

## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

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AS THE TRANSITION FROM SOCIALISM to market economy gathered speed in the early 1990s, many people proclaimed the final success of capitalism as a practice and neoliberal economics as a science. But with the uneven achievements of the “transition,” the deepening problems of “development,” the continuation of boom and bust cycles in market societies, persistent unemployment, widening of the wealth gap, and expressions of resistance, the discipline of economics is no longer seen as a mirror of reality or as a unified science. How should we understand economics and, more broadly, the organization and disorganization of material life?

In the meanwhile, economists are crossing disciplinary boundaries in impressive numbers and attempting to apply their models to an ever-increasing range of social phenomena. Some economists also have discovered anthropological notions such as culture and figurative speech. Today, economists speak about social and cultural capital, as well as signals and information. Even the hallowed and notoriously ambiguous anthropological term, “gift,” (as well as “reciprocity”) has been encompassed within the rationalistic rhetoric of economics; however, anthropologists and economists use the terms very differently. For their part, anthropologists have not reached into this cross-disciplinary space nor fully used their ethnographic and analytical tools to offer alternative interpretations. Given its notion of culture, what does anthropology contribute to our understanding, explanation, and “predictions” about economies and economics?

In this book, we have approached these issues by asking a new question. Why is economics persuasive? How does it convince us? Or, what persuades

us to participate in everyday economic life? We are not asking about the persuasions given by market incentives or about individuals balancing rewards and costs in their decisions, as in the language of economists, but about the persuasions of economy that stimulate, focus, cajole, and invite us to act in certain ways. This rhetoric is public and private, as well as spoken, written, and acted. Such persuasions often lie hidden in the gap between economics and anthropology.

Our essays were first presented within a set of conferences on “rhetoric culture,” the meaning of which was discussed through all of the prior sessions. The preceding volumes in this publication series explore the idea in depth. A central thread in all of these conversations to which we responded is that language and actions are performances that we deploy to move others and ourselves in action and conceptually. Rhetoric, as in political speech, can be used to lead, align, beckon, and bring people to a particular perspective. These performances are rooted in culture, context, memory, and shared (and not so shared) understandings. But the task of addressing economy in terms of rhetoric posed a special challenge. Other sessions in the conference series addressed everyday poetics, politics, religion, and kinship. Most of us can envision a link between these parts of life and rhetoric. Addressing the connection between rhetoric and economy, however, created a challenge for both the anthropologists and the economists who contribute to this book. If anthropologists had always been aware of the rhetorical aspects of social life, where had they written about economy? And if economists had always been talking about and writing down graphs, curves, and equations, where was the rhetoric? As if to underline the challenge, our conference on economy was the ultimate session in the larger conference series. Could anything fruitful emerge?

We used the occasion to bring together anthropologists and economists (as well as a sociologist) to speak to the puzzle and to engage in a conversation across the disciplines. Because we were in a dialogue, we were trying to persuade each other, both our fellow disciplinarians and our counterparts, of the power of our views. On the idea of persuasion as the theme, we agreed at the outset. But as the work proceeded, it proved to be increasingly profitable, because—as the essays demonstrate—the toolkit of rhetoric smartly aligns with much of economic theory and practices, and with economic anthropology as well (although that may be because we are all voices within a long “Western” conversation). The reader will find that by “thinking rhetorically,” the contributors to this volume find shared ground and open exciting spaces for exploration as they show how their different approaches have more in common than is usually supposed.

We use the word, “rhetoric,” in the original (Platonic and Aristotlean) sense of persuasion. But what makes an analysis of material life in economics

or in anthropology persuasive? And what makes a form of material life persuasive to its practitioners and to others? In economics, the Chicago-trained Deidre McCloskey (1985, 1994) was the pioneer in the study of economic rhetoric, and her writings have been influential outside of the field.<sup>1</sup> Others have pursued a broadly rhetorical line, such as Arjo Klamer (1983), who has written on conversations, and Philip Mirowski (1989), who has explored the metaphors of general equilibrium theory that were drawn from physics. Related as well are writings in feminist economics, postmodern economics, and a variety of heterodox approaches in economics. Anthropology, with its emphasis on culture, semiotics, pragmatics, language, myth, ritual, and everyday life, has long displayed an interest in rhetoric, as the other volumes in this series attest. In the past decades, some anthropologists (Bird-David 1992; Gudeman 1986; Sahlins 1976) have tried to bring the culture concept to ways of thinking about economics, but the idea of developing a rhetorical approach has been slower to develop.

But what does the word, rhetoric, really mean? Some people associate rhetoric with the use of tropes, such as metaphor or metonymy; on this view, it may be opposed to deduction or logic. Some use rhetoric to refer to modes of presentation in speech and gesture; others link rhetoric to dialogue, interaction, and communication. More broadly, rhetoric can be seen as a way of bringing about a feeling or emotion in others. Of course, rhetoric sometimes means just the opposite: it is hot air, sophistry, and just talk, if not misdirection. The philosophically inclined might claim that through rhetoric the “real” is constructed, while others offer the perspective that rhetoric has to do with multiple and unstable meanings that require interpretation by both speaker and listener. Still others may prize a rhetorical perspective because it leads to the analysis of a speaker and listener’s positions.

We draw on some of the traditional divisions that the concept of rhetoric evokes. For example, in rhetorical studies, the form of an expression may be separated from its content, or how something is said may be separated from what is said. Some of the classical terms used to capture this division are *res* or substance, and *verba* or expression, as well as *logos* (content) and *lexis* (style). Today, we might talk about figures of speech and the subject being conveyed. In Marshall McLuhan’s words, we could also speak about medium and message. But the divisions are arbitrary, because the two aspects overlap and interact, and they are emphasized differently by disciplines and cultures. In the West, we often prize the substance or meaning of discourse over its form, but it is the interaction or dialectics of the two that provides an important thread in this volume. In economics, as the reader will find, the form of a presentation conveys a good part of its meaning and persuasive power; in a word, form becomes content. For example, when metaphoric associations tell us about the

local meaning of money, are we not looking at the impact of how something is said on its content? And when supply and demand curves specify price, are we not defining price through a mode of expression? It works in reverse as well, because we could see graphs and metaphors as outcomes of struggles to express something we experience or think we know. These struggles to express and to use expressions to formulate knowledge are common to both anthropology and economics. And they lead us into perplexing issues about epistemology, methodology, history, and ethnography. The reader thus will find that we weave reflections about these issues into our consideration of economic persuasions. We want to persuade the reader that “thinking rhetorically” is a profitable way to think about economy.

### THE CAST OF ESSAYS

If the study of rhetoric begins with Aristotle’s discussion of political persuasion, James Carrier’s essay ends with the way political power and control are achieved through rhetoric. Rhetoric, says Carrier, is about the devices we use to persuade others and concerns the form as opposed to the substance of a communication. To invoke Marshall McLuhan again, it is the medium and not the message. Carrier admits that this division is “formal,” but it is persuasive. We rely on the form of a communication, suggests Carrier, for its simplicity, which makes for good aphorisms and understandable public policy, as in the neoliberal wave that has swept Britain and the United States. Simplicity lends itself to prescribing and controlling world events, just as it offers clarity and consistency.

With this view of rhetoric, Carrier turns to the most well known dispute within economic anthropology, which is that between the “formalists” and the “substantivists.” The terms repeat the crucial division in rhetorical studies and suggest why the formalists claimed “victory” in the debate, because by focusing on the “medium,” they were more persuasive. But it was never this simple. For one part, the debate replicated a long-standing division between anthropology and economics as disciplines. For another, as William Milberg discusses in this volume, economics may be undergoing a change that brings it closer to the concerns of anthropology. I might add that several generations of students have found the formalist/substantivist debate to be “rhetorical” as well, although in the pejorative sense of the term.

Carrier leads us through the main points of the debate. Is economy the product of individuals choosing through the exercise of calculative reason, or is it a set of social relationships and institutions? Are economic processes forged in local and historical contexts or are they transcendent forms? The

formalist approach is persuasive for its universalism, because it presumes that humans across cultures are alike in their mental predisposition. The substantivists are more particularistic with their insistence on the importance of variation and context. This difference in methodologies and epistemologies reflects broader debates infecting many disciplines, such as that between lumpers and splitters, or between anti-relativists and relativists.

The formalist/substantivist debate is dialectical because each side actually employs both faces of rhetoric, although with different emphases. Substantivists start with the substances of economy, which are land and labor. The two make up the content and the context of their discourse. But these substances assume different forms in different societies, according to the transaction type (or form) in which they are exchanged, which include reciprocity, redistribution, and markets, and the transaction forms are institutionally framed. For substantivists, it might be said, every economy is typologically or “formologically” different. In contrast, formalists are looking at the invariant form of the individual who is a purposeful actor, or *homo economicus*. So far, so good, but this rational actor operates by drawing on the subjective content of preferences, which are distinct to him. For formalists, the form may be comparable across all human beings, which is the claim of many economists, but the substance of that action, which is made up of preferences, is not, otherwise why would rational calculators exchange? Thus, the dialectical terms of rhetoric are echoed in the debate between formalists and substantivists. One finds form in transactions that are institutionally framed; the other finds form in the acts of individuals. Formalists must presume substances just as the substantivists presume form, even if their contents and forms are differentially emphasized.

Carrier offers us a punch line to this debate: the idea of simplicity. Not all forms, he suggests, are alike; some are more persuasive than others. The formalists’ “form,” he suggests, is simple and abstract. The substantivists’ form, which is transaction types, is threefold and linked to institutions. On the ground, these transactions also are mixed and not always clearly discernible. The substantivist approach does draw on the device of simplicity, at the social if not the psychological level, but it is a more complex simplicity. Thus, are we left with an ambiguity? Was the great debate between formalists and substantivists in economic anthropology about content or form? We have always considered it to be a controversy concerning the content of economy, but perhaps it was truly rhetorical. At the least, a rhetorical approach that looks at how we persuade helps us understand the issues at stake.

Richard Swedberg’s account of our shifting uses of the word, interest, reprises many of our themes, but in a different language and with a more philosophical and sociological turn. Swedberg argues that disciplines appropriate words for their own purposes, and these meanings dominate other possible

uses, especially as they spread across several disciplines. Why do some uses become more persuasive than others? For many of us, the word “interest” means the return we pay for the use of someone else’s money, however, Swedberg uncovers other uses of the word in economics and sociology, which reveal some of the rhetorical differences between the disciplines. Tracing the history of these uses, he suggests that their reconsideration may offer fresh ways of thinking about economy.

Swedberg first recounts the stillborn use of the concept of interest in sociology. Paying special attention to Simmel’s work, he suggests that Simmel drew on the Kantian distinction between form and content in which interest, referring to content, provided the driving force or motive for interactions that took different forms. According to Simmel, sociology was to leave the exploration of the content of interest to other disciplines. Although his notion of content was broader than economists entertained, Simmel subordinated it to the relationships or form in which it was expressed; and he thought that the same interest might have a different form in different associations (which is not unlike exercises in rhetoric that call for variations in style while preserving meaning). Conversely, the same social form might rest on different interests. In contrast to Simmel, Weber argued that interests lend stability to actions and that interest-driven behavior pervades all domains of life and is vital to the form of social action and organization. For Weber, interests covered almost the entire range of human experience and were seemingly more stable than the obligations and expectations of formal groups in which they were expressed.

Swedberg contrasts these multifaceted notions of interest in earlier sociology to the narrow use of the word “interest” in economics. After Adam Smith, the term was cleansed of explorations into the subjective states of actors and replaced by the concepts of *homo economicus* and preferences. But preferences or interests could be known only when revealed in choices, so even socially shaped actors dropped out in the abstract theory. With this development, the difference between sociology and economics sharpened. For Simmel, interest was motive or content, while form was the shape of the interactions in which it appeared; for Weber, interests were sturdy, but varied by context. In economics, however, interest became a form, whereas the contexts within which it was realized were elided. Swedberg’s analysis points us to the interesting dialectical transformation that what began as shifting content or substance in early sociology became the invariant form in economics. His analysis of the word, interest, also suggests why the formalist/substantivist debate in economic anthropology became so heated, because it had much to do with how we conceive humans in society. The formalists in anthropology took the position of economists; the substantivists were like sociologists. They splintered the dialectics of rhetoric.

But nothing stands still, and the form versus content debate may be long in the tooth given changes in economics and anthropology. William Milberg returns us to the general topic of persuasion in his survey of changes in the methodologies and theories in economics. He asks how and why economics has become so persuasive, despite its sometimes-indirect relevance to what actually happens. His argument crosscuts, if not confounds, some of the traditional classifications in rhetoric. Milberg shows how economics has moved from a view of economy as an ordered and complete system (or form), which was an assurance against uncertainty, to a more pragmatic sense of incompleteness, although the yearning for simplicity persists.

Focusing on his discipline's shifting questions, Milberg shows how the criteria of persuasion and "progress" in economics have changed and moved slightly closer to some of anthropology's traditional ones. Milberg identifies three phases or paradigms in economics during the past century. First, practitioners relied on a hypothetico-deductive method that involved the notions of partial equilibrium (Marshall), general equilibrium (Arrow and Debreu), optimization, the first welfare theorem, and scarcity. In this paradigm, progress was judged by the elegance of the formulation and its robustness in the sense that if the same results could be achieved by using less restrictive assumptions than before, the new model was considered to be more persuasive. The deductive rigor of this rhetoric brought it closer to physics (and persuaded us to support capitalism).

A transition—often contested within the discipline—occurred with the rise of the "New Economics" in which the possibility of achieving general equilibrium was abandoned, although the anchor of rational choice was retained. As the search for overall systematicity and completeness was forsaken, new subfields in economics arose. In this period, the discipline shifted toward a more inductive approach, and with it, results contrary to the earlier deductions were found in the analysis of international trade, monopolistic competition, increasing returns to scale, and growth. Rational choice played a role in explaining these findings, but the vision of consistency shifted from the overall economy to the subfields. Robustness was no longer so prized, although the problem of allowing for contingency, given the ad hoc hypotheses, was avoided by assuming rational choice. Assessing progress in the discipline became more difficult. For anthropologists, the shift from deduction to induction as a mode of persuasion in economics is ironic, because this distinction was the central theme in the 1941 Frank Knight–Melville Herskovits debate.<sup>2</sup> Knight, the well known economist, accused Herskovits, and other anthropologists, of practicing induction as opposed to the rigorous deductive methods employed in economics.<sup>3</sup> Fifty years later, the tables have turned, except that most anthropologists have abandoned induction (which is the other side of

the coin to deduction) in favor of constructivism, narratives, and other means of persuasion!

Finally, according to Milberg, in the 1990s, economics began to evince another shift, this time toward empiricism and more reliance on the use of statistics—terms like “significance” are used now with their statistical meaning. The disadvantage is that statistics draws on probabilities but not certainty, so that the achievement of definite knowledge is no longer possible, and as economics becomes more pragmatic it becomes difficult to judge what constitutes progress. With this turning, the image and anchor of *homo economicus* is almost booted out the door. There is a fascinating consequence of this change that Milberg terms, “The Kletzer Effect.” As Milberg suggests, statistical results can be interpreted, attributed with diverse meanings, and put to different uses. If he is correct, the difference between anthropology and economics narrows even further, because interpretation is a central method and persuasive device in anthropology.

By his analysis, then, the rhetoric of economics has shifted considerably from the logos or reasoning of deduction to induction and then to pragmatics and statistics. According to some of the cynics that he cites, it has even become chicanery with its emphasis on the stylistic (or lexis) device of statistics, especially when the statistical notion of significance takes on a broader meaning than is supported by probability theory.

Milberg has one more lightening bolt in his locker. In light of these changes, he sees an increasing move in economics toward the study of institutions (the New Institutionalism), especially institutions that have to do with property rights. By drawing on this approach, he suggests, economics will carry out a new imperialism of the other social sciences and may resurrect the image of *homo economicus*. In the next chapter, however, I offer a contrary story. Harold Demsetz presented one of the original and most cited articles that began the shift toward the New Institutionalism; my contribution attacks this essay by deconstructing its circular rhetoric. The conversational merry-go-round of economics and anthropology continues!

I interweave themes we have encountered in the essays by Carrier, Milberg, and Swedberg, such as different modes of knowing and forms of persuasion. Focusing on the concept of property, I highlight the different ways that economists and folk justify and explain their holdings. Both have narratives of legitimation, but the stories are worlds apart. Folk understandings, as made evident in tales, myths, and other verbal performances, are varied and have no predictable form. People often rely on rhetorical devices, such as metaphor and part-for-whole relations in their justifying narratives. Locally contested and discussed, these stories legitimate the shared holdings that I call a base. Standard economics employs a different rhetoric and displays a breach or ten-

sion in its stories. Often contemporary economics begins with Locke's story of possessive individualism and the extension of personal labor to objects that creates possession of them. This narrative uses rhetorical devices, such as metaphor and metonym. But the neoclassical narrative, as exemplified by the work of Harold Demsetz, silences these content-filled stories to employ a different mode of reason. His story persuades by use of calculative reason, deduction, and the expectation of achieving efficiency in competitive trade, which are hallmarks of formal economics. Examining the way that Demsetz applies this deductive mode to an ethnographic case (which Demsetz does in order to provide an aura of realism and beginnings), I find that Demsetz's narrative misconstrues the ethnographic content and turns solipsistic. His rhetorical form has no touchstone outside of itself. But the Demsetz story, which has been absorbed within the New Institutional Economics, has become persuasive in and outside of economics. Just as this case illustrates the tension between communicating by medium (derivational form) and by message (ethnographic content), it also suggests how the former often colonizes the latter in mentality and on the ground. The contrasting narratives employed by an economist and by a people, with their different rhetorical emphases, reflect the epistemological difference between economics and anthropology, even if in practice the two are often mixed together.

Metin Cosgel is interested in the differences between economics and anthropology as well, but he draws on the trope of conversations to explore the contrast. Cosgel finds that in the social sciences, anthropologists and economists talk to each other less than each does with other disciplines. They do not draw on one another's works as made evident in citation patterns, nor do they attend the same professional conferences. What is the difference between the two? Is it a divergence in assumptions, in the use of mathematics, in subject matter, in methodologies, or in models? These explanations, says Cosgel, are not persuasive, because such differences do not stop economists from conversing with scholars from other disciplines. Cosgel then explores two models of specialization (Adam Smith and Charles Babbage), which have aided economists, and applies these to conversation types. With this move, Cosgel shifts our focus from the different subject matter of the two fields to their conversational forms. Adopting a rather pragmatic perspective, he asks whether there is a difference in the problem each discipline attempts to solve. Economists try to discover how to align incentives or bring different interests together (as Swedberg observes); anthropologists try to make sense of dispersed interests. If one discipline asks how unlike interests can be joined, the other asks what people share. Anthropologists thus face the problem of finding out what they do not know (or even know how to find) in ill-defined contexts; economists encounter the problem that people may keep information about their interests

secret. Each discipline socializes or disciplines its practitioners to converse and persuade in a particular way, which explains our lack of dialogue and sometimes-mutual antagonism. Cosgel concludes that by exploring our rhetorical differences, and drawing on our respective comparative advantages (as in classic trade theory), we may each benefit from cross-fertilization. In the language of economists, we can both benefit from “spillovers”; in the language of anthropologists, we can benefit from culture contact and “diffusion.”

Jane Guyer finds that even when conversations take place among people who share interests, wish to reach agreement, and seemingly understand one another, “economics talk” may swirl out of control. She traces through a public debate in Nigeria during the 1983 to 1999 period of military rule and structural adjustment. Her central theme, which she takes from Hayek, concerns our everyday “craving for intelligibility” (rather like Cosgel’s description of anthropologists) and Hayek’s admonition that we should all “submit” to the unpredictable outcomes of markets rather than the predictable outcomes of central planning and authoritarian regimes. Hayek’s view is linked to the Austrian distinction between market uncertainty, for which outcomes cannot be probabilistically calculated, and risky results to which probabilities can be attached. We should trust, he argues, that spontaneous order emerges through the invisible hand process, and we should accept our ignorance about the future. As Guyer shows, the rhetoric used in the Nigerian economic debates drew on the neoclassical perspective in which markets reach or are supposed to reach equilibrium or stasis and in which the concept and experience of uncertainty has no place. The neoliberal promise of certainty, however, was never fulfilled, even as the Nigerian people and media kept calling for a degree of certainty and closure.<sup>4</sup>

Guyer shows that Nigerians did not agree about what was happening in “the economy” or even whether there was “an economy.” Government voices suggested there was an economy, which they knew how to manage; however, most people’s experience of wildly fluctuating prices, unpredictable supplies, and worsening material conditions denied this political talk. People searched for and disagreed about “basic” concepts, such as “the deficit,” “the surplus,” “a subsidy,” “price stability,” and “benchmarking.” Most Nigerians wanted to have a sense of certainty about the economy, but market results were uncertain and the meanings by which the market was understood were disparately defined and were contested. This confusion fed into the difference that was drawn between the near term and the future, especially by the International Monetary Fund. According to the structural adjustment rhetoric, one had to accept short-term difficulties and perplexities in the service of reaching long-term economic growth and stability through the market process. The steps between these stages, however, were never made clear or “simple,” to invoke Carrier’s distinction, and a gap opened up between the long-run promise and

everyday hardship. A contested rhetoric emerged to fill this seemingly chaotic space. People wanted a feeling of certainty or intelligibility in everyday life, but abstract, simplistic terms such as freedom, democracy, the nation, and sacrifice were not satisfying. Guyer's rhetorical analysis shows how the debate swung back and forth between substance and expression, or between what was communicated and how it was conveyed. This shifting rhetoric may leave us with the sense that an economy can become so inscrutable that we can only search for terms to tame it or accept the limits of our knowledge, which was Hayek's argument.

Nurit Bird-David and Asaf Darr turn our attention to rhetoric in practices and to a topic that has occupied anthropology since Malinowski and Mauss. What is a "gift" and how is it different from a commodity? Are market exchanges of goods for money different from reciprocity or delayed gifting between acquaintances, friends, and strangers? Did anthropologists invent the category, "gift," in opposition to market trade, or does it have an ethnographic application? If, as many anthropologists claim, reciprocity is a distinct mode of exchange, what is the relation between their distinction and actors' practices? Drawing on ethnography from market contexts, Bird-David and Darr offer a new perspective on this puzzle by employing a pragmatic and rhetorical approach. They look at "mass-gifts" that are offered by retailers in Israel and at "samples" that are provided by wholesalers in the United States. In both cases, these gifts are offered as persuasions to purchase. Do these prestations create mutuality and a commitment to purchase the object? Alternatively, are they a price reduction that invokes a sense of thrift or a product sample that provides needed information before purchasing? If the gift accompanies the commodity that is sold, does it imply that the seller is reciprocating the payment with a "free" gift or is the seller simply providing full value? This market practice confounds our traditional separation between gifts and commodities, which sometimes exemplifies the opposition between anthropology and economics. How should we interpret these practices?

According to Bird-David and Darr, mass-gifts and samples help convince people in markets to transact. But there are local limits on their meaning. In some contexts, gifts cannot be offered because they would be seen as bribes. For example, purchasing agents in electronic companies can accept product samples but not lunches, although once a market trade is established a lunch may be accepted. Bird-David and Darr reveal how the rhetoric of the gift and of mutuality is appropriated to enhance market sales, suggesting that market transactions are being mystified or veiled as if they were mutuality in order to create a long-term relationship. In these rhetorical practices, substance and expression, or content and form, are contradictory. Such actions, filled with conflicting meanings, require contributions from both anthropology and eco-

nomics not as alternatives or complements, but as dialectical voices that are joined in practices. Bird-David and Darr show how anthropology and economics as conversations about sharing knowledge and about aligning interests (to follow Cosgel) are both a part of economy.

Keith Hart and Ruben Oliven attend to that central tool in market economies: money. Traditionally, the analysis of “modern” money has been the province of economists who address interest rates, currency exchange, inflation, and a host of issues. Anthropologists used to talk about “primitive” currency and ask whether or not it shares features with market money. Both Hart and Oliven bring a more rhetorical approach to money if in different ways.

Hart has already provided a number of studies of money, but here he adds a fresh perspective by asking a central question: how does money persuade? How do we communicate through money, and what are we saying when using currency? We use money, of course, to persuade others to give up what they possess. Hart asks a deeper question: how have we endowed money with the capacity to convey both local and personal meanings, and joint and cross-cultural meanings? Perhaps, he suggests, its persuasive power lies in its capacity to mediate between the abstract and the singular.

Drawing on a range of writers to explicate money’s power, Hart first invokes Spengler, in whom he finds a dialectical perspective that brings together and opposes number as magnitude and as function (relationships). Each signals constancy in variability; but, if one directs us to the concretely sensual, the other leads us toward infinite potential. According to Spengler, there is an historical transition from money as magnitude to money as abstraction, but Hart sees the dialectic as a universal property of money, which is the source of its persuasive power. We have faith in money, yet we are aware that this commitment must be collectively shared. Money is a tool for realizing one’s wants; however, these can be fulfilled only through the shared medium that enables others to do the same; money binds us together even as we compete for it in a community. Money’s rhetorical force is based on this dialectic that invokes content and form, message and medium, substance and expression. Without the capacity to convey personal meanings, money as an abstraction would lose its power. In this age of global capitalism, we increasingly use money in its abstract sense, which may be why local or community currencies also have been flourishing.

Ruben Oliven’s essay fills the ethnographic space that Hart outlines. A Brazilian anthropologist, Oliven offers a set of ethnographic observations about everyday money practices in the United States. Money, he shows, is both meaningful and an empty medium. It is a measuring rod, a means of exchange and a store of value; but what is this “value” in local terms? Oliven recounts the

US everyday figures of speech about money. If I look at the hegemonic power of market rhetoric and the way it cascades into economic theories and into economic practices, Oliven considers how monetary associations cascade in daily life. Rhetoric here refers to how money is discussed and communicated, or its contents versus its form. Part of money's "value" lies in its pervasive and persuasive power to express US history, the life cycle, food, cleanliness, pathologies, religious differences, and even values insured by the Constitution. Money in the US is animate, and when it talks, it conveys a "universal" language that "all" of us understand as it soaks up many meanings that appeal. These US persuasions differ markedly from those in Brazil. If people thought they were not being rhetorical with money, they would be wise to read Oliven, for it is through such quotidian sayings and practices, as Hart argues, that money achieves its persuasive power.

Arjo Klamer draws the essays to a close with a model of economy that brings together perspectives from both economics and anthropology. Like other scholars, he is concerned about the rhetorical emphasis on form in economics. In its place, he offers a four-part, overlapping model of economy that consists of the *oikos* (the house), the social, the market, and the state. His model centers on incommensurate values and institutions, but their overlaps and the separate constituents are continually open to conversation and negotiation. Klamer thus addresses the content of values as well as their creation and modification in dialogue; in fact, the idea of economy as a conversation has long been a motif for him (1983) as it has been for myself (Gudeman and Rivera 1990), as Cosgel observes. Because values are a part of culture, Klamer observes, economy is never an independent domain. We converse about economy within the context of cultural values and "doing good." Going beyond the traditional idea that economics is a prescriptive discipline, Klamer revives the idea of economics as a moral science, which strikes a welcome chord with many anthropologists who—following Durkheim—see their field as a moral science. Klamer refers as well to the market as a conversation and even suggests that a significant part of the Gross Domestic Product is made up of conversations! Here, he is attacking the idea that individual preferences, which make up demand, are independently given. They are socially influenced and negotiated through conversations. Klamer even envisions the entrepreneur in terms of his persuasive powers and the conversations in which he engages. Ultimately, for Klamer, economic values and transactions are only a way or means to generate support for other value domains, such as art, rituals, and a heritage, which are its contents. With this perspective, he joins Aristotle in seeing material action as something done "for the sake of" something else rather than something done "for its own sake."

## THE OUTCOME

*Economic Persuasions* focuses in two directions: toward the similarities and differences in the rhetoric of anthropology and economics, and toward the rhetoric of people as they experience material life. One set of issues revolves around the different disciplinary rhetorics: are there epistemological differences between anthropologists and economists? Do they employ contradictory methodologies? Or, have their traditional fields of study been so different—small ethnographic societies and large industrial ones—that they have little in common? Why are the two disciplines unable to persuade one another of their own positions? From the second perspective, we have asked what illumination anthropologists can offer by exploring the language of everyday material life in both market societies and elsewhere. What persuades people in the realm of consumption or in economic policy making? And why has the rhetoric of economics so often become the legitimating force for taking action in everyday life?

We have approached these and similar questions in view of the fact that rhetoric in relation to material life can be understood in several ways: it is a method of analysis; it is constitutive of the world; and it is part of our analytical discourses. We can analyze the utterances of the Chair of the US Federal Reserve as a way of persuading people to believe in the economy, and as a way of constituting a world for us—a world of “objects,” such as “the economy,” “inflation,” and “productivity.” We can also look at our disciplinary discourses as constitutive techniques for seeing, being, and talking in the world, and as different styles. Whatever the mode, the exertion of influence and power over others and ourselves is woven into these ways of approaching economy. We make a world for ourselves through rhetoric. We invite the reader into this world and to join the conversation about this unexplored side of economic life.

## Notes

1. Keynes, of course, long ago published his *Essays in Persuasion* in hopes of directing us to “our real problems—the problem of life and of human relations, of creation and behaviour and religion” (1932: vii).
2. The essays are reprinted in Herskovits (1965).
3. As we observed, this same difference partly divided the formalists from the substantivist, as discussed by Carrier.
4. Hayek’s themes suggest a pragmatic approach, which might connect him to John Dewey who, in 1929, published *The Quest for Certainty*, in which he saw culture as providing the certainty that humans seek. It was an anti-essentialist or anti-foundationalist position, just as Dewey was a defender of open, free speech as in the Nigerian debate.