Uniting as it does the subject of rhetoric and science, the title of our study is seductive. We would seem to be uniting incompossibles, and the attempt to do so can engage the imagination. What might it mean to pursue the role of logic in science and how might that pursuit differ from our own? Or would the role of logic in natural science differ from that of logic in human science? Or how would logic in human science differ from rhetoric in the same? And what of rhetoric in natural science study? Does it have a place there? Finally, what of the respective contributions of logic and rhetoric to the field of mathematics? Intriguing questions, all. Our focus, however, centers on that relationship that obtains between that human achievement called rhetoric and that kind of research that is involved in the human or social sciences.

In treating this subject we shall attend to the question of the human sciences and their style of research. At this point we shall then address the relation that has held between logic and rhetoric over the centuries of thought, a relationship that speaks loudly and significantly to the issue at hand. Finally, we shall focus on the subject of rhetoric, and more particularly to that formulation which has come to be known as The New Rhetoric.

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When we speak of the sciences, more often than not we mean the natural sciences: those that deal with physical things and forces with the intent of analyzing, explaining, ascertaining their rule or law governedness, predicting and, hopefully, controlling variables of whatever kind. This elaborate undertaking is carried out with observations, experiments, hypotheses formations, verifications and replications in the respective scientific fields. Natural science views the objects of its study as observanda, explicanda and manipulanda, thanks to a strategy of sophisticated technical language that eliminates by design the polysemy of ordinary discourse through definitions, classifications, taxonomies, mathematical formulae and symbolizations, and prescribed or derived axioms. So successful have these efforts been that some philosophers over the centuries have toyed with the notion of creating an artificial language that could be magically extended to the whole of human life and, with the blessing of such a langue bien faite, transforming our existence.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, however, the physical things and forces with which natural science deals do not exhaust the picture of human life. In this realm the task is far more complicated than when dealing principally with physical factors. To be sure, the human sciences also have to contend with physical concerns at every turn, since they are dealing with human beings who by their very nature are beings-in-the-world, beings-for-the-world, beings-at-the-world. Still, as Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, the object of the social sciences is directly or indirectly meaningful action in the world, which is approached by the various human sciences in their respective ways (1971). To treat the human as a purely physical force is to ignore the person's humanity, the aspect that makes the person and the study of him or her so distinctive. But, in saying that the focus is on meaningful action, we are nonetheless including body, world, entities, meaning, intentionality, language, reflection. Moreover, there is the additional remarkable fact that in their performance of meaningful action, we find that the participants are engaged in the ongoing and noteworthy feat of interpreting themselves. To put it in still another way, to study man as an animal analyzandum et explicandum is one thing; to study man as an animal symbolicum, metaphoricum, historicum, religiosum et hermeneuticum is quite another. And it is this focus on the human being that confronts the theoretician and the practitioner of the human sciences.

In the presence of this situation we are led to ask how one should properly proceed if he or she should wish to come to grips with the issues that confront the human sciences. In some form or other this question has always been raised by the human sciences since their inception.