

The point of departure and inspiration for my presentation today is the ringing declaration with which Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric begins: 'Rhetoric is the counterpart (ἀντίστροφος) to dialectic' (I.1, 1354a1). The train of thought that follows this remark is polemical, doubly so. Aristotle's object is to use what we know—or he thinks we know—about dialectic to illuminate rhetoric, the better to defend it not only from its enemies, chiefly Plato as represented by the *Gorgias*, but also from its friends and practitioners, who are the object of the scathing indictment that occupies much of the first chapter. In both engagements a crucial part is played by the idea of rhetoric as a counterpart to dialectic. I'm especially interested in how, in virtue the counterpart relation that obtains between the two disciplines, what Aristotle has to say about one can throw light on the other. Aristotle is most interested in using dialectic to understand rhetoric, and inevitably I shall have lots to say about this, but I hope also to discover illumination proceeding in the other direction: light that Aristotle's conception of rhetoric, and especially what he has to say about dialectic in the course of expounding that conception, throws on dialectic itself. Though he dedicated a substantial treatise to dialectic, the *Topics*, Aristotle has surprisingly little to say of a reflective or programmatic character there. Any help we can derive from another source is therefore welcome. This is especially true when it comes to questions about the use or value of the discipline.

Now to chapter 1 of the *Rhetoric*, where Aristotle pays the most attention to the affinities between rhetoric and dialectic. Breaking with Aristotle's own order of

presentation, let's begin with Plato. This will give us a chance to see what is meant by talk of counterpart disciplines, for the idea had already been put to use by Plato in the *Gorgias*, and Aristotle's use of it pretty plainly intended as a rejoinder.¹

In a famous passage in the *Gorgias* the arts that care for the soul and those that care for the body are presented as counterparts to each other (463-466a). Two pursuits are counterparts in the relevant way by standing in the same relation to different objects or domains. Thus according to Socrates the arts of medicine and justice are counterparts by caring in the same way for the body and the soul respectively, of whose natures they possess genuine understanding and whose good condition—health and virtue—are their respective objects. In Socrates' system of analogies, as false likenesses or counterfeits of justice and medicine respectively, rhetoric and cookery are likewise counterparts, aiming at pleasure and not the good of the soul and the body, of which they have no understanding, and to which as a result of these facts they are each related in a different but less creditable way than the corresponding true arts. For Aristotle by contrast, rhetoric is not the counterpart to a pretender or imposter like cookery, but to a real art, dialectic. The burden of Aristotle's implicit argument with Plato in the *Rhetoric* is that features shared by the two disciplines, can be a reproach to rhetoric only if they are to dialectic, where, it transpires, they are not.

A look at the broader context of the counterpart passage in the *Gorgias* will help us to grasp the points Aristotle wants to make against Plato better. It belongs to Socrates' response to Polus' demand that he—Socrates—say what he thinks rhetoric is (462b). This demand comes in a section that is the sequel to the

¹ On this point, see Brunschwig, 1994; Rapp, 2002: II. 20-1. Cf. passages in Isocrates and Aristotle, *Politics*.

² cf, *Meno* 95c

³ Cf. Burnyeat 1994.

⁴According to Socrates, rhetoric caters to the auditors'

dialogue's first sustained argument, which was set in train by a request for an account of what rhetoric is. In the case of the arts, the 'What-is-F?' question becomes the 'What is F about question?', if you will (449d). Gorgias wants to answer 'about *logoi*'. In the pages that follow there are many twists and turns to the argument and a certain amount of looseness about how the 'about' in the question is to be understood. Is an art about the nature of the objects that constitute its domain; about the instruments and measures it employs; about the product it produces; or all of the above? At every turn, Gorgias is foiled or thwarted by Socrates. Being about *logoi* doesn't set rhetoric apart from other arts, all of which, in a way, traffic in or are occupied with *logoi* (449d-450b). This is especially plain when we take into account the didactic side of art, which is emphasized all the way through the dialogue. Apart from their primary function, to make or do something, artists also make others like themselves by teaching them (449b, 455c, 458a), and this is accomplished in good part by *logoi*, which artists also employ while reflecting about or explaining their art, in formulating problems, in consultations with colleagues and like activities.

Gorgias next attempts to define rhetoric by the fact that it does not make anything apart from *logoi*, but this feature too turns out to be shared with other pursuits (450b-452d). And Socrates puts the 'what is it about?' question again, this time about the *logoi* that belong to rhetoric: 'what are *they* about?' (451d). Gorgias' answer is: 'the greatest and the best of human affairs', but the reader who expects at last to hear about the substantive subjects tackled by rhetoric and rhetorical *logoi*, must wait a little longer. Socrates shifts attention to the *products* of the different arts, each of which will be presented as the greatest and best by the practitioners of the corresponding art. To say 'the greatest and the best' is therefore not enough to distinguish the product of rhetoric. Gorgias names *persuasion* as the product of rhetoric, and dilates on the benefits that it secures. Since each artist will be

persuasive in his own sphere, this permits the question ‘about what?’ to be posed one last time: ‘persuasion about what?’ together with a new question ‘persuasion of what kind?’, for Socrates elicits Gorgias’ agreement to the proposition that there are two kinds of persuasion, one that produces conviction without knowledge, the other that imparts real knowledge or genuine understanding (454e; cf. Aristotle *Rh.* I 2, 1355b29). Since even as stout a defender of rhetoric as Gorgias would never claim that the orator, constrained as he is by speaking in law courts and at other public gatherings and before intellectually limited audiences under pressure of time, can achieve persuasion of the second, knowledge-imparting kind, the only alternative appears to be to admit that rhetorical persuasion is of the first kind, which implants conviction apart from knowledge. Since Gorgias also agrees that the law courts and other deliberative bodies before whom the orator speaks tackle issues of justice and injustice and the beneficial and harmful, he comes perilously close to conceding that rhetoric is persuasion of the ignorant by the ignorant about matters of the utmost importance (459b, d; cf. *Phdr.* 260c7).

Let’s pass quickly over the next and last major development in the argument, in which Gorgias’ discomfort with this result leads him halfheartedly to affirm that he will teach his students justice, so setting up his own official refutation (460a).² For this is supposed to be in conflict with his earlier assertion that the teacher of rhetoric is not to blame for the harms done by the misuse of the skill that he teaches (456c7-457c3).

The argument between Socrates and Gorgias prepares the way for the analogies of the counterpart passage. There are a number of new ingredients, notably the account of how the ignorant artificer of persuasion effects his purpose, through pleasure and the gratification of the audience, which makes his pursuit

² cf, *Meno* 95c

analogous to—the counterpart of—cookery. But we reached this point because Gorgias' effort to define rhetoric as kind of *logology*, so to speak, was thwarted by Socrates, who forced a choice between treating it as a substantive variety of knowledge, in this case about justice, *dikaiology*, if you will, on the one hand, and an ignorant, sycophantic pretender to the same title, on the other—leaving no room for an art of or about *logoi* that are not confined to one special subject but range freely over many subjects. It's striking, then, that Aristotle makes rhetoric the counterpart of dialectic and draws from this the lesson that, like it, rhetoric is a an art or faculty of *logoi* with no substantive domain to call its own—precisely the possibility that Socrates' argument refuses to countenance (449c ff.). Indeed Aristotle maintains that to set either up as a discipline with a subject matter of its own would to miss their true nature, which is precisely to be faculties of *logoi*, and not sciences of definite subject-domains (*Rh.* I 2, 1355b3, 1356a33, 1358a23-6 I 4, 1359b12-16).

[HO I]

One might almost think that Aristotle was siding with Gorgias! And one wouldn't be entirely wrong. At a number of points, Aristotle does register his disagreement with the line of argument pursued by Socrates in the *Gorgias* in apparent agreement with his—Socrates'--interlocutor. For example, the fact that rhetoric is capable of doing great harm when used unjustly, Aristotle maintains, is hardly peculiar to it but a feature it shares with all the goods apart from virtue, especially the greatest, e.g., strength, health, wealth and strategy (*Rh.* I 1, 1355b2-7; cf. *Gorgias* 456c7-457c3; **HO II §5**). Dialectic is implicitly included, inasmuch as sophistic is essentially the same faculty as dialectic put to different ends (1355b17-21; cf. *SE* 165a31). This sounds very much like Gorgias when he says it would be unfair to blame the teacher of rhetoric, any more than the teacher of any other competitive skill, for its misuse by a student (456c7-457c3).

Nonetheless Aristotle is not a fan of Gorgias. To correct this impression, we need only turn to the other side of Aristotle's polemic; doing this will also help set us on the way to answering the question that I am going to leave hanging for a short while here, namely how can an arts of *logoi*, each of which is as Aristotle puts it a mere capacity to supply arguments not the science of a subject matter, which can be practiced by someone who is devoid of expertise concerning the subjects about which he contrives *logoi*, be of value or use?

If Aristotle's view of rhetoric was more favorable than Plato's in the *Gorgias*, it was not because he was kindly disposed to rhetoricians active before and during his lifetime, who, as I've already noted, are the object of a scathing indictment in the first chapter of the *Rhetoric*. To be more precise, it is contemporaneous authors of *Arts of logoi* who are at the receiving end of Aristotle's polemic. Gorgias, who belonged to an earlier era, though referred to in book III, on style, goes unmentioned here, but I doubt Aristotle's view of him was any kinder. Aristotle's perspective is, however, in important ways different from Plato's in the *Gorgias*. His principal charge is that rhetoric, such as it then was, occupies itself with manipulating the emotions of the audience at the expense of presenting arguments to them about the matters in contention. He complains that the rhetoricians have little or nothing to say about the *enthymeme*, the rhetorical argument or syllogism, which in his view ought to be the central concern of rhetorical theory.³

So harsh is Aristotle's condemnation that it comes as a something of surprise when, in the second chapter of book 1, he presents emotion as one of the three artistic *pisteis* or ways of securing conviction, alongside the presentation of the speaker's character and the argument itself (2. 1356a1 ff.). For our present purpose, we can put aside the interpretive issues raised by the introduction of the non-

³ Cf. Burnyeat 1994.

argumentative *pisteis*—they do not alter Aristotle’s emphasis on the centrality of argument—to concentrate on his objections against the use of emotion in actually existing rhetorical theory and practice. He maintains that appeals to the emotions do not bear on the matter at issue or affair in contention--they are ἐξῶ τῶν πραγμάτων--instead they relate to the hearer, by affecting whom they work (1354a18, 28; 1356a3-4, 14-15). The orator intent on stirring the feelings of his hearers is, he maintains, like someone who bends a straightedge (κανὼν) before using it (1354a25). By contrast, in order to come to grips with the affair at issue, argument is of the essence (1355a15-18, 22), ideally argument confined to establishing that it, the issue or *pragma*, is or is not the case, has come to be or has not (1354a26-7; cf. 1356a3-4, 15-20) or will come to be or will not (1354b13-15). There is no doubt an overlap between the gratification of an audience by an orator, to which Socrates objects in the *Gorgias*, and the corruption or perversion of their capacity for judgment through emotion, against which Aristotle inveighs in the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle employs the same language of *gratification* (χάρις).⁴ But the opposition between the defects and failings of rhetoric and the alternative that would remedy them that Socrates’ argument sets up is different from the one that emerges from Aristotle’s account.

The alternative to playing on the emotions of the audience for Aristotle is not, as it is in the *Gorgias*, the care of the soul grounded in the substantive understanding of its nature, but argument about the matter at issue. Aristotle agrees that argument has an important didactic function that can be discharged only by the master of a

⁴According to Socrates, rhetoric caters to the auditors’ gratification (χάρις) and pleasure (462c; cf. 464d). Aristotle notes that emotional appeals are less effective in deliberative than in forensic oratory because, while the audiences own interests are at stake in the former, in the latter they look only to their own gratification (1354b11, 33).

substantive discipline (*Rh.* I 2, 1355b28-32) and so presumably in the care of the soul through education. If he thought this were the only function of argument, his critique of rhetoric would resemble that of Socrates', who late in the *Gorgias* envisages a true but unexemplified art of rhetoric that is hardly to be distinguished from the art of the statesman, who teaches people to be just (504d, 508c, 517ab). But argument of this kind is precisely not rhetoric's business on Aristotle's view. This is clear from the passage I cited earlier about how rhetoric, like dialectic is in danger of losing its identity to the extent that they come to resemble a special science (*Rhet.* I 4, 1359b12 ff = **HO I**; cf. I 2 1358a 22-6)

Aristotle is, then, performing a balancing act, using the idea of rhetoric as a counterpart to dialectic, to argue against the rhetoricians, on the one hand, that the business of rhetoric is, like that of dialectic, above all and first and foremost, *argument* and against the Plato of the *Gorgias*, on the other, that rhetoric's relation to argument is like dialectic's, not a special science's.

This brings us back to the questions I left hanging a short time ago: what kind of argument is the business of rhetoric and dialectic and what is the use of argument by people who do not have knowledge of the matters about which they argue? On the way to answering these questions, let's look a little more closely at the counterpart relation that obtains between the two disciplines, but first a caution. If comparing rhetoric to dialectic in this way elevates the former, dialectic as Aristotle understands it, is a less elevated business than it was for Plato, to whom it was always *the* method that leads to philosophical truth and who sometimes comes close to identifying it with philosophy itself, whose coping-stone he calls it in the *Republic* (VII 534e).

For Aristotle the two disciplines are counterparts by furnishing wide-ranging *practices* of dialectical and rhetorical argument with the appropriate methods.

These practices are roughly characterized at the beginning of the *Rhetoric* as upholding and examining an argument, on the one hand, and, on the other, defending and accusing (to which Aristotle later adds praising and blaming and counseling for and against when he distinguished the three genres of oratory at I 3, 1358a36 ff.). Though shared to an extent by everyone, these activities can be developed and practiced by expert practitioners as arts of dialectic and rhetoric respectively (1354a3-11; cf. *Soph. el.* 11, 172a30-6).⁵

The value of these practices and the arts that correspond to them will differ from that of the ordinary run of arts and sciences. Each of the latter makes use of argument for didactic or other purposes, arguments that are confined to the fixed set of principles proper to its domain and the consequences deduced from them. Each is of value to the extent that knowledge of that domain is, which in the case of practical and productive disciplines will itself in turn depend on the value of the products or actions made possible by that knowledge. Rhetoric is defined by Aristotle as: the faculty of discerning the potentially persuasive about each matter' (*Rh.* I 2, 1355b23; cf. I 1, 1355b10-14). The object of the *Topics*, the treatise on dialectic, is 'to discover a method by means of which we shall be able to construct syllogisms about every proposed problem from reputable premises (and by means of which, when it is our turn to respond, we will avoid saying anything contrary to the thesis we defend)' (100a18-21). The benefits of fulfilling the internal demands of the arts of dialectic and rhetoric are not self-evident, and vidently such pursuits stand in need of justification in a way the special arts and sciences do not.

Aristotle has the most to say about the value of rhetoric, and by implication dialectic, in and around a passage dedicated to showing that it is *useful* (χρήσιμος

⁵ I 1, 1354a1-3, 1357b7-9; I 2, 1356a31-4, 1358a21-25; I 4, 1359b11-16.

(1359a20-b9). **[HO II divided into many subsections]** It is thick with comparisons to dialectic, and it resembles and refers to a passage in the *Topics* that sets out the purposes in relation to which that treatise and the method of dialectic expounded in it are *useful* (I 2, 101a25-b4).⁶ An art or method is useful in relation to the goal or end that is its organizing principle, to be sure. But being useful also covers looser and less direct relations between an art and the benefits that may be brought about by its practice, like those at issue here. The passage does not shy away from, but rather emphasizes, the two disciplines most distinctive and potentially troubling features, in order to explain how practices to which such seemingly dubious powers belong are of use or value. . Not only are they are not confined to arguing about matters belonging to the domain of one special art or science about which the orator or dialectician actually knows something. They are not even confined to making the case for true conclusions. Alone among arts they argue on opposite sides of the question (1355a29-36). **[HO II. § 3]** The invention of a persuasive or reputable argument for a false conclusion can be just as much the exercise of the art of rhetoric or dialectic as the invention of an argument for the truth that is its contradictory.

The picture of human epistemic powers that emerges is remarkably rosy. Human beings, he maintains, are orientated by nature to the truth, which they mostly hit; things true and things good are naturally stronger than their opposites, and more readily argued for and more persuasive, to speak without qualification. **[HO II. §§ 1 & 4]**. There is, then, in his view, a natural human affinity for the truth. This sentiment is well attested elsewhere in Aristotle. To cite only one especially notable passage on method from the *Eudemian Ethics* (I 6, 1216b26-36). 'Best of all would

⁶ discussed in Allen 2007: 98–100.

be if all human beings were seen to agree with what shall be said, but if not, then in a certain way all, which they will do being induced to shift their opinions (μεταβιβαζόμενοι), for every one has a certain kinship with or affinity for the truth (οἰκεῖον τι πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν).⁷ The burden of the passage on usefulness, then, is that the orator, like the dialectician, has a part to play assisting human beings to do what comes naturally to them, namely to grasp and appreciate the truth for sound reasons.

The passage from the *Topics* to which Aristotle refers at 1355a28 [HO II. § 2], reads: 'having catalogued the opinions (δόξαι) of the many, we shall converse with them, drawing not on views alien to them but on their own, inducing them to shift their opinion (μεταβιβάζοντες) when we think they speak wrongly' (101a30-34). As Aristotle notes in the *Rhetoric*, since the persuasive is always persuasive to someone, but no art studies the particular, rhetoric will not study what is reputable to, e.g., Socrates or Hippias, but what is reputable to people of such and such a kind (I. 2, 1356b26-a1). Rhetoric with its command of what is persuasive, and to whom, will be in an excellent position to invent arguments persuasive to different types of audience. Many of these groups will be far less thoughtful than those to which Socrates (or even Hippias) belonged, and elsewhere in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle emphasizes the limitations of the audiences to whom, and the constraints under which, orators must speak (1357a 3, 1419a18). There is, then, ample room for a wide range of possible relations in which the considerations put forward by the

⁷ On this and similar passages, see Barnes 1980.

orator can stand to those by which he is moved himself, from being substantially the same to be entirely different.

For much of the passage under examination (i.e. **HO II**), Aristotle adopts the point of view of a speaker who is better informed or more knowledgeable than his auditors and who is set on persuading them of the truth. To win their assent, he must adapt or tailor his argument for them by exploiting considerations that they find persuasive, where these may differ from those that would figure in a properly didactic, scientific demonstration of the same conclusion, if any, and, as already noted, from the reasons by which he is most moved himself. 'Instruction is impossible', maintains Aristotle, in the sphere where rhetoric is of most use (1355a25-7. HO. II. 2). (This is where Aristotle seems to side with Gorgias; cf. *Grg.*, 454e). Nonetheless the context, with its heavy emphasis on human beings' natural affinity for truth, suggests that the orator and the dialectician will favor good reasons and sound arguments. Things true and things good are naturally stronger than their opposites, and more readily argued for and persuasive, to speak without qualification, Aristotle asserts. (1355a36, HO 2, § 4). A characteristic, F, belongs to something without qualification (*ἀπλῶς*) if it is true to say that it is F, abstraction made from particular circumstances or with qualifications mentally removed, e.g., such qualifications as to or in relation to someone or something, at a time or in a place.⁸ The qualifications from which abstraction needs to be made here will, then, refer to the factors that hinder or impede this capacity, e.g., in rhetoric, strong emotion, partiality, prejudice, inattentiveness, and the like on the side of the listener, deceit or incompetence and the like on the side of the speaker; in dialectic *duskolia*, excessive competitiveness, partiality or hostility to the view under consideration.

⁸ Cf. *Top.* II 11, 115b29–35.

There is however another non-didactic use of argument available to those lacking expert knowledge, which likewise depends on and assists the human affinity for truth. It is discussed explicitly, albeit briefly in the *Topics*, but is, I suggest, also implicit in the *Rhetoric*, where it constitutes yet another way in which rhetoric is the counterpart to dialectic.⁹

The third of the three uses for the treatise specified in *Topics* I 2 is 'in relation to the philosophical sciences' (101a27-8, 34-6).¹⁰ 'Being able to raise difficulties on both sides of the question, we shall more easily discern the truth in each'. The 'we' who will be aided in our search for the truth are, in the first instance, the parties to a dialectical debate conducted in the right spirit of fair and open-minded inquiry, perhaps the audience if there is one and, it also seems, the solitary philosophical inquirer who, as Aristotle envisages him, will in effect take both parts in a dialectical discussion in his quest for the truth (cf. *Top.* VIII 1, 155a7-16). It is a beneficiary of the last kind whom Aristotle has chiefly though not exclusively in view when he returns to the issue in the last chapter of the treatise (VIII 14, 163b9-16). **[HO III]**

(Also) with regard to knowledge and philosophical wisdom, to be able to see together and to have seen together the consequences that follow from each hypothesis is no small instrument (ὄργανον), for it only remains to choose one of them correctly, and for this a good nature is needed, i.e., the good nature that relates to the truth, to be able to choose truth and flee falsehood

⁹ Unless this is meant to be covered by 'so that how things are should not escape us' (1355a32 in § 3), which may refer not to things in general, but to the immediate circumstances of the rhetorical dispute.

¹⁰ At 101a36-b5 Aristotle adds a further point (ἐτι δέ): 'in relation to the first principles of each science'. On the question whether this is a fourth use, different from those already announced, or a further specification of the third use, see ad loc. Brunschwig 1967-2007 xii, 116-17, Smith 1997: 52-4.

well, precisely what those who are well endowed by nature do, for loving and hating well what is presented to them, they judge what is best.’¹¹

The appeal to a good nature here should remind us of the epistemological optimism we have already encountered in *Rhetoric* I 1.. That the art of rhetoric, apart from enabling the orator to tailor his message to his audience, can also be of use, in the sphere in which it operates, in something like the way dialectic is in its, is suggested by another passage in the *Rhetoric*, that comes a few pages after the one that makes up **HO II**. After observing, in another passage, already mentioned, that rhetoric does not grasp the particular any more than any other art does and is, therefore, not occupied with what is persuasive or reputable to individuals, but like dialectic, with what is so to types (1356b28-34), Aristotle continues: ‘for [dialectic] also does not syllogize from any chance assumption, but from the beliefs of those who require argument, while rhetoric syllogizes from the beliefs of those accustomed to deliberate, for its function concerns the kinds of things about which we deliberate and regarding which we do not possess arts’ (1356b34-a4; cf. 1359b18-20).¹²

Aristotle’s observation in the earlier passage, ‘not even if we had the most exact knowledge, would it be easy for us to persuade some by speaking on its basis’ (1355a24-5 = **HO II. 2**) was, I suggest, concession for the sake of argument. Vital as its tailoring function may be, the art of rhetoric typically finds its most important application in relation to matters of which there is not exact knowledge and which require deliberation. The audience’s limitations and constraints of time and occasion are not the only reasons why ‘instruction is impossible’ in the sphere where rhetoric is of most use (1355a25-7), or why the arguments that it employs do not and should not meet the didactic standards erected by Socrates in the *Gorgias*.

¹¹ On this passage in relation to I 2, 101a34–6, see Barnes 1991.

¹² Translating the text printed by Kassel

If dialectic can be applied to especially good effect in the preliminary investigation of issues falling under the philosophical sciences, domains in which there is a fixed system of settled and immutable truths the understanding of which is the mark of the master of the corresponding science, rhetoric is especially useful in spheres where immutable truths are few and prone to exceptions, where constantly renewed deliberation on the basis of shifting and inconclusive evidence is required to make the decisions on which action is based and where there is no such thing as a fixed and settled condition of the intellect in which all the truths proper to the domain are grasped. Aristotle's remarks here invite comparison his account of deliberation in the *Ethics*, where we learn that it is concerned with things that are to be done and up to us, but which permit of being otherwise and do not fall under any of the exact and self-sufficient sciences, in this way resembling medicine and navigation more than gymnastics or the art of writing (EN III 1112a33-b10; cf. VI 7, 1141b8-12). If philosophical inquiry conducted by a solitary investigator can sometimes resemble an internal dialectical discussion in which the philosopher takes both parts, rhetorical debate in a deliberative assembly will sometimes resemble the deliberations of an individual agent, in which, however, the tasks of making cases for and against different courses of action are distributed among different parties.

Let's pause for a brief review of our progress so far. Despite the abuses of which rhetoric is capable, and for all the defects of actually existing rhetorical theory and practice, well-practiced rhetoric can, through its mastery of persuasive argument, serve human beings' natural affinity for the truth. It belongs beside dialectic. Each is a faculty of *logoi*, not a science with a substantive subject matter of its own. It's

surprising, in view of the importance of the issue on which they touch, that Aristotle's remarks in the *Topics* about the usefulness for purposes of philosophical inquiry of being able to see together the consequences of opposing hypotheses is an obiter dictum (VIII 14, 163b9-16). [HO III]. *Topics* VIII 14 offers advice about how the dialectician can train or exercise the abilities he will need to succeed in the practice of dialectical argument. One thing that will help to impart the necessary facility is to practice arguing both for and against the same thesis (163b4 ff.). This is the occasion for him to add, almost in passing, his comments about the benefits for philosophy of the same.

It's also surprising that the *Rhetoric* gives us in some ways a fuller picture of how dialectic can be of value than the *Topics*. Another point that is formulated more explicitly in the *Rhetoric* regards the essentially ancillary relation of the two disciplines' relation to the discovery and grasp of the truth. Recall Aristotle's warning that we leave rhetoric and dialectic behind to the extent that we tackle a subject in terms of the principles proper to it and obscure their true insofar as we want to treat them as bodies of knowledge about substantive domains rather than faculties of argument. We can go further. They serve not, so to speak, as methods of truth, which deliver and certify truths, but rather, just as Aristotle says, as methods for inventing arguments from reputable premises and discovering the potentially persuasive about a subject. Grasping and understanding the truth requires something more.

That the two disciplines nonetheless stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to that something more is, I think, the implication of *Rhetoric* I.1, 1354a14-18 (HO § 0).

I've labeled this passage § 0 on the handout because, though it plainly has something to do with the discussion of rhetoric's usefulness, it is separated from it. So puzzling is its relation to its own immediate context that I think it's worth considering the possibility that it has been displaced, but I've confined the argument for this suggestion to an appendix.

This passage speaks of reputable opinions, ἔνδοξα. These are, of course, the special concern of the dialectic, and they figure prominently in the *Topics* account of the dialectical syllogism. It is interesting to note, as people have noted, that ἔνδοξον and πιθανόν are freely interchanged in the *Rhetoric*. This may help to counteract an—in my view mistaken—tendency to focus too exclusively on the *Topics* when studying the term. To my way of thinking, although the extension of ἔνδοξον, or most of it, is composed of propositions accepted by belonging to one of the disjuncts in the famous list, things believed by all, or most or the wise and so on, being accepted in this way lends a proposition its reputable character rather than being what it is for it to be ἔνδοξον—hence my partiality to 'reputable' as a translation.¹³

¹³ The word is also used, and used of views or opinions and not just persons, in a work that is part of the Aristotelian Corpus, but not by Aristotle. The *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* falsely attributed Aristotle in antiquity, was for much of the modern period confidently ascribed to the fourth century rhetorician Anaximenes of Lampsacus. For example, Radermacher in his 1951 collection of the remnants of pre-Aristotelian rhetorical theory treats Anaximenes' authorship as an established fact. The text's most recent editor, Pierre Chiron, is—properly—more cautious (*Pseudo-Aristote: Rhétorique à Alexandre* Paris, 2002. CIII–CVII.). With a few qualifications, he regards the attribution to Anaximenes as highly plausible, but not proven. No one, however, has ever doubted that it is a work of fourth century rhetorical theory, and thus a precious source of

At Rhetoric 1354a14-18 (§ 0) being ἔνδοξον is not brought into connection with being persuasive, except implicitly, with being like or similar to the truth. Aristotle asserts that it belongs to the same faculty to see the truth and what is like the truth.¹⁴ Aristotle's view can be usefully compared with two alternatives in the *Phaedrus*, which he likely has in view here.¹⁵ There drawing on an association between likelihood and likeness or resemblance to the truth that was already old at the time, Plato argues that the persuasive power of likely argument is due to a similarity or likeness to truth (273d ff). Rhetoricians like Tisias, are said to have advised the orator to pay no attention to the truth, but to cultivate the persuasive, which is what seems true to the many, which is the likely. (272d-273c; cf. 259e-260a). The point is illustrated by the notorious story of the attack by a weak (but brave) man on a strong (but cowardly) one (267a; 273bc; cf. *Rh.* II 24, 1402a17-23). Each is advised not to tell the (implausible, unlikely) truth, but a (likely) falsehood

information about the state of the discipline at and before Aristotle's time. At one point, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* tells us that there are two kinds of γνώμαι, i.e., pithy sayings or *sententiae* (1430b1 ff.). One is the ἔνδοξος, the other the παράδοξος. When one says something ἔνδοξος, he continues, there is no need to supply reasons, for what is said is neither unfamiliar or distrusted, but when you say something παράδοξος you ought to indicate the reasons concisely.' This is not much to go on, and further researches would be needed to see if other testimonies can be discovered. Nonetheless, taken together with the evidence in Aristotle's own *Rhetoric*, this may suggest that the term was current in fourth century rhetoric where it was used to mean, among other things, that a proposition was reputable, accepted and the like. And this would lend support to the idea that Aristotle did not, and did not take himself, to be defining a novel conception in the *Topics*.

¹⁴The relation of 1355a15-18 (=§ 0) to their context is puzzling. See the appendix to this chapter for a discussion of the problem and a suggested solution.

¹⁵Cf. Cooper 1994: 203-8, who calls these lines the 'Phaedran' passage.

instead. To be sure, the truth may occasionally be likely, but if so it is only by accident.

To this Socrates opposes a different picture, in which the persuasiveness or likeliness of a case, instead of being only accidentally related to the truth and capable being manufactured by people who are wholly ignorant of it, can be produced—in an artful, systematic way—only by those with knowledge of the relevant truths. He fastens on the idea of the likely as the source of persuasiveness, and argues that the orator who wishes to deceive without being deceived works by exploiting likenesses to the truth or reality. This orator passes by degrees through them to the likelihood that he will present as the truth to his auditors in order to induce them to shift their opinions (μεταβίβαζεν) as he would. There can, then, be no art of rhetoric apart from knowledge of the truth (261e-262c).

Aristotle agrees with Plato in rejecting the idea that the persuasive or likely is related to the truth only by accident, but with a crucial difference. To Plato's way of thinking, the capacity systematically to invent persuasively likely arguments is inseparable from a grasp of the truths which they are like, but though there is a moment in the *Phaedrus* when rhetoric and dialectic seem about to converge (266c7-9), the moment passes and the task of discovering and grasping truth is reserved for dialectic (266c, 269b). Instead rhetoric is conceived of as an ability to lead souls (ψυχαγωγία) that makes use of knowledge won by other—dialectical--means (261a, 271c).

On the interpretation I am defending, however, Aristotle would object, and perhaps in the passage under consideration does object, to this division of labor. On his view, the two counterpart disciplines, though operative in different spheres, stand in the same relation to truth. Though it is not the function of either to discover or secure the truth by itself, each, by enabling its practitioners to make the most persuasive or reputable case possible for a thesis can be highly useful to this end. By

bringing out what can be said on both sides of a question, they provide assistance to human beings' capacity to discern the true and the false. And this will have been the point of the of Aristotle's statement that it belongs to the same faculty to discern the truth and what is like the truth, which so resembles Plato's view about the relation between the true orator's ability to argue persuasively by likelihood and knowledge of the truth (*Rhet.* 1355a14-15; *Phdr.* 273d).¹⁶

Aristotle's statement that it belongs to the same faculty to discern the truth and what is like the truth (1355a14-15) makes the best sense if we understand talk of the *verisimilis* or that which is like the truth not as meaning that for each *verisimilis* or likelihood there is a truth to which it is similar—the way artistic verisimilitude is sometimes understood. Rather something will be likely or *verisimilis* by exhibiting the features, characteristics or marks that belong to the truth, e.g., implying or being implied by known truths, being compatible with them or conforming to well-established patterns among similar previous occurrences, or in some contexts, the power to illuminate or explain other truths, and so on. Being good at aiming at reputable opinions belongs to the person who is likewise disposed towards the truth because the reputable opinions, which are similar to the truth, are so in virtue of displaying these marks, and the task of assessing the reputable credentials of an opinion, by attending to these, cannot be divorced from that of pursuing the truth. And assembling reputable opinions and arguing from them is the business of the dialectician and, it now seems, the orator as well, who are, therefore, equipped to play a useful, and perhaps in some circumstances indispensable, part in the quest for truth.

¹⁶Cooper 1994 203 speaks of the relation here between the abilities to see the truth and to see what resembles going in the opposite direction from Socrates' in the *Phaedrus*.

APPENDIX *Rhetoric* I 2, 1355a14-18

These lines are separated from the passage proper, §1-5, by a back-reference to an earlier assertion that the professional rhetoricians of Aristotle's day favor judicial oratory because it is easier to persuade audience by rousing their emotions when their own good is less obviously at stake (1354b26-a1). The 'for' (γάρ) with which it begins should mean that it lends support to the preceding sequence of assertions (1355a3-14): that the artistic method of rhetoric is properly concerned with *pisteis*; that the *pistis* is a demonstration; a rhetorical demonstration an enthymeme and the enthymeme a syllogism of a kind, that the syllogism is the concern of dialectic, with the result that he would be best able to invent enthymemes who adds to the knowledge of how and from what a syllogism arises, which comes from dialectic, a grasp of the sort of things about which enthymemes are (on this passage, see Burnyeat 1994: 12-15). But it is hard to see how. It has been argued that the truth and what is like it are the concerns of dialectic and rhetoric respectively (e.g., by Rapp 2002: II 78). The point would then be to support the view, asserted in the preceding lines, that the two disciplines are related. The problem, acknowledged by the view's proponents, is that it is not obvious that Aristotle thought of dialectic and rhetoric in this way. Elsewhere he often takes dialectic to be concerned with opinion by contrast with the special sciences, which are concerned with truth (cf. Bonitz, *Index*, 203b47-9).

What is more, it is not clear how the relation between dialectic and rhetoric that is asserted in the preceding, viz. that they require an understanding of the syllogism, which is the special study of one of them, is supported by the existence of a faculty that discerns both truth and verisimilitude. Admittedly rejecting this view leaves the relation with the foregoing as much of a mystery as ever. In view of these difficulties, I wonder if these lines might not have been displaced. They are of a piece with the epistemological optimism of §1-5, and would, I suggest fit especially well after §4, 1355a36-8, where they would lend support to the statement that 'the things that are better and the things that are true are by nature more by nature readily argued and more persuasive (to speak without qualification)' (1355a36-8) *because* (γάρ) 'it belongs to the same faculty to discern what is true and what is like the truth and human beings are well orientated to the truth and mostly hit on it...' (1355a14 ff.). If lines 1355a14-18 do not belong where they are found, the sequence of statements about enthymemes and syllogisms, and the need for the orator to learn from dialectic about the latter, can be viewed as a well motivated digression that helps contrast the proper focus of rhetoric's artistic method on argument with the rhetoricians' misguided obsession with emotion, and consequent neglect of deliberative oratory, to which 1355a18-20 returns.

