Another example of a presumption appeal comes from the debates over the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which was justified by the claim that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). As time passed and no WMDs were found, administration officials were pressured to justify the invasion. On August 5, 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld held a Pentagon press briefing. When asked why the United States had not yet found the weapons that were the reason for the war, he answered: "as we all know, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."[63] This statement clearly located presumption with those who believed Saddam Hussein possessed WMDs. According to Rumsfeld, the burden of proof was not on those who believed weapons existed, but on those who argued that they did not.

SPHERES OF ARGUMENT

Although many arguments in which you engage on a daily basis may be technical (such as the communication in a classroom as you discuss specialized scholarly articles) or personal (such as the interpersonal interactions you have with friends), one purpose of this book is to orient your thinking about communication toward a public sensibility. How can people resolve disagreements about public issues such as global warming, immigration, the war in Iraq, abortion, or desegregation? To understand the dynamics of public argument, it helps to understand the distinctions between the processes of public, personal, and technical argument.

Philosopher Chaïm Perelman emphasizes that arguments are always addressed to an audience.[64] Although people often think of the strength of an argument in terms of how well it will convince a **universal audience,** that is, *an audience composed of all reasonable and competent members of humanity*, the reality is that people address arguments to **particular audiences,** or *actual audiences.*[65] The debate between creationism/intelligent design and evolution provides an example. For scientists, only peer-reviewed scientific data count when determining which theories should be taught; thus, citing evidence from the Bible to explain creation would be unpersuasive to an audience of scientists. In contrast, evidence from the Bible might be sufficient to persuade a religious audience that data from nonscientists pointing to intelligent design should be taught as a theory. In each case, the arguers are addressing particular audiences. Arguments are different according to their audiences and purposes (resolving a technical dispute, working through a personal issue, or developing public policy.)

Communication scholar G. Thomas Goodnight recognizes that the persuasiveness of an argument and the form it takes depend on the sphere of argument in which it occurs.[66] According to Goodnight, **spheres of argument** are *"branches of activity—the grounds upon which arguments are built and the authorities to which arguers appeal."*[67] Goodnight recognizes that what is persuasive depends on the purpose of the argument. To explain how different grounds for argument emerge, Goodnight posits three spheres of argument: personal,

technical, and public. He argues that particular warrants and data count differently depending on the sphere in which they are argued.

Think about the last time you and friends were talking. What did you talk about? Music? Your favorite TV show? The newest movie? What a friend should do about a family conflict? You and your friends may have covered a range of topics, from arts to interpersonal relations. It is doubtful that any of you declared another friend incapable of speaking about a topic because s/he was unqualified. The next day, probably no one in your group remembered the specific arguments. Your experience in this instance is an example of the **personal sphere,** *the place where the most informal arguments occur, among a small number of people, involving limited demands for proof, and often about private topics.*

Argument in the personal sphere tends to be ephemeral, meaning it is not preserved. No preparation is required. Many things count as evidence, which is pulled from memory. All topics are open to discussion even if the participants have no special knowledge about them. Expertise is not necessary; anyone can talk on any subject. The test of what constitutes a valid argument in the personal sphere is truthfulness: are the people with whom you disagree honestly representing their beliefs? The time limits imposed probably have nothing to do with the nature of the disagreement, and more to do with when people must leave. Ultimately, the relationships involved do not require agreement among everyone.

Contrast this to the **technical sphere,** *the argument sphere that has explicit rules for argument and is judged by those with specific expertise in the subject.* An example of a technical sphere argument occurs any time medical professionals try to publish their scholarship in a specialized journal such as *Journal of the American Medical Association* or *The Lancet.* Technical arguments are judged by referees, or peer reviewers, who have special expertise in the area being discussed. When the arguments are deemed valuable, they are preserved and published. Other members of the specialized medical community may then join the discussion.

The function of this type of argument is, as Goodnight states, to "advance a special kind of knowledge."[68] It takes special expertise to contribute to a technical dispute. It also takes special expertise to read or understand it. Terms, phrasings, and the complexity of the argument make it relatively inaccessible to anyone not trained in medicine. The argument in a medical essay may be difficult for you to follow because the data being used is unknown to you, or because the warrants were left unstated and you did not know how to provide them.

Another example of technical argument can be found in courts of law. Judges oversee disputes between trained lawyers and must themselves possess special expertise in order to apply the rules of argument fairly. Lawyers must not only have received training, they must also have passed a test (the bar exam) that deemed them competent to practice law. Very specific rules govern who may speak, when they may speak, and what they may say. The proceedings are recorded. Not all evidence counts. (For example, hearsay evidence is usually excluded in criminal cases.) The ultimate authority for determining punishment

the law; a jury may decide a case, but its decision is bound by the rules of law nd the judge's instructions. Many times, the test of argument in the technical phere is truth, either in terms of objective facts or in terms of which claim best pproximates people's understanding of the world.

In many ways, the technical and personal spheres of argument represent vo extremes. The **public sphere** is *the argument sphere that exists "to handle isagreements transcending personal and technical disputes."*[69] Ultimately, the sue at hand is broader than the needs of a group of friends or of a specialized chnical community. For example, arguments about whether the university iould raise tuition, a parking ramp is the best way to solve the parking problem owntown, or the local school bond referendum should be passed are all public phere arguments. Generally, the issues affect a broad range of people and, ence, a broad range of people may speak to them. The demands of proof are ot as rigid as in technical argument or as fluid as in personal argument. The test validity for such an argument tends to be whether it is right, as in "just" (not as "correct"). People, as members of a community, try to serve the community's terests with public argument and, thus, need to assess whether they can come agreement about what is the right thing to do.

The Pluto controversy offers an example of the distinction among public, ersonal, and technical claims. In the February 1999 issue of *Natural History*, yson wrote an essay titled "Pluto's Honor." In it, he argued:

> As Citizen Tyson, I feel compelled to defend Pluto's honor. It lives deeply in our twentieth-century culture and consciousness and somehow rounds out the diversity of our family of planets, like the troubled sibling of a large family. Nearly every schoolchild thinks of Pluto as an old friend. And there was always something poetic about being number nine. As Professor Tyson, however, I must vote—with a heavy heart—for demotion. Pluto was always an enigma to teach.[70]

other words, Tyson recognizes that arguments that might matter in a personal public sphere (such as public perception, schoolchildren's beliefs, and the etry of nine) are not relevant in the technical realm, where technical ques-ons of how planets are grouped are the only criteria. Children's sadness at not ding Pluto along with the terrestrial and gas giant planets in the Scales of the niverse exhibit (which portrays the relative size of things in the solar system) nply does not count as relevant data in the debate.

Other scientists also recognized this distinction among argument spheres. a debate Tyson organized at the American Museum of Natural History on e status of Pluto, Jane Luu, codiscoverer of the first actual Kuiper belt object e belt in which Pluto resides), argued Pluto was not a planet and made clear at continuing to refer to it as a planet "would only be due to tradition and ntimental reasons. . . . So, in the end, the question goes back to this: Should ence be a democratic process, or should logic have something to do with it?"[71] u was basically asking: Is this a technical or public sphere debate? Substantial blic outcry arose over the IAU's vote to demote Pluto from planet status, but

FACETS OF PERSONA

To highlight the ways in which persona is performed and is itself a symbolic action, we describe the various facets of persona in the following sections. Character, roles, identity, authority, and image are interlocking parts of a person's persona. We use the metaphor of "facet" because these concepts are interconnected parts of a larger whole, yet each concept offers a distinct perspective. The distinctions among the facets are not absolute. Particular roles, such as firefighter, carry particular character elements, such as courage. When people seek to develop authority, they often seek to portray the image of a leader. In addition, people perceive particular identities to fit particular roles better. For example, people's perception of sex roles makes female nurses and elementary school teachers less remarkable than male nurses or teachers. All these facets of persona have two things in common: (1) skillful choices about each can enhance symbolic action and (2) each facet is produced by symbolic action.

Character

Imagine you are shopping for a new stereo. The salesperson cannot answer any of your questions about sound quality or features, and insists on steering you toward the most expensive equipment. You begin to question the character of a person who does not seem to have your best interests in mind, so you ask for help from someone else. The second salesperson is someone with whom you worked when you bought a television, and whose advice was helpful. This salesperson also provides complete answers to your questions and is willing to admit it when a cheaper model may be just as good as a more expensive one. You trust this person, both because of your previous experience but also because of the way the stereo discussion is handled. The second salesperson has ethos, while the first one lacks it.

In Chapter 1, we defined **ethos** as *that which is "in the character of the speaker"*; more completely, it is *the character of a rhetor performed in the rhetorical act and known by the audience because of prior interactions.* This understanding of ethos is informed by two classical scholars: Aristotle and Cicero. Aristotle defined ethos as an appeal based on a rhetor's "presentation of character" within a persuasive act.[14] Ethos, as an artistic proof, is created by the rhetor. Roman rhetorician and statesperson Cicero described it as composed of elements of character outside the rhetorical act.[15] He included "the customs, the deeds, and the life" of the rhetor of which the audience was already aware.[16] For Cicero, the rhetor's character known from previous acts was more important to demonstrating ethos than the appeals a rhetor made in the speech.

In our definition, ethos is developed both prior to and within a rhetorical act. For example, when Richard Nixon was president in the early 1970s, he normalized relations with "Red China." After World War II, the People's Republic of China became a communist country. The United States cut off all ties with it and viewed it as an enemy. In 1972, Nixon became the first US president to visit China and began developing diplomatic ties. The US people

accepted Nixon doing this because of his ethos. He was known as a staunch anti-communist; if he thought it was acceptable to work with the Chinese, it must be. Nixon did not rely on his past character alone, however. In his messages to the US public, he explained and justified his foreign policy decision, using his authority as president and praising the virtue of closer US-PRC ties.

Because *ethos* is character existing prior to, and within, a rhetorical act, to understand it, one needs to understand the components of character. Aristotle's description is helpful. For Aristotle, character is comprised of three dimensions: practical wisdom (*phronesis*), virtue (*arête*), and goodwill (*eunoia*).[17]

Practical Wisdom. Rhetors demonstrate **practical wisdom** or prudence (phronesis) through the use of *common sense and sound reason.*[18] If a rhetor attempts to persuade with arguments the audience perceives to be irrational, unbelievable, or unrealistic, the rhetor's character is harmed and the audience will probably not be persuaded. Practical wisdom is conveyed by a rhetor's command of information and ability to make decisions based on sound reasons.

In a local campaign for school board that one of the authors witnessed, candidates participated in a forum. One candidate aggressively defended strong positions on the issues. He wanted to overhaul school financing, opposed the school funding referendum, and favored terminating the superintendent. On the surface, he seemed to have a clear agenda and advocate forceful action. As the forum progressed, however, he was unable to answer questions about the district's finances, how the district would function if the referendum failed, and his grievances against the superintendent.

The other candidates failed to take strong stands on issues, but appeared open to public concerns. One audience member said she wanted a board member who listened to her concerns, showed common sense, and gathered information before making decisions.

The first candidate lost the election by a wide margin. The results seemed to surprise his backers because the election results for the referendum were very close and he had been the only school board candidate to oppose it. Yet, he failed to gain the support of voters who shared his opinion because they did not believe he possessed practical wisdom. Even though many voters agreed with him on some fundamental issues, they perceived other candidates as possessing better practical wisdom.

Virtue. Rhetors are perceived to possess **virtue** (arête) if they seem to be *sharing the values the audience considers worthy of merit.* Aristotle, based on fourth century BCE Greek society's view of the world, said that virtue included "justice, manly courage, self-control, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality [generosity], gentleness, prudence, and wisdom."[19]

During election campaigns, candidates try to portray themselves as possessing the virtues of leadership. When former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani campaigned for president in 2007, he explained: "I'll set a course and stick with it. I'll be on offense on terrorism. I'll be a fiscal conservative. I'll lower taxes. I'll seek private market solutions to most problems."[20] In the first part of

this statement, Giuliani attempted to portray himself as a decisive, unwavering, self-confident, and courageous leader. He stated his positions boldly to portray himself as a forceful defender of values consistent with the conservative agenda because he was attempting to persuade Republicans to support him for their party nomination: he portrayed himself as possessing the virtues he believed his audience valued. Additionally, his campaign website offered a biography that focused on his virtues of leadership as a crime fighter, reformer, fiscally responsible mayor, and courageous leader during the September 11, 2001, attacks on his city.[21]

Aristotle identified what he believed were ideal virtues; however, his ideals were limited by his culture. For example, he argued: "the virtues and actions of those who are superior by nature are more honorable, for example, those of a man more than those of a woman."[22] Today, although many of the values he identified might be considered virtuous, we hope people do not believe that a person's biology determines their ability to possess virtue. In addition, what a virtue means is open to contest. It is defined by the culture, the situation, and the audience. In some cultures the virtues of a good leader might be courage, conviction, and forcefulness, but in others they might be listening to others, seeking advice, and seeking understanding. Although a definitive set of values cannot be developed for what constitutes virtue for the ethos of a rhetor, the values that the audience esteems determine whether it perceives the rhetor to be virtuous.

Goodwill. A rhetor who possesses **goodwill** (eunoia) is perceived as having *the quality of being motivated by the audience's best interests, as putting the needs of the audience ahead of the rhetor's own interests and motives*, much as a friend would.[23] In order to have goodwill, Aristotle argues, the rhetor has to understand the frame of mind of the audience. When the rhetor assesses the audience and incorporates the appropriate appeals, s/he appears to be motivated by the audience's interests and needs. A rhetor who is perceived as having goodwill might propose a policy for the greater good that goes against the rhetor's self interest. For example, if you are working on a group project for a class, you hope the other group members possess goodwill. You most likely enjoy working with, and favorably assess, those people who are more concerned about the grade of the group than their own personal performances.

When Barack Obama announced his candidacy for the presidency on February 10, 2007, he attempted to demonstrate goodwill by explaining that his motives for running were not grounded in self-interest, but in the interest of the nation. In his speech, Obama talked of his motivation to move to Illinois after completing law school. He spoke of moving to a new city where he was offered a job by a church for a salary of $13,000. He took the job, he claimed, because of a "single, simple, powerful idea—that I might play a small part in building a better America." He then talked of encountering violence, visiting inadequate schools, and meeting unemployed people. He concluded that he "received the best education" he had ever had.[24] Obama portrayed himself as doing good things for others, not for himself. His demonstration of goodwill was part of his ethos

because, through his work in Chicago, he stated he had become a better leader who understood the needs of people and the meaning of Christianity.

Ethos is a complex construction of a rhetor's character consisting of the audience's perceptions of a rhetor's practical wisdom (phronesis), virtue (arête), and goodwill (eunoia), a perception informed by the rhetorical act and by the rhetor's actions preceding the act. If the audience perceives a rhetor to be trustworthy and to possess the character qualities the audience esteems, then the audience will be more open to the rhetor's message. For Aristotle, ethos was the most effective persuasive proof because when audiences trust rhetors, they are more receptive to their persuasive messages, including logos and pathos appeals.

Character is understood differently today. Aristotle wrote of rhetors possessing character; now, people consider character not as an innate possession, but as a rhetorical construction. Communication scholar Edwin Black notes, "We are more skeptical about the veracity of the representation; we are more conscious that there may be a disparity between the [person] and his [or her] image; we have, in a sense, less trust."[25] Inherent to this loss of trust is the recognition that ethos is not something that just is. Ethos is created; it is performed. As scholars become increasingly aware of the performative aspect of rhetoric, they develop additional ways to assess the rhetor's persona.

Roles

People perform various roles in their daily lives, as well as across their lifetimes. On any given day you probably assume several roles, each having particular functions, qualities, characteristics, and communication patterns. Suppose you make three requests during a day. You ask your professor to extend the deadline on a paper, your friend to let you borrow something, and your subordinate at work to perform a required task. In each of these situations, you play a different role: student, friend, or manager. You perform different personae, each calling for different attitudes toward the audience. As a student, you are a subordinate to the audience, as friend a peer, and as manager a superior. You are the same person, but the role you perform to make the request influences the request. At the same time, the nature of the request places you in a particular role. By becoming aware of social roles and the way they affect perceptions of the rhetor, you can become more aware of the factors that influence reception of rhetorical acts.

Social Roles. If the rhetor plays a role that is held in high regard and consistent with the values of the society, the audience can be more receptive to the message.[26] Goffman explains that during performances, individuals "tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society."[27] People dress up for job interviews because US society equates professional dress with a professional work attitude. A potential employer can see you more easily in the role of worker if you perform the role of a worker. Thus, when you interview for a professional job, you likely dress in a way you think others perceive to be professional, rather than in blue jeans, flip-flops, and a ripped T-shirt; speak