved to collaborate in our own self-interest. But what happens when uncertainty prevails, when markets, institutions and rules fail as they are failing today? Then we look to the rhetor and note the strange history of rhetoric - that in times of trouble rhetoric rises like a phoenix from the debris to help us reconsider anew how we might encourage each other into collaborative redemptive action.

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