That philosophy essentially depends on argument is taken as such common knowledge that to dispute it seems simply to abandon philosophy for some other form of thinking. The works of Johnstone, Passmore, Toulmin, Perelman, Meyer, and others have shown some time ago that when we speak of philosophical argument we cannot conceive of it simply as logical argument following the rules of formal reasoning. Philosophical arguments are couched in rhetorical forms of speech that make them understandable to the hearer or reader and that account for a great part of their acceptability and usefulness. This is not to say that philosophical argument can be solely rhetorical in nature, depending only on techniques of speech and language for its success. Since Aristotle's first sentence in the *Rhetoric* it is clear that logic (dialectic) and rhetoric are forms of thought as interlocking as strophe and antistrophe.

Since the body of work exploring the rhetorical nature of rational argument mentioned above, examination of the relation of rhetoric and philosophy has occurred from all sides, from consideration of “essentially contested concepts” to the role of rhetoric in empirical scientific thought. Much of this work has appeared in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. The last decade has also seen a revival in Europe of interest in rhetoric as a legitimate occupation of study, and the foundation of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric.

Because of this whole course of valuable thought the question of the role of argument in philosophy can be re-raised, if it ever has, in fact, ceased to be a matter of discussion. Is philosophy about arguments? Is argument, whatever we may wish to understand by it, at the heart of philosophy? Does the truth of any philosophy rest on its arguments? Or do the arguments we identify within a total philosophy or within a more particular form of a philosophical position depend upon another form of reasoning and speech that is itself not argumentative?

Ernesto Grassi, working from the insights and texts of the Italian...
humanist tradition from the Renaissance to Vico, has suggested that all rationalistic speech—speech having arguments and deductions as its basic form—depends upon another form of speech that is non-rationalistic, non-argumentative, and non-deductive. This is the speech of first principles or archai. This is the speech of the metaphor which Vico says is always a "fable in brief." Grassi observes that the starting points of any deductive reasoning are not supplied by the deduction itself. It is a scandal to logic that it cannot ground its own starting points. For this, a speech that follows tropic, not logical, patterns is necessary, especially the metaphor. Grassi sees this as the fundamental moment at which logic or argument requires rhetoric. Rhetorical speech grounds the beginning points of first principles.

On Grassi's view, then, rhetoric is not tied to philosophical reasoning as a way to make its conclusions more understandable and communicative, nor to provide a way to more loosely state what can in principle be put into formal terms of logical thought. Instead, rhetoric is required in order that logic or argument in philosophy can exist at all. The metaphor is the basis of philosophical thought and the act of imagination that the discovery of the metaphor requires is at the heart of the philosophical enterprise. The argument makes clear in rationalistic terms what the mind has a primordial access to in the metaphor and in the rhetorically organized speech of first principles.

The central position expanded by Grassi seems to me to have much to recommend it, principally because it makes rhetoric a necessary moment in argument. It identifies rhetoric in philosophical reasoning with the speech act in which the argument is initiated. The art of rhetoric is the art of first principles, the art of finding the topics for a line of reasoning from which the line can be generated. Grassi's position, although elaborated by him mostly in terms of the sources of humanistic rhetoric, has the advantage of making the ancient connection Aristotle sought between topics and reasoning. The topos is that from which we "draw forth" (ἐξ) what is needed for probable reasoning.

I would like to add to Grassi's case some observations about philosophical systems which I think are compatible with it and help illuminate the role of argument in such systems. I would like to consider not just philosophical arguments in isolation, but in relation to full-blown philosophies, those which might to a greater or lesser extent be associable with Hegel's dictum "The true is the
whole" ("Das Wahre ist das Ganze"). I do not have simply Hegelian systems of thought in mind, but those philosophies that are in some essential sense speculative or holistic.

I wish not only to consider metaphor as a "fable in brief," crucial to the speech that begins a fully developed act of philosophical reasoning or system of arguments, but to consider further the relation of argument to narration. A fable is a narration, and thus, if Vico and Grassi are correct, the speech act wherein archai are adduced is essentially narrative. The narrative act exists in the way the metaphor begins the speech of the argument. In my view the narrative also holds the individual arguments of a total philosophy together. By total philosophies I mean most of those espoused by the major figures conventionally studied in the history of Western philosophy. A philosophy cannot be simply a collection of arguments found in one place. I agree with Johnstone that philosophies can be understood as autobiographies of a special sort. If so, they in some sense must be called narratives.

What holds a philosophy together is its narrative aspect. The narrative it expresses is its life blood that animates its arguments and gives them interest. Whitehead's view—that it is more important that a proposition be interesting than be true, but that truth adds interest—can apply to whole philosophies. Arguments are not interesting in themselves; they are only interesting for the role they play in some narrative. If an argument is examined by itself, it is ultimately interesting only when it is brought back into some narrative of which it is a part. Philosophers in the analytic tradition often claim that certain arguments are just interesting in themselves. But my point holds even in such cases. In such cases there actually is a narrative in which these arguments that are "just interesting" exist. This narrative may be no more than the articulation that could be done of the analytic Weltanschauung itself or some more specific part of it as applied to the self, the mind, ethics, or things. The reasoning required of simple puzzles is not philosophical reasoning. Philosophical reasoning always works toward a story of what is even if it does so in parts.

The view I am advancing sees philosophical reasoning as essentially meditation. Every philosophy is an attempt to meditate through a question to an answer. For total philosophies, or philosophy of the whole, the question is without limits. Arguments must be mediated within some context that is not itself argued, but there. The form of this context, what holds the specific arguments
together or makes them interesting, is the narrative dimension. The natural form of the meditation is the narration. Descartes, not a supporter of the concept of narrative truth, nonetheless presents his *Meditations on First Philosophy* in a narrative form of himself which depends at every turn on leading metaphors as the grounds and beginnings of his arguments. In this he sets the tone of modern philosophy—the continual identification of philosophical thought with argument and truth seemingly reached by arguments, but at the same time using the full range of rhetorical speech to accomplish the basis and communication of his philosophy.

In conclusion, the view that philosophy is about arguments is correct if it also acknowledges that arguments live within the other senses of speech, especially the metaphor and the narrative. These forms of speech are not part of argument; arguments are part of them.

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