The *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*

Vivienne Brown

For the final version see V. Brown (2016) 'The *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*', in *Adam Smith: His Life, Thought, and Legacy*, R.P. Hanley (ed.), Princeton University Press, pp. 48–66.

I Smith's lectures on rhetoric

The sociality of human life is fundamental for Adam Smith's writings. Human beings are social beings; any enquiry into ways of life, history or morals, must start from an understanding of this sociality rather than from any notion of an individual abstracted from social context. An important part of this sociality is given by language and discourse with others, whether this is everyday conversation, public speaking, learned writings, literature or theatre. It is perhaps not surprising then that Adam Smith's first lectures after his university studies (at Glasgow and then Oxford) were on rhetoric and belles lettres (polite learning).

These first lectures were delivered to a public audience in Edinburgh (1748-49) and were so successful that Smith was invited to repeat them in the following two years. Smith then lectured on rhetoric and belles lettres at the University of Glasgow (1751-1763) where he was Professor of Logic and later of Moral Philosophy. Apart from Lecture 3, on the origin and development of language,[1] these lectures were unpublished. Although they were influential at the time, later scholars could only glimpse their content from other people's account of them until student notes of the Glasgow lectures, entitled "Notes of Dr. Smith's Rhetorick Lectures," were discovered in 1958 at the sale of a manor-house

library in Scotland. These student notes were published in 1963 under the title *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (LRBL). Smith's interest in literature and belles lettres continued into later life but his projected volume on "a sort of Philosophical History of all the different branches of Literature, of Philosophy, Poetry and Eloquence," as he put it in 1785, was never completed (CAS 248). All we have now are the student notes of the 1762-3 lectures – almost complete but with Lecture 1 missing.

We do not know whether Smith changed his lectures on rhetoric during his time at Glasgow; nor do we know whether he was further developing his views on rhetoric and belles lettres after he left Glasgow. We do not know whether his later work in revising *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* or in writing (and later revising) the *Wealth of Nations* might have prompted some changes to his views, nor whether in planning his philosophical history of the subject he was developing it in new ways or simply putting the finishing touches to a system he had finalised many years earlier. Smith was a meticulous writer and had such anxiety about unpolished versions of his work reaching the public that, shortly before his death, he ordered all his working manuscripts to be burnt. He also disliked the practice of note-taking at lectures; the student notes that we have seem to have been written up after the lectures took place, We can be fairly certain, therefore, that Smith would be horrified to think that scholars would read the student notes of his lectures as if they were a finished statement of his mature views.

II Modernising rhetoric

As a polymath with deep interests in philosophy, history, natural science, the history of language, and all forms of literature and writing, at home in the

ancient classics as well as in English and French (and some Italian) literature, Smith was well placed to develop a modern conception of rhetoric. Furthermore, the time was ripe. Mid-eighteenth-century Scotland was experiencing the economic and political benefits of the 1707 Act of Union and was becoming more confident of its role within an English-speaking Britain. Its universities were modernizing the curriculum and its political and social elites were ready to embrace improvement and modernization. The moment was thus propitious for forward-looking public intellectuals to help shape civil society; moreover, it did Smith no harm in the eyes of the Scottish literati that his six years of studying at Oxford had more or less dissolved his Scottish accent.

Smith was well versed in the classical rhetoric of Aristotle and Cicero, but he was a proponent of what was then the modern approach to rhetoric. The coverage of rhetoric was being extended from public speaking or oratory, which was the core of classical rhetoric in the civic life of ancient Greece and Rome, to include learned and literary forms of discourse, including fine writing, polite learning and the new scientific writing of the time. The modern aesthetic of writing and speaking valued plain language over what had come to be seen as "flowery eloquence," that is, an excessively ornamental form of language overladen with figures of speech and latinate expressions which had become popular in Renaissance approaches to rhetoric in the sixteenth century. This plain language approach had been advocated by John Locke and members of the Royal Society of London in the seventeenth century, particularly for works of instruction such as the natural sciences and philosophy. Smith was thus involved in the process of reworking long-established rhetorical traditions.

Smith's lecture courses on rhetoric seem to have hit the right note at the right time. The lecture course at Glasgow might be thought of as a sort of writing and literary appreciation course for young gentlemen, ranging widely over ancient and modern authors, and including histories, essays, poetry, oratory and works of instruction. It combines discussion of principles of good writing, modes of argumentation and forms of intellectual inquiry, in the context of an overview of authors with which educated young men were expected to be familiar. The course also includes practical discussion of good writing and oratory, such as might be useful for students in their present studies as well as future duties in public life. In line with the modern view, Smith espouses a clear, plain, grammatically-correct style. He also gives practical advice on writing, for example, on how to construct effective sentences (put what's important at the front).

In establishing principles of literary appreciation, the rhetoric course also provides guidelines for an appropriate decorum of expression for young men at the start of their careers, and Smith's analysis of the characters of the various authors and orators as disclosed in their writings also emphasizes the importance of good character. Smith's course on rhetoric was thus not only an academic analysis of different genres of writing and exposition; it was also in part a practical and ethical education relating to linguistic communication for students growing up in an increasingly commercial, cosmopolitan and scientifically-informed world.

III The rhetorical theory of LRBL

Presumably Smith used Lecture 1 to outline the distinctive features of his approach and indicate how the course was to be structured. Lecture 2 then

opens with detailed remarks on clear writing, avoiding ambiguity and using

native English words whenever possible.

Of the five traditional parts of classical rhetoric – style, invention,

arrangement, memory and delivery – Smith was most concerned with style

(*elocutio*). Excellence of style had come to be associated with a highly ornate

style with abundant use of the various figures of speech of which the rhetoric

books at the time provided exhaustive lists and subdivisions. Smith dismissed

this approach, saying that such books were generally "very silly" (LRBL i.v.59).

Smith argues that plain style and propriety of language suited to the character of

the author facilitate clear expression of the author's thoughts and sentiments:

> When the sentiment of the speaker is expressed in a neat, clear, plain and clever manner, and the passion or affection he is possessed of and intends, *by sympathy*, to communicate to his hearer, is plainly and cleverly hit off, then and then only the expression has all the force and beauty that language can give it. It matters not the least whether the figures of speech are introduced or not. (LRBL i.v.56; original emphasis)

Although Smith argues, against the rhetorical tradition, that figures of speech

have no intrinsic value and add beauty only if they happen to be "just and

naturall forms" of expressing the author's thoughts (i.v.56), he adheres to

tradition in emphasising the importance of an author's communication with his

audience. Beauty of style also partly depends on its appropriateness, or

propriety, in expressing an author's thoughts such that they are clear and

pleasing to his audience. In explaining this Smith relies on the notion of

"sympathy." This term is not explained in LRBL although it is important in *The

Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published a few years previous to the 1762-63

delivery of the course. Smith seems to be saying that it is by "empathy" with his

audience that an author understands how to communicate his thoughts and feelings to them.[2]

Smith's rhetorical theory focuses on different forms of discourse with their distinctive styles. He identifies four main forms of discourse or styles of composition: poetic, narrative / historical, didactic and rhetorical / oratorical.

Poetic discourse is aimed at providing amusement and entertainment. Smith expresses a preference for verse rather than prose because conciseness, harmony and regular movement are beautiful and powerful in their effects. Here too the beauty of a plain style is noted, even for verse (see esp. Lectures 7 and 21, e.g. LRBL i.75).

Narrative discourse aims to narrate facts. This includes the genre of historical writing but it also includes description generally and narration of facts in other genres. Smith argues that good writers explain causal relations between events, eliminating any "gaps" in the train of events they are recounting (LRBL ii.32, 36). Two sorts of facts are differentiated, "external facts," which are events that take place in the world, and "internal facts," which are thoughts and designs in people's minds. Smith recommends indirect description for portraying emotions. This involves describing the effects of emotions on the person concerned or on spectators at the time, rather than trying to describe the emotions themselves. Smith argues that this indirect method of description draws the reader to enter into the emotions and sympathize with the person concerned, thus experiencing the same emotions albeit at one remove, although the most extreme emotions can hardly be described at all, even indirectly. This sympathetic aspect of indirect description has instructional value for readers

and has resonances with TMS where spectators approve of others' emotions to the extent that they can enter into them (LRBL i.181-4, ii. 5-8, 16-17, 28).[3]

Didactic and rhetorical discourses are the other two forms of discourse. They are similar insofar as they both aim to prove some proposition. Smith argues that didactic discourse fairly puts the arguments on both sides and tries to persuade no farther than the arguments are convincing. Rhetorical (also called oratorical) discourse, by contrast, has persuasion as its main objective and so it magnifies the arguments on the one side and excites the audience's emotions in its favor. Both discourses consist of two parts, the proposition that is laid down and the proof of that proposition, but in the case of didactic discourse the proof applies to "our reason and sound judgment" whereas in the case of rhetorical discourse the proof is designed to "affect our passions and by that means persuade us at any rate" (LRBL ii.14; also i.149-50, ii.13).

When the aim of the didactic writer is to deliver a system of knowledge, rather than to prove a single proposition, the structure of the argument becomes more complicated in involving "a long deduction of arguments." Two contrasting approaches are presented. One approach is to lay down just one or a few general principles by which the various rules and phenomena might all be explained in terms of a single chain of reasoning. This is the most satisfying and elegant approach, and its greatest exponent was Sir Isaac Newton whose theory of gravity and planetary orbit was regarded as the most brilliant achievement of modern natural science. This accordingly is called the "Newtonian" method and is hailed as "undoubtedly the most Philosophical," on largely aesthetic grounds: "It gives us a pleasure to see the phaenomena which we reckoned the most unaccountable all deduced from some principle (commonly a wellknown one)

and all united in one chain ..." (LRBL ii.133-134).[4] This is contrasted with the "Aristotelian" method which explains each phenomenon in terms of a separate principle. Smith is critical of the Aristotelian method because it lacks a unifying principle of explanation.

Smith's account of rhetorical discourse follows the ancient division of eloquence into demonstrative (panegyric), deliberative (legislative) and judicial (LRBL ii.97). In the case of deliberative eloquence there are two ways of proceeding (LRBL ii.135-137). If the audience is thought to be prejudiced against the orator, he should draw the audience gently over to his side, not telling them in advance what he is going to argue as that might turn them against him, but leading them along gradually. This is the "Socratic" method, the "smoothest and most engaging manner," although it does involve some deception in initially keeping from the audience what is to be argued. If, however, the audience is thought to be favourable to the orator's position, he should affirm at the outset what he is to prove and then proceed to adduce his arguments for it and controvert anything that goes against it. This, the "Aristotelian" method, is held out as "harsh and unmannerly."

These four kinds of discourse are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1   *Four kinds of discourse / styles of composition*

Poetic	Narrative/historical	Didactic	Rhetorical/oratorical
aim is amusement: verse, preferably plain	aim is instruction: plain prose style		aim is persuasion: rhetorical prose style

```
                                            _____
    bare narration of facts/        argumentation = proposition + proof
         description                       |                     |
                              reason / sound judgment      move the passions
                                       |                         |
                              (i) Newtonian              deliberative discourse
                              (ii) Aristotelian               (i) Socratic
                                                             (ii) Aristotelian
```
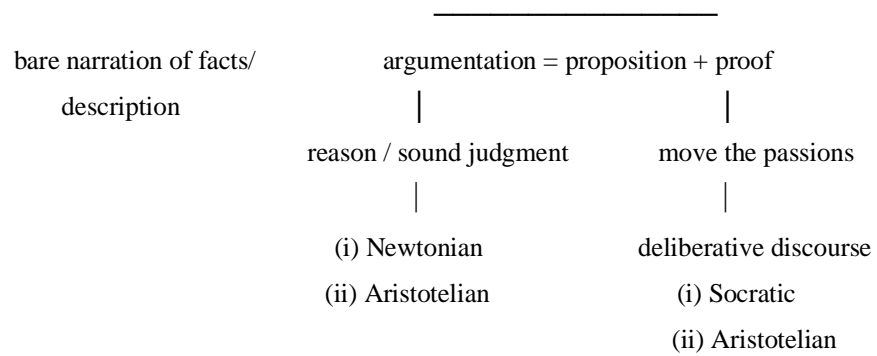
Figure 1 illustrates that two different criteria are used to categorise the different discourses: style, which is determined by the aim of the discourse, and content, such as narration of facts or argumentation. On the criterion of style, narrative / historical and didactic discourses adopt a plain style as they both have the aim of instruction, whereas rhetorical / oratorical discourses have a rhetorical style as they aim at persuasion. On the criterion of content, it is didactic and rhetorical / oratorical discourses that are similar in that both provide argumentation, although the different aims of these discourses determine the different ways in which they formulate their proofs.

Smith's discussion of style and kinds of discourse indicates that his rhetorical theory is based on a "communication" model of language, according to which language is used by an author (speaker or writer) to transmit his thoughts to an audience. Beauty of style is achieved when this communication from author to audience takes place without hindrance. Plain language is most admired because it provides a transparent medium through which the author's thoughts and feelings can be transmitted.

IV Issues for rhetorical theory

In spite of the modernity of Smith's approach to rhetoric, a number of longstanding issues about rhetoric are illustrated by Smith's arguments in LRBL.

One issue concerns the scope and bounds of "rhetoric." Classical rhetoric primarily concerned public speaking with its aim of persuading an audience. This focus can be understood in terms of the importance of effective public speaking, for example, in public debates and in the law courts, as part of the civic life of ancient Greece and Rome. Speeches can be written down, however, and it is in written form that ancient speeches, such as Cicero's, have come down to us. This implies a fluidity between oral and written forms, including genres as diverse as political and legal speeches, lectures, plays, poetry, story-telling, philosophical dialogues, and sermons. This fluidity in turn suggests that written discourses are also included within the concerns of rhetoric if they are directed at an audience. But this then raises a question of the boundaries of "rhetoric." In one sense, all written discourses are aimed at an audience, whether the aim is persuasion, entertainment, instruction, or a combination of these. Smith's rhetorical interest in fine writing and polite learning of all kinds, in addition to the traditional area of oratory, illustrates this expansion of rhetorical application. But the problem now is that, if all or even most human communication is deemed rhetorical, the term loses its meaning. At least one twenty-first-century historian of rhetoric has argued that "[h]istorians of rhetoric must face the question of where the line between rhetoric and non-rhetoric ought to be drawn."[5]

Another issue concerns the intellectual and moral status of rhetoric. Since Plato, a strand of European intellectual culture has criticised "rhetoric" for pursuing persuasion at the cost of truth and arousing the passions of the audience instead of engaging their intellects. Plato's contrast of rhetoric with philosophy, for example, in *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, depicts rhetoric as the "other" of philosophy – as persuasion in contrast with the search for truth, as the

manipulation of passion in contrast with the cultivation of reason. If we take the narrow-scope understanding of rhetoric, this criticism is localised to specific types of discourse. "Oh, that is just rhetoric," we might say of some flamboyant speech. Yet, if we accept that persuasion is an aspect of all discourse, the simple binary distinction begins to dissolve: philosophical works also seek to persuade, and the language of reason, or reasonable language, is not immune to emotive or figurative expressions.

On the other hand, even narrow-scope rhetoric has been valued for its contribution to making complicated arguments more orderly in presentation. Classical rhetoric also includes consideration of the ethics of public speaking, with a concern for propriety in address, good character in the author and consideration of the audience – or, at least, with a concern for the appearance of such things. In view of this, defenders of rhetoric have argued that criticism of rhetoric's arts of persuasion is really criticism of the abuse of rhetoric rather than of rhetoric itself.

There is thus an ambiguity about both the scope and status of "rhetoric." Narrow-scope rhetoric applies to a restricted field of discourse where the arts of persuasion are particularly important, whereas wide-scope rhetoric applies across many if not all fields of discourse. The status of rhetoric is similarly ambiguous. Sometimes the term "rhetoric" is pejorative, dismissing a discourse as manipulative. Yet, in another sense, much of human discourse is "rhetorical" in that it is aimed at a particular audience, for a particular purpose, and follows (or adapts) the current conventions in doing so. This ambiguity is significant because it raises a question about the communication model of language. If much of human discourse is rhetorical in some sense, this suggests that language is not

simply a transparent medium through which an author transmits his thoughts to others, but is also a mechanism for influencing the way that others react to what is being said.

V Applying Smith's rhetorical theory to LRBL

These long-standing ambiguities about rhetoric are also evident in LRBL. There is a double meaning of "rhetoric" in LRBL where it functions as the name of both a genus and a species. The LRBL refers to itself as "a system of Rhetorick," thus apparently endorsing a wide-scope sense of the term (LRBL i.v.59). This suggests that the study of rhetoric is akin to a combination of the cultivation of taste in literary matters and an intellectual appraisal of forms of argumentation. On the other hand, "rhetoric" is a derogated term applied to discourses that are dominated by the attempt to persuade at all costs. In the scheme of discourses / styles of composition, rhetorical discourse is contrasted unfavourably with didactic discourse, and at these moments LRBL reproduces the binary distinctions between reason and passion, truth-seeking and mere persuasion, that have been used against rhetoric since Plato. Smith argues that didactic discourse "endeavours to persuade us only so far as the strength of the arguments is convincing, instruction is the main End," whereas for rhetorical discourse, persuasion is the "main design" and "Instruction is considered only so far as it is subservient to perswasion, and no farther" (LRBL i.150).

Smith's distinction between didactic and rhetorical discourses, however, is not easy to maintain in practice. Didactic writers sometimes assume "an oratorical stile tho it may be questioned whether this be altogether so proper," and it turns out that the only writers who consistently adhere to the didactic style are Aristotle (who comes of worse in comparison with both the Newtonian

and Socratic methods) and Machiavelli, with Cicero adopting a mixed style (LRBL i. 84-5). It thus turns out that, in practice, didactic discourse finds it hard to do without elements of rhetorical discourse; and Aristotle, who does adhere to the didactic method, is compared unfavourably with others. This suggests that, in practice, an austerely didactic style, to the extent that it is possible, might not always be the most effective.

Smith's recommendation of plain style, even for poetry, rejects a traditional view that figures of speech are beautiful in their own right. Yet the distinction between plain style and rhetorical effect is not always easy to maintain in practice. Smith extols the plain style of Jonathan Swift, for example, whose writings "are so plain that one half asleep may carry the sense along with him" (LRBL i.10).[6] But Swift was one of the greatest prose satirists of the English language. Even a plain style may be used to rhetorical effect; for example, to take Swift's arguments in *A Modest Proposal* at face value would be to entirely misunderstand them.[7] Furthermore, Smith here recommends plain style using metaphor, that even "one half asleep may carry the sense along with him." This is in contrast with writing that is so burdened with figures of speech that it is hard to understand: "[s]tudying much to vary the expression leads one [the author] also frequently into a dungeon of metaphorical obscurity" (LRBL i.13). Here excessive metaphor is criticised using the metaphor of a dungeon. How are we to interpret LRBL at this point? Perhaps Smith was being ironic, or was parodying figurative usage in order to amuse his young students. Suggesting that "one half asleep may carry the sense along with him" might have been a jokey reference to the sleepy state of his students. Smith would not have been the first lecturer to notice that some students were nodding off in the course of a lecture. Mention of

a dark "dungeon" might also be thought to raise a smile amongst his young male audience. Or perhaps these figures of speech are just a "natural" form of expression for Smith in making vivid the advantages of plain speech.

On the other hand, these metaphors might be considered as linguistically complex. The expression "carry the sense along with him" might be thought to evoke the etymology of the word "metaphor", which derives from the Greek word, *metaphora*, meaning literally "carrying across," "transference." Smith's expression here might thus be interpreted as a metaphor that involves a play of words on the notion of "metaphor." The second figure also involves a play on words, on the non-native word "obscurity," which derives from the Latin, *obscurus*, the literal meaning of which is "covered," and by extension "dark" or "unintelligible." The dungeon metaphor is also drawing on a classic metaphor that associates light with understanding and knowledge (as in the term "Enlightenment," which is now used to characterise Smith's own period) and darkness with ignorance (as in the expression "the Dark Ages"). The success of both these metaphors might be thought to rely on Smith's knowledge that his students had sufficient Greek and Latin to pick up, even enjoy, the play on words that they involve. Alternatively, perhaps "carry" and "obscurity" should be regarded as dead metaphors, with no intended play on classical etymology.

It is thus difficult to know how to interpret these two metaphors. Were they deliberate, designed to amuse an audience of young students? Or were they perhaps unintentional, examples of the kind of spontaneous use of figures of speech that come so naturally. But, even the notion of "natural" in LRBL is not straightforward. Smith commends a "natural" way of speaking and writing, yet he also explains that the plain style is not itself "natural" as it is the modern style

of the educated classes, those of "rank and breeding" (LRBL i.5-7). The plain style is not the way of speaking that comes "naturally" to all classes. Indeed, the "lowest and most vulgar conversation" is packed with figures of speech; as Smith puts it, referring to the fish market in London, the "Billingsgate language is full of it" (LRBL i.76). Restraint in speech and dress, by contrast, is particularly the way of the English educated classes (LRBL ii.249-250). The plain style, although held out as being natural, is thus as much of a rhetorical style – in the sense that it is designed to appeal to a specific, that is, an educated eighteenth-century British, audience – as a highly ornate one. It was one of the aims of Smith's lecture course to inculcate this more refined way of speaking and writing amongst his students.

This section has considered the meta-theoretical question of the "reflexivity" of Smith's lectures on rhetoric, that is, whether they enact the rhetorical theory they present. Although the lectures are mostly written in plain style, ambiguities about the scope of rhetoric and issues of interpretation pose difficulties for the communication model of language.

VI Applying Smith's rhetorical theory to his published works

The Theory of Moral Sentiments and the *Wealth of Nations* deal with different subject matter, but the rhetorical theory of LRBL suggests that they have it in common that they are both complex rhetorical works. As such they are candidates for rhetorical analysis.

One question is whether TMS and WN correspond to the forms of discourse in Figure 1. Both TMS and WN are serious works of learning and instruction, written mainly in the plain style. As examples of didactic discourse, their style might be thought of as Newtonian in that each provides a detailed development of a single overarching principle. In the case of TMS, the notion of

"sympathy" is introduced in the first chapter and forms the basis of the account

of social and moral judgment; and in the case of WN, the "division of labour" is

introduced in the first chapter and forms the basis of the analysis of markets,

production, capital investment and the system of natural liberty. It would be

stretching the point, though, to say that these entire books are composed of a

series of "deductions" from the principles introduced in the opening chapters.

In some other respects, these works do not satisfy all the characteristics

of didactic discourse. Didactic discourse puts the arguments fairly on both sides

(LRBL i.149). This is not really the case for TMS or WN. In TMS other systems of

moral philosophy are not considered until the final Part VII of the book, and

mostly the treatment there (apart from Stoicism) is cursory. The treatment of the

other systems (apart from Stoicism) is more or less to showcase what is

distinctive about Smith's own theory and the extent to which the other systems

correspond with his own. In the WN other systems (mercantilism and

physiocracy) are not considered until the penultimate part (Book IV) which is

directed to showing why they are both erroneous. In TMS and WN, therefore, the

style of the comparison is to give pride of place to Smith's own system and then

argue against other systems, or in the case of systems that are similar,

acknowledge wherein they are correct. Furthermore, the style used in WN

against mercantilism has elements of a "rhetorical" style in that mercantilism is

denigrated and its supporters accused of "sophistry," thus echoing Plato's

criticism of the sophists that they sacrifice truth for effect. TMS and WN are

complex theoretical systems whose aim is to argue for a particular theory as

against rival theories. In spite of their plain style and analytical seriousness, they

are written to persuade; and the structure of the works and their style of composition contribute to that objective.

Furthermore, TMS and WN are not without significant figures of speech. In TMS Smith uses the metaphor of the "impartial spectator" to denote moral conscience. Ordinary everyday relations between people are presented in terms of a model where all are "spectators" to each other. This spectatorial model is extended to moral judgment about oneself which is presented in terms of agents imagining themselves from the standpoint of an impartial spectator (TMS III.1.2). This metaphorical figure of the impartial spectator is central to Smith's moral theory and its interpretation has been much debated. Smith's metaphorical expression in WN about the "invisible hand" is widely known (WN IV.ii.9). It is also much disputed. It is often used to promote a view of Smith as an ardent supporter of laisser-faire but many scholars dispute this interpretation, questioning the centrality of the metaphor for Smith's economic arguments (which are more nuanced than the invisible hand metaphor suggests) and even whether it refers to free market allocation as that is now understood in modern economics.

VII Rhetoric, communication and language

In LRBL a communication model of language explains Smith's preference for plain style over rhetorical style. As plain prose may have particular stylistic features and rhetorical effects, and didactic discourse may be rhetorically complex, this suggests that the communication model of language encounters difficulties when it is applied in the context of rhetorical theory. An alternative model of language is that we think, speak and write *within* language and its conventions. Although we might interpret the experience of reading an author's

works as gaining access to the author's own thoughts, this itself is an artefact of language.[8]

Smith's model of communication suggests that a plain style should result in all readers having the same interpretation. In spite of Smith's recommendation of perspicuity and plain style, his own works are complex rhetorical products that have not resulted in agreed interpretations over the years. Is this an irony that Smith, as writer and connoisseur of fine writing, as rhetor and rhetorical theorist, would appreciate?

Bibliographic essay

For a history and defence of rhetoric see B. Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1988). For histories of eighteenth-century British rhetoric see: W. S. Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton, 1971), and L. P. Agnew. *Outward, Visible Propriety: Stoic Philosophy and Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorics* (University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

For general discussion of LRBL see: W.S Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton University Press, 1971), ch. 6.iv, pp. 536-76, earlier published as "Adam Smith's Lectures on Rhetoric: An Historical Assessment," *Speech Monographs*, 36 (1969) pp. 393-418; and A.S. Skinner, *A System of Social Science: Papers Relating to Adam Smith*, (Clarendon Press: 1996, 2nd edn.), ch. 1, pp. 7-24.

On the significance of LRBL for understanding Smith's works as complex rhetorical products, see V. Brown, *Adam Smith's Discourse: Canonicity, Commerce and Conscience* (Routledge,1994), and "Dialogism, the Gaze and the Emergence of Economic Discourse," *New Literary History*, 28 (1997), pp. 697-710; S. J. McKenna, *Adam Smith: The Rhetoric of Propriety* (State University of New York Press, 2006);

A. M. Endres, "Adam Smith's Rhetoric of Economics: An Illustration using 'Smithian' Compositional Rules," *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 38 (1991), pp. 76-95; B. Walraevens, "Adam Smith's Economics and the *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*: The Language of Commerce," *History of Economic Ideas*, 18 (2010), pp. 11-32.

---

[1] An extended version of Lecture 3 was first published as "Considerations Concerning the First Formation of Languages, and the Different Genius of Original and Compounded Languages," *The Philological Miscellany* (1761).

[2] On the significance of the distinction between "empathy" and "sympathy" for TMS, see V. Brown, "Intersubjectivity and Moral Judgment in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*," in C. Fricke and D. Føllesdal eds., *Intertsubjectivity and Objectivity in Adam Smith and Edmund Husserl* (Heusenstamm, Frankfurt: 2012), pp. 243-272.

[3] At LRBL ii.17-18 it is argued that only facts can have instructional value. This is not the view at TMS III.3.14.

[4] A similar argument is made in 'History of Astronomy' (HA II.7-9, IV.76).

[5] D. L. Marshall, "Literature Survey Early Modern Rhetoric: Recent Research in German, Italian, French, and English," *Intellectual History Review*, 17 (2007), pp. 75-93, at p. 76.

[6] In a later lecture Smith advances the opposite opinion on Swift, that his style is "very close" so that "no word can be passed over without notice" (LRBL i.92).

[7] *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland Being a Burthen on Their Parents or Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Publick* (1729) proposes that the young children of poor people in Ireland could be sold as tasty food for the rich.

[8] For an application of this argument to theories of interpretation, see V. Brown, "Historical Interpretation, Intentionalism and Philosophy of Mind," *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 1 (2007), pp. 25-62.