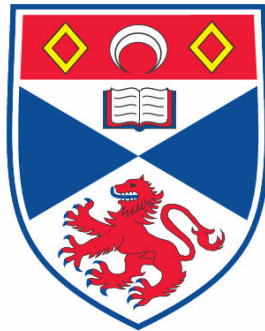


**THE ROLE OF EMOTION-AROUSAL IN ARISTOTLE'S *RHETORIC***

**Jamie Dow**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St. Andrews**



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**The Role of Emotion-Arousal in**  
***Aristotle's Rhetoric***

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Thesis for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Philosophy)  
University of St Andrews

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## Declarations and Statements

This thesis has been composed by me (the candidate); the work of which it is a record has been done by me, and it has not been accepted in any previous application for any degree.

I was admitted as a research student on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

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## Supervisor Statement (signed copy sent separately)

Jamie Dow has fulfilled the University Regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D).

Professor Sarah Broadie

Date

## ABSTRACT

The principal claim defended in this thesis is that for Aristotle arousing the emotions of others can amount to giving them proper grounds for conviction, and hence a skill in doing so is properly part of an expertise in rhetoric. We set out Aristotle's view of rhetoric as exercised solely in the provision of proper grounds for conviction (*pisteis*) and show how he defends this controversial view by appeal to a more widely shared and plausible view of rhetoric's role in the proper functioning of the state. We then explore in more detail what normative standards must be met for something to qualify as "proper grounds for conviction", applying this to all three of Aristotle's kinds of "technical proofs" (*entechnoi pisteis*). In the case of emotion, meeting these standards is a matter of arousing emotions that constitute the reasonable acceptance of premises in arguments that count in favour of the speaker's conclusion. We then seek to show that Aristotle's view of the emotions is compatible with this role. This involves opposing the view that in *Rhetoric* I.1 Aristotle rejects any role for emotion-arousal in rhetoric (a view that famously generates a contradiction with the rest of the treatise). It also requires rejecting the view of *Rhetoric* II.2-11 on which, for Aristotle, the distinctive outlook involved in emotions is merely how things "appear" to the subject.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 – Two normative claims about rhetoric in Rhetoric I.1.....	3
Chapter 2 – Why only proper grounds for conviction belong to rhetoric.....	39
Chapter 3 – What are “proper grounds for conviction”?.....	97
Chapter 4 – The contradiction problem over emotion-arousal.....	130
Chapter 5 – Aristotle’s Rhetoric on what the emotions are.....	182
Chapter 6 – “Appearances” and “beliefs” in Aristotelian emotions.....	201
Conclusion.....	254
Appendix – The role of Pleasure and Pain in Aristotelian Emotions.....	257
Bibliography.....	266

## Introduction

The project of this thesis is to understand, with reference to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, how emotion-arousal has a legitimate role in rhetoric. Chapters 1 to 3 focus on Aristotle's view of rhetoric itself; and one of their principal claims is that, for Aristotle, the legitimacy of using emotion-arousal in public speaking is closely bound up with whether such use is a genuine exercise of rhetorical expertise. The claim is that the considerations that can render some use of emotion-arousal in public speaking improper would also render that same use deficient as an exercise of rhetorical expertise. Indeed, legitimacy considerations can count decisively in showing that certain kinds of practice are not exercises of rhetorical expertise at all. Thus, some legitimacy-related considerations feature in the nature of rhetoric itself. This seems to create challenges for Aristotle's apparently canonical view in the *Rhetoric* that knowing how to arouse listeners' emotions is a key part of rhetorical expertise. The challenges mainly concern what must be true of the emotions for their arousal to have the role that Aristotle apparently assigns it in rhetoric. Before they are broached, chapter 4 examines what potentially is an even more severe difficulty for any proposal about Aristotle's view of emotion-arousal in the *Rhetoric*. That is the apparent contradiction between I.1 and the rest of the treatise. A new solution is proposed. This difficulty removed, chapters 5 and 6 return to Aristotle's understanding in the *Rhetoric* of the nature of the emotions. This is of course a topic of interest and controversy in itself. Here, however, there is the added concern about whether the nature of emotions will enable their arousal to meet the requirements set out in the earlier chapters, requirements which bear not just on whether emotion-arousal is legitimate, but on its place in rhetorical expertise at

all. I will claim that Aristotle's understanding of the emotions is such that emotion-arousal can meet these requirements.

The conclusion of the thesis raises some residual worries about the legitimacy of using emotion-arousal in rhetoric.

It is not part of the current project to argue for or against the unity of the *Rhetoric*, or to try to reach a verdict on the various developmental and redaction hypotheses that have been proposed. The present project simply assumes the unity of the *Rhetoric* as a working hypothesis. To this extent only it might be considered a contribution to the debate about unity, in that a significant motivation for denying unity has been the apparent difficulties in finding a consistent treatment of emotion-arousal throughout, and indeed in finding a consistent treatment of the norms that apply to rhetoric generally. If it can be shown that Aristotle has a coherent position maintained without inconsistency throughout the *Rhetoric*, this motivation for denying its unity is removed.

# Chapter 1 – Two normative claims about rhetoric in

## *Rhetoric I.1*

### Introduction

The emotions<sup>1</sup> and their arousal feature prominently in Aristotle's criticism of rival accounts of rhetoric. This chapter is concerned with establishing the precise grounds on which this criticism proceeds. We will show that the criticism is made on the basis of what the expertise of rhetoric *is*, and hence of what will and will not count as exercising it. As a result, careful examination of his arguments against his rivals reveals important contours of Aristotle's view of the nature of rhetoric itself.

### A sketch of Aristotle's view of rhetoric

Aristotle distinguishes carefully between what counts as a genuine exercise of the expertise – what is *entechnon* – and what does not.

*The proofs are the only thing that is within the bounds of the expertise, the rest are accessories. (1354a13-14)*

The proofs (*pisteis*)<sup>2</sup> fall inside, everything else falls outside. The distinction seems to be between things that constitute (or play a part in constituting) exercises of rhetorical expertise and things that do not. Exercises of rhetorical expertise may always be accompanied by accessory features, such as pleasing or arresting diction, and perhaps also any expertise in rhetoric will itself inevitably be accompanied by some corresponding abilities related to these accessory features. But their presence does not make for rhetorical expertise or its exercise and

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<sup>1</sup>I shall use the English words "emotion" and "passion" interchangeably throughout the thesis. There is some discussion of Aristotle's Greek term "*pathos*" in chapter 5 below.

<sup>2</sup>The meaning of *pisteis* will be discussed below.



their excellence does not make for excellent rhetoric. This insistence on what does and does not truly make for rhetorical expertise is repeated numerous times at key moments throughout the treatise.

*It is obvious that the job of the disputant is nothing other than to demonstrate the issue at hand – that it is or is not the case, that it happened or did not happen. (1354a27-9)*

Demonstrating the issue is a matter of producing *pisteis*, rhetoric is the expertise that enables someone in a forensic context to be an effective ‘disputant’:<sup>3</sup> the claim here about the disputant’s role thus directly supports the earlier claim that only the *pisteis* belong within rhetoric.

A number of further passages hammer home the same point.

At 1354b21-22, as part of a passage of argument criticising the handbook writers, Aristotle concludes that

*they demonstrate nothing about the pisteis that belong to the expertise (peri tôn entechnôn pisteôn), i.e. how one might become good at enthymemes. (1354b21-22)*

Then:

*Since it is obvious that the method that belongs to the expertise (hê entechnos methodos) is concerned with the proofs (pisteis) ... (1355a3-4)*

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<sup>3</sup> Aristotle’s argument here has forensic speaking particularly in mind, but it is clear that he intends his argument to apply to all contexts where rhetoric is exercised. This is explicit at 1354b22f. in relation to deliberative rhetoric: we have no reason to suppose anything different of epideictic rhetoric.

When, at *Rhetoric* I.2, Aristotle proceeds to lay out his view of what the nature of the expertise itself is, his answer strengthens the view we have been setting out above.

*Rhetoric is taken to be an ability on more-or-less any given subject to discern what is convincing (pithanon)... .*

*Of the proofs (tôn pisteôn), some require no expertise (atechnoi), some fall within the domain of the expertise (entechnoi) ... (1355b31-35)*

The immediacy of the transition from specifying rhetoric as an ability to discern what is *convincing* to a taxonomy of the *proofs* indicates firstly that the two are very closely connected. So effortless is the transition that this connection must be part of an everyday understanding of these concepts – it does not require an argument to justify it. The connection is surely this: to give a proof is to provide something that convinces. If that is so, then an *expertise* in proofs is just an expertise in producing convincing things. And this might be plausibly thought to consist in an ability to *discern* (i.e. to identify) precisely those convincing things. When someone produces a proof, he exercises an ability to “identify what is convincing” (b25f.) in the relevant subject matter. Thus this passage indicates, secondly, that producing proofs is a genuine exercise of the expertise of rhetoric. And furthermore, it looks likely that nothing else within the realm of public speaking will be an exercise of this ability to discern what is convincing. As the earlier passage stated, proofs are the only thing that falls under the bounds of the expertise.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> That this view is consistently held throughout the *Rhetoric* is suggested by, for example, the following passages in book III: 1404a1-12, 1414a31-37.

There is a further important strand to Aristotle's view that may be stated briefly here, but will be argued for in detail below. I claim that for Aristotle, a *pistis* is something that constitutes *proper grounds for conviction*. In fact, even this expression is a kind of shorthand for a more complex relation wherein one thing will constitute proper grounds on which to be convinced of some second thing. So, where an orator wishes to persuade his listeners to believe some conclusion, the claim is that something cannot be a *pistis* unless it provides a basis on which they would be (to some degree) *warranted* in believing the conclusion of which it is offered as a *pistis*.<sup>5</sup> In other words, if someone is presented with a *pistis* by an orator, and forms a conviction *for that reason*, then he has acted properly – this is the kind of way in which convictions *should* be formed.

The English word “proof” has an implication, which the Greek “*pistis*” lacks, that the correctness of the orator's conclusion is necessitated by the proof offered.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, with that reservation, “proof” serves well as a translation because it conveys the important normative aspect of Aristotle's understanding of *pisteis* – a *pistis* is *proper grounds for conviction*. In what follows, therefore, the word will typically either be translated “proofs” or glossed as ‘proper grounds for conviction’.

Aristotle's view of rhetoric, then, is that it consists of an ability to discern what is convincing on a given topic. The exercise of this ability is a proof: the presentation of what is discerned. Proofs are proper grounds for conviction – they provide the listener with a basis on which he may act *properly* in forming a conviction. What the orator presents to the listener should give the listener proper grounds on

<sup>5</sup>The nature of this warrant is examined in detail in chapter 3 below.

<sup>6</sup> See further chapter 2 below.

which to form a conviction. Only to the extent that the orator meets this requirement is he exercising an expertise in rhetoric.

### What is Rhetoric?

The above is an initial sketch of the view that is here attributed to Aristotle. It is not an uncontroversial interpretation.

Neither, though, on this reading, is Aristotle's view itself uncontroversial. It will help to understand why. It is perfectly possible to give an account of what rhetoric is without any essential connection with how listeners *ought* to behave, or indeed with any other normative concept. And, as we shall see, many of Aristotle's predecessors seem to have known it. Rhetoric is a skill for using speech to get your listeners to agree with you and do what you want them to do. Defined thus, any means of using speech that systematically has the desired effect will be an exercise of the art of rhetoric, a successful rhetorical technique.

That Aristotle is not content to define rhetoric in this simple intuitive way is significant. We are claiming that Aristotle makes conformity with certain *normative* requirements a criterion of something's being an exercise of rhetoric. Indeed, we propose that this view performs a pivotal role in the arguments of the *Rhetoric's* opening chapter. These exegetical claims have seemed controversial to many: it is the focus of this chapter to justify them. We have set out above a sketch of the view of rhetoric here being attributed to Aristotle, and an indication of some key places in the text where this view is asserted. We should now briefly establish that there were prominent thinkers in the relevant period whose view of rhetoric differed markedly from Aristotle's. The aim here is simply to throw into relief how distinctive the claimed

normative aspect of Aristotle's account was, by contrast with some rival views current among his contemporaries or near-contemporaries. Having thus set the scene, we will return to detailed exegesis of the text, to show that the proposed view is indeed Aristotle's, and to show how it provides the key to understanding the main arguments of *Rhetoric* I.1.

### Non-Normative Views of Rhetoric among Aristotle's Predecessors

Perhaps the biggest names associated with an ancient picture of rhetoric that is extremely different from Aristotle's are Thrasymachus and Gorgias.

These excerpts from Gorgias's *Encomium of Helen* represent perhaps the most celebrated example.

*But if it was speech which persuaded her and deceived her heart, not even to this is it difficult to make an answer and to banish blame as follows. Speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works: it can stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity. I shall show how this is the case, since it is necessary to offer proof to the opinion of my hearers: I both deem and define all poetry as speech with meter. Fearful shuddering and tearful pity and grievous longing come upon its hearers, and at the actions and physical sufferings of others in good fortunes and in evil fortunes, through the agency of words, the soul is wont to experience a suffering of its own. But come, I shall turn from one argument to another. Sacred incantations sung with words are bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain, for, merging with opinion in the soul, the power of the incantation is wont to beguile it and*

*persuade it and alter it by witchcraft. ... What cause then prevents the conclusion that Helen similarly, against her will, might have come under the influence of speech, just as if ravished by the force of the mighty? For it was possible to see how the force of persuasion prevails; persuasion has the form of necessity, but it does not have the same power. For speech constrained the soul, persuading it which it persuaded, both to believe the things said and to approve the things done. The persuader, like a constringer, does the wrong and the persuaded, like the constringed, in speech is wrongly charged. To understand that persuasion, when added to speech, is wont also to impress the soul as it wishes, one must study: first, the words of astronomers who, substituting opinion for opinion, taking away one but creating another, make what is incredible and unclear seem true to the eyes of opinion; then, second, logically necessary debates in which a single speech, written with art but not spoken with truth, bends a great crowd and persuades; and, third, the verbal disputes of philosophers in which the swiftness of thought is also shown making the belief in an opinion subject to easy change. The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies. For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to disease and others to life, so also in the case of speeches, some distress, others delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion.<sup>7</sup>*

The metaphors used to describe the power of speech involve magic spells and potions, exercises of political power, the use of physical strength to coerce others, and the use of drugs in medicine. Another

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<sup>7</sup>Gorgias, *Helen*, translation from Sprague [1972].

prominent figure in the history of rhetoric at this period, Thrasymachus, picks up these images for rhetoric as a powerful force. The physical force image appears in the reported title of one of his works on rhetoric: “Knockdown Speeches”,<sup>8</sup> casting the power of rhetoric in a forensic or political contest as akin to that of a wrestler. Likewise, in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, Thrasymachus is described as a great expert in calming the anger of a crowd, using terminology – “charming them with spells” – that is explicitly attributed to Thrasymachus himself (*Phaedr.* 267d1). Put that together with the picture of Thrasymachus from Plato’s *Republic* I, where his view of “justice” is as a tool by which the powerful exercise their power over the weak.<sup>9</sup> It fits nicely with that view to think that rhetoric was another such tool for exercising power. The power of rhetoric (or of speech, *logos*) is comparable to any other force acting powerfully on its objects, whether those objects are listeners (in the spells imagery, you spellbind your audience) or whether they are your opponents whom you overpower when your words rob them of the allegiance of listeners (in the wrestling imagery, you throw you opponent).

It might turn out that Gorgias, Thrasymachus and others took the view that rhetoric is to be understood simply as a force, with no particular tendency of its own to good or ill, that one can harness to one’s own designs. If that were established, then one might plausibly interpret all of the above imagery as expressing that view. But that view is not yet established. As long as one cannot appeal to some general account of their views on rhetoric, we should distinguish carefully between the differing implications of the above images. Several of them admit of a perfectly benign interpretation. They may be readily interpreted as

<sup>8</sup>Thrasymachus DK 85B7.

<sup>9</sup>Here I follow Chappell [1993], [2000] *pace* Everson [1998].

simply striking ways of talking about rhetoric, that are perfectly compatible with the normatively constrained understanding of rhetoric that we are here attributing to Aristotle. Arguably those images, such as the wrestling image, in which one exerts the power of rhetoric *against those who are arguing for a different point of view* are benign. This is because the image does not even purport to characterise the relationship between orator and listener. Images of this kind characterise the interplay between the disputing parties, and it seems perfectly natural to characterise in the language of physical force or violence the effect on one's opponent of arguments that (properly) count decisively in the eyes of others in favour of your case. An argument can be in that sense devastating, inexorable, irresistible, powerful or 'knockdown'.

The language of spells and magic, however, is more disturbing. For imagery of this kind purports to characterise the way in which the orator's speech works in affecting the audience. Part of the point of such imagery, especially as part of Gorgias's display of the power possessed by the skills he offers to convey, is that they operate on people whether they are willing or not. Just as a spell is supposed to bind someone and bring about change irresistibly, perhaps without its object even knowing, so an orator – Gorgias claims – is able to spellbind his audience. The *Helen* concludes with the revelation that although it may have been effective in improving the listener's opinion of Helen (Ἑλένης μὲν ἐγκώμιον), it has in reality all been an exercise in amusement for Gorgias himself (ἐμὸν δὲ παίγνιον). I see no reason to suppose, as Wardy does, that Gorgias here hints that our enjoyment of this exercise shows our complicity in deception, or our consent to



Gorgias's exercise of power over us.<sup>10</sup> If that were so, Gorgias would have landed us in a strange state indeed – aware that we have been deceived, aware that we have had a hand in our own deception, and yet still persuaded. It is questionable whether such a state is possible,<sup>11</sup> and doubtful whether this was part of what Gorgias intended here. On Wardy's suggestion, the reader has been foolishly complicit in consenting to Gorgias's deception, and might be expected to reproach himself for this in retrospect. But this reading surely distorts Gorgias's point. The speech is epideictic and the reader assesses it as such – no one is really trying to form a genuine verdict about Helen. It is rather Gorgias himself that the reader is assessing. The reader does this precisely by *refusing* his consent to be deceived, and assessing how well Gorgias can fare in advancing his case. The speech's success then consists in our feeling the force of the case in Helen's favour, being unable to see how to answer it, and yet realising that something is amiss in the exoneration of Greece's most famous adulteress.<sup>12</sup> The point is that the piece has exercised over us the very kind of power that forms such a theme in the speech itself. And it has done so flagrantly – even when advertising the fact that speech is being used to wield power over its listeners, we are powerless to resist. No matter how little consent or complicity we offered, or how fore-armed against Gorgias's wiles we were, we were overpowered. In fact, this is a central point of the speech. The very choice of subject matter tells us that what is being defended is indefensible, the emphasis on exercises of power by the use of speech is prominent throughout, and in case it were not

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<sup>10</sup>Wardy [1996] 37.

<sup>11</sup>It would come close to the kind of self-deception whose possibility was plausibly denied in Williams [1973].

<sup>12</sup> cf. Griffin [1980]: "the archetype of deceitful wives", 78; "a legendary figure ... for her guilt and suffering", 97-8.

obvious, at the end we are told explicitly that Gorgias is not in earnest and is relishing his sway over us. Yet even with all these reasons for epistemic caution right in the foreground, we still find ourselves beguiled. So almost the reverse of Wardy's claim is true – Gorgias's speech has its way with us even when we consider ourselves to have most reason to resist. Gorgias's skills have the power to make the weaker case appear the stronger, even when the audience knows that this is what is happening. So much, at least, is Gorgias's provocative claim.<sup>13</sup>

This fits with Gorgias's assimilation (well charted by Wardy) of philosophical argument to political demagoguery, and to witchcraft and magic spells.<sup>14</sup> All are ways of using speech to exercise power over others, and represent processes in which – if they are executed skilfully – the listener is powerless to resist. Perhaps on their own, these power images might simply be a metaphor for the fact that one-way-or-another speech influences people – something that at that level of generality nobody would wish to deny. Fitted into a larger picture of Gorgias's controversial views, it seems as though these kinds of imagery have a much more specific use, as expressing a view of rhetoric in which the expertise does not in any way depend on whether or not what is communicated in speech represents good reasons for conviction. Indeed even the making of such a distinction by

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<sup>13</sup>It would require much more from Gorgias to show that his techniques actually have the power to get people to form beliefs against what they consider to be the balance of reasons to believe. All he actually succeeds in showing is that beliefs can be 'compelled' even in circumstances in which a listener takes himself to have some substantial reason(s) not to believe.

<sup>14</sup>cf. also De Romilly [1975].

philosophers is cast as merely their device for exercising power over others.

If this is a correct understanding of what is going on in the use by Thrasymachus and Gorgias of imagery of spells (and other kinds of power), it is clear how sharply it differs from the view of rhetoric that we are here attributing to Aristotle. For Aristotle, the sense in which rhetorical expertise gives the orator power over listeners to influence them is that it gives him an ability to show them that *by their own lights* they do well to be convinced. The power he has is limited by the extent to which he can show them this.

Hence, at one level, Aristotle will have no objection to the use of comparisons with wrestling and physical force. In defending the usefulness of rhetoric at 1355a19-b7, he argues *a fortiori* from the acceptability of being able to “defend yourself” with bodily force to the acceptability of doing so with argument.

But at another, these metaphors are used by Gorgias and Thrasymachus to express a conception of rhetoric that is very much at odds with Aristotle’s. On his view, rhetoric is an ability to influence listeners by producing in speech things that *should*<sup>15</sup> bring about conviction in them. On theirs, rhetoric is an ability to influence listeners by producing in speech things – indeed *anything* – that *actually will* bring about conviction in them.

The kind of view held by Gorgias and Thrasymachus has some similarities to our everyday – and generally pejorative – conception of

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<sup>15</sup>The exact character of this “should” will be clarified in chapter 3 below.

what rhetoric is. It may well be a bad thing if a speaker works his charm on an audience but fails to give them any good reasons for adopting his proposed point of view. But we scarcely think this means the speaker has failed to deploy a skill in rhetoric.

At this stage, it is enough to note that we are attributing to Aristotle a view that would have been surprising in his own day. It is not, on the face of things, the most instinctive and natural understanding of what rhetorical expertise is. So we need both a clear case to support the claim *that* Aristotle held this view, and an explanation of *why* he did so. For both of these we turn in detail to the text of the *Rhetoric*. It will become clear that this view emerges from, and explains the arguments in the text of the *Rhetoric*, especially *Rhetoric* I.1.

### Analysis of Two Key Arguments

The core of the argument of I.1 is in the following passage.

νῦν μὲν οὖν οἱ τὰς τέχνας τῶν λόγων συντιθέντες οὐδὲν ὡς εἰπεῖν πεπορίκασιν αὐτῆς μόριον αἱ γὰρ πίστεις ἔντεχνόν ἐστι μόνον, τὰ δ' ἄλλα προσθῆκαι, οἱ δὲ περὶ μὲν ἐνθυμημάτων οὐδὲν λέγουσιν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ σῶμα τῆς πίστεως, περὶ δὲ τῶν ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος τὰ πλεῖστα πραγματεύονται: (1354a11-16)<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ross [1959] with parentheses removed, see below and n. 18. Hereafter, unless otherwise indicated, the text quoted is Ross [1959]. Cf. also Kassel [1976].

*As it is, those who put together Arts of Speaking have provided scarcely a part of it.<sup>17</sup> For it is only the proofs<sup>18</sup> that belong to the art, other things are mere accessories. And they say nothing about enthymemes, which are the body of proof; whereas they devote most of their treatment to things that are outside the issue.*

This passage contains an outline of Aristotle's arguments against his predecessors' views of rhetoric, arguments that occupy him for much of the first chapter. That this is so is confirmed by the repetition of these points in the brief resumptive passages at 1354b16-22, 1355a3-4 and 1355a19-20.

This passage presents a case in favour of the conclusion: that Aristotle's predecessors, "those who put together 'Arts of Speaking'", have "provided scarcely a part of it" (a12f.).

The punctuation in Ross's text is misguided,<sup>19</sup> and the passage is best read as offering two arguments, with a shared premise. These two arguments are (i) that the handbook writers say nothing about enthymemes, which is the body of proof (a14f), and (ii) that they mainly treat matters that are not relevant (a15f.). On Ross's

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<sup>17</sup> There is a variant reading in the text here, which has been thought important to issues that form the subject of chapter 4 and will be discussed there. cf. Ross [1959], Kassel [1976]. Here, little, indeed pretty much nothing, depends on whether it is 'little' or 'pretty much nothing' that Aristotle's predecessors have contributed to the art of rhetoric.

<sup>18</sup> The meaning and correct English translation of *πιστις* is controversial: my view, outlined above, is defended in greater detail below. In this initial discussion of these sections of I.1, "proofs" may be taken as a placeholder for the Greek term.

<sup>19</sup> "The parentheses Ross puts round *αἱ γὰρ πίστεις ... προσθηκαὶ* are a disaster" Burnyeat [1990] 10 n.26.

punctuation, with the sentence “For it is only the proofs that belong to the art, other things are mere accessories” (a13f.) in parentheses, Aristotle’s remark is cast as relatively unimportant or unconnected to these arguments. But this is absurd. For this sentence – premise 3 in both arguments below – surely contains the premise that is pivotal to each of the arguments, namely a premise connecting proof (or whatever will turn out to be the correct rendering of “πιστις”) with rhetoric.

### Argument (i)

1. In attempting to give an account of the art of rhetoric, the handbook writers say nothing about enthymemes (a14f.)
2. Enthymemes are the most important part of proof (a15)
3. The only thing that properly belongs to the art of rhetoric is proofs (a13f.)

We may infer:

4. The handbook writers say nothing about the most important part of the only thing that properly belongs to the art of rhetoric

Which gives good reason to suppose:

5. In attempting to give an account of the art of rhetoric, the handbook writers have produced scarcely a part of it (a11-13)

A key aim of this chapter is to uncover Aristotle’s view of *pistis* – thus far rendered “proof”. The above argument contains a premise (2) that might be illuminating on this score. If we can understand what enthymemes are, then this might shed light on the nature of *pistis*.<sup>20</sup> However, the above argument will not tell us whether Aristotle is

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<sup>20</sup>Such an undertaking in detail is beyond our scope here. In brief, “*enthymêma*” literally means a consideration, and Aristotle’s view seems to be that enthymemes are pieces of reasoning (1355a8) that constitute considerations in favour of the speaker’s case. Cf. further chapter 3 below, and Burnyeat [1990].

operating with a normatively constrained notion of *pistis* such as the one sketched above. For even if we suppose that it is an essential feature of enthymemes that they meet certain normative epistemic constraints, and that it is this very feature that makes them the main part of *pistis*, still some kinds of *pistis* do not require enthymemes (indeed some kinds may be best pursued without enthymemes),<sup>21</sup> and so nothing would follow from the epistemic probity of enthymemes about whether Aristotle's view of *pistis generally* was normative, and in what way.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the same is not true of the second of this pair of arguments.

#### Argument (ii)

1. The handbook-writers have spent most of their time on things that are outside the issue.
2. Only proofs belong to the expertise of rhetoric.
3. Therefore the handbook writers have contributed next-to-nothing to the expertise of rhetoric.

As it stands, this second argument is rather elliptical. Its conclusion is that the handbook writers have said little about rhetorical expertise.

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<sup>21</sup> As is confirmed explicitly at III.17.1418a9-17.

<sup>22</sup> Suppose *πιστις* meant "something that gets people persuaded" – on something like the non-normative view held by Gorgias and others mentioned above. On this view, a *πιστις* does not necessarily make it the case that the listener *has reason to get* persuaded. It is nevertheless consistent with this view to suppose that in fact persuasion *mainly* happens through enthymemes, and even that this because enthymemes make it the case that the listener *should* be persuaded.

The justification is that the *pisteis* alone fall under the expertise, and the handbook writers have spent most of their efforts on what is outside the issue, or irrelevant.

What, then is meant here by “outside the issue” or “irrelevant”? John Cooper rightly insists that what is at issue here is the fact that the handbook writers were “giving instruction on how to speak off the subject, to speak about irrelevancies;” and that “περὶ δὲ τῶν ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος τὰ πλεῖστα πραγματεύονται” does not mean, as Cope thought, that they were labouring at things lying outside the art’s concerns, “*extra artem* – outside the limits of a genuine ‘Art of Rhetoric’”, in the kind of way that, for example, how to dress for making a speech might plausibly be thought to be.<sup>23</sup>

As for how the argument works, as it stands it is incomplete. It requires an unstated premise to the effect that speaking about irrelevancies cannot constitute producing *pisteis*. Whilst most commentators perhaps take this linking premise to be too obvious to need spelling out, it seems to me that it is a substantial and contestable step in the argument. For the premise is only obvious if you take Aristotle’s view of what can count as producing a *pistis* and hence of the nature of rhetoric. And these are issues on which views differ between Aristotle and those falling under his criticism in this passage. On an alternative view of *pistis*, the unstated linking premise is not available: there is no difficulty in supposing that irrelevant speaking could constitute producing *pisteis*. Presumably part of what motivates Aristotle’s argument in the first place is that it was part not just of the handbook-writers’ theories but also of the practice of many orators to

<sup>23</sup> Cooper [1999] 391, cf. Cope [1877] 4. Reasons for preferring Cooper’s view are important and are given more fully below. Cf. also Lanni [2005].



gain a persuasive advantage by irrelevant speaking. That is, irrelevant speaking must actually *work* in getting people convinced (as, of course, it does). And such techniques, as well as working, must have been taken to be techniques *in rhetoric*. If orators' irrelevant speaking was the means by which they changed the minds of their audience, wouldn't this make it a means of persuasion, and hence a *pistis*? And isn't it clear that an expertise in such speaking would be an expertise precisely in *rhetoric*? Thus, Aristotle's conclusion, that those offering instruction in irrelevant speaking were not thereby conveying the art of rhetoric, is distinctive and controversial. So, it seems, is the unstated premise about *pisteis* that this second argument requires.

These two arguments promise to give a clear signal of Aristotle's understanding of what rhetoric *is* – for he thinks it clearly follows from his understanding of the nature of rhetoric that deploying enthymemes *is* an exercise of rhetoric, and that speaking that is irrelevant to the *pragma* *is not*.

Aristotle is clearly here not merely deploying ordinary notions of rhetoric. He is arguing for a surprising and distinctive conclusion, and we should look carefully at this second argument to see how he does this, and how he is able to make his argument so persuasive that it is regarded as obvious (indeed often passes unnoticed) by commentators.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Cooper [1999] 391: “[the handbook writers] were doing nothing but giving instruction on how to speak off the subject, to speak about irrelevancies; and that [viz., presumably, speaking off the subject] *obviously* cannot be a true part of the art of oratory.” (emphasis and explanation mine) Most other commentators see in this step of the argument nothing significant enough to deserve comment – as we have seen, Ross puts the key sentence (1354a13) in parentheses.

Here is how I think his argument (ii) should be made explicit.

1. The handbook writers have dealt mainly with what is outside the issue (i.e. irrelevant to it) (a15f.)
2. If what one says is irrelevant to an issue then it contributes nothing to giving someone proper grounds for conviction (roughly, a “proof”) of any particular view on that issue. (premise supplied as obvious)<sup>25</sup>
3. The only thing that properly belongs to the art of rhetoric is giving proper grounds for conviction (a13)

We may infer:

4. Most of the handbook writers’ work dealt with matters that contribute nothing to the only thing that properly belongs to the art of rhetoric

This gives good reason to suppose:

5. The handbook writers have produced scarcely a part of the art of rhetoric (a11-13)

It certainly looks as though the sentence (a13) that Ross puts in parentheses – premise 3 above – is needed to play a key role in connecting the premises Aristotle gives with the conclusion he takes them to support, in the above argument (ii), just as it did in argument (i).

### A Pivotal Premise

So, if these arguments are to be understood as I have laid them out above, then this sentence at a13 is integral to the arguments. I wish to

<sup>25</sup> How could one offer to somebody proper grounds for conviction of a particular view on some issue without saying something *about* that issue?

claim that this sentence expresses Aristotle's substantive view of rhetorical expertise, and – as suggested by the phrase “*proper grounds for conviction*” – his view is that rhetoric constitutively involves conforming to some normative standards. It will be important to tease out exactly what norms are involved here, and what can be said to recommend this distinctive view of rhetorical persuasion.

But first we should clarify the exegetical case for supposing that the sentence at a13 is pivotal to Aristotle's argument here, that it expresses a distinctive view of the nature of rhetoric, and that this view is correctly represented in our translation of *pistis* as “*proper grounds for conviction*”.

The sentence in question, then, is “αἱ γὰρ πίστεις ἔντεχνόν ἐστι μόνον, τὰ δ' ἄλλα προσθηκαί” ( *For it is only the proofs that belong to the art, other things are mere accessories.* 1354a13). As we have seen, in the arguments in which it features, it serves to adjudicate what things do and don't constitute exercises of the expertise of rhetoric. It does so by expressing a substantive view of what is essential to rhetorical expertise, such that then various candidates can be assessed against it to see whether they fit. Enthymemes fit perfectly. Things ‘outside the issue’ fail to fit. Enthymemes are clear cases of *pistis*. Irrelevancies are clearly *not*. Now, in rendering ‘*pistis*’ into English, translators have divided roughly into those preferring something like “*means (or modes) of persuasion*” and those preferring something like “*proof*”. Obviously there is a substantive difference at stake here. Those preferring “*means of persuasion*” understand the term ‘neutrally’ to cover *any* use of speech that is such as to help get the listener to be convinced. Those preferring “*proof*” understand it as loaded with

normative content: something that provides *proper* grounds for the listener to be convinced. The difference and its importance will be clear if we set out the relevant parts of the argument separately using each of these ways of understanding *pistis*. We may thus distinguish two different construals of premises 2 and 3 as follows.<sup>26</sup>

2a If what I say is irrelevant to whether p, then it contributes nothing to proper grounds for conviction (roughly, “proof”) as to whether p.

3a Providing proper grounds for conviction is the only thing that belong to the expertise of rhetoric.

2b If what I say is irrelevant to whether p, then saying it is not such as to help getting someone to be convinced (i.e. is not a “means of persuasion”) of p.

3b Helping, by saying things, to get people to be convinced is the only thing that belongs to the expertise of rhetoric.

So, the difference between the two different construals corresponds to the difference in the way “πίστις” has been translated at 1354a13 and elsewhere – i.e. “proof” or “means of persuasion”? There are some relevant linguistic considerations, but let us first consider what is philosophically at stake in how we construe the argument here.

I take it to be a general principle of interpretation that, in the absence of good reasons to do otherwise, we should prefer interpretations that attribute to the author premises that are fairly obvious and

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<sup>26</sup> For these purposes I consider “doxastic” persuasion – persuading someone to believe that p. But the arguments could be run equally well for practical persuasion – persuading someone to  $\phi$ .

uncontroversial. This will especially apply where, in reconstructing an argument, we supply premises that are not explicit in the text. Premise 2 here is supplied in just this way. We should therefore prefer a construal of this premise that is obvious and uncontroversial, so as to explain why Aristotle did not need to state it explicitly. In this case, it is 2a that is obvious and uncontroversial, whereas 2b is certainly much more contentious if not obviously false.

On the other hand, in relation to premise 3, it is surely 3b rather than 3a that has the more obvious appeal. 3b could be taken as little more than elucidating what is meant by the “expertise of rhetoric” – it would be widely agreed, and not denied even by Aristotle’s rivals (an advantage in an argument criticising them). Rhetoric is an expertise in convincing people to believe things or do things, and so only things that contribute to this are part of it. The difficulty is that, construing premise 3 this way (as 3b) gives Aristotle a bad argument. It looks as though premise 2b is false, or at best highly contentious, risking begging the question against those Aristotle is criticising. And if one combines 3b with any more plausible construal of premise 2, such as 2a, the argument simply does not go through.

It is my view that the argument is best understood with premises 2 and 3 construed as 2a and 3a. As such, the argument runs as follows.

1. The handbook writers’ techniques are predominantly for presenting irrelevancies.
2. (2a) Irrelevancies make no contribution to proper grounds for conviction.

3. (3a) Proper grounds for conviction are the only thing that belong to the expertise of rhetoric.
4. Therefore: the handbook writers' techniques are predominantly for things that make no contribution to the expertise of rhetoric.
5. This gives reason to think that: the handbook writers, for all their labours, have provided us with scarcely a part of the expertise of rhetoric.

I wish to contend that (in the end) this is fundamentally a good argument. It seems to me to be the one we find at 1354a11-16. If it is correct, the best that can be said for the contribution of these predecessors of Aristotle, the handbook writers, is that they have thought lots about accessory features of rhetorical practice. What they have failed to do is set out the essential features that explain success when the expert rhetorician persuades through deploying his expertise.

However, the suggestion that this argument is good against its targets needs the following important clarification. The pivotal premise 3 – as construed here (3a) – merely *asserts* his own position over against rival views of rhetorical expertise. If it is correct that Aristotle's predecessors held a purely causal view of the power of rhetoric, then they and any sympathetic to this view surely would not grant this premise. Rhetoric's power, on their view, is like that of a strong wrestler or a magic spell or a violent enemy: it produces its result without needing to render that result in any sense proper. Whether conviction has been properly produced is, on this view, an entirely separate question from whether conviction has been produced by an exercise of rhetorical

expertise. At this stage in the treatise, Aristotle has offered no arguments against competing views and in favour of this premise. Nevertheless, if the premise *can* be supported appropriately, the argument is good. In the next chapter we will try to show that Aristotle has good reasons for accepting it.

### Aristotle's Distinctive Conception of Rhetoric

The main claim of this chapter is that Aristotle's arguments at the start of the *Rhetoric* turn on a substantive and normative view of rhetoric to which he is not obviously entitled by virtue of general agreement, and for which, at least initially, he offers no argument.

This distinctive view of rhetoric is expressed in Premise 3 above:

*Proper grounds of conviction<sup>27</sup> are the only thing that belong to the expertise of rhetoric.*

### Aristotle's view of rhetoric (1354a13) was surprising and controversial

This premise, expressing his view of rhetoric, is not immediately obvious.<sup>28</sup> By ordinary standards, those who rouse groups of people to do or believe things by clever use of tone-of-voice, choice of words, eye contact, smiling, etc. as they speak, rather than a skill in giving proper grounds for conviction, are nevertheless (perhaps even, on some views, *pre-eminently*) examples of using an expertise that both we and the ancients would be likely to call "rhetoric". So the premise is far from obvious.

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<sup>27</sup> Although this is the clearest way of formulating the sense of Aristotle's *pistis*, we will continue to use "proofs" as a less clumsy shorthand in what follows.

<sup>28</sup> *pace* Cooper [1999] 391.

It is also controversial. Someone who takes a purely causal view of rhetoric's persuasive power would reject it. It seems that both Gorgias and Thrasymachus took just such a view. And their view seems to have much in its favour. It seems to capture a very natural sense of "rhetoric" in both English and Greek. It straddles both positive and pejorative uses of these terms. It is a view on which rhetoric is a substantial expertise involving systematic understanding of its domain (human conviction). And it seems to have been a view taken seriously around Aristotle's time – just such a view comes under discussion in Plato's *Gorgias*, and is reflected still in the views of rhetoric discussed in the later *Phaedrus*.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, whilst there are important differences between Socrates and the other characters in both the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus* (and those historically who held similar positions) as to what any rhetoric worthy of 'technê' status is like, there is no dispute over the point at issue here. A technique's credentials as an exercise of rhetorical expertise are purely a matter of its bringing about rhetoric's proper product (e.g. rhetoric's equivalent to medicine's health and strength, in Socrates' view at *Phaedrus* 270b) and of its doing so reliably for each audience on each occasion (which, in Socrates' view, will involve – amongst other things – a great deal of psychological knowledge, *Phaedrus* 271b-272b).<sup>30</sup> As such, the comparison with the doctor's art is apt (*Phaedrus* 270b) – whether

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<sup>29</sup>*Gorgias* esp. 455d-457c, noting 456a where rhetoric's power is described as "δαίμονία τις", also 459b-c, "μηχανὴν τινα πειθοῦς"; *Phaedrus* 261a-e, esp. "ἄρ' οὖν οὐ τὸ μὲν ὅλον ἢ ῥητορικὴ ἂν εἴη τέχνη ψυχαγωγία τις διὰ λόγων" (261a), "οὐκοῦν ὁ τέχνη τοῦτο δρῶν ποιήσει φανῆναι τὸ αὐτὸ τοῖς αὐτοῖς τοτὲ μὲν δίκαιον, ὅταν δὲ βούληται, ἄδικον;" (261c-d) with both of these in the mouth of Socrates.

<sup>30</sup>Of course, Gorgias and others might well have a different conception of what rhetoric's proper product was, and of the kind of knowledge required to ensure a technique was reliably successful.



administering a particular drug is good medical practice comes down simply to a matter of whether this will be most effective at bringing this kind of patient from their current state towards the desired (healthy) state. This stands in contrast to Aristotle's view that there may be speech techniques that are reliably effective in bringing about the desired end result but still do not count as exercises of rhetoric because their mode of operation does not proceed via offering *proper* grounds for conviction.

So, Aristotle's arguments turn on a pivotal premise expressing his distinctive view of rhetoric. His view is far from obvious and has a serious contemporary rival. It is asserted unargued, and he does not immediately defend it.

#### Inadequate Explanations of Aristotle's Position.

Of course, Aristotle may simply be setting out his position to his students on his own terms. Once granted his view about the nature of rhetoric, he has a good basis for arguing that the handbook writers have said next to nothing about it. There is something less than fully satisfying about an argument made on this basis. Given the scathing criticism here of rival writers on rhetoric, one might expect Aristotle to offer reasons that either these rivals themselves or at least a neutral party would be likely to accept for preferring his account of rhetoric over theirs.

We might hope, that is, that he does after all offer a justification for this premise. Or alternatively, perhaps somehow his argument can be reinterpreted in such a way that the difficulty does not arise. Before putting forward my own approach, I will consider a number of

tempting but ultimately inadequate ways of trying to give Aristotle a satisfying position. Firstly, I consider and reject the possibility that our premise 3 represents a stronger claim than Aristotle intends to make or needs to make here. I contend that he requires precisely the claim expressed above in premise 3. I then consider and reject one way in which it is suggested Aristotle *does* justify premise 3. Having done this, I will offer my own view of how Aristotle justifies the claim represented in premise 3, a claim which will then make good both arguments against the handbook writers: argument (i) from their silence on enthymemes and argument (ii) from their focus on irrelevant speaking.

So, first, one might argue that the phrase *“the proofs are the only thing that is within the bounds of the expertise”* (a13) simply refers to the section of the speech called *“proofs”*. While this is quite plausible, it won’t help. Firstly, even construed this way, the premise is neither obvious nor agreed – on the views Aristotle is criticising, the persuasive effect turns crucially on the introduction, narrative and conclusion (and doubtless the other sections too), and skill in these sections is deemed at least as much part of rhetorical expertise as skill in delivering a good *“proofs”* section.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, in order to get clear on what this claim – thus construed – would be, we need to understand what features of the *“proofs”* section it is in virtue of which it belongs to the art, features which no other section of the speech has. The answer is obvious – it is the fact that the *“proofs”* section is the section of the speech in which the speaker gives the listeners proper grounds for the belief or decision that he is urging upon them. So, even if *“the proofs”* denotes a section of the speech, it still includes the claim that proper grounds of

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<sup>31</sup>1354b17-20.

conviction are the only thing that belongs to the expertise of rhetoric, and hence still represents the same surprising and controversial claim.

If the controversial claim cannot be evaded in this way, let us consider how the claim could be justified.

Christof Rapp argues<sup>32</sup> that premise 3 is maintained on the basis of what Aristotle has said about *technê* in the preceding lines. Aristotle, he claims, argues that *pistis* (proof) alone can be combined with a methodical procedure (1354a8) or provides an explanation of non-accidental successful rhetorical performance (1354a9-11). But this seems simply false. People can and do give methodical procedures for rhetorical persuasion that rely for effectiveness on features other than the proofs offered to the audience. Such features certainly purport to explain the non-accidental success of skilled orators. Plato has Socrates sketch just such a proposal at *Phaedrus* 271a4ff.. And we have seen that it was such a method that Gorgias, Thrasymachus and the handbook writers claimed to offer their pupils. Moreover, it seems hard to deny that methods of this kind are successful in bringing about non-accidental successful prosecution and defence (a5ff.). It seems plainly false to suppose that proper grounds for conviction are the only materials from which one can construct a method for successful prosecution and defence that actually works. (And if one combines Rapp's suggestion with understanding "*pistis*" as simply 'means of persuasion', then a13 becomes vacuous - "only means of persuasion are methodical ways to persuade someone.") In short, it does not seem that Rapp has Aristotle's argument correct here. There is no indication that the assertion at a13 is made on the basis of the claims about *technai*

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<sup>32</sup> Rapp [2002] *ad loc*, vol II p.40

at a8 or a9-11. And, as we have seen, even if there was this would not give Aristotle a good argument.

Curiously, Rapp's appears to be the only positive suggestion in the commentaries about how Aristotle might have substantiated this claim.<sup>33</sup>

It seems to me preferable to think that Aristotle rests his claim at a13 on other justifications, which will be examined below. *Prior* to a13, however, he has given no justification for the substantive and important claim that proofs, or proper grounds for conviction, alone belong to the expertise of rhetoric.

I propose that Aristotle thinks that rhetoric is solely concerned with providing proper grounds for conviction *because it's right, morally and politically, that the practice of rhetoric be restricted to providing proper grounds for conviction*. This has the exegetical advantage that much of the argumentation immediately after 1354a13 is devoted to establishing just this, namely that it is *right* that rhetorical practice be restricted to something like the giving of good evidential reasons. The arguments focus on speaking in forensic contexts, and there, where factual claims are at issue, it seems only good evidential reasons will constitute proper grounds for conviction.

Still, this will not be enough on its own to justify the view that practices that violate such restrictions are not exercises of rhetorical expertise *at all*. At best, such arguments will show that these are uses of rhetorical expertise that one has good reason to avoid. This is

<sup>33</sup>Despite Grimaldi's careful distinctions between senses of *pistis*, ([1972] ch2), even he misses this issue entirely. Cope ([1877] *ad loc.*) has nothing on this point.

important because of how Aristotle's argument fits together. He argues that because his predecessors have given instruction mainly about how to speak irrelevantly, they have thereby delivered little or nothing of the art of rhetoric itself. If his argument is merely that morally one *shouldn't* use irrelevant speaking, this will not support his case. For it would be open to those he is criticising to concede that there was something objectionable about this kind of deployment of rhetorical expertise, whilst maintaining (plausibly) that it was nevertheless still a deployment of rhetorical expertise.<sup>34</sup>

The next chapter will investigate in detail the arguments that Aristotle advances to support the claim that we have identified here as playing such a pivotal role in his arguments criticising the handbook writers. The aim of this chapter has been to show simply that Aristotle does indeed claim that it is only producing proofs that belongs to rhetorical expertise, and that "proofs" here should be understood normatively as 'proper grounds for conviction'. Further, it has been important to show that this claim represented a very distinctive and controversial conception of the nature of rhetoric, a conception which therefore calls for supporting argumentation.

Finally, in this chapter, we hope to demonstrate that the next argument Aristotle advances against the handbook writers (1354a18-21) is best interpreted as showing that if something is a genuine exercise of rhetorical expertise, it should not be generically barred by the state. This corroborates our claim that Aristotle's view of rhetoric is such that there are normative constraints on what will count as an exercise of this expertise and what will not.

<sup>34</sup> Indeed, just such a point is part of what Gorgias appears to contend in Plato's *Gorgias* 456c6-457c3.

1354a18-21 follows on from the last argument explained above:<sup>35</sup> speaking irrelevantly to the issue doesn't count as giving proof, and hence doesn't count as exercising rhetoric. Aristotle appears to back this up with an argument from the laws of well-ordered states.

*The result is that if all judgements were conducted the way they actually are today in a mere handful of cities – principally those that are well-governed – they would have nothing to say. For everyone thinks that this should be what the laws declare, whereas [only] some actually implement this and forbid speaking outside the issue, as they also do in the Areopagus, and they are quite correct to have this rule.*  
(1354a18-24)

On one possible interpretation, the argument is a repetition of his claim that the handbook writers' techniques are for speaking outside the issue, and a pointed observation of a consequence of it. On this view, Aristotle offers this thought-experiment simply as a vivid way of pressing his claim that the handbook writers' techniques were for irrelevant speaking. He invites us to imagine places like the Areopagus, where speeches are governed by strict rules, and then to realise that in such situations the handbook writers would be left with nothing to say. Since this would be well-explained if their techniques are for irrelevant speaking, this thought-experiment lends abductive support to his claim that their techniques are for speaking "outside the issue".

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<sup>35</sup>The interpretation of a16-18 will be considered in detail below, particularly in chapter 4.

However, if this is his argument, it adds nothing to insist that it is *right* for irrelevant speaking to be barred, or to add that the contexts in which irrelevance is barred are the *well*-regulated contexts. If Aristotle had intended this passage simply as abductive confirmation of his claim about the irrelevance of the handbook writers' techniques, he surely would not have been at such pains to bolster the argument in the way he actually does. Indeed, he is at great pains to emphasise that it is in states with *good* laws (a20) that such a situation would obtain, that all agree that the laws *should* be that way (a21f), that they are thus in that paragon of *eunomia*, the Areopagus (a23),<sup>36</sup> that all are *right* to think that the laws should be this way (a23f), and that one *should not* use irrelevant techniques to corrupt the judge (a24). He seems to consider it important to offer further justification for his contention that it is in *well*-regulated contexts that irrelevant speaking is barred (hence "γάργ" at a21 and a24). If this passage is nothing more than a pointed repetition of the claim that the handbook writers' techniques were for irrelevant speaking, then it remains a mystery why so much of the text of this section is taken up with something that is not required to support this point – namely, the insistence on the *correctness* of prohibiting irrelevant appeals. That the handbook writers would be left with nothing to say if irrelevant speaking were prohibited will be true whether or not it is *correct* to prohibit irrelevant speaking.

Another possible interpretation is that this passage sets out the conditions that are a pre-requisite "for rhetoric to be practised in the proper way".<sup>37</sup> The idea has proved popular that Aristotle here is laying out a set of high ideals (either for the exercise of rhetoric or for the conditions of its exercise), for which orator or lawgiver should

<sup>36</sup>See further below n.55.

<sup>37</sup>Schütrumpf [1994] 106.

strive, but that will inevitably be compromised and tempered in the actual business of public speaking in real-world situations.<sup>38</sup>

This view is, however, quite problematic. It typically has difficulty showing how this passage is connected with its context, and in particular with the sections immediately prior which argue that the handbook writers have set out next to nothing about rhetoric. It also has difficulty making 1354a18ff. a telling criticism of Aristotle's rivals. It seems scarcely a devastating criticism that their techniques would be barred in an ideal state – they would probably agree! Nor is it a serious objection to their methods that they were for “realistic” rhetoric rather than “ideal” rhetoric, or that rhetoric as they conceived it was a concession to the difficult realities of political and forensic life. Finally, this view faces the challenge of providing a satisfying explanation of why Aristotle should break off from his argument to speculate about what the exercise of rhetoric would be like in an ideal state.

Nevertheless, the unattractiveness of this view is probably best brought out by showing that a more attractive interpretation is available. Aristotle here is not concerned with applying ideals *to* the exercise of rhetoric, nor to the conditions for its exercise. His thought

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<sup>38</sup>One form of this view involves distinguishing in Aristotle two contrasting views – an ideal view in I.1 and a realistic view elsewhere; cf. Sprute [1994] 119, who sees in I. 1 an “ideal rhetoric”, and he describes this section as constituting “a recommendation to lawgivers”; Engberg-Pedersen [1996] “austere” vs. “normal” rhetoric; Schütrumpf ([1994] 115) contrasts the rhetoric of I.1, rhetoric “in its most valuable form”, with that described elsewhere in the work, “rhetoric as it is practised”. Engberg-Pedersen's view is harder to categorise, because he seems to see that I.1 aims to show the nature of rhetoric, rather than ideals that apply to it. Likewise, Sprute sees that for Aristotle the idealised conditions envisaged in this passage of I.1 help to show what is essential to rhetoric generally, though he does not explain how.



experiment here is supposed to shed light not on what the ideal conditions are for practising rhetoric, nor on how it would be practised by a morally uncompromising practitioner, but on what rhetoric *is*. And in doing so, it helps to show that, for all their efforts in the name of rhetoric, the handbook writers have failed to elucidate it. That is, a18-21 is a further argument for the conclusion at a11-13. The fact that they would have nothing to say in well-governed conditions shows that their techniques are not techniques *of rhetoric*. Aristotle does not here criticise the handbook writers for setting out techniques for exercising rhetoric in a morally (or otherwise) objectionable way. He criticises them for the fact that their techniques fail to constitute an expertise in rhetoric *at all*. Aristotle may be concerned elsewhere with how one should exercise rhetorical skill responsibly rather than irresponsibly.<sup>39</sup> But that is not his concern here. He is concerned here not with normative considerations, *external* to the nature of rhetoric, that apply *to* it; but rather with normative considerations, *internal* to the nature of rhetoric, violation of which undermines an activity's claim to be an exercise of rhetorical expertise at all.<sup>40</sup>

The passage, I contend, supplies a further argument for Aristotle's main conclusion in these opening pages of the *Rhetoric*, that the handbook writers have scarcely touched the art of rhetoric at all. The argument might be spelled out as follows.

1. If the handbook writers' techniques were for exercising rhetorical expertise, then they would not be such as to be prohibited in a well-ordered state. (premise implicit)

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<sup>39</sup>e.g. 1355a31.

<sup>40</sup>*Pace Sprute* [1994] 122-3.

2. But they are such as to be prohibited in a well-ordered state.  
(1354a18-21)
3. Therefore (from 1 and 2), it is not the case that the handbook writers' techniques are for exercising rhetorical expertise. (cf. a11-13)

Of course, the first premise is controversial. And yet, if Aristotle is able to trade on such an assumption it is immediately clear how the argument represents a cogent and powerful criticism of the handbook writers. We will see in the next chapter how this unstated premise fits into an outlook plausibly shared by both Aristotle and his audience, and will suggest some reasons why even those Aristotle is criticising may have had difficulty denying it. One obvious way in which one might assent to this first premise is if one supposed that speech-making was vital to the good functioning of a state, and rhetoric was simply a skill for doing this *well* (whatever that skill might turn out to consist in). On such a view, it would simply be inconceivable that a state with the *right* kind of laws would prohibit techniques that enabled the excellent discharging of a vital public function.

We will need to say much more about the link between public speaking and good governance, and between their related expertises of rhetoric and '*politikê*'. Here, however, let us merely observe the advantages of construing the argument as above. It makes sense of how the argument fits into the criticism of the handbook writers. It makes sense of why Aristotle is at such pains to justify his claim that it is in those states especially that are *well-ordered* (*malista tais eunomoumenais* a20) that the rules apply that would put the handbook writers' techniques in difficulty. Hence it makes sense of the precise position in which we find these remarks, in a way that is hard to make

out on alternative interpretations. So, given these advantages, we note that this way of construing the argument involves supposing that *it is in the nature of rhetorical expertise itself* that its techniques comply with an insistence on relevant speaking that any well-ordered state should have. Complying with these particular normative requirements is built into the very nature of rhetoric itself, such that if you are speaking irrelevantly, you simply cannot be exercising rhetorical expertise.

We have claimed, then, that there is a nest of arguments ranged against the handbook writers, all of which require for their interpretation that we attribute to Aristotle an understanding of rhetoric that has significant normative content. Only the presentation of proper grounds for conviction counts as exercising the expertise. This is stated at 1354a13 and forms the basis for the two arguments immediately following. And rhetorical expertise has a nature such that it is simply impossible that exercising it would be prohibited by correctly-formulated laws. That using the handbook writers' techniques would be utterly ruled out by such laws (1354a18-21) adds a further reason for concluding that they have – for all their efforts – told us nothing much about rhetoric. (1354a11-13)

## Chapter 2 – Why only proper grounds for conviction belong to rhetoric.

In the last chapter, we highlighted a claim that seems to be a pivotal premise in Aristotle's arguments in the opening chapter of the *Rhetoric*.

*Only proofs [i.e. proper grounds for conviction] belong to the expertise [of rhetoric]. 1354a13.*

On this basis, Aristotle argues (a14-15) that to neglect expertise in enthymemes is to neglect a key element in rhetorical expertise. Similarly, he argues (a15-18) that providing techniques in speaking irrelevantly to the subject at hand does not amount to provision of any part of rhetorical expertise. He bolsters this latter argument with a thought experiment (a18-21) about how the advocates of such techniques would fare if every judicial context had – as properly every such context should – a prohibition on irrelevant speaking. But the thought experiment itself seems to presuppose an equally surprising claim – equally surprising to us, at least. That is as follows.

*Rhetorical expertise has a nature such that it is simply impossible that exercising it would be prohibited by correctly-formulated laws.*

Whilst perhaps to us, these two claims seem equally unobvious and in need of arguments to support them, in *Rhetoric* I.1, they are treated rather differently from each other. From 1354a11 to 1355a20, as his summary at 1355a19-20 makes clear, his chief concern is to criticise the views of the handbook writers. But it is important to see that he

pursues this in such a way as also to justify his own view. He is clearly aware that it has not been enough simply to assert that “the proofs are the only thing that belong to the expertise” (1354a13), he needs to argue for this. And by 1355a3, he considers this to have been achieved:

*Since it is evident that the method belonging to the expertise has to do with proofs (or proper grounds for conviction) ... (1355a3-4).*

By this point, Aristotle considers that his arguments against the handbook writers have vindicated the first claim: that rhetoric is an expertise in presenting proper grounds for conviction.

On the other hand, there is no indication that Aristotle is concerned to mount a defence of the second claim. He simply considers it obvious that exercising rhetorical expertise could not fall foul of a correctly-formulated law.

In what follows, we shall examine how the arguments against the handbook writers work, and hence how they serve to justify Aristotle’s own view of rhetoric expressed in the first of the two claims above. The appeal of these arguments, as we shall see, is partly dialectical, where those with a different view of rhetoric, particularly Thrasymachus, would be committed to the arguments’ premises. But their appeal is also based on a highly plausible view of the role of rhetoric in a successfully functioning state. We have seen indications that such a view plays a crucial role in Aristotle’s arguments at the start of the *Rhetoric*. It will be an important concern of this chapter to show how such a view is adhered to throughout the *Rhetoric*. We will note that it is consistent also with some important remarks in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Furthermore, such a view will be argued to be highly plausible. On this view of rhetoric’s role in the state, Aristotle does not need to

defend his assumption that rhetoric is such that its exercise could not be prohibited by correctly-formulated laws (the second of the two claims highlighted above). He does not consider that it requires a defence, and I shall attempt to show that it is at least plausible that he is right.

So, as Aristotle sees it, the second claim set out above – crucial to his case but assumed unstated – does not require defending, but the first claim – explicit at 1354a13-14 – does. Aristotle’s arguments from 1354a13 to a21 against the handbook writers are devastating if they go through. I wish to suggest that having outlined his key arguments, he returns precisely to the task of justifying some key elements on which they depended. This occupies him from 1354a21 to 1354b16.

We have suggested that Aristotle’s arguments rely on unstated premises about the relationship between the proper functioning of the state and the nature of rhetoric. Let us therefore consider a sketch of this view that, I claim, Aristotle assumes. It is a view very different from our own understanding of rhetoric. Frustratingly, his view of the relationship between rhetoric and the state is something he never sets out explicitly. This might raise a worry about whether it is justified to attribute such views to Aristotle. We will attempt to answer these worries. Firstly, some remarks in the *Nicomachean Ethics* show that Aristotle saw an important connection between rhetoric and political expertise. However, these remarks fall short of asserting the stronger connection between rhetoric and the proper functioning of the *polis* that his arguments in the *Rhetoric* require. Evidence for this is found in the *Rhetoric* itself. Secondly, therefore, we will show that Aristotle’s use of some key pieces of terminology in the *Rhetoric* seems to support

ascribing to him the views sketched here. Thirdly, and most importantly, these views are needed to make sense of some of his key passages of argument. The fourth strategy is to show how the views attributed to Aristotle about rhetoric and the state cohere well with what he says in the *Rhetoric* and elsewhere about the function and goal of rhetoric.

A sketch of Aristotle's view of the relationship between rhetorical expertise and the proper functioning of the state.

States – plausibly all states, but certainly the Greek *poleis* of Aristotle's day – need orators (public speakers). This is because in order to function well it is necessary for citizens to confer, deliberate and come to decisions. This includes deciding on laws and state policy, and coming to verdicts in the lawcourts. For citizens to make judgements about the merits of courses of action, or of each side's case in a law suit, the case for each of these has to be made.

Rhetoric, then, is an expertise in discharging public speaking roles in the state – specifically, it is an expertise in helping citizens to arrive at good publicly-deliberated judgements,<sup>41</sup> by making the case one way or another in relation to some

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<sup>41</sup> Reflection on what the *technê* of rhetoric serves to produce is suggested right at the start of the *Rhetoric*, when Aristotle says that, "as all would agree", an expertise should account for non-accidental success (*epitunchanousin* 1354a9). But success in what? What exactly is the product whose successful production will be accounted for by this expertise? Aristotle's answer seems to be that it is good publicly-deliberated judgements by citizens. Aristotle eventually says this explicitly at 1358b1-2, with the whole of I.3 devoted to explaining how this works in each kind of rhetoric. More briefly, at II.1, 1377b20-21, he says, "rhetoric is for the sake of a judgement (*heneka kriseôs*)." Cf. also I.2, 1357a1-2 where rhetoric's function is discharged only in relation to things that are the objects of deliberation.

proposal,<sup>42</sup> so that a judgement can be made as to its merits (often in comparison with the merits of some rival proposal).

If this view is correct, it suggests a basis for thinking that a genuine exercise of rhetoric could not be something that the laws should prohibit. This view of the relationship between rhetoric and the state could serve to underpin the unstated assumption in the argument at 1354a18-21, highlighted at the end of the previous chapter. The way this works is as follows. If the laws aim at the well-being of the state and its citizens then they should not prohibit anything that is necessary to public goods like the well-being of the state and its citizens (certainly not insofar as it is necessary to these). Arguably the making of good judgements by citizens in roles such as juror (dicast) and assemblyman (ecclesiast) is necessary to the well-being of state and citizens in this way. Similarly, the laws should not prohibit anything that conduces either to public goods like the well-being of the state and its citizens or to something necessary for such well-being. If it is correct to think of rhetoric as an expertise in enabling good judgements, then exercises of rhetoric are of this kind. The laws should not prohibit them.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>"Demonstrating the matter, that it is or is not the case, that it happened or did not happen." 1354a27-28.

<sup>43</sup> The use of the Areopagus as an example (1354a23) recalls the role of persuasion and good laws in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. The prominence there of both persuasion (829, 885-6, 968-75; cf. earlier *Agamemnon* 385ff.) and the rule of law in good civic governance (482-89, 681-710), in the way Orestes' situation is resolved through the establishment of the Areopagus court, suggests that these features are seen not as conflicting but as interrelated. That is, persuasion is not at odds with good civic governance, but crucial to it.



So, Aristotle's strategy in the arguments from 1354a18 to 1354b22 is to make clear exactly what rhetoric's proper role in the state is. To uncover this role just is to uncover the nature of rhetoric. And to grasp the nature of rhetoric is to have the basis for knowing what activities will and will not count as exercises of this expertise. This line of reasoning can then be used to devastating effect against those offering rival accounts of the techniques of rhetoric. Indeed, this is exactly what we find in the passages leading up to the double conclusion at 1354b16-22. The argument may be sketched as follows. First, rhetorical skill in making the case for a particular view is supposed to assist in the production of good public judgements: once it is clear what kind of subject matter these judgements have, it is immediately obvious that the handbook writers' techniques cannot possibly serve this purpose, since the techniques they set out do not even involve addressing this subject matter (b16-21). Secondly, it is obvious that putting a case to an audience of citizens with a view to good public judgements is a matter of producing proper grounds for conviction, and that this will centrally involve skill in enthymemes (b20-22). The complete absence of these skills from the "*technai*" of these writers constitutes a failure to identify and describe the art of rhetoric.

This should suffice as a sketch of Aristotle's overall position and of his main lines of argument. We will see that this is consistent with some much weaker remarks in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But the principle grounds for supposing this to be Aristotle's view are from three sources: his handling of some key terminology, a detailed examination of the arguments of *Rhetoric* I.1, and his views elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*.

### Aristotle's Teleological View of Rhetoric in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

At the start of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains how certain activities and forms of expertise fall “under” a larger activity or expertise, such that the goal of the first is pursued for the sake of the goal of the second larger (more “architectonic”) activity or expertise. The expertise of bridle-making aims at making good bridles, but since this is a case where bridle-making comes “under” a larger expertise, horsemanship, this end – good bridles – is itself desirable for the sake of the purpose of the larger activity, i.e. riding horses.<sup>44</sup> Aristotle goes on to suggest that we see just this hierarchy of expertises in relation to political expertise, indeed that political expertise has all<sup>45</sup> activities and forms of expertise under it – specifically including rhetoric.

*If so, then one must try to grasp it [what is good and best] at least in outline, that is, what it might be, and to which sort of expertise or productive capacity it belongs. It would seem to belong to the most sovereign, i.e. the most ‘architectonic’. Political expertise appears to be like this, for it is this expertise that sets out which of the expertises there needs to be in cities, and what sorts of expertise each group of people should learn, and up to what point; and we see even the most prestigious of the productive capacities falling under it, for example generalship, household management, rhetoric; and since it makes use of the practical expertises that remain, and furthermore legislates about what one must do and what things one must abstain from doing, the end of this expertise will contain those of the rest; so that this end will be the human good. (*Nicomachean Ethics* I.1.1094a24-b7)*

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<sup>44</sup> EN I.1.1094a9-16.

<sup>45</sup> If, against Bywater, “πρακτικαῖς” is retained at 1094b4, then Aristotle may intend a restriction of the scope of this claim.

It seems clear that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle sees rhetoric as falling – like the other *technai* – under political expertise. Thus, the aim of rhetoric is choiceworthy for the sake of the aim of political expertise, namely the human good.<sup>46</sup> If his view of rhetoric is unchanged between the *Rhetoric* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, then it is clear that Aristotle has here part of the basis for the kinds of arguments we have been looking at in *Rhetoric* I.1. If rhetoric's aim is choiceworthy ultimately for the sake of the human good, and if this is the aim of political expertise, then it is clear that anything that was a genuine exercise of rhetorical expertise would make some contribution towards a good that was choiceworthy for the sake of the overall human good, and hence recognised as valuable by political expertise. Thus, according to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, rhetoric aims at some good.<sup>47</sup> Clearly, also, an activity that was prohibited by the exercise of political expertise (for example, by correct laws) because it made no contribution to any goal recognised as valuable by political expertise, could not be an exercise of rhetoric or of any other genuine expertise. Nevertheless, this still is some way from the kind of claim we need in the *Rhetoric*. For all we have seen from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, rhetoric might aim at personal gain for the speaker – this being, of course, *some* good. And it might be that there are types of activity that are genuine exercises of rhetoric (and aim at rhetoric's good goal) which nevertheless are consistently prohibited by correct laws because activities of that type have some disadvantage that outweighs the fact that the activity promotes rhetoric's good goal. To this extent, what is said explicitly in this

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<sup>46</sup>Rhetoric coming under *politikê* also means that it would be a matter of expertise in the latter to establish when and where rhetoric should and should not be practised, who should learn it, and to what extent, etc..

<sup>47</sup> This, of course, was already entailed by the very first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. 1094a1-2.

passage does not commit Aristotle to the position we need to attribute to him in the first chapter of the *Rhetoric*. Rhetoric's goal need only be *some* good recognised by political expertise – and this seems to leave the field still wide open to the kinds of goals envisaged by Gorgias, Thrasymachus and others. This is as much as the explicit argument of the passage seems to require. Rhetoric's goal need not be the successful discharge of a role in the state, enabling citizens engaged in public deliberations to come to well-formed judgements.

And yet, although he does not specify here what he thinks rhetoric's choiceworthy goal is,<sup>48</sup> we have a hint of what Aristotle's view is. He lists rhetoric amongst the “most prestigious” (1094b3) of the capacities alongside generalship and household management. The point seems to be that the most likely alternative candidates for being the science of the human good<sup>49</sup> are themselves subordinate to *politikê*, hence the latter has a better claim to be the science to which the human good belongs. This certainly hints at a view of rhetoric's goal that is closer to the one sketched above, than to that of Gorgias and Thrasymachus.

So, rhetoric in the *Nicomachean Ethics* aims at a good recognised by political expertise, and at one which makes rhetoric among the “most prestigious” of capacities.

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<sup>48</sup> Aristotle does specify rhetoric's goal at *EN* III.3, 1112b14 as to persuade (“an orator does not deliberate about [his goal, namely] whether to persuade”), but this tells us nothing about how he understands the nature of persuasion, nor what it is about it that makes it choiceworthy.

<sup>49</sup>That some saw rhetoric this way is perhaps suggested also by Aristotle's remark at *Rhetoric* I.2, 1356a27-30 about those who, for various reasons, mistakenly practise rhetoric *in place of 'politikê'*.

Aristotle's View of Rhetoric – some philological considerations.

In the view sketched above, Aristotle's distinctive view of rhetoric is that it is entirely a matter of providing proper grounds for conviction. This view is justified by reference to wider questions of how the exercise of rhetoric, the practice of oratory, fits into the state as a whole.

Attributing to Aristotle this view both of what is involved in exercising rhetorical expertise, and of rhetoric's wider relationship with the functioning of the state, finds corroboration in some striking features of the language he uses in the *Rhetoric* to set out his position.

Firstly, English translators of the *Rhetoric* tend to translate both *peithô* and *pistis* and their cognates with the English word "persuasion" and its cognates (*pistis* is sometimes translated "means of persuasion"). This masks the fact that the two words have very different connotations and Aristotle seems to be very careful how he uses them. In particular, he carefully gives prominence in his definitions of rhetoric, and his early arguments establishing what rhetoric is, to *pistis*, whereas cognates of *peithô* do not appear in connection with rhetoric until 1355a30.<sup>50</sup> This is particularly surprising given how closely connected in the minds of Aristotle's audience the expertise of rhetoric would be with both *peithô* and *peithein*.<sup>51</sup> Persuasion would simply be the natural concept for Aristotle to deploy to elucidate the nature of

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<sup>50</sup> Πείσσαι at 1355a25 appears to refer to teaching, not to rhetoric.

<sup>51</sup> cf. 1355b10 where Aristotle goes out of his way to clarify that rhetoric's task is not "to persuade": he is surely right to think that this needs saying, indeed it would be a very natural thing for his audience to suppose that rhetoric's task was precisely to persuade. cf. also, for example, *EN* III.3, 1112b14; Plato *Gorgias* 452e-453a; *Phaedrus* 270b8, 271b4f..

rhetoric. Despite this, Aristotle prefers *pistis* initially, and for very good reason. He wants to insist that rhetoric consists in the presentation of proper grounds for conviction, as we have seen, and *pistis* expresses this much better than *peithô* does. *Pistis* means something that someone can rely on, a basis for trust. It has a financial usage, meaning a deposit or a pledge, something that offers some good grounds for trusting that a contract will be kept.<sup>52</sup> It does not have a pejorative usage, in the way that *peithein* certainly does.<sup>53</sup> It is for these reasons that “proof” is a much closer translation than “means of persuasion”, since it implies good grounds for belief, rather than merely any verbal means of getting someone’s beliefs changed. “Proof” is misleading to the extent that it has a factive implication – in English, someone who has proof has knowledge, and it cannot turn out that they are wrong after all. Whereas in Greek, you can have plenty of *pisteis* and still turn out to be mistaken, in just the same way that someone may offer a financial deposit or pledge, yet still renege on a contract. With this reservation, “proofs” seems an acceptable English translation, though the rather inelegant “proper grounds for conviction” is more accurate. More importantly, Aristotle’s avoidance of *peithô* and his repeated use of *pistis* as he sets out his view of the nature of rhetoric signals a very significant feature of this view. That is that rhetoric is an expertise not simply in changing listeners’ minds, but in giving listeners *good* grounds for being convinced of the speaker’s claims.

A second indication in this direction is the phrase ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος (“outside the issue”). This would have been familiar to anyone concerned with rhetoric in the fifth and fourth centuries in Athens.<sup>54</sup> It

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<sup>52</sup> LSJ s.v. II.1.

<sup>53</sup> LSJ s.v. A.II.

related to both the role of the juror<sup>55</sup> and the role of the orator – a connection that we will see is crucial to Aristotle’s own view. As Aristotle tells us, orators were forbidden to speak “outside the issue” in the Areopagus,<sup>56</sup> and other well-governed places. He does not tell us (although it should come as no surprise to us to learn this once we’ve read 1354a31-b16) that as part of the Heliastic oath that jury members swore each year, they swore to judge defendants on the basis of the charge alone, i.e. not to be swayed by matters irrelevant to the charge.<sup>57</sup> We know that the phrase “ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος” was a familiar way of referring to this restriction.<sup>58</sup> The history of this phrase, in particular its use in the orators, thus re-emphasises that this phrase means “outside

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<sup>54</sup> Orators frequently insisted on their own scrupulousness about avoiding what was irrelevant using this very phrase, “outside the issue” (ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος). Often this was as part of a contrast with their opponents or with the general run of orators. Aeschines I.170.1-2; Demosthenes LVII.33, 63, 66; Isaeus *Frag* III.1.6; Lycurgus I.11, 13, 149; Lysias III.46. Cf. Lanni [2005].

<sup>55</sup> We will use the English “juror” for the Greek *dikastês*. The point about how the speaker’s role is related to the role of those whose function it is to form a verdict is not, however, confined to forensic contexts. This is clear from Aristotle’s use of *kritês* and cognates (related to *krisis*, verdict) from 1354a32 to 1355a3 to cover both jurors and assemblymen. Note the explicit assertion at 1354b22f. that rhetoric itself is the same for both kinds of speaking. Cf. also 1358b1-59a6.

<sup>56</sup> This is confirmed by Lysias himself in a speech before the Areopagus. Cf. Lysias III. 46.

<sup>57</sup> The text of the Heliastic oath is apparently preserved *verbatim* at Demosthenes XXIV.149-151, including the following, “καὶ διαψηφιοῦμαι περὶ αὐτοῦ οὗ ἂν ἡ δίωξις ᾗ.” (For whatever the prosecution is being made, I will cast my vote in relation to *that*). There is some debate about the authenticity of the entirety of what Demosthenes purports to quote, but doubts are focussed elsewhere than this particular clause, cf. Hansen [1991] 182-3, MacDowell [1986] 43-44.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Aeschines I.170 “τὰς ἔξωθεν τοῦ πράγματος ἀπολογίας μὴ προσδέχεσθε, πρῶτον μὲν τῶν ὄρκων ἕνεκα” (Do not accept their irrelevant defences, firstly because of your oaths ...).

the issue under consideration”, not “outside the business, i.e. the art, [of rhetoric]”, as Cope thought.<sup>59</sup> So, we have here a phrase, crucial to Aristotle’s argument, that was already regularly used in ways that linked the roles of orator and juror in relation to the proper subject matter for public speeches. We shall see that this way of linking orator and juror is very similar to the way Aristotle himself links them: what is not the proper business of the juror to consider cannot be the proper business of the orator to speak about. His use of this phrase evokes a line of reasoning already familiar to his audience.

The sketch above of Aristotle’s position can thus draw initial support from some key terminology from *Rhetoric* I.1. More importantly, though, this position can be seen to underlie the individual arguments of this section. Establishing this requires close consideration of these passages.

#### The Areopagus Argument (1354a18-24)

*The result is that if all judgements were conducted the way they actually are today in a mere handful of cities – principally those that are well-governed – they would have nothing to say. For everyone thinks that this should be what the laws declare, whereas [only] some actually implement this and forbid speaking outside the issue, as they also do in the Areopagus, and they are quite correct to have this rule.*  
(1354a18-24)

We suggested in the previous chapter that the form of this argument is as follows.

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<sup>59</sup> Cope [1867] 4. cf. Cooper [1999] 391.



1. If the handbook writers' techniques were for exercising rhetorical expertise, then they would not be such as to be prohibited in a well-ordered state. (premise implicit)
2. But they are such as to be prohibited in a well-ordered state. (1354a18-21)
3. Therefore (from 1 and 2), it is not the case that the handbook writers' techniques are for exercising rhetorical expertise. (1354a11-12)

If the general view of rhetoric attributed to Aristotle above is correct, we can see this as a kind of shorthand for the following.

- 1A.If something (e.g. using the techniques from the handbook writers' *technai*) is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, then that thing contributes to producing good public judgements.
- 2A.If something contributes to producing good public judgements then that thing enables the state to run properly.
- 3A.If something enables the state to run properly then the laws should not prohibit that thing.
- 4A.(from the above) If something is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, then the laws should not prohibit that thing.
- 5A.But the laws should prohibit using the handbook writers' techniques (1354a20-21 "they would have nothing to say").
- 6A.Therefore it is not the case that using the handbook writers' techniques is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric.

On the view sketched above of rhetoric's purpose, namely helping citizens to make good public judgements, this argument starts to look more convincing. Premise 1A is supplied by this view of rhetoric, and plausibly premises 2A and 3A are obvious. If we are right to attribute this view to Aristotle, and if this view is correct, then it is starting to seem as though he has a good argument showing the inexpertise of the handbook writers.

Still, the formulation of the premises is not quite adequate. Premise 3A seems suspect. For something might contribute to the well-being of the state and be the object of legitimate legal prohibition on other grounds. For example buying and owning foreign slaves would be legitimately prohibited as an injustice against those enslaved even if they enabled the state to run properly. So, we should reformulate the argument as follows.

- 1B. Insofar as something is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, to that extent that thing contributes to producing good public judgements.
- 2B. Insofar as something contributes to producing good public judgements, to that extent that thing enables the state to run properly.
- 3B. Insofar as something enables the state to run properly the laws should not prohibit that thing.
- 4B. Insofar as something is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, the laws should not prohibit that thing.
- 5B. The laws should prohibit using the handbook writers' techniques (1354a20-21 "they would have nothing to say").

6B. Therefore it is not the case that using the handbook writers' techniques is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric (1354a11-13).

The problem is that on this more precise formulation of the first three premises, although 3B now seems true and 4B follows from what precedes, the inference to 6B is not legitimate. Again – albeit at a different point in the argument – the possibility is left open that the handbook writers' techniques are ways of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, but the laws should prohibit their use because of other features of these techniques than the features that make using them an exercise of rhetoric.

The point is especially important because, as we will see, at least one key figure in the handbook writers' tradition<sup>60</sup> – Thrasymachus – although unlikely to have endorsed premise 1B and Aristotle's conception of rhetoric and its aims, would nevertheless have found premise 4B difficult to deny. Moreover, since steps 1 to 4 of the above argument are not stated in the argument at a18-21, but are our supposition of the background, it would be particularly good if 4B were a premise that might have seemed plausible on a variety of different conceptions of the nature of rhetoric, including especially that of Aristotle and of those who are targets of his criticism here. If 4B is acceptable in this way, then a valid inference to 6B would make for a very powerful argument against the handbook writers' claims to have set out the art. So, it would be disappointing if the above reconstruction of Aristotle's argument were correct, and this final crucial inference failed.

<sup>60</sup>Chapter 4 below contains an extensive argument that he is among those in view in this passage.

Furthermore, even if this suggested dialectical nuance were not present, on the above reconstruction Aristotle's argument fails *even if he is granted his opening premise* about the nature and purpose of rhetoric.

Can the argument be made good? I believe it can.

Aristotle states confidently (1354a20-21) that under a proper prohibition of irrelevant speaking the handbook writers, using their own techniques, would have *nothing* to say. This bold claim implies not merely that their conception of rhetoric disposes them towards techniques that carry a *risk* of irrelevant speaking. Rather the suggestion seems to be that there is something about how they envisage rhetoric itself, and hence how they envisage what its techniques have in common, such that *all* of their techniques are *sure* to be prohibited by a properly-run state.

We may venture a conjecture as to what the view of rhetoric might be that Aristotle is attacking here. The view could well be one in which rhetoric gives the orator a power to bring about his desired verdict, *whatever the merits of his case*, in much the same way as a wrestler's power (or a magician's) is not dependent on whether this or that opponent *ought* to be defeated. If this was the handbook writers' view, then clearly the effectiveness of their techniques needed to rely on features *other than* the facts and evidence relevant to the issue at hand. And Aristotle explicitly says something very close to this at 1354a15f.: "they busy themselves predominantly with what is outside the issue at

hand.”<sup>61</sup> It will be part of the burden of chapter 4 below to flesh out more fully what these techniques might have been. It is enough to notice here that techniques for bringing about conviction whatever the merits of your case must operate through causal mechanisms that are independent of (and hence invulnerable to) the particular facts of the issue at hand. Two conclusions seem to follow. Firstly, since their techniques were aimed to have this kind of effectiveness, they were bound to involve speaking about things outside ‘the issue at hand’. Secondly, if we are right about Aristotle’s position here, then those very features that in the eyes of the handbook writers make their techniques good rhetoric, are precisely the features that Aristotle claims show that these techniques are not part of rhetoric at all.

If this is right, the reasoning at 1354a18-24 proceeds as follows. Steps 1 to 4 are unstated, but show how, given some plausible background assumptions (2C and 3C), 4C follows from 1C, i.e. from an Aristotelian view of rhetoric’s nature and purpose. We have noted that one might have other reasons to endorse 4C. Hence the most crucial steps are from 4C to 9C.

1C. Insofar as something is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, to that extent that thing contributes to producing good public judgements.

2C. Insofar as something contributes to producing good public judgements, to that extent that thing enables the state to run properly.

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<sup>61</sup>We note the minor discrepancy between what Aristotle’s argument at 1354a18-21 requires and what is asserted at a15f., regarding whether it was all or merely most of the handbook writers’ methods that involved speaking outside the issue at hand.

- 3C. Insofar as something enables the state to run properly the laws should not prohibit that thing.
- 4C. (from 1C, 2C and 3C) Insofar as something is a way of exercising the expertise of rhetoric, the laws should not prohibit that thing.
- 5C. Insofar as using some speaking technique influences the listener irrespective of the merits of their case, the laws should prohibit the use of that technique. (“the laws should ... prohibit speaking outside the subject” 1354a21-4)
- 6C. All of the speaking techniques of the handbook writers are techniques for influencing the listener irrespective of the merits of the speaker’s case. (background information about what the handbook writers taught, under the title “rhetoric”: ‘they busy themselves predominantly with things outside the subject’ 1354a15f.)
- 7C. (from 5C and 6C) The laws should prohibit all of the speaking techniques of the handbook writers. (1354a20-21 “they would have nothing to say”).
- 8C. (from 4C and 5C) Using speaking techniques that influence the listener irrespective of the merits of the case is not exercising the expertise of rhetoric.
- 9C. (from 6C and 8C) The handbook writers have told us next to nothing about rhetoric. (1354a11-13).

The position we propose should be attributed to Aristotle about rhetoric’s role in the state thus suggests a way in which what Aristotle says at 1354a18-24 fits together and contains a good argument for the claim that the handbook writers have told us next to nothing about rhetoric (1354a11-13).

Thrasymachus' View of Rhetoric, and *Eunomia*

In the line of reasoning we have been considering in relation to 1354a18-24, arguably Aristotle's own commitment to the background premises 1-4 stems from what he takes to be deep truths about the nature of rhetoric and its place in public deliberation. But these commitments are not explicit in the text, and this passage seems to appeal simply to an intuitive sense of the relationship between rhetoric and good governance, one that Aristotle is able to presuppose in his audience.

However, the argument at 1354a18-23 may additionally display a clever dialectical nuance in how it engages with the position of those who are being criticised, the handbook writers themselves. The reason is that the apparently contentious key background premise is in fact one that the handbook writers themselves would probably have thought true.

*If the handbook writers' techniques are for exercising rhetorical expertise, then they are not be such as to be prohibited in a well-ordered state. (premise implicit)*

This premise needed to be construed (as in 4C above) in such a way as to combine with what Aristotle actually says:

*"The result is that if all judgements were conducted the way they actually are today in a mere handful of cities – principally those that are well-governed (Gk. eunoumenais) – they would have nothing to say." (1354a18-21)*

to produce a cogent argument against his targets.

These premises clearly appeal to the way the laws should be. The Greek concept, deployed here at a20, for the laws' being the way they should be is "*eunomia*". This term, Aristotle elsewhere insists, refers to two things, the correctness of the laws that are in place, and compliance with them by those within the state.<sup>62</sup> In some hands, the concept had a somewhat conservative, anti-democratic flavour.<sup>63</sup> But at 1354a20 "*eunomoumenais*" simply seems to mean that it is in states *that get their laws right* that there is a prohibition on irrelevant speaking.<sup>64</sup>

We shall see in chapter 4 that there is a strong case that Thrasymachus and those who saw themselves as heirs to his view of rhetoric are among the writers of *technai* that Aristotle has in mind in this opening passage. Indeed they are perhaps his principal target. Thrasymachus would have been likely to endorse a key premise of this argument, even though his view of rhetoric, legality (*νόμος*) and of politics seems to have been very different from Aristotle's. If so, then this argument from well-governed states has the dialectical subtlety of using premises acceptable not only to Aristotle and his audience but also to the targets of criticism themselves. Thrasymachus, fragment B7a,<sup>65</sup> testifies to his having written a *technê*, and ascribes to "Thrasymachus and several others" the claim that they possessed "such arts of political or rhetorical speeches", and interestingly goes on to criticise them for achieving nothing of the things of which they claimed to possess the *technê*. What is important for our case here is the close association

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<sup>62</sup>Aristotle *Politics* 4.6, 1294a1ff.

<sup>63</sup>Demosthenes 24.139.

<sup>64</sup>This is why Aristotle appeals to a general view how "the laws should stand" (a21f.), and why such a formulation was preferred for premises 4C, 5C and 7C in the argument above.

<sup>65</sup>DK 85B7a, Philodemus, *Rhet* II.49.



between rhetoric and politics. Whilst it is possible that this phrase distinguishes two types of speeches, the most natural way to interpret it seems to me to be that it offers “political speeches” and “rhetorical speeches” as two different ways used by Thrasymachus and the others for referring (as they saw it) to the very same thing. Rhetoric to him is part of political expertise. If Thrasymachus’ view of political processes is like the view of laws and of justice ascribed to him in Plato’s *Republic* book I, then it might run something like this. In politics, parties compete for power, using any and all means available to them. Rhetoric is one way of doing this. Whoever emerges as the most powerful also appropriates other tools of power, including the notions “just”, “lawful” and the like.<sup>66</sup> Political expertise would amount to simply a way of gaining power and getting your way in public affairs. On this basis, exercising rhetorical expertise might naturally be seen as exercising a skill which is part of a wider business of getting, wielding and retaining power in the state – i.e. exercising political expertise. So, if his view of *eunomia* is similar to his view of justice,<sup>67</sup> then *eunomia* will always tell in favour of those whose expertise in politics is the greatest – the winners define what will count as *eunomia*, the manipulation of the concept itself is one of the tools of their expertise. So it would be very surprising if *eunomia* turned out to bar the exercise of some constituent of political expertise itself. The thought would be this: if you are having *eunomia* used against you, it must be that you are in a position of weakness, and have not yet fully exploited the tools of power, such as rhetoric. Genuine rhetoric, fully exercised, appropriates notions like *eunomia* and uses them to its own advantage, such that they will never be in conflict. If Thrasymachus held something like these views, then it is easy to see why he would be committed to

<sup>66</sup> Here again I follow Chappell [1993], [2000], *pace* Everson [1998].

<sup>67</sup> As is strongly suggested by *Republic* I.338d-339a.

affirming the key background premise – i.e. that there could not be any conflict between *eunomia* and genuine rhetorical expertise. Hence, if Thrasymachus wishes to resist Aristotle's conclusion, that his techniques in irrelevant speaking are no part of rhetoric, then he must deny that correct laws would prohibit the exercise of these techniques.

If we have the unstated background premise of Aristotle's argument right, then it looks as though this premise has the dialectical subtlety of being acceptable to the handbook writers in the tradition of Thrasymachus. They will be committed to denying another premise, on pain of conceding that their techniques are not part of the expertise of rhetoric. If they were unwilling or unable to deny that their techniques were for speaking outside the issue (perhaps this was too well-known to deny? perhaps it was vital to their position that the effectiveness of their techniques did not depend on the particular details of the case?), then they must deny that a well-ordered state would prohibit irrelevant speaking. Yet at this point Aristotle seems to be at his strongest: indeed he cites universal public opinion in his support, "everyone thinks that this should be what the laws declare" (a21-22). He also cites the practice of the Areopagus in favour of the view that it is precisely in a *well*-ordered state that irrelevant speaking would be prohibited. If the handbook writers wish to deny the second premise, then they are bound to deny that the Areopagus is an example of *eunomia*. Perhaps for them, no state would be any better ordered than any others, since in all, the powerful appropriate the laws and other tools of power. Or perhaps it is tyrannies that are better examples of *eunomia* than the Areopagus in Athens. On either of these

options, the view is rather counter-intuitive compared to the view Aristotle appeals to here.<sup>68</sup>

I do not think that Aristotle's primary aim is to engage dialectically with those in this Thrasymachean tradition, as he might if he were addressing them directly (which he is not) and hoping to convince them. In fact, in stating his position and in criticising the handbook writers, many of his arguments proceed from premises that would *not* have been acceptable to those with a Thrasymachean view of rhetoric.<sup>69</sup> That said, it is a nice result if Aristotle's argument is such that its force cannot be evaded even by those he is criticising. In this short argument (1354a18-24), he corroborates his main conclusion – that the handbook writers have told us nothing much about rhetoric – in a thought-experiment that makes appeal to assumptions that would have been shared not only by Aristotle and his audience, but by those in the Thrasymachean tradition – the tradition (we claim) of the handbook writers.

The arguments that follow show how well Aristotle's own framework makes sense of his claim that these writers had failed to shed light on the expertise of rhetoric.

#### Mini-Argument 1354a24-25

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<sup>68</sup> That the Areopagus is a paradigm of *eunomia* is suggested by its role in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* as the place for the proper resolution of disputes by appeal to law. Additionally, there is considerable evidence that (even aside from the period around 462 and Ephialtes' reforms) the Areopagus was considered, as a court, a paradigm of just arrangements: Lysias 3.2; 6.14; Ober [1989] 141; MacDowell [1963]; Hansen [1991] 295.

<sup>69</sup> "Only the proofs belong to the expertise," would be an obvious example (1354a13).

There is, just after the argument from well-ordered states, a very short argument that deserves examination for what it reveals about Aristotle's view of rhetoric. Strictly speaking, it seems to be more like a stage in a more extended argument, connecting both with what precedes and with what follows. It is partly for this reason that it is important.

*For everyone thinks that this is what the laws ought to urge [viz. that speakers not speak outside the subject at hand], while some actually put this into practice ... and they are right. For one ought not to warp the juror [Gk. dikastên], leading him on to anger or resentment or pity.*

The focus of my discussion here, what I am calling the "mini-argument", is the last sentence just quoted. It comes after Aristotle's appeal to public opinion and esteemed practice in support of his claim that the laws should prohibit irrelevant speaking in public deliberation. This mini-argument, then, introduced by "for", purports to be a reason to think that public opinion and esteemed practice are right: the laws should indeed prohibit irrelevant speaking in public deliberation. The argument, I think, is simple and plausible and runs as follows.

1. You shouldn't warp the juror. (1354a24f.)
2. Speaking irrelevantly is warping the juror. (implied)
3. (from 1 and 2) You shouldn't speak irrelevantly. (implied)

This is some reason to think that:

4. The laws should prohibit speaking irrelevantly. (1354a21-24)

Understood thus, I think this fits well with what precedes. And we would expect it to fit equally well with what follows, since immediately after the passage just quoted, we have a further argument (the “Carpenter’s Rule” argument) introduced by “for ...”. The Carpenter’s Rule argument ought to support the claim in the argument above, namely that *you shouldn’t warp the juror*.

### The Carpenter’s Rule

In the sketch of Aristotle’s view of how rhetoric is related to the proper functioning of the state, we saw that Aristotle views the purpose of the orator *qua* orator<sup>70</sup> as intimately related to the task of the juror. At I. 3.1358b1-2 (and throughout 1358b1-59a6) he will explicitly say that the orator’s purpose is related to the listener, and specifically that the orator’s purpose in each kind of rhetoric is given by what kind of thing it is on which the listener is trying to form a judgement. Naturally, this differs between forensic, deliberative and epideictic contexts. For example, in a forensic case, the listener is judging whether such-and-such a crime was or was not committed as alleged: the speaker’s purpose will thus be the proper formation of *that very judgement* in the particular direction he is urging (which will depend on whether the speaker is prosecuting or defending). It is clear that on this view, the role of the orator is inextricably related to the role of the listener.

Furthermore, if oratory is about fulfilling a necessary and important role in the proper functioning of the state, this perhaps suggests that the orator’s role is *ancillary* to that of the listener. The orator’s role is to

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<sup>70</sup>That is, the speaker in the context of public deliberation, where rhetoric is the expertise relevant to their role. The situation in practice is complicated by the fact that in forensic contexts, often the speech would have been composed by someone other than the person delivering it.

enable the listener to discharge his role successfully, and so play his part successfully in proper public deliberation and decision-making.

If we take this to be Aristotle's position, it may come as a surprise that he supports in the way he does his objection to warping the juror using emotion-arousing techniques.

*For one shouldn't warp the juror by bringing him into anger or envy or pity. For that would be like someone warping the ruler he is about to use. (1354a24-26)*

Whereas Aristotle's general position seemed to be that the role of the orator is ancillary to that of the juror, the comparison with the carpenter's ruler seems strongly to suggest the converse. The ruler is the juror, the carpenter is the orator – so seemingly the juror is as ancillary to the orator's purpose as the ruler is to the carpenter's. We might be puzzled at this tension. Nevertheless, this is surely not the point of the comparison. The suggestion of the simile is that warping the juror defeats the orator's own purposes, just as warping his ruler defeats the carpenter's purposes. It is best not to hang too much on whether there is some kind of *priority* to the role of orator or of juror. One can make sense of the passages by seeing the roles and purpose of each as interdependent. The jurors' purpose is to make a justified judgement on the matter in hand – for this they need justifications, proofs, things that bear one way or the other on the matter in hand, and this is why the orator is useful to them – as a supplier of these things. The orator's purpose is that the jurors form a justified judgement on the matter at hand, and that this judgement be the one he is urging! It will defeat this purpose if his approach prevents the

jurors from making a justified judgement at all. Crucially, however, if the jurors' verdict is – as hoped – in the orator's favour, this confirms the correctness of the orator's position in just the same way that a ruler can confirm the straightness of the carpenter's handiwork. A ruler is a cognitive instrument; it tells the carpenter something about his handiwork. Similarly, the jurors' verdict is germane to the orator's purpose, confirming the correctness, the likely truth of the orator's position. Even though a bent ruler or warped jurors can announce a verdict of a kind, such a verdict has lost its cognitive value as confirmation that joints are straight, or that the orator's contention is correct. The carpenter's rule simile suggests that the purpose of the orator is not just to get a particular verdict, but to get it in such a way as to validate the correctness of his position.

If the cognitive competence of the jurors is needed to achieve the orator's aim, then this illuminates both why "warping the juror" fails to promote that aim, and also, more widely, why saying *anything* outside the issue will fail to promote that aim.

This account – which seems a very natural way of making sense of this passage – involves supposing that the orator aims at a *properly-formed* judgement in his favour, rather than just any judgement in his favour. This might be thought contentious. It would hardly be agreed by a Gorgias or a Thrasymachus. On their view, rhetoric is about exercising power over others, and this can be achieved just as well regardless of whether the listener is "warped" by the speaker. Likewise, if one considers the kinds of motivations that many individual orators might actually have when they speak, there will be many examples of speakers whose purposes – winning, for example – would not be in

any way compromised by the listener's being warped. Considered in relation to the purposes of the Thrasymachean or Gorgianic orator, or in relation to the various motivations that actual individuals have for public speaking, the point of the comparison seems shaky – these goals are not necessarily undermined by the warping of the listener. Thus warping the listener often is simply *not like* a carpenter warping his ruler before using it. By contrast, on the view of rhetoric attributed above to Aristotle, the point of the comparison holds. Rhetoric's purpose in the state is to produce (or contribute to producing) justified judgements, and the orator's purpose in any particular case is to produce a justified judgement. It certainly undermines *this* purpose if the listener is warped by the speech. The fact that the comparison with the carpenter's ruler makes very natural sense on our proposed Aristotelian view of rhetoric, along with the fact that it makes much better sense on this view than on some obvious alternatives, serves to confirm this view. In short, the proposed view makes best sense of this argument.

Before leaving the carpenter's rule analogy (1354a25f.), we should return to how it fits into the sequence of thought in *Rhetoric* I.1. For there is a potential difficulty here. We saw that it purports to support the claim required by the "mini-argument" (a24-5) preceding it, namely that you shouldn't warp the juror. The worry is that it appears to provide the wrong kind of support for the way in which this claim is used in the mini-argument. In the mini-argument, the claim that one should not warp the juror is proposed as a reason to have laws that prohibit irrelevant speaking. But the claim supported by the carpenter's rule is not that one should not warp the juror, but rather that *given the orator's purposes*, he should not warp the juror. If you have



those purposes, you shouldn't warp the juror. It looks as though the carpenter's rule comparison supports only a hypothetical imperative, but the mini-argument requires a categorical imperative.

Two ways of resolving this suggest themselves. The first, and my preferred option, is to suppose that the mini-argument is elliptically stated, and that where Aristotle has said, "one should not warp the juror ..." (1354a24f.), this is simply short for "if one has such-and-such a purpose (the purpose that orators have), one should not warp the juror ...". This way, the mini-argument is properly supported by the carpenter's rule comparison. We then face the task of understanding how such a hypothetical imperative could serve as a reason for supposing that the laws are correct to forbid irrelevant speaking. But it is not impossible to conjecture how this might be. After all, on this interpretation, the "if ..." clause ought to be something so obvious it did not need stating. Some purpose, shared by orator and lawmakers, might relate to a basic concern for the proper functioning of courts. One such purpose that would be frustrated by warping the juror is avoiding distorted (or improperly formed) judgements. This would make "if one wants to avoid distorted judgements, one should not warp the juror ..." a reason for prohibiting irrelevant speaking; and furthermore the desire to avoid distorted judgements might be supposed to be sufficiently ubiquitous to be left unstated in the mini-argument at a24f..

An alternative is to suppose that the hypothetical imperative supported by the carpenter's rule comparison is conditional on a purpose that *any citizen ought to have*. If this were the case, then a hypothetical imperative of that kind would be a reason to accept an

equivalent imperative that was categorical. Again, the proposed Aristotelian view of rhetoric readily supplies the conjecture that the orator's purpose on which the hypothetical imperative is conditional is to avoid distorted judgements.

Note that the proposed view of rhetoric attributed here to Aristotle offers these resources for removing a potential difficulty in Aristotle's argument. Without our proposed close connection between the purpose of rhetorical expertise and the good functioning of the state, this worry about Aristotle's sequence of argument here will be more difficult to resolve.

The brief argument from the speaker's role: 1354a26-31.

*Moreover it is obvious that the job of the disputants is nothing beyond demonstrating the matter at hand – that it is the case or that it isn't, that it has happened or that it hasn't. Whether it is important or trivial, or legal or illegal, to the extent that the legislator has not defined these things, surely the juror should find these things out for himself, not learn them from the disputants.*

The argument at 1354a26-31 fits the pattern we have established. It purports to be a corroborating reason ("Moreover ..." a26) supporting some claim made earlier in the passage. It is not completely obvious which claim, but the best candidate is probably the claim at a21-24 that it is rightly thought that the laws should prohibit irrelevant speaking. Whatever claim it supports, though, it expresses Aristotle's view of the speaker's role – the role that rhetorical expertise enables him to discharge well. Whereas the carpenter's rule simile looked at this through the eyes of the orator and his professional goals, this section

looks at the role of the speaker from the point of view of the state and its citizens generally. What is the speaker's role? Why do we have parties speak in courts? The answer is that they have a valuable contribution to make in establishing the fact of the matter in dispute, but – as though to clarify – this does not extend to assisting in knowing its legality or its seriousness. Common to this and the carpenter's rule passages is that Aristotle is not attempting to appeal to a view of rhetoric that would be accepted by those he is criticising. He started with something like that strategy in the thought experiment about the Areopagus, and he is now corroborating the picture by offering his *own* explanation.<sup>71</sup> He is explaining, on his own terms, why it is that this is the case, and does so by substantiating his claim that they have told us nothing about how rhetorical expertise helps its possessor successfully discharge the role of a speaker in contributing to public deliberation. Having told us that their techniques actually hinder the task of the speaker, he makes the related point that once one reflects more generally on the role of the speaker, it is obvious (“φανερόν” a27) that it does not extend beyond helping the jurors to come to a verdict on the facts at issue.

As with the previous parts of this passage, I am claiming that it is hard to make sense of why Aristotle says what he says here without supposing that he connects the nature of rhetorical expertise with the proper functioning of the state in the way I have suggested. This becomes clear from reflection on how establishing something about the speaker's role (a27) could warrant a conclusion about what the laws

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<sup>71</sup> The transition occurs at a23-24, “they are right about this, for ...”: from that point, Aristotle is not trying simply to render plausible his assertion that the handbook writers have said next to nothing about rhetoric.

are right to prohibit (a21-24). The underlying argument of this section (1354a26-31) should, I suggest, be understood as follows.

1. If something is inconsistent with the successful discharge of the speaker's role, then the laws should prohibit it. (premise implicit)
2. Speaking irrelevantly to the issue is inconsistent with the successful discharge of the speaker's role. (a26-31)
3. Therefore the laws should prohibit speaking irrelevantly to the issue. (a21-24)

The section under discussion is taken up with establishing the second premise. But it aims to provide further support (“*Moreover*” a26) for the earlier claim about what the laws should prohibit.<sup>72</sup> It does this successfully only if the first (unstated) premise is allowed; but we note that this is a very natural thing to think on the proposed Aristotelian view of rhetoric. It is also a rather strange thing to think otherwise – it might be that taking a bath is inconsistent with the successful discharge of the role of cabaret entertainer (i.e. you can't manage much cabaret whilst taking a bath), but it would be strange to take this obvious fact to be a reason for a legal prohibition against cabaret entertainers taking baths. The law should only be concerned with roles that serve certain public goods – and the view we are proposing as Aristotle's is that the role of speaker in a public deliberation is just such a role.

*Moreover it is obvious that the job of the disputants is nothing beyond demonstrating the matter at hand – that it is the case or that it isn't, that it has happened or that it hasn't.*

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<sup>72</sup>The carpenter's ruler analogy (a25f.) had also been offered in support of this claim.

The first part (a26-28) of this little section (a26-31) counters a line of thinking that might support a denial of the second premise above. The line of thinking is this. One might think that speaking about *anything* could form on occasion part of the speaker's role, if speaking about that thing would make the speaker more effective in getting his listeners to accept his proposed view. Aristotle insists against this that "the role of the speaker (lit. the party in a dispute) is nothing beyond demonstrating the issue, that it is so or is not so, that it happened or did not happen." (a27f.). He does not offer an argument to this effect, he simply takes this to be "obvious" (a26). Once again, we should note that this view is indeed obvious when the role that rhetorical expertise enables its possessor successfully to discharge is understood as promoting a particular public good.

*Whether it is important or trivial, or legal or illegal, to the extent that the legislator has not defined these things, surely the juror should find these things out for himself, not learn them from the disputants.*

The second part (a28-31) requires the proposed Aristotelian view of rhetoric for different reasons. These claims about where the juror should and should not seek the speakers' contribution to his deliberations, are offered with the clear implication that they will determine what is and is not part of the speaker's role. Indeed, although the correlative clauses at a26-31 purport to be concerned, one with the role of the speaker and the other with the role of the juror, arguably the point of *both* clauses is about the role of the speaker. The suggestion is that Aristotle uses "the juror should not learn x from the speaker" as simply a way of saying that the speaker should not speak about x. This passage suggests that Aristotle accepts the following principle:

If it is part of the speaker's role to speak about something, that thing must be both (a) a proper object of deliberation and judgement for the listener, and (b) something on which it is right for the listener's deliberations to be assisted by the speaker's contribution.

Or its equivalent:

If something either (a) is not a proper object of deliberation or judgement for the listener, or (b) is not something on which his deliberations should be assisted by the speaker's contribution, then it is not part of the speaker's role to speak about that thing.

But a principle of this kind is not simply self-evident.<sup>73</sup> It would have been denied by Thrasymachus and seems at odds with the point of view of Gorgias' *Helen*.<sup>74</sup> But it becomes a pretty natural thing to accept, as soon as you suppose, as we are proposing Aristotle did, that the proper functioning of the juror in deliberation and judgement is

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<sup>73</sup> It is not obvious that the success of the speaker in his role is constrained by the preservation or promotion of the success of the listener in his. In cricket, the fact that the batsman ought not to play deliveries wide outside the off-stump, and that he would be playing poorly if he did, does not mean that it is not part of the bowler's business to bowl deliveries there. The contrast between this example and Aristotle's orator is precisely that in cricket the bowler aims at the batsman's failure in his role, whereas Aristotle's orator aims at the listener's success.

<sup>74</sup> As suggested in the last chapter (see references there) Gorgias – at least from the evidence of the *Helen* – could happily allow Aristotle's claim that the juror ought properly to take his view of the legality and seriousness of an action directly from the laws themselves, or use common sense to "figure it out themselves" (1354a30), and even that they ought not to allow the disputing parties to be involved in the deliberations about these things. All of this Gorgias might happily concede. In his view, even if the juror *ought* to resist their contribution, still it might be the mark of an expert speaker that he successfully overcomes this resistance so as to exert influence on their deliberations by speaking about these things.

central to the role and purpose of the speaker.<sup>75</sup> It is against precisely such a background that we suggest 1354a26-31 can most naturally be understood. So understood, the second part, a28-31, is aimed at resisting a position that might be argued as follows. If the jurors are inclined to deliberate about things other than “the issue”, then it is acceptable for the speaker, by speaking about such things, to assist them. Hence speaking about these things cannot be inconsistent with his role. An argument of this kind would provide a basis for denying the crucial second premise above – that speaking irrelevantly to the issue is inconsistent with the speaker’s role. The argument has some plausibility – one might plausibly think that the speaker could legitimately try to inform *whatever* deliberations the jurors happen to be undertaking. Against this, Aristotle insists (a28-31) that even where the juror *needs* to form a judgement on things other than “the issue”, it is not right for him to be assisted by the speakers (the parties to the dispute), and it is not right for the speakers to attempt to address the jurors on such subjects. This insistence shows very clearly that Aristotle is proceeding on the basis of a very particular conception of the role that this kind of public speaking has in the successful functioning of the state.

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<sup>75</sup> Conceivably, one might read a26-28 and a28-31 as two more-or-less independent reasons for thinking that the state is right to ban irrelevant speaking. Even on this suggestion, the first of these reasons still seems to require the kind of view of rhetoric I am suggesting. But the second might not: that the juror has an important role in the state, and that this might be threatened by speakers addressing topics other than the issue at hand (specifically the legality and severity of the issue), is already good reason for the state to deploy laws to prevent this threat, specifically laws forbidding irrelevant speaking. No view of the speaker’s role need be presupposed. Still, this does not strike me as a preferable reading of the passage.

The section 1354a26-31 as a whole, thus, contains Aristotle's insistence on the following two points. Firstly, there is no part of rhetoric's goal that is promoted by speaking outside the issue (a26-28). Secondly, doing so in fact undermines the achievement of rhetoric's goal, because it causes the jurors to deviate from deliberating about the case in the way they should (and hence it risks corrupting their judgement) (a28-31).

So, in relation to what comes before it, this section offers support for the Areopagus rules argument, in particular for the claim that it is right for the laws to prohibit speaking outside the issue. It does so on the basis of a clear conception of the role and purpose of the speaker, a conception of just the kind we outlined above when setting out Aristotle's understanding of rhetorical expertise.

But the section also invites doubt about whether Aristotle is right to gloss as he does the "issue" (*to pragma*), proving which is the speaker's whole business, and deliberating about which is the main business of the jurors (assisted only by the laws, and – failing that – by common sense).<sup>76</sup> He glosses "the issue" in a forensic setting as whether something "is the case or is not, has happened or has not happened" (a28), i.e. the factual claims involved in the charges. So, one might wonder whether this is unduly restrictive. If it is, and the scope of rhetorical speaking and judicial deliberation ranges much wider, then Aristotle's case against the handbook writers would be significantly undermined. For then, even though they had said nothing about proving the factual claims of a legal charge, their techniques would turn out after all to be relevant to "the issue", and so they

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<sup>76</sup>This seems to be the thrust of a29-31.



would not be vulnerable to the Areopagus rules argument after all, nor would they be vulnerable to Aristotle's first argument (a13-16) in which the fact that all their techniques were for speaking "outside the issue" was used to show that they had said nothing about proofs (and hence nothing about rhetoric). Relevance and irrelevance are relations. We may properly ask, "irrelevant to *what*". To know whether the handbook writers' techniques were for irrelevant speaking (in the kind of way that would undermine their claim that these were techniques of *rhetoric*), we need a clear and defensible account of what "the issue" is to which they ought to be relevant.

Aristotle addresses just this important point in the section that follows (1354a31 – b22). Correct laws allow and even encourage the role of the public speaker in assisting public deliberation – the role in which rhetoric enables its possessor to excel – but they also circumscribe the kinds of public deliberation that should take place and hence<sup>77</sup> restrict the role of the public speaker. One claim certainly defended in this section is that the laws should restrict the deliberation of "judges"<sup>78</sup> to as narrow as possible an area – noting that this area is bound to include whether the factual claims made in the charge in a court case<sup>79</sup> are true

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<sup>77</sup> Though note that 1354a29-31 indicates that there may be additional restrictions on the speaker's subject matter applying even to things that *are* proper subjects of judicial deliberation: thus, potentially, some matters the juror "ought to figure out himself and not learn from the disputants" (a30).

<sup>78</sup> For our discussion of 1354a31-b16, we will use "judge" as an English equivalent to Aristotle's *kritês*, which means roughly 'those whose function it is to form a verdict (*krisis*)' and covers decision-makers in both courts and assemblies. Note that in each, there would be several hundred such people.

<sup>79</sup> We have seen already that Aristotle's *primary* focus in this first chapter is on forensic contexts, but there are hints that he sees his arguments as applying to deliberative and epideictic contexts as well. The assemblyman as well as the dikast is

*Chapter 2 – Why only proper grounds for conviction belong to rhetoric.*      page 76 of 272

or not – and that everything else should be dealt with by the lawgiver and written into the laws. This is clear from the way the section both starts and ends (1354a32-33; b11-16). For our purposes, the reasons Aristotle offers in support of this conclusion are not so important as the fact that he devotes space to arguing for it at all. After all, Aristotle does not suggest that it is somehow impossible that actual judges in actual courts might deliberate about things other than the facts of the charge. He leaves open the possibility that the handbook writers' techniques are relevant to the kinds of things that judges *actually* consider. Hence, for any given subject on which the judges will form a judgement, these might be techniques for getting judges persuaded to take your preferred view of it. Thus, they would qualify as techniques of *rhetoric*, under many accounts of what rhetoric is. But not under Aristotle's account. For him, if the judges are forming a judgement on something on which they ought not to be forming a judgement, it will not be part of the designated role of the speaker to assist them in coming to a judgement on that thing. And since rhetoric is an expertise in discharging *that* role, techniques for speaking on subjects of that kind will not be techniques of rhetoric.

This suggests a way of reading the conclusion of this passage of argument (1354b16-22) that is more integrated than those suggested by previous commentators, and which helps to make sense of how Aristotle has achieved by 1355a2, not just a devastating criticism of the

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mentioned at 1354b7. And the idea that the judges will need to assess claims about past, future and present (1354b13f.) hints that all three kinds of context fall within the scope of his argument. In all three kinds of context, the listeners can be seen as deliberating the truth or falsity of some factual claim – that the accused did such-and-such a deed; that such-and-such proposal is best for the city; that this person possesses (or possessed) such-and-such a virtue.

handbook writers, but (as he claims) a justification of his own position. He claims at 1355a3f. that it is now obvious that the expertise of rhetoric is concerned with providing proper grounds for conviction. The extent to which he has argued for this conclusion we will consider below. But we propose here a reading of 1354b16-22 that shows how the passage of argumentation concerned with the proper role of judges contributes to his basis for the claim at 1355a3f..

*If this is correct, then it is obvious that it is an expertise in irrelevance that is the subject discussed by those who give definitions of other things, such as what the introduction or narrative should contain or each of the other parts of the speech – since in them they busy themselves with nothing except how to put the judge into a certain condition, and they set out nothing about the proofs that belong to the expertise, that is to say the means of becoming good at enthymemes.*  
(1354b16-22)

Exactly what is claimed and on what basis in this passage has sadly not received much scholarly attention.<sup>80</sup> This is surely not because it is all luminously clear. In looking carefully at this passage, and how it is connected to its surrounding context, I hope to substantiate the following claim. Aristotle here concludes not just that the handbook writers' techniques were for irrelevant speaking, but also the correctness of his previous contention<sup>81</sup> that the handbook writers have

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<sup>80</sup> The passage is cited twice in the Symposium Aristotelicum volume (Furley & Nehamas [1996]), but on both occasions this is little more than a passing mention. Cope [1877] has nothing on this except a misunderstanding mentioned below. Neither Grimaldi [1980] nor Rapp [2002] offers help on these points.

<sup>81</sup> This claim is, in my view, announced at 1354a11-13, argued for between that passage and the passage currently under discussion, 1354b16-22, at which point his

told us next to nothing about the proper constituents of rhetorical expertise, since these are concerned with giving proofs, and turn out to consist, largely or wholly, in a skill in enthymemes.

Some features of this passage are relatively uncontroversial. As part of earlier arguments, Aristotle has charged the handbook writers with setting out techniques for speaking outside “the issue” (τὸ πρῶγμα), i.e. irrelevantly. Irrelevantly *to what* is initially left unspecified – that is, it is initially left unstated what the range of “issues” is that might properly be addressed by a speaker. Substantiating this claim required an account of what “the issue” – the proper subject matter for speakers – is. For something to be a proper subject matter for speakers, it turned out that it must also be a proper concern of judges’ deliberations and judgement. Hence, as soon as one grants that the proper concerns of judges were confined to the subjects Aristotle sets out (“*If this is correct ...*” 1354b16, referring back to b11-16), it is clear that speaking on other matters is speaking irrelevantly, and hence that artful techniques for doing so are artful techniques in irrelevance (1354b16-18). In other words, once it is clear what “the issue” is, it is immediately obvious that the handbook writers’ methods were for speaking “outside” it. Anyone who knew their work (and the fact that they are the immediate target of criticism at the start of the treatise suggests their works were widely known) would know that it did not include instructions on speaking about the range of subjects to which Aristotle confines both judge and speaker. Aristotle’s remarks at b17-20 are a reminder of the kinds of things that did occupy them, with perhaps a note of mockery

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demolition of their work is complete. They had set out an expertise not in rhetoric but in irrelevance. There is then a brief passage about how all this sheds light on their (otherwise puzzling) preference for forensic over deliberative speaking. These conclusions then appear in the summary passage 1355a19-20.

at their careful definitions (*diorizousin* b17f.) and laborious attention (*pragmateuontai* b19f.) to things that turn out to be irrelevant to the proper concerns of a public speaker.

This much is common to most commentators.

Less attention has been given to how b21-22 fit into the argument.

*“and they set out nothing about the proofs that belong to the expertise, that is to say the means of becoming good at enthymemes.”*

There are perhaps three options here. One is that Aristotle here simply repeats his assertion (uncontroversially) that the handbook writers have set out nothing on proofs and enthymemes and (more controversially) that it is in these things that the expertise of rhetoric consists (*entechnôn* b21). A second is that he is claiming that the handbook writers' silence about proofs and enthymemes is a further reason to suppose that they were setting out an expertise in irrelevance.<sup>82</sup> A third, and my preferred, option is that Aristotle was here drawing a second conclusion from the preceding argument: if he is right in what preceded, then not only is it clear that the handbook writers' techniques were techniques in irrelevance, but also it is clear they were therefore failing to set out the constituents of an expertise *in rhetoric*.

The first interpretative option is not impossible but seems unattractive. We have seen in the previous chapter how unobvious and controversial Aristotle's view was that only the proofs belong to rhetorical expertise. 1355a3-4 suggests that Aristotle has not merely asserted but argued for this crucial contention. 1354b21-22 looks like a

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<sup>82</sup>On this reading, 'gar' at b19 introduces two reasons: a19-20 and ('de' a21) a21-22.

plausible candidate for the conclusion of an argument to that effect. But the first option construes b21-22 instead as an unsupported assertion, separate from what precedes it.

The second option is unattractive for a number of reasons. Like the first option it has Aristotle offering no argument in support of his crucial claim about the nature of rhetoric. Moreover, this second option construes b19f. (“since in them ...”) and b21f. (“and they set out ...”) as coordinate reasons both introduced by that initial “since” (*gar*, b19); and yet the positions they occupy in the argument are very far from coordinate with each other. The first of these supposedly coordinate reasons (b19f.) seems to require the correctness of the preceding section, as “if this is correct” (b16) implies, and combines closely with the “*those who ...*” clause at b17-19. Whereas the second requires neither and seems to stand entirely on its own as a reason for thinking that these writers had offered an expertise in irrelevance. They simply do not seem to be coordinate in the way this reading requires.

A final reason against this way of construing the role of b21-22 is that it seems to suggest a worrying circularity in Aristotle’s thinking. At 1354a13-16, as we saw in the preceding chapter, his argument relied on taking the fact that their techniques were for irrelevant speaking as obvious evidence that their techniques contributed nothing to the provision of proofs. It would rather undermine that argument if it turned out that here he was supposing that the fact that they had told us nothing about providing proofs were evidence that their techniques were for irrelevant speaking.

The third interpretative option for 1354b16-22 leaves the earlier argument intact, and offers Aristotle a superior argument in this section itself. This option involves supposing that b21-22 offer an additional *conclusion*. The argument as a whole then goes as follows.

1. It had previously been shown that (a) the orator's role involves the judges successfully discharging their role (1354a25f.); and (b) the orator's role is solely to offer proof of some particular view of those subjects on which judges may deliberate and be assisted by orators (1354a26-31).
2. It is correct [that the proper subjects for the judges' deliberations and hence for an orator are restricted to x, y and z]. (*"if this is correct"* b16)
3. The handbook writers spent all their time defining what each part of the speech should contain (b17-19), and in doing so covered exclusively emotional techniques [not involving x, y and z]. (b19-20)
4. Therefore (from 2 and 3) the handbook writers' techniques are for speaking that is irrelevant to the only proper subjects for judges and orator. (b16-17)
5. What is irrelevant to a subject cannot constitute any kind of proof, and specifically proof by enthymeme, of a particular view of that subject. (presupposed as obvious)
6. And therefore (from 4 and 5) they have said nothing about how to give proofs on the only subjects that are proper for an orator. (b21)
7. (from 1 and 6) They have said nothing about how to do the only thing that "belongs to the expertise" (b21). i.e. They have said nothing about successfully discharging the one activity in which the orator's role consists.

8. This in fact is a matter of being good at enthymemes (b21-2.).

On this reading, b21-22 combines together what have been separated above, namely the conclusions 6 and 7. This might seem illicit: considered on their own, 7 does not straightforwardly follow from 6. But given 1, the background understanding of the speaker's role, if rhetoric is an expertise in discharging this role, 7 can be seen to be equivalent to 6. The background understanding of the endeavour in which rhetoric is the relevant expertise was given at 1354a25-31 (speakers offer judges proofs to assist their deliberations), and that picture of the speaker's role was importantly filled out by 1354a31-b16 (the relevant deliberations relate to a carefully circumscribed range of subject matter). Appropriately, we find that once this elucidation of the orator's role and hence of rhetorical expertise has been set out, the conclusions Aristotle is able to draw from 1354b16 onwards not only demonstrate negatively the failure of the handbook writers to say much about rhetoric, but also confirm more positively the correctness of Aristotle's own position on the nature of rhetoric.

On this view, the argument to b21-22 in many ways recapitulates the argument of 1354a11-16. There are a number of reasons why this is important. One is that on this way of understanding the argument, Aristotle has made progress not just in negative polemic, but, more positively, in justifying the central tenet of his own view of rhetoric. The claim that rhetoric is an expertise in giving proofs, a claim that – we should recall – played such a pivotal role in Aristotle's opening arguments (and for which no supporting argument was initially offered), has now been given much more substantial support since its original assertion at 1354a13. On the proposed interpretation,



1354b16-22 highlights just this point. Specifically, the use of the word “*entechnôn*” (‘that belong to the expertise’) at b21 is a reminder that all of the careful argument from 1354a25-b16 about the roles of the judges and the orator had been aimed at elucidating precisely what the *technê* (‘expertise’) of rhetoric consisted in. And hence it is a much more carefully fleshed-out and justified account of this expertise Aristotle is deploying in order to determine that the handbook writers’ techniques contribute nothing to it, and that in fact it is a matter of getting good at enthymemes. Aristotle’s own proposed account of rhetoric has thus been placed on a firmer footing. How successful he has been in doing so is obviously an important matter to investigate, and will be considered in detail below.

The principal conclusion (7 above, 1354b21-22) on this interpretation is still polemical and negative. It is (as earlier at 1354a11-16) that the handbook writers have offered an expertise in irrelevance and hence not in rhetoric. This is nicely confirmed by the way it supports what immediately follows (1354b22-55a3).

The argument of 1354b22-55a3: expertise in irrelevance rather than rhetoric explains the preference for forensic over deliberative speaking.

*For this explains why, despite the fact that speaking to the assembly and forensic speaking share the same method, and despite the fact that the business of politics is finer and more statesmanlike than the business of people’s interactions, nevertheless they say nothing at all about political speaking, whereas they all attempt a technical account of prosecuting your case at law. The reason is that irrelevant speaking is less use in assembly debates [than in the lawcourts], and political*

*debate is less of a corrupt business than forensic speaking because it is more a matter of common interest. For here [viz. in the assembly] the judge is judging about his own interests, hence there is no need to do anything else besides demonstrating that things are as the deliberative speaker says they are. Whereas in the lawcourts this is not enough: it pays to win over the listener. For the judgement is being made about the affairs of others, hence looking to their own interests and listening with partiality they give in<sup>83</sup> to the disputants rather than form a judgement. That is why in many places, as we said before, the law prohibits speaking outside the issue. There [in the assembly] the judges themselves guard against this sufficiently. (1354b22-55a3)*

The thought is that having got clear what rhetoric consists in helps us to understand why the handbook writer tradition has a preference for forensic. If their skills were in rhetoric, they would work equally well if not better in political contexts as in forensic contexts. There are good reasons for preferring political to forensic speaking (it is “nobler”, “more statesmanlike”, “less corrupt” b23f, 24, 28). Hence, if the handbook writer’s skills were genuinely in rhetoric, we would expect them to have a strong preference for devoting attention to political speaking. But actually they have the opposite preference. This suggests that their skills are not in rhetoric.

In fact, the non-rhetorical ‘expertise in irrelevance’ offered by the handbook writers<sup>84</sup> works well in forensic contexts because it is not

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<sup>83</sup>*Didoasi* here probably suggests a surrender, cf. Cope [1877] *ad loc.*, LSJ II. esp 4, V, and McCabe [1994] 141; but it may simply mean that they grant the speaker their case, cf. LSJ III.2.

<sup>84</sup>Involving appeals to private self-interest (1354b8-11, b33f.) or for sympathy and favour (“*pros charin*” 1354b34).

directly in the listener's own interests to form the correct judgement. In political deliberation, what is at stake is more a matter of interests that the citizens have in common (Gk. "*koinoteron*" b29, e.g. the success of their state, the general well-being of its citizens, etc.), so the citizens' own interests lead them to be sufficiently concerned to form the correct judgement.<sup>85</sup>

The handbook writers have described a set of skills that are not rhetoric. Hence their skills are no use when judges are judging as they should and when what is needed is genuine rhetoric. Their skills come into their own when surrendering to pressure or inducements from the disputing parties has replaced the forming of judgements. And that is something that Aristotle says doesn't happen in the assembly but often does in the lawcourts.

So, the proposed interpretation of 1354b16-22 nicely prepares the way for this final piece of polemic (1354b22-55a3) against the handbook writers.

We must return to our claim that Aristotle uses his complex conclusion at 1354b16-22 to underline the additional support he now has for his earlier central claim about the nature of rhetoric – that the only thing that belongs to the expertise is proofs.

#### Support for the claim that only proofs belong to rhetoric

Although there is no passage where Aristotle has argued directly in support of this claim, we have seen that throughout the intervening

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<sup>85</sup>cf. Cope [1877] *ad loc.*

passages of argument, he relies on and gradually makes visible of his underlying view of what the expertise of rhetoric is. We suggested that his view was as follows.

Rhetoric is an expertise in discharging public speaking roles in the state – specifically, it is an expertise in helping citizens to arrive at good publicly-deliberated judgements, by making the case one way or another in relation to some proposal, so that a judgement can be made as to its merits.

If this view, as it has been progressively unveiled throughout 1354a18-1354b16, is found plausible, then it offers support to Aristotle's contention that it is only the production of proofs that constitute an exercise of the expertise of rhetoric. The way it does so is as follows.

Firstly, if rhetoric is a skill in assisting the listener towards good judgements, in ways properly sanctioned by the state, then this is reason to suppose that supplying proper grounds for those judgements is what it will consist in.

Secondly, if (as Aristotle clearly presupposes throughout 1354a24-b16<sup>86</sup>) the judges' task is specifically the cognitive task of *forming a judgement as to the truth of certain claims*, rather than (say) some more general task of dispute arbitration or deciding whose side to take in a conflict, then this is reason to suppose that supplying proper grounds for such judgements is what the expertise consists in.

Thirdly, if (as Aristotle explicitly claims in the section 1354a31-b16) the proper scope of the judgements that judges make is confined to specific

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<sup>86</sup>cf. especially 1354a25-26, a30-31, b3-4, b10.

factual claims, rather than including general evaluative claims or universal principles or even legal precepts, this is reason to suppose that proofs will be central to the kind of assistance the speaker might properly supply. To illustrate, if the judges consider the question, “Did this person commit such-and-such a murder?” all they would need are a clear definition of murder and then relevant evidential considerations. The former should be supplied by the laws, and the latter are, in Aristotle’s terminology, *pisteis* – proper grounds for conviction. Whereas if they considered the questions, “Is murder a crime?” and “How serious a crime is murder?” one might think that helping them offered much more scope for things other than providing proofs or information. Perhaps (we may speculate) the kinds of techniques that work on the emotions directly and do not function by addressing the subject at hand would be an example: Aristotle himself allows that there is a role for such approaches in moral education,<sup>87</sup> and it seems that this kind of technique was espoused by the handbook writers.<sup>88</sup> However, the combination of supposing that the expertise of rhetoric enabled the speaker successfully to assist the judge in making judgements, together with supposing that these judgements were confined to addressing specific factual claims, makes it natural to suppose that this expertise should consist largely if not wholly in the provision of proper grounds of conviction.

#### Aristotle’s justification of his key premises

So, the claim here is that Aristotle does succeed in providing justification for the two claims highlighted at the start of this chapter.

*Only proper grounds for conviction belong to the expertise [of rhetoric]. 1354a13.*

<sup>87</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104b16, 1172a20-21.

<sup>88</sup> 1354a15-18, b17-20; 1356a16-17.

and

*Rhetorical expertise has a nature such that it is simply impossible that exercising it would be prohibited by correctly-formulated laws.*

However, these claims are justified by appeal to a picture of rhetoric as an expertise in contributing by public speaking to the proper functioning of the state. While Aristotle argues carefully from this basis to the details of what the proper contributions of public speakers are, he does not argue for this basic account of what rhetoric is. He assumes it.

We have seen (in relation to the “Areopagus argument”) that Aristotle could perhaps lay claim to some dialectical entitlement to this position – some of those he is criticising would have agreed not only that correct laws would not prohibit the exercise of genuine rhetoric, but perhaps also that rhetoric is an expertise in taking part in public life. This may well be part of the explanation for why Aristotle does not feel the need to argue for his basic position on the nature of rhetoric. Nevertheless, it seems better to suppose that Aristotle simply considered his view of rhetoric to be obvious, and to have intuitive plausibility, such that it did not stand in need of justification.

We will return below to the non-exegetical question of whether this represents a weakness in Aristotle’s argument, i.e. is this view of rhetoric and the state so plausible as not to require justification?

First, however, it will be useful to see that the position here attributed to Aristotle on the nature and purpose of rhetoric, is not only based in detailed exegesis of *Rhetoric* I.1, but also coheres nicely with his views elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*.

Support from the rest of the *Rhetoric* for the proposed Aristotelian view of rhetoric

Aristotle's view is that rhetoric is an expertise that helps the state to function well. As such, of course, it will fall within the ambit of political expertise – the expertise that aims at the well-being of the state and its citizens – or, in Aristotle's terms – “the human good”.<sup>89</sup> So, on this view, Aristotle's view of rhetoric is (perhaps unsurprisingly) teleological.

Nevertheless, our proposal is that rhetoric has the specific purpose of making a very particular kind of contribution to the success of the state and of its people. We proposed that rhetoric is an expertise in helping citizens to arrive at good publicly-deliberated judgements, by making the case one way or another in relation to some proposal, so that a judgement can be made as to its merits. As we shall see, this finds corroboration in several places in the *Rhetoric*.

Aristotle's Teleological View of Rhetoric elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*

At several points, Aristotle explicitly states what he takes to be the purpose aimed at by an orator in speaking. This purpose is to demonstrate that things are as he claims, and this can be made more precise in each oratorical situation by attending to what judgement is at issue, that is, what kind of judgement the listener is to make.

*Moreover it is plain that the job of the disputants is nothing beyond demonstrating the matter at hand – that it is the case or that it isn't, that it has happened or that it hasn't. (1354a26-28)*

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<sup>89</sup>See above on rhetoric in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1.

*For here [in deliberative contexts e.g. the assembly] the judge judges about his own affairs, such that all there is to do is demonstrate that things are as the speaker says. (1354b29-31)*

*Let us take rhetoric to be an ability in relation to each thing to observe what is potentially persuasive. This is the function (ergon) of no other expertise. (I.2.1355b26-28)*

*The forms of rhetoric are three in number. For that is the number of kinds of listeners that there are for speeches. Indeed it is from three things that a speech is composed: the one who speaks, what is spoken about, and the one spoken to, and the purpose (telos) is in relation to the latter – the listener, I mean. Necessarily the listener is either a observer or a judge, and a judge is either a judge of things past or of things future. The one who makes a judgement about future things is, for example, the assemblyman; the one who makes a judgement about things past is, for example, the juror; and about ability, the observer. So there must necessarily be three forms of rhetorical speeches – advisory [or deliberative], forensic, epideictic. ... Each of these has a different purpose (telos), three [purposes] for three [forms of speech]. For the advisor it is the advantageous and the harmful (indeed, someone proposing something advises it on grounds that it is better; the opposition opposes it as being worse), and he marshals other matters in relation to this – whether it is lawful or unlawful or fine or shameful. To forensic speakers it is what is lawful and unlawful<sup>90</sup> – these*

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<sup>90</sup>This need not imply that the forensic speaker should address questions of what types of thing are (or should be) lawful or unlawful (cf. 1354a29), nor any tension with our earlier claim that the forensic speaker should be confined to the facts of the issue at hand. Given a clear understanding of the laws, it is a purely factual matter whether, in a given lawsuit, the laws were breached in the particular way set out in Chapter 2 – *Why only proper grounds for conviction belong to rhetoric.* page 91 of 272



*too marshal everything else in relation to these. To those praising or blaming it is what is fine and what is shameful – these also refer other matters back to these. (I.3.1358a36-b8, b20-29)*

The above passages seem to present a consistent view. The function (*ergon*) of rhetorical expertise is enabling the orator to see what features of the situation offer a proper basis for convincing listeners of his preferred view of the issue. The latter is the aim (*telos*) – to prove his case as securely as the situation permits. These passages offer various formulations of this aim “to demonstrate the issue, that it is the case or isn’t ...” (1354a27f.), “to demonstrate that things are as the speaker says” (1354b30f.), and more bluntly for each kind of rhetoric, the aim is stated as “the advantageous and the harmful ... the lawful and the unlawful ... the fine and the shameful” (1358b22, 26, 28). Aristotle is careful to point out at 1355b10-14<sup>91</sup> that the function of rhetorical expertise is not to persuade but to observe the persuasive features offered by the situation, and the wording is reflected also at 1355b26ff. (cited above). This should be understood entirely in line with what he understands the *aim* of rhetoric to be in the passages just noted. Rhetoric’s aim is to prove a particular view of any given issue; rhetoric’s function is to pursue that aim as best the situation permits, by bringing to light whatever features of the situation count in favour of that particular view of the issue. Where the situation does not have much to offer, the final result may be that the orator has not convinced the listener, despite having exercised a flawless rhetorical expertise.

All of this is familiar fare in the interpretation of the *Rhetoric*. But what is important here is to draw attention to the *way* in which the role and the charge.

<sup>91</sup> On the basis of comparison with other *technai*, particularly medicine.

purpose of the orator is determined by its relationship to the role of the listener. The two are intimately interrelated, as 1358b1f. makes explicitly clear. Indeed, it makes sense additionally to suppose that Aristotle thought that the role and purpose of both orator and listener are determined by their place in a larger political arrangement aimed at the proper functioning of the *polis*. In our examination above of the Carpenter's Rule analogy, it was clear that there is no conflict or tension between the orator's aim of proving *his* case, the aim of the listener, and indeed the aim of this part of the political arrangement – for instance the aim of the judge and of the courts to return the best possible verdict. It is therefore no surprise to find the same view elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*.

These passages on rhetoric's function and aim confirm the picture that we put together painstakingly from the texts of I.1. The expertise of rhetoric enables the speaker to succeed in helping the listener to a well-formed judgement – a judgement he hopes will be the one he recommends for the reasons he recommends.

Rhetoric as an expertise in discharging a valuable role in the state: is this sufficiently obvious that it needs no justification?

In English usage, there is a familiar pejorative use of “rhetoric” and its cognates<sup>92</sup> which perhaps makes it hard for the modern reader to appreciate the initial appeal of Aristotle's understanding of rhetoric. Our own conception of rhetoric perhaps owes more to Gorgias than to Aristotle. We tend to see rhetoric as associated with obscuring the truth, and promoting personal gain at the expense of careful, clear reasoning. So, the prospects might look dim for defending as obvious

<sup>92</sup>See, for instance, OED *v. sub* “rhetoric” 2.b, *sub* “rhetorical” 1.b, *sub* “rhetorician”

2.b.

Aristotle's underlying view – a view he simply presupposes in advancing the arguments of *Rhetoric* I.1 – that rhetoric is a skill in contributing to public deliberation by putting the case for a particular side of the debate or dispute.

Nevertheless, Aristotle's position can be defended very simply.

On any account, rhetoric is a skill that enables its possessor to achieve non-accidental success<sup>93</sup> at something related to public speaking. Perhaps there are a number of candidates for such success, skill in attaining which the Greeks might plausibly have called "rhetoric" (*rhêtorikê technê*). But since there is in the context of the *polis* one obvious candidate that more than any other makes the associated skill worth having, and worth valuing in others, Aristotle may be forgiven for presuming that this is the proper object of discussions about rhetoric. On his view, rhetoric is the skill that enables its possessor to be successful in contributing to the public deliberations of citizens.

Such a skill is what states – particularly Greek *poleis* – value and make provision for by cultivating the contribution of public speakers to the deliberations of the assembly or courtroom, and to other state occasions (e.g. public funerals in ancient Athens). Likewise, when an audience in a courtroom or assembly pays attention to a speaker, and hopes that the speaker will speak well, they do so on the basis that they will gain from the speaker a contribution to their deliberations on the issues before them. And what the speaker himself often hopes for is to succeed in convincing his listeners by the force of his arguments, such

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<sup>93</sup> cf. 1354a9-11.

that their adoption of his proposed view constitutes an independent endorsement of that view.

In the case of the speaker, of course, there are rival skills that might be called “rhetoric”, that would be of value to the speaker. One such would be an ability simply to bring about in listeners whatever judgements the speaker chose, without his having necessarily contributed anything to their deliberations. It seems to me that even considering the perspective of the speaker alone, this is a much less valuable skill, because its successful use wins no endorsement of the speaker’s position. Of course, as soon as one considers the skills the *state* values in a public speaker, and those *listeners* value in a speaker addressing them, it is clear that an ability to bring about in listeners whatever judgement the speaker chooses is a good deal less valuable than an ability to contribute to the deliberations of citizens.<sup>94</sup> The latter is far and away the kind of rhetoric most worth having, most worth recognising, and most worth talking about. Something like this is hinted at when Aristotle lists rhetoric among the “most prestigious” kinds of expertise in *EN* 1094b3, and there are indications at a number of points in the *Rhetoric* that Aristotle can simply take it as obvious that rhetoric is a skill whose exercise relates to certain particular kinds of context – most obviously lawcourts and assemblies.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Arguably it is part of the burden of Plato’s *Gorgias* to show that the skill that Gorgias calls “rhetoric” – a skill simply in bringing about in listeners persuasion of whatever the speaker chooses – is not worth valuing in oneself or in others. Seemingly, Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* simply presupposes this conclusion, but (as Plato had done before him in the *Phaedrus*) he appropriates the name “rhetoric” for his own theory.

<sup>95</sup> e.g. I.1,1354a4-6, b22-3; I.3, 1358a36-7. It is harder to characterise the context occupied by an epideictic speech, but perhaps the paradigm might be a funeral oration, or campaigns for election to office, where what is at issue is someone’s fine or

Chapter 2 – Why only proper grounds for conviction belong to rhetoric. page 95 of 272

If this is right, then it seems unobjectionable for Aristotle simply to presume that it is this expertise that is under discussion in a treatise on rhetoric.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, I have sought to set out how Aristotle justifies his view of the nature and purpose of rhetoric – a view which, as we saw, plays such a pivotal role in his opening arguments. His justifications turn out to appeal to a conception of rhetoric that is partly argued for and partly presupposed. Nevertheless, it coheres with his views elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*, and elsewhere in his work. And the attribution of this view to Aristotle opens up ways of understanding his arguments in I.1 as good arguments, where in the absence of this view they are flawed and puzzling. We argue that not only do his arguments have merit, but also he is entitled to the assumptions he makes about the kind of success that rhetorical expertise enables.

This clears the way to investigate what exactly Aristotle means by *pistis* - glossed here as ‘proper grounds for conviction’, and how he can claim that there can be proper grounds for conviction in the emotions of the listeners.

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base character.

## Chapter 3 – What are “proper grounds for conviction”?

In the preceding chapters, we set out a particular view of rhetoric, arguing both that it is correct exegetically to attribute it to Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, and that this view is itself plausible. The view is that rhetoric aims at the good judgement of the listeners, and is exercised solely in the provision of proper grounds for conviction. Rhetoric has this nature because it is an expertise in discharging a valuable role in the functioning of the state.

Clearly, however, this is simply an outline of an expertise in rhetoric. The present chapter is devoted to providing a more substantive account of what these proper grounds for conviction are with which rhetoric is concerned. Specifically, we will need to clarify in what way grounds for conviction must be *proper* for the providing of them to qualify as a possible exercise of rhetoric.<sup>96</sup> As we shall see, this raises some constraints on how Aristotle could make good his claim that arousing the emotions of listeners amounts to providing them with proper grounds for conviction.

We will first propose a general theory of *pistis*, and attempt to show how this fits what Aristotle says in the *Rhetoric*. We will then show how this general account works for Aristotle’s three kinds of technical *pistis*, based on argument, character and emotion. Some prominent

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<sup>96</sup>Thus this chapter offers the promised explanation of the sense in which the listener is warranted in believing a conclusion on the basis of a proof offered by a speaker (above n.4). Our account is expressed in terms of the listener’s good judgement, rather than in terms of warrant.

counter-examples to this account, involving ‘argument-’ (*logos*) *pisteis*, will be considered. The last part of the chapter considers some difficulties and apparent difficulties in fitting emotion-arousal into this account.

### Non-Technical Proofs and Technical Proofs of three kinds

It will be useful to set out first, with reference to the text of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle’s general framework for the place of *pisteis* in rhetoric.

For Aristotle, *pisteis* are the basis provided by the orator’s speech on which someone might form or hold a conviction about something (1403a9-13). Some *pisteis* are simply there to be used (e.g. witness evidence, torture evidence, and written contracts), and do not require rhetorical expertise to generate them (“*atechnoi pisteis*”), whereas the very production itself of other *pisteis* requires the exercise of rhetorical expertise (“*entechnoi pisteis*”, cf. 1355b35-9). These ‘technical proofs’ come in three kinds: those from the character of the speaker (*ethos*), those involving arousing the emotions of the listeners (*pathos*) and those that work through the argument itself (*logos*) (1356a1-20; 1377b16-28; 1403a9-13).<sup>97</sup> It is to these technical *pisteis* that we now direct our attention.

### A theory of *pistis*: what constitutes proper grounds for conviction?

It is clear from early on in the *Rhetoric* that material that is irrelevant to issue at hand does not qualify as proper grounds for conviction of the orator’s proposed view of it.<sup>98</sup> Irrelevance is an impropriety that

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<sup>97</sup>Obviously our concern is primarily with the technical proofs, and hence in references to proofs or *pisteis*, it may be presumed that unless stated otherwise it is the technical proofs that are in view.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. e.g. 1354a13-16, and chapters 1 and 2 above.

excludes material from being a possible *pistis*. On the other hand, Aristotle seems to allow that there are things that would count as exercises of rhetorical skill despite being sufficiently objectionable that they should not be done.<sup>99</sup> Thus, not every way of lacking propriety rules something out as a *pistis*. So, what is required for something to count as a *pistis*? The answer I propose might be crudely summarised thus: an orator presents listeners with proper grounds for conviction of his conclusion just if what he presents to them is – by their lights – good reason for the conclusion he is recommending.<sup>100</sup> A more precise formulation is as follows.

Proposed Characterisation of Aristotelian *Pistis*:

Orator A gives listener B a *pistis* P for judgement J iff

1. P is so related to J that, if B regards the elements of P as reputable and is correct to do so, then it would be an exercise of good judgement on B's part if B were inclined to make judgement J because of P.
2. A presents P to B as
  - a. comprised of things B is disposed to regard as reputable, and
  - b. as so related to J that, if B does regard these as reputable, B should make judgement J because of P.
3. A *pistis* aims at B's sincerely making judgement J because of P, i.e. taking himself to be right to make judgement J because of the reputability for belief of those things of which P is comprised

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<sup>99</sup> cf. 1355a29-31: Rhetorical expertise involves being *able* to argue both sides of the case, even where actually to do this shouldn't be done because it would be to persuade people of things that are inferior or base “οὐ γὰρ δεῖ τὰ φαῦλα πείθειν” (a31). Cf. also 1355b2-7: rhetoric can be used wrongly and cause great harm.

<sup>100</sup> This rough summary is intended only as an approximation to the view I am recommending.



and P's relation to J. Hence a good *pistis* will have the following additional features:

- a. P is comprised of things that B is actually likely to regard as reputable.
- b. P is such that B is actually likely to see that it stands in the relevant kind of relations to J.
- c. Presenting P to B as a basis for judgement J is actually likely to lead B to make judgement J because of P.

Our main concern in this characterisation is to state more precisely what it is about a *pistis* that makes it *proper* grounds for conviction. A *pistis* proceeds from certain premises (*protaseis*) – that this is true of all three technical kinds of *pistis* can reasonably be inferred from its being explicitly said of those involving both *logos* ('argument', 1359a6-10, 26-9; 1377b16-20) and *pathos* ('emotion', 1378a26-9). We will hope to show from a crucial passage that the above formulation correctly characterises what it is about these premises and their relation to the judgement in support of which they are offered that makes them proper grounds for conviction.

We have already seen that for Aristotle the orator's exercise of his craft should not corrupt the listener in certain ways, indeed it should assist him in making good judgements aimed at the truth.<sup>101</sup> On the above formulation, it is clear that the orator's presentation of *pisteis* does this by helping the listener to undertake a process of reasoning that has two important features. One is that the premises be ones that the listener finds reputable. The other is that the reasoning process itself proceed

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<sup>101</sup>Such a view undeniably has significant normative content, but will also prove considerably less high-minded than some competing views of rhetoric attributed to Aristotle. The merits of such views will be considered briefly below.

correctly so that the reputable character of the premises contributes towards giving the conclusion a similar character – that is, correct reasoning from reputable premises serves to make the conclusion more reputable.

Rhetorical, Dialectical Expertise and the Nature of *Pisteis*: 1355a3-18.

This passage seems to help with generating a clearer picture of Aristotle's view of what a *pistis* is.

*Since it is plain that the expert method is concerned with the proofs [Gk. pisteis], and proof is demonstration of a kind [Gk. apodeixis tis] (for we are convinced most of all whenever we think a thing has been demonstrated), and a rhetorical demonstration is an enthymeme, and this is pretty much the most important of the proofs, and the enthymeme is reasoning of a kind [Gk. sullogismos tis], and it is the job of dialectic (either dialectic generally, or one of its parts) to consider alike all reasoning, and it is clear that the one who is best able to discern this – from what and how a piece of reasoning comes about – would also be best skilled in enthymemes, provided he also grasped the subject matter of the enthymeme and how it is different from cases of logical reasoning. For what is true and what is like the truth belong to the same capacity to see. And at the same time people are to a great extent naturally inclined towards what is true and generally find the truth. This is why having a canny eye for reputable views is the mark of the same kind of person as having a canny eye for the truth. (1355a3-18)*

This is a difficult passage. Consideration of the difficulties over how the arguments work must be postponed to another occasion. For our purposes, not much hangs on this. Whatever the argumentative

structure of the passage, and whatever precisely is the correct understanding of the key terms *apodeixis*, *tis*, and *sullogismos*, a number of points seem clear about the nature of rhetorical *pisteis*.

Firstly, Aristotle is concerned to show that it is experts in dialectic who are best placed to possess an expertise in rhetoric. This is clearly the emphatic conclusion announced at a10-14. One might see the entirety of the present section as making the same point<sup>102</sup> (indeed also the very opening slogan of the treatise, “Rhetoric is the counterpart to dialectic!” 1354a1). Hence the section serves as a kind of sales pitch for his own teaching, with Aristotle suggesting that one should learn rhetoric from someone like him whose expertise makes him well placed to furnish the necessary background in dialectic. The basis for his argument is the nature of rhetoric (as concerned with providing *pisteis*) and hence the nature of the *pisteis*. The crucial point for our purposes is that Aristotle’s argument here – however we trace it out in detail – starts from the nature of *pisteis* (a3-5). A *pistis* is of such a kind, and the most important of the *pisteis*, enthymeme, is of such a kind that it is experts in dialectic that are best placed to master them. What is it about expertise in dialectic that helps with enthymemes and *pisteis*? Aristotle explicitly says at a11 that it is a matter of being able to discern “from what and how a piece of reasoning comes about” (ἐκ τίνων καὶ πῶς γίνεται συλλογισμός). So, *pisteis* are such that their successful

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<sup>102</sup>This is confirmed by the clear echoes at a14 of Plato *Phaedrus* 260-273, especially 273d2-6. Aristotle’s care at 1355a14-18 to insist against Plato’s Socrates that the expert orator need not know the truth about his subject matter is best explained by supposing that his main point in a3-18 was that expertise in dialectic enables expertise in rhetoric. Since Socrates had said something very similar, Aristotle might easily have been misunderstood as endorsing the *Phaedrus* position, hence the need for clarification.

production is a matter of knowing something about how reasoning works, and something about the selection of propositions for reasoning. Our contention is that the crucial aspect of understanding “how reasoning comes about” is understanding the inferential relations that may obtain between propositions: particularly, understanding how propositions may stand to one another as premises to conclusion such that if one accepts (and persists in accepting) the premises, one is urged towards accepting also the conclusion. This feature is precisely what is needed for skill in producing enthymemes and *pisteis* generally, i.e. for being good at rhetoric. And it lies within the province of dialectic. The other aspect of dialectical skill that is a key requirement for rhetorical expertise is an ability to select propositions that will serve as premises in an argument to the desired conclusion – an ability “to discern ... *from what* ... a piece of reasoning comes about”. Obviously part of an ability to discern the right premises is an ability to see their inferential relations to the conclusion. But if this were all that was intended by this phrase, it would make the “from what” and the “how” of all almost identical. It is more likely that what Aristotle has additionally (and perhaps principally) in mind here is the dialectician’s ability to identify premises that not only stand in the right inferential relations to the conclusion, but that are *acceptable to the listener*. These two features of dialectical skill mentioned specifically by Aristotle here help to illuminate the nature of the *pisteis* with which the passage starts. They confirm what was proposed in our definition of *pistis* set out above. A *pistis* consists of premises that are acceptable to the listener and that stand in the right kind of relations to the judgement for which they are offered as a *pistis*.

A second feature that sheds light on what a *pistis* is is the claim that a *pistis* is “a demonstration of a kind”, or “some sort of demonstration” (a4-5).<sup>103</sup> For on any plausible interpretation of this claim,<sup>104</sup> a demonstration (even a less than full-blooded specimen) will be a device by which the reputability of the premises confers reputability on the conclusion. It is for this reason that demonstration is a suitable instrument for teaching, learning and persuasion (*An Post.* I.1, 71a1-2, a9-11; *Rhetoric* I.2, 1355b26-35). This is an important addition to what we have already seen. For in dialectical reasoning, the practitioner’s purpose can be merely to get their “opponent” to abandon their starting position: that is, abandon their acceptance of propositions that they had found acceptable, by showing that they entailed an unacceptable conclusion. Reasoning can have this limited function, even when it uses acceptable premises. But demonstration aims at something more. Demonstration aims at the acceptance of the conclusion. So, in claiming that *pistis* is some kind of demonstration, Aristotle is saying that it is comprised of things that are reputable, and that it is a device by which they confer reputability on something else, namely the conclusion.

Thirdly, it seems that we can say something stronger about the connection between *pistis* and demonstration. We see this in the way Aristotle supports his claim that *pistis* is *apodeixis tis*. The supporting reason given is that we are convinced (*pisteuomen*, a5) most of all when

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<sup>103</sup> cf. Burnyeat [1990] 13-30. For the present point, nothing depends on the interpretation of *tis*.

<sup>104</sup>The original sense of *apodeixis* to mean simply ‘show’, ‘make public’ or ‘reveal’ (cf. Barnes [1975] 78) is not a plausible candidate here. However stringent, technical or otherwise the sense is in this passage, it is a case of “showing that”, and this is sufficient for the above point to go through.

we take it that something has been demonstrated. On a very literal interpretation, Aristotle has a rather weak argument here. He appears to be making an inductive generalisation from the cases of greatest or best *pistis* (*pisteuomen malista*, a5) to a conclusion about *pistis* generally. The argument, on this construal, is relaxed, to put it mildly. On a more plausible reading, however, Aristotle's argument is about what is essential to *pistis*. What he seems to have in mind is that the most successful cases of *pistis* illuminate what it is about a *pistis* that makes it successful or unsuccessful, i.e. what makes it a *good* example of *pistis*. The view thus illuminated is that a *pistis* is successful to the extent that the conclusion is demonstrated, and this shows us that every *pistis* must involve some degree of demonstrative success on pain of being so bad as a *pistis* that it is not a *pistis* at all. If this is a correct understanding of the argument of a5-6, we must understand "*apodeixis tis*" (a5) in the conclusion of that argument – "*pistis* is demonstration of a kind / a species of demonstration" – in such a way that Aristotle is not here affirming that every case of *pistis* is a defective case of demonstration. Otherwise, cases of the kind he cites apparently as the most successful kind of *pistis* at a5-6 would risk not only failing to attain that accolade, but failing to be cases of *pistis* at all, making nonsense of the argument. It is obvious that no such affirmation is involved if one reads the conclusion as '*pistis* is a species of demonstration', but Burnyeat has presented a powerful case for preferring taking '*tis*' as *alienans* over just such a reading.<sup>105</sup> Still, the

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<sup>105</sup>Burnyeat [1990] 13-39. It is not obvious that this reading cannot accommodate the merits of the *alienans* reading by reading '*apodeixis tis*' not as "some [particular] species of demonstration", but – indefinitely (cf. LSJ *v.sub 'tis'* I.A) – as "demonstration of some kind or other", and allowing that the kinds of demonstration over which this expression ranges might include the less-than-full-blooded kinds of demonstration that are central to the *alienans* reading, defective demonstration

otherwise preferable reading of 'tis' as *alienans* does seem to face a difficulty here, since it seems to have Aristotle saying that *pistis* is "demonstration of a kind", i.e. demonstration that is defective in some way.<sup>106</sup> The difficulty is avoided if we take the force of Aristotle's assertion here to be not the negative claim that *pistis* is no more than a defective demonstration, but rather the positive claim that *pistis* is demonstration of at least that relaxed, less-than-full-blooded kind. If his assertion states the minimum standard of demonstration that a *pistis* must attain, then there is no difficulty in accommodating cases of fully-fledged demonstration as examples of the most successful kind of (genuine) *pistis*. After all, when we have a demonstration that is not defective or non-standard in any way, but *is* a full-blooded specimen of demonstration, it is indeed the case – in this case most clearly of all (*malista* a5) – that we 'are convinced', i.e. we are in the state that results from proof. The suggestion must be not simply that being a demonstration is one thing among many that make a proof a good proof, but that *what it is to be a good proof* is (at least in part) a matter of its credentials as a demonstration. This would constitute a good justification for a conclusion about the nature of proof itself: that it is demonstration of some kind (a5). What might Aristotle intend by such an assertion? Clearly this is not the point at which to reach for his technical account of demonstration from the *Posterior Analytics*.<sup>107</sup> What is appealed to here is an everyday understanding of what it is to have something demonstrated. On the most obvious conjecture, two aspects are central: one relates to the way the premises are grasped, and the

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perhaps, but demonstration in some sense nonetheless.

<sup>106</sup>"only a sort of *apodeixis*, ... not as it were your full-blooded specimen, not something from which you can expect everything that you would normally expect from an *apodeixis* ..." Burnyeat [1990] 13.

<sup>107</sup>Burnyeat [1990] esp. 13-14.

other concerns the way the demonstration proceeds from them to the conclusion.<sup>108</sup> If this is right, then – as in our proposed definition of *pistis* – the more reputable the premises are to the listeners, and the tighter the inferential relation between premises and conclusion, the better the *pistis*.

Together these features of Aristotle's argument at 1355a3-18 suggest that the understanding of *pistis* proposed above is indeed Aristotle's. They also make clearer the sense in which *pistis* is 'proper grounds for conviction', and support our earlier contention that "proof" – while not perfect – has considerable merit as an English translation of "*pistis*".

Support elsewhere for the proposed characterisation of Aristotle's view of *pistis*.

The view may be further supported by reflection on what is involved in 'being convinced' (*pisteuein*). It seems as though Aristotle here thinks of being convinced as involving taking oneself to have proper grounds for conviction – at 1355a5-6 he seems to take it as simply obvious that the best cases of 'being convinced' (*pisteuein*) can illuminate the nature of a *pistis*, and precisely because of the kind of grounds for conviction that we take ourselves to have in these best cases. For him, it seems to be part of the meaning of 'being convinced' that one takes oneself to have some proper grounds for conviction. This would put his views in line with those we find at *De Anima* III.3, 428a17-23. Aristotle there is concerned to show that *phantasia* is not *doxa*, and he does this by showing that *doxa* involves what we are here calling 'being

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<sup>108</sup>These do, in fact, have their more stringent counterparts in Aristotle's technical account in the *Posterior Analytics* (71b20-24): the self-explanatory character of the axioms, and the necessity with which what is demonstrated follows from them.



convinced' (*pisteuein*, or *pistis*<sup>109</sup>). The argument then proceeds by appealing to the fact that some brutes have *phantasia*, whereas none have *pistis* (a19, a23) – hence none have *doxa*, and hence *phantasia* cannot be *doxa*. Whether or not the last sentence (a21-3) in this passage is authentic, it seems that the explanation it offers for why brutes do not have *pistis* is Aristotelian and is that brutes are not open to persuasion as is required for *pistis* because they do not have *logos*. I take it the point is not that conviction only exists where there has been an actual prior episode of someone undertaking to persuade the person in question. The point is rather that conviction is a matter of being in the kind of state – affirming something on the basis of some grounds for doing so – that is both the typical result of persuasion, and the kind of state that is open to further persuasion (someone who is convinced of something takes it that if there were better grounds for denying that thing, they would cease to be convinced of it). States of conviction in the *De Anima* as in the *Rhetoric* are a matter of taking oneself to be responding to proper grounds for conviction.

We see this account of proper grounds for conviction reflected in what Aristotle says elsewhere in the *Rhetoric* about the kinds of premises needed for rhetorical argument. Premises need to be persuasive or reputable<sup>110</sup> to the kind of people being addressed (1356b34), and this is a matter of their either being intrinsically plausible to them (*pithanon*

<sup>109</sup> It is clear that *pistis* can refer either to a state of mind, a state of conviction, as it must at e.g. *De Anima* III.3, 428a17-23, or to the grounds for someone's conviction, as it must e.g. at *Rhetoric* I.1, 1355a3-5. In some instances, a case could be made for either meaning, e.g. *Rhetoric* I.2, 1356a13; II.1, 1377b25.

<sup>110</sup> *Endoxon* at 1356b34 appears to be used as simply a synonym for *pithanon*, used immediately before this at b28. It seems to be given a slightly more precise sense at 1357a12-13 where having premises that are 'agreed' seems to be distinct from and correlative to having premises that are 'reputable' (*ex endoxôn*).

*kai piston*, b29) or being shown to follow from things that are intrinsically plausible (b29f.). This, typically, is a matter of the premises being recognisable to listeners as the kind of thing they are accustomed to using in sound deliberation (1356b37f.). Seemingly, for premises to be reputable and for them to be agreed are distinct, but both can contribute to making an argument persuasive (1357a12-13). Such premises may consist in likelihoods of various kinds (1357a34-b25) or of examples with a similarity to the case in question (1357a7-21). Interestingly, although premises for rhetorical proofs could be intrinsically plausible or inferred from things that are, Aristotle deems it necessary to clarify that this does not require the orator to go back to first principles in the relevant subject matter. To do so would either confuse the listener with an argument too long to follow (1357a3-4, a10-12, a16-23), or would in fact involve a departure from exercising *rhetorical* expertise into the exercise of an expertise in some particular subject area (1358a2-26). Premises should be such that listeners are disposed to regard them as reputable, either by their being intrinsically plausible to them already, or because they can be quickly inferred from things that are. Finally, there is the obvious point that Aristotle's phrases "*to (endechomenon) pithanon*" – the (possibly) persuasive (1355b15f., b26, b33f.; 1356a12f., a20, b28-9; 1403b19) and "*ta hyparchonta pithana*" – the existing persuasive things (1355b10-11) – typically refer simply to features of the circumstances surrounding the forensic case or political proposal with which the orator is concerned. On our proposed account of *pistis* these are those features (or combinations of features) that the listeners are disposed to regard as reputable, and which stand (and can be presented as standing) in the relevant kind of relation to the speaker's conclusion. In this way, Aristotle can insist that "the things referred to" (τὰ ὑποκείμενα

πράγματα) by the speakers have an influence on the effectiveness of their case. Things that are “true” and “better” will generally yield the better argued and more persuasive side of a debate (1355a36-38). Indeed, he summarises his treatment of the *pisteis* as a treatment of “what things give the facts themselves (αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα) their persuasiveness” (1403b19), and insists that it is right for the speaker to ‘fight with the facts themselves’ (1404a6; cf. also 1416a37).

#### The proposed characterisation of *pistis* and the use of premises not believed by the speaker

It will have been noted that the proposed account of proof offered above does not exclude the use by the speaker of premises that he himself does not take to be true or reputable. All that is required is that proofs consist of material that the listeners are disposed to regard as reputable, and that *if true* are good grounds for judging the conclusion true. It might be worried that this leaves open the possibility that speakers pervert the course of justice or lead the assembly astray by appealing to popular beliefs that they know to be misleading misconceptions. In so doing, they would not serve the civic goals that rhetoric is supposed to serve. The worry is justified, but only up to a point. Aristotle is optimistic about the extent to which popular views track the truth (1355a14-18), and is happy to allow that even if the fallibility of popular beliefs allow the unscrupulous practitioner opportunities for leading the citizens astray, that same set of beliefs will generally be affording *more* and *better* opportunities to the other side of the debate to persuade the citizens of what is true and right (1355b36-8).

However worrying or otherwise this is, it certainly seems to be Aristotle's view. There is a much-discussed example at *Rhetoric* I.9, 1367b22-27 of the kind of unscrupulous practice in question, an example which is sometimes cited as showing that Aristotle's view of rhetoric had no normative content.<sup>111</sup> In fact this passage creates a difficulty only for more idealised accounts of rhetorical expertise sometimes attributed to Aristotle,<sup>112</sup> and fits nicely with the view of *pistis* offered here.

*Since praise is made on the basis of actions, and what is distinctive of the good man is what is done from choice, you are to try to show that he acts from choice, and it is useful that he be taken to have done these actions on many occasions. This is why coincidences and things that happen by chance are to be taken as if they were by choice, for if many similar things are produced, they will be thought a sign of virtue and choice. (I.9, 1367b22-27)*

This is probably the best example of such underhand practice. It is difficult to deny that Aristotle is endorsing the practices described in this passage: his use of the gerundive 'to be taken' (*lêpton*) seems clearly a prescription to the orator to proceed in this way.<sup>113</sup> But does

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<sup>111</sup>e.g. Sprute [1994] 123-7. His list of "morally questionable tricks" includes also II.24 (discussed below) and II.21, 1395a8-10, where Aristotle's point is surely just that it can sometimes be important to state something more crudely or sweepingly than is really the case, presumably in order to convey the force of the point. Note that even here, Aristotle is careful to confine such a strategy to the opening or closing summary, not the proofs section.

<sup>112</sup> e.g. Irwin [1996] esp. 142-46. Irwin even cites this passage at 163 but seems not to see the difficulty for his position.

<sup>113</sup> A gerundive that is undeniably prescriptive occurs 3 lines earlier 'you are to try' (*peirateon*), and there are myriad other examples throughout the *Rhetoric*.

this violate Aristotle's earlier restrictions on what can count as a *pistis* and hence on what counts as an exercise of rhetorical expertise? It is possible to read this instruction charitably simply as advice to the orator not to be too fussy about whether each action in a series of apparently similar actions was by chance or by choice. Or it may be that the advice concerns cases where it is hard to know the exact motives for a series of similar actions: Aristotle advises the orator to allocate the 'benefit of the doubt' in the way that suits his case. Still, let us adopt a less charitable reading for the sake of testing our proposed account of *pistis*, since this passage has sometimes been read so.<sup>114</sup> To take an example, I praise Helen as being compassionate (having the virtue of compassion), and cite her numerous trips to the hospital visiting the sick – despite the fact that I know that in several of these cases the fact that the people she visited were sick and in hospital was a matter of coincidence – she was in fact collecting debts from several of them.

Aristotle here describes this kind of case as a sign-argument (1367b27 *semeion*), where the sign in question is in fact a sign for two related things:

*Sign*: that Helen went often to the hospital and visited the sick.

*Signified 1*: that Helen makes fully-fledged *prohaireseis* to visit the sick in hospital, i.e. that she chooses these actions because they are cases of visiting the sick in hospital, and chooses them from a character-disposition.

*Signified 2*: that Helen is compassionate

For this argument to be a *pistis*, and to be the kind of thing that counts as an exercise of the expertise of rhetoric, it must on our account satisfy

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<sup>114</sup>e.g. as "direct instructions to lie" (Sprute [1994] 125).

two requirements. The first is that the 'persuasive feature' (*to pithanon*) in this case be presented as itself something that the listener will find reputable, and as something that, if true, makes it an exercise of good judgement to suppose that Helen is compassionate. In this case, absent any special reason to disbelieve it, the listeners are likely to regard the sign, that Helen went often to the hospital and visited the sick, as believable simply on the basis of the speaker's testimony. The problem is supposed to arise in the way this fact is related to the beliefs that Helen is compassionate and that she makes *prohaireseis* to visit the sick in hospital. For simplicity, we will refer only the former of these. The difficulty is that there is potentially a deception here: the implication is that Helen's coincidental visits were caused by her compassion, when in fact they were not, and the speaker knows they were not.<sup>115</sup> Aristotle, on this reading, comes very close to endorsing lying ("are to be taken as in the realm of choice", 1367b25f.), since it sounds as though he is suggesting that the orator assert directly what he knows to be false, namely that these occurrences were a result of the relevant kind of choice. So, there would be plenty here to count objectionable, by Aristotle's own lights<sup>116</sup> as well as our own. Still, I think that even on this uncharitable reading we do not have a violation of the specific normative conditions proposed above for something's being a *pistis* and hence being an exercise of rhetoric. The reason is this. The fact that Helen has visited the sick in hospital many times simply *is* good grounds for supposing that she is compassionate. The move from believing the sign to believing the signified is wholly proper, even though there is no guaranteed connection at all between sign and signified, and certainly the sign does not guarantee the truth of what it

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<sup>115</sup>Note that on the more charitable interpretations of this passage, such contexts would not be among those that Aristotle has in mind for what he advises here.

<sup>116</sup>*Nicomachean Ethics* II.7, 1108a19-23; IV.7, 1127a17-26.

is appropriately taken to signify. It is an exercise of good judgement on the listeners' part if they judge Helen compassionate on the basis of this sign. Aristotle's language here is non-committal about whether this is genuine case of a sign (*sêmeion*) – he says that many similar things “will be believed to be” (*doxei*) a sign of virtue and choice. This might imply that he thinks this is not a genuine case of a sign, since the coincidences were not caused by virtue or choice. But equally he may simply be showing that what is important in deploying this kind of proof is what the listener thinks. The listener (quite properly) registers something like the following: that the likelihood of Helen being compassionate, given her many hospital visits, is higher than it otherwise would be. On something like this basis, he takes her visits to be a sign of her compassion. Even though, in fact, these visits are not caused, as perhaps is implied, by her compassion, still it is entirely proper for the listener to move from believing that Helen has made many visits to the sick in hospital to believing that she is compassionate. So it is entirely compatible with producing genuinely rhetorical proofs that these use material that the speaker does not himself believe.

Quite aside from these exegetical considerations, one should note that although this kind of behaviour on the part of a speaker may often be objectionably insincere or deceptive this need not always be so. Indeed, the use of premises one believes to be flawed need not even involve insincerity at all. An atheist might use genuinely rhetorical proofs in persuading an audience of Christians by appeal to the authority of Christ or the Bible, whilst freely avowing that he himself did not recognise their authoritative status.

A “weaker” view of *pistis* considered, and the problem of apparent enthymemes in *Rhetoric* II.24.

In case it is thought that this leaves Aristotle’s account of *pistis* rather weak, and inadequate to promote the civic goals set out earlier, we should contrast our proposed account of *pistis* with another weaker possibility. That is that a *pistis* involve something that the audience merely *take to be* proper grounds for inferring the conclusion. This really seems too loose, and seems not even to rule out the use of irrelevant speaking that Aristotle specifically excludes in *Rhetoric* I.1. In cases where folk are swayed by irrelevant speaking, at the time they endorse the conclusion, they typically (mistakenly) take it that the speech has constituted good grounds for believing it.

Perhaps there is a plausible version of the loose view that would rule out irrelevant speaking. Some exegetical support for a looser view than the one I have proposed comes from passages seeming to allow that *apparent* enthymemes can constitute genuine *pisteis*, and hence find a place in the art of rhetoric. Still, 1356a35ff. seems inconclusive here, and the evidence of II.24 is not conclusive either. Many of the *topoi* of II.24 are unobjectionable. In relation to those that are not, while “*chresimon*” (‘useful’, 1401a9) and “*touto dei poiein*” (‘one should do this’, 1401a27f.) seem to suggest that Aristotle endorses these techniques as part of rhetoric, 1402a26-28 possibly implies that he excludes them from the art of rhetoric and confines them to the practices of non-artistic, manipulative ‘rhetoric’ (in the pejorative sense recognised at 1355b19f.) and of eristic. Arguably, Aristotle’s position at 1355b15-21 and 1356a35-b8 is this. It is part of the knowledge involved in rhetorical expertise to know how to use merely apparent



enthymemes effectively.<sup>117</sup> But exercising the expertise involves having particular aims (involving the listeners' good judgement) which could not be furthered by the use of techniques that led listeners to form judgements improperly.

#### More "high-minded" views of *pistis* considered

A passage like 1367b22-27 shows clearly what is misleading about more high-minded views of Aristotelian rhetoric, such as that of Irwin.<sup>118</sup>

"The view that considerations of what is "fine" and morally right enter into deliberation about means fits Aristotle's claim about rhetoric. When he says that the orator must not try to persuade every audience and must not be unscrupulous in the choice of means to secure persuasion, he implies that moral considerations should influence the orator's decisions. Since moral considerations belong to political science, the relevance of these considerations may explain why Aristotle regards rhetoric as an appendage of political science." ([1996] 145-6)

We have already offered a rather different explanation of the way in which Aristotle thinks rhetoric and political science are related (to which should be added the concern with character, which adds another but very limited way in which rhetoric is related to political science, as a sort of offshoot. 1356a25-7<sup>119</sup>). We note in passing that, *pace*

<sup>117</sup>This would yield a sense in which it makes sense to advise the orator on how fallacious techniques "should" be used (cf. 1401a27f.): i.e. if you were to undertake to use them, this is how you should do it.

<sup>118</sup> cf. also Halliwell [1994] 216-9, 221, 228-30; Wörner [1990] 24; Grimaldi [1972] 19-21. The issue is discussed at length and a resolution different from mine offered in Engberg-Pedersen [1996].

<sup>119</sup>This is what I take to be the correct understanding of 1356a25-7, the passage to which Irwin appears to allude (cf. "appendage of political science") in the passage

Irwin, Aristotle does not quite say that the orator must not try to persuade every audience – he says that with some listeners it wouldn't be *easy* even with the most exact understanding of the subject matter, and indeed that deploying *that* kind of 'scientific' knowledge in those circumstances would be impossible (1355a24-7). Still, Aristotle does indeed say that there are some kinds of persuasion that the orator should not undertake. The orator should not persuade listeners of "inferior things" (*ta phaula*) (1355a31). This, I think, is a much more limited restriction than that implied by Irwin. Most significantly, Aristotle does not either say or imply that to persuade listeners of inferior things would not count as an exercise of rhetorical expertise, or as a case of producing *pisteis*. So, the objection to the handbook writers at the start of the treatise and the objection to persuading people of inferior things here are of two very different kinds. Irrelevant speaking is objectionable in a way which disqualifies it from counting as producing *pisteis* and hence from being an exercise of rhetoric at all. This kind of technique cannot promote good judgement in the citizens listening, and so cannot possibly contribute to the civic aims that rhetoric serves. In this sense, because rhetoric contributes, as we would say, *epistemically* to the success of the state, there are some *epistemic* requirements, failure to meet which disqualifies something from being an exercise of rhetoric at all. Persuading people of what is base, however, is objectionable on (as we might say) *moral* rather than *epistemic* grounds. It is of course true that Aristotle thinks that with oratory, as with all human activity, there are requirements, claims of virtue and considerations of what is "fine", that mean that an orator should not exercise his expertise in certain ways.<sup>120</sup> But failure to meet

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quoted.

<sup>120</sup>It is, in any case, not clear what these "inferior things" are of which an orator ought not to persuade people. Some take "*phaulos*" to mean – roughly – bad. The

these requirements entails only that the orator is acting badly, it does not disqualify his activity from being an exercise of rhetoric, a case of producing *pisteis*. Notice also that a mere handful of lines further on from the passage to which Irwin alludes, Aristotle explicitly allows that rhetorical expertise – like other good things – can be used wrongly and thereby cause great harm (1355b2-7).

This approach seems also to provide the right response to worries arising from Aristotle's apparent recommendation of arousing the passion of *phthonos* (envy) in the audience, as an exercise of rhetorical expertise.<sup>121</sup> Such a practice might be objectionable on ethical grounds.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, even if so, the most this would show is that the speaker *should not* arouse *phthonos* in his listeners. But this is fully compatible, on our proposed view, with supposing that arousing *phthonos* can – even on those occasions – constitute a genuine case of providing a *pistis*, and hence be a genuine exercise of rhetorical expertise. As such, it should come as no surprise to find in a treatise on rhetoric instruction on how to arouse *phthonos*, alongside some less-

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predominant meaning in LSJ has to do with inferiority of status, which suggests an objection of more limited scope. Or Aristotle's objection here might even be to arguing for the "weaker" side of a case: that a virtuous orator ought never be trying to make the weaker case appear the stronger.

<sup>121</sup> *Rhetoric* II.10, 1388a27-30 is very naturally read as offering such a recommendation. The issue is ably discussed in Sanders [forthcoming], who argues that there is no such recommendation.

<sup>122</sup> The objection would run as follows. *Phthonos* is inferior (Gk. *phaulon*, 1388a35f. – plausibly 'bad', since it is here contrasted with *epieikes*) and belongs to inferior (or 'bad') people – so to arouse it risks reinforcing an ethically bad attribute in the citizen audience.

than-glowing remarks about the ethical credentials of the emotion and those who feel it.<sup>123</sup>

Applying the characterisation of rhetorical *pisteis* to each kind of *pistis*.

Logos proofs

Successful proofs of the kind Aristotle describes as proceeding ‘through the argument’ (1356a19) will have the following key features.

- (1) The audience is disposed to regard *pistis* P as reputable, and the speaker presents P to them as such:
  - a. the audience EITHER taking P to be intrinsically plausible
  - b. OR coming to see that P is warranted by things that they find intrinsically plausible
- (2) The speaker presents P to the audience as proper grounds for judgement J – i.e. as so related to J that if the audience regard P as reputable, then they have proper grounds for making judgement J because of P. And the audience accept this.
- (3) While the audience may or may not be correct about the reputability of P, they are correct to recognise the relation between P’s being reputable and the probity of making judgement J.
- (4) The audience recognises P as proper grounds for making judgement J.

The end result, of course, is not necessarily that the audience comes to make judgement J, but that they come to recognise what they take to be proper grounds for making it. Some more complex cases may involve

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<sup>123</sup> 1388a35-6.

iterations of the above schema, such that where the audience comes to what they take to be a properly formed judgement as a result of this kind of proof, the orator may then use this judgement as the basis for a further argument. That is, J may be merely an interim conclusion, one step in a longer argument.<sup>124</sup>

#### How this works in the case of *ethos* proofs.

Proofs of the kind Aristotle describes as being ‘in the character of the speaker’ (1356a2), or ‘through his character’ (a4f.), will have the following key features.

1. The orator presents the audience with evidence that he is of good character.
2. The audience regard it as reputable on this basis that this particular speaker is of good character.
3. The audience infer from this that the speaker is trustworthy (*pistos*)
4. The audience hears this particular speaker recommend judgement J.
5. So the audience believe the following: this speaker is trustworthy, and he recommends J, so probably it is correct to judge J.
6. The audience recognise this speaker’s trustworthiness as proper grounds for making judgement J.

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<sup>124</sup> Aristotle’s practical advice on keeping rhetorical arguments short, in the section 1357a7-21, is just that: there is nothing in the formal structure of rhetorical arguments that prohibits multiple steps. It is the cognitive limitations of the audience that mean that an argument must not be too long to follow.

In the terms of my earlier proposal, there is here a *pistis* of which the audience have a well-founded acceptance, and which provides proper grounds for making judgement J. The *pistis* is the conjunction of ‘this speaker is trustworthy’ and ‘this speaker recommends judgement J’. The second conjunct is obviously something that it is easy for the audience to find reputable, simply by hearing the speaker recommend J in his speech. The first conjunct comes from taking the speaker to be of good character. At times, Aristotle presents this as though it were a very intellectual matter (II.1, 1378a6ff.), where the speaker’s character is inferred from evidence he presents in his speech for his own wisdom, virtue and goodwill, and then the speaker’s trustworthiness (*axiopistos* 1356a5f., *pistos* 1378a6, a15) is then inferred from these elements of his good character. But I take it that we need not suppose this to be an explicit thought process in the listener’s mind. In fact it is better thought of as the activation of a disposition – evidence of someone’s wisdom, virtue or goodwill is sufficient to activate a (rational) disposition to treat that person as trustworthy. Aristotle more-or-less says this in his book I formulation concerning character proofs at 1356a6ff., “we believe / trust / treat-as-reliable good people more, and we do so more readily: this applies generally on all subjects, but applies absolutely where precision is impossible and there are things to be said on either side.” Clearly Aristotle intends this both as a general statement about how humans are disposed to respond to what others say, and as an *explanation* of how the character of the speaker can function as a *pistis*, as a basis for being justified in accepting some further conclusion. So, presenting evidence for the good character of the speaker functions in rhetoric simply to activate this general disposition in these particular circumstances, in relation to *this* speaker, and what he is saying *now*. The listeners’ apprehension of the speaker’s

character need not be an explicit thought process to which they attend, merely something they – one way or another – take to be the case (*phainesthai* 1377b26, *hypolambanein* b27, *dokounta* 1378a14, *phaneien* a16). They believe the things Pericles has said, because they believe Pericles – *he* himself is what is *pistos*, and if his character is good it provides the strongest of proofs (1356a13). When asked to justify why he thought a particular course of action was best, an assemblyman could reply, “because Pericles said it was,” perhaps supplemented with some comment on Pericles’ wisdom, virtue and patriotism.

(How enthymeme might turn out to be the body of proof on this model)

Before we come to how this model works for *pathos* (emotion) proofs, we may make some observations about the role of enthymemes. This model of what is required for something to be a *pistis* fits with a plausible reading of Aristotle’s assertion at 1354a15 that enthymeme is the “body of *pistis*”. Let us recall that, for Aristotle, enthymemes are pieces of inferential reasoning (1355a8) that constitute “considerations”<sup>125</sup> in favour of the speaker’s case. On the proposed understanding of proof, enthymemes will underlie the workings of proofs of all three kinds, *logos*, *ethos* and (as we shall see) *pathos* proofs. The expression “the body of” (we might compare our English expression “the guts of”) need not carry the implication that there could never be a case of *pistis* that did not involve an enthymeme. But the implication would be that, in most cases,<sup>126</sup> something’s being a *pistis* would be as a result of its being substantially an enthymeme. This

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<sup>125</sup>The literal meaning of *enthymema* is a consideration. Cf. above n.18, and Burnyeat [1990] for more detail on the kinds of inferential reasoning involved in an enthymeme.

is because even in the kinds of proof that use character and emotion, one can describe the way in which the proof works as an enthymeme. These proofs involve the listener moving from accepting one or more “premises” to accepting a “conclusion” in a way that can be accounted for precisely by the way in which those premises are related: they are related in such a way that the premises serve to make the conclusion reputable. Thus, if one looks at the *contents* of the listener’s mental states, the things he accepts as he follows the proof, one has a set of premises and a conclusion, and an inference that has the structure of an enthymeme. We might allow that the standard case of an enthymeme involves the listener consciously *believing* the premises, believing that the conclusion is made reputable by the premises, and then coming to believe the conclusion. Character-proofs and Emotion-proofs will simply be variants on this standard case since they will involve mental states that constitute acceptance of one or more premises of such a piece of reasoning, but without those mental states necessarily being ones of consciously believing those premises.

On this understanding, we distinguish the relevant ways of describing how a proof works, seeking to highlight at each point the contents of the listener’s mental states.

*Ethos*-proofs:

1. I hear Callias credibly present evidence of his own good character
2. I trust Callias (I treat Callias as being of good character)
3. I know that Callias asserts that J

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<sup>126</sup> The obvious exceptions are *logos*-proofs using examples (and perhaps some kinds of signs), and perhaps merely-apparent enthymemes, which Aristotle seems to allow to be cases of *logos* proof at 1356a35ff..



4. I believe J

This can be redescribed in terms of the contents of my mental states.

1. Evidence for: Callias is of good character

a. This evidence is reputable

2. Callias is of good character

3. Callias recommends J

Therefore (or 'this is good grounds for asserting')

4. J

And what we have here in this latter sequence seems to be an example of an enthymeme, where the premises recommend the conclusion. We should note that step 2 above involves a mental state – trusting Callias – that we can treat as having the intentional contents 'Callias is of good character'. It constitutes good judgement to trust someone on the basis of evidence for their good character, and it is similarly a matter of good judgement to make judgements because they are recommended by someone in whom you have a properly-formed trust. This is a case of good judgement precisely because of the underlying enthymeme, i.e. because trusting has a kind of intentional content which is about the trusted person's character, and if this is correct, it is capable of constituting proper grounds for precisely the further judgements that it disposes you to make when you trust somebody.

*Pathos-* (emotion-) proofs

Similarly, the suggestion is that the emotions involved constitute affirmations of one or more premises that are part of an underlying enthymeme. So we get a sequence of mental states as follows.

1. I register evidence that Smith is a dangerous character

2. I feel afraid of Smith (I feel that Smith is a dangerous character)

3. I believe Smith is guilty of assault

This can be redescribed in terms of the contents of those mental states.

1. Evidence for: Smith is a dangerous character

a. This evidence is reputable

2. Smith is a dangerous character

3. Smith is guilty of assault

If this is right, then here too we see the key characteristics of enthymeme: the premises confer reputability on the conclusion. We will consider below and in subsequent chapters whether the above could indeed form the basis of Aristotle's view of *pathos-pisteis*. For the moment, this sketch of a view shows how it could be that enthymematic argument underlies all of the kinds of technical proofs within Aristotle's theory of rhetorical *pistis*.

How this then sets a challenge for *pathos* proofs: an apparent problem solved but a deeper challenge generated.

We sketched above an outline of how in all kinds of *pisteis* including *pathos*-proofs there is an enthymematic argument underlying the proof. But in that account, we did no more than set out how there could be a sequence of mental states with contents such that certain inferential relations held between those contents. Proof requires more than this. We said that a requirement was that if the listeners were correct to regard the premises as reputable, it would be an exercise of good judgement for them to make the recommended judgement *because of the premises*. That is, what is presented must be such that the listener could believe the conclusion *for that reason*. Indeed, it is precisely when the listener believes the conclusion *on the basis of the proof* that the proof

has been successful.<sup>127</sup> It is a requirement of rhetorical proofs that, if they are successful and the listeners acquire beliefs on the basis of accepting what is presented, their acceptance of the premises of the proof be a *well-founded* basis for believing the conclusion. In other words, once it is granted that the listener accepts as reputable the premises of the proof they should not be liable to any epistemic criticism for taking these as good grounds for believing the conclusion.

An initial puzzle is that this appears at first sight problematic in the case of emotions.

In general, we can see whether something is a good basis for believing a conclusion by reference to two tests.

1. Can this thing be cited by believers themselves as a justification for their believing the conclusion?
2. Can we cite this thing as a third-party explanation for how a believer was justified in believing the conclusion?

In the case of argument proofs, it is obvious that these tests are passed. We justify our beliefs by citing an argument, and even where the argument turns out to be flawed, we might cite the fact that we believed it at the time to justify rationally our believing the conclusion. Similarly, we explain how someone's belief in a conclusion is well-founded by adverting to a good argument that they believe that supports it; and likewise it constitutes some level of defence of a person's good judgement to advert to an argument whose premises

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<sup>127</sup> This is not to say that the proof is necessarily deficient if it is not accepted – unusually stupid people might fail to understand a perfectly good rhetorical proof, for example. But proofs aim at being the basis on which someone believes their conclusion.

*they* believe, even when those premises are known in fact to be false (or when their believing them is known to lack proper grounds).

A similar story can be told for believing someone on the basis of their character. We support our beliefs by reference to the character of the person on whose authority we believed the conclusion. We explain the well-foundedness of the beliefs of others by reference to their having received them on trust from someone trustworthy, and we do so even when the beliefs have turned out false.

So, I might believe that *p* because I believe an argument to *p*, or because I believe Callias (who says that *p*). These are familiar ways in which we justify our beliefs to ourselves and others – we relay the argument that persuaded us, or we advert to the reliable testimony of the person we believed, “Callias told me, and he is honest as the day is long.”

Our claim is that there is a similar story to be told about the emotions and the justification of beliefs.

This might not seem immediately obvious for two reasons. Firstly, we do not cite our emotional states directly as justification for our beliefs in the way we do cite an argument or the character of an informant. In answer to the question, “Why did you think Smith guilty?” it seems a weak kind of justification to say, “Because I was in the emotional state of fearing him.” Secondly, we do not cite the emotional states of others directly as part of explanations of their epistemic success. Thus, “she judged that Smith was guilty because she was afraid of him,” would be more typically understood not as a justification of her judgement at all,

but as a way of saying that her judgement was impaired. There is thus some reason to doubt whether emotions can justify beliefs in the ways that facts and beliefs can.

However, the resolution of this apparent problem should already be clear. If we simply use the form of expression “feel that ...” to describe emotional states, then they start to seem on a par with beliefs. Thus, we may offer justifications of our beliefs as follows. “I believe that Smith is guilty of assault because I feel he is a dangerous character.” This is simply a redescription of my feeling afraid of Smith making explicit the content of the emotion. This also suggests that if my fear of Smith had played an important part in my concluding that Smith was guilty of assault, it would not be misleading to say, “I believe that Smith is guilty of assault because he is a dangerous character.” That is, once we understand clearly the role played by the contents of emotional states, these contents can be cited directly, in justification of conclusions inferred from them, in just the same way as we do with beliefs.

This, I propose, is exactly how Aristotle is able to see the arousal of the passions as the provision of proof, and is the explanation at work behind his belief that passions affect our judgements (1356a15f.; 1377b31-78a5) – a belief that features in the very definition of the passions offered in the *Rhetoric* (II.1, 1378a19-22).

A deeper problem for the claim that arousing emotions is a way of providing proof

However, substantiating this account presents a deeper challenges. The contents of emotions must be affirmed by the subject in something like the way beliefs are – they cannot merely be appearances. In short,

Aristotelian passions must be shown to have the right characteristics to occupy the role in *pisteis* proposed here. Showing this will be the task of chapters 5 and 6.

Before this challenge is taken up, however, we should address directly a long-standing problem<sup>128</sup> facing any interpretation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in relation to emotion-arousal. The problem is the apparent stark contradiction on whether emotion-arousal has any place at all in rhetorical expertise. The next chapter criticises previous approaches to this problem, and proposes a new solution.

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<sup>128</sup>Stephanus seems to worry about it in his commentary on the *Rhetoric* (Stephanus 287-8, CAG 21 pp. 297-8).

## Chapter 4 – The contradiction problem over emotion-arousal

The principal focus of this chapter will be to propose a solution to the contradiction problem of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the difficulty that Aristotle appears to hold contradictory views about the admissibility of emotion-arousal as a component of rhetorical persuasion.

We have seen that Aristotle objects to the techniques put forward by the writers of rhetorical handbooks on the grounds that these cannot contribute to the provision of proofs (e.g. 1354a11-16). Since it is in proofs alone that rhetorical skill is exercised, their handbooks tell us nothing much about the expertise of rhetoric. The techniques in question are clearly connected with emotion-arousal (“slander, pity, anger and similar passions of the soul” a16f., “anger, envy or pity” a24f.), and we shall see that it is the prominence in Aristotle's critical remarks of this connection that has given rise to puzzles about whether these criticisms are compatible with the important place (as one of the three kinds of technical proof) given to emotion-arousal in his own position.

I shall be principally concerned with setting out and opposing what I shall call the “Contradiction View” (hereafter ‘the CV’).<sup>129</sup> That is, I shall be opposing the interpretation of the relevant passages that gives rise to a contradiction within the *Rhetoric*. Whilst this position offers quite a plausible interpretation of some key passages, it generates

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<sup>129</sup> Barnes [1995] 259-262; Wisse [1989] 17-20; Fortenbaugh [1992] section VII; Kennedy [1985]; perhaps Cope [1877] 6. If the “Contradiction View” can be shown to be incorrect, then this further undermines the motivation for attributing to Aristotle two conceptions of rhetoric, an “austere” or idealised conception and a “normal” or pragmatic conception. See above Ch. 1 n. 37.

significant difficulties in other respects. Quite apart from the contradiction itself which this view obviously generates, the other difficulties with the CV are enough to make it deeply unattractive. I thus offer an alternative interpretation that resolves the contradiction, ascribing to Aristotle a position that is consistent throughout the treatise. Of course, I am not the first to attempt this task. Many have felt that somehow the interpretation of *Rhetoric* I.1 offered in the CV cannot be correct, and have sought to interpret this chapter in ways that avoid inconsistency with the rest of the treatise.<sup>130</sup> Hence, I will also make clear how my resolution of the difficulties, though having much in common with some of these accounts, differs from them in important respects and represents a genuinely new approach to the issue. The claim is that the new approach preserves what is attractive about these previous solutions whilst avoiding the intractable difficulties they have typically faced in finding the desired views in Aristotle's text. It also, arguably, provides – and turns crucially on – a new and historically highly plausible picture of the targets of Aristotle's criticism in *Rhetoric* I.1.

I

#### The apparent Contradiction Problem and the “Contradiction View”

The CV is an exegetical conclusion based on the following difficult passages in the *Rhetoric*, in which Aristotle criticises his predecessors.

*These days, those who put together Arts of Speaking have provided us with scarcely a part of it.<sup>131</sup> For it is only the proofs that belong to the art, other things are mere accessories. But they say nothing about*

<sup>130</sup> Cope [1867] 4-6; Cooper [1999]; Wardy [1996] 114-6; Grimaldi [1972] 44; Schuettrumpf [1994]; Burnyeat [1990] 10 n.26.



*enthymemes, which are the body of proof; whereas they devote most of their treatment to things that are outside the issue. For slander, and pity and anger and passions of the soul of this kind are not about the issue, but aimed at the juror. (1354a11-18)*

*One shouldn't warp the juror by leading him on to anger, or envy or pity, for that would be like someone warping the ruler he is about to use. (1354a24-26)*

*If this is correct, then it is obvious that it is an expertise in irrelevance [lit. "things outside the issue"] that is the subject discussed by those who give definitions of other things, such as what the introduction or narrative should contain or each of the other parts of the speech – since in them they busy themselves with nothing except how to put the judge into a certain condition, and they set out nothing about the proofs that belong to the expertise, that is to say the means of becoming good at enthymemes. (1354b16-22)*

On the face of it, what is at issue is the arousal of emotions in general. The lists – anger, pity, envy, and the general phrases “passions of the soul such as these”, “put the judge into a particular condition”, etc., certainly suggest this. These other writers saw stirring the emotions as part of rhetoric, and Aristotle criticises them not merely for their *exclusive* focus on these things, but for including them within rhetoric at all. He is absolutely crystal clear – the art of rhetoric is about the

<sup>131</sup> Or “have produced only a small part of it” depending on whether one reads “οὐδὲν ὡς εἰπεῖν πεπορίκασιν αὐτῆς μόριον” or “ὀλίγον πεποιήκασιν αὐτῆς μόριον” (or indeed “ὀλίγον πεπονήκασιν αὐτῆς μόριον” as Kassel [1976] conjectures). In fact, little hangs on this difference, since there is an uncontested “οὐδὲν” at 1354b21 in a passage clearly aimed at making the same point.

technical proofs, and centres around enthymemes; it does not include things that are “outside the issue” (or “irrelevant”). Emotions are outside the issue, and so arousing them is no part of rhetoric.

The apparent contradiction is then striking, when Aristotle affirms at I. 2.1356a1-20 that arousal of listeners’ emotions is one of the three kinds of proof that belong to the art. Indeed, in this passage he appears to make the very link that is so problematic. He says the following about the kind of proofs that work through the emotions of the listeners.

*[Proofs] through the listeners, whenever they are brought into an emotional state by the speech: for we do not make judgements in the same way when upset as when we are glad; or when hostile as when friendly. And this is, as we said, the only thing the current handbook writers attempt to treat. These things will be made clear one by one when we speak about the emotions.(1356a14-19)*

So, in this passage, Aristotle is talking about his own three technical proofs; he refers forward to his account of the emotions in II.1-11; and he says – referring back to his own remarks at I.1 – that it was this very subject that previous writers spent their labours on: their fault mentioned here seems to be that they treated of nothing else. On the face of it, it seems that here Aristotle’s *pistis*-by-emotion, one of three kinds of *entechnoi pisteis* (technical proofs) in his own theory of rhetoric, is the very same subject which, in I.1., he rejects as having *no* place in rhetoric.<sup>132</sup> The above passages, on the natural reading just given, seem

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<sup>132</sup> This is a difficult passage for anyone denying that Aristotle contradicts himself in the *Rhetoric* in relation to emotion-arousal. An alternative understanding of this passage will be offered below.

to provide a strong basis for thinking that Aristotle's views in the *Rhetoric* on emotion-arousal are contradictory.

So, what I am calling the "Contradiction View" (CV) is firstly the exegetical view that the key phrases,

*"slander and pity and anger and passions of the soul of this kind"*  
(1354a16f.)

*"leading him on to anger or envy or pity"* (1354a24f.)

refer to the passions in general, and that the handbook writers' techniques are criticised on the basis not that they involve emotion-arousal in the wrong way, but that they involve the arousal of emotions at all.

It is secondly, and consequently, the view that there is something of whose role in rhetoric Aristotle approves in *Rhetoric* II.1-11, I.2, etc., and of whose role in rhetoric he disapproves in *Rhetoric* I.1. More strongly still, there is something of which Aristotle says in *Rhet* I.2, II.1, etc. that it has an important role in rhetoric as one of the three *entechnoi pisteis*, and of which he says in *Rhet* I.1 that it has no role in rhetoric. So, for example, Barnes and Wisse, whilst differing as to their diagnosis of how Aristotle's text came to contain a contradiction, both clearly hold the view that there is indeed a stark contradiction here.

Barnes writes:

"[in *Rhetoric* I, Chapter 1] the art is austere: although arousing the emotions may well be effective in getting an audience on your side, the study of the emotions is no part of Aristotle's rhetoric – it is not, strictly speaking, a mode of persuasion. ...

[but] the contention of Chapter 1 seems to be rejected in Chapter 2. Here rhetoric is still concerned with “the modes of persuasion”. But Aristotle now distinguishes among these modes. ... As for the technical modes [at 1358a2-4] ... the second item looks suspiciously like the appeal to emotions which Chapter 1 expressly banned, a suspicion which is confirmed a few lines later at 1358a13-14. ... Something is awry. Perhaps a subtler scrutiny will show that the first two chapters of the work are after all consistent with one another? Perhaps we should rather suppose that the two chapters are “doublets,” one of them originally written to supplant the other, which were unconvincingly published together by Andronicus? Perhaps Aristotle was in a muddle himself? Most scholars now prefer the first of these suggestions.<sup>133</sup> Myself, I opt for the second. ... In sum, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 do not seem to cohere with one another.” (Barnes [1995] 261-263)

Similarly, Wisse writes:

“The contradiction is obvious: the ‘technical’ means of persuasion are here identified with the enthymeme, and everything else, especially *pathos*, is explicitly excluded from the ‘art’ (*technê*). ... It is inescapable, therefore, to accept that here [viz. in *Rhetoric* I.1] Aristotle does not regard *pathos* as part of the art of rhetoric, which is inconsistent with his concept of the three technical *pisteis* put forward in the second chapter of the *Rhetoric*. ... Accordingly, attempts to interpret the first chapter differently and to remove the inconsistency are all

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<sup>133</sup> I will show below that there are serious problems with previous attempts to resolve the contradiction. The resolution proposed here proceeds on quite different grounds from the proposals found unconvincing by Barnes and Wisse.

unconvincing. Grimaldi's idea, e.g., that Aristotle only rejects 'emotional appeals which are totally extraneous to the issue', and that he sanctions appeals which are not, has no support in the text of the first chapter: such a distinction is simply not there. Sprute's claim that Aristotle's statements in 1,1 only concern an ideal art of rhetoric, corresponding to an ideal set of laws, will not do either. Aristotle's opinion [in *Rhetoric* I.1] that *pathos* is non-technical is an unqualified one ..." (Wisse [1989] 18-19)

The Contradiction View seems to have substantial textual support, and seems based on common-sense interpretations of some important passages. On a number of these passages alternative readings will be offered below. But initially, and particularly because the reading of the text involved in the CV is so entrenched, it will help to show that despite these initial attractions, a wider look at the views the CV attributes to Aristotle shows it to be in fact deeply implausible. We shall see that as well as the major contradiction itself, this view creates further deep interpretative problems, mainly through its attributing to Aristotle some highly implausible views. So, I first hope to show that the CV cannot be correct as it stands. I also want to show that there are good grounds for denying the principal contention of the CV, that it is emotion-arousal generally of which Aristotle both says in *Rhet* I.2, II.1, etc. that it has an important role in rhetoric as one of the three *entechnoi pisteis*, and of which he says in *Rhet* I.1 that it has no role in rhetoric. There is a strong case to be made that Aristotle is talking about different things in these passages – what is criticised in I.1 is something quite distinct from what is advocated in I.2 and II.1-11. Thus, even independently of the contradiction itself, I suggest that there are strong

grounds for rejecting the CV. Showing the CV to be less attractive than it first appears will help to establish the need for an alternative proposal. In the process, we will uncover a host of *desiderata* for an interpretation of the *Rhetoric*, especially of the first chapter, many of which are not met by the CV but are met by the proposed alternative.

## II

The CV cannot stand as the correct interpretation of *Rhetoric* I.1 for several reasons. Our main concern in this section will be with reasons drawn independently of the contradiction over emotion-arousal. Nevertheless, this is itself a good reason against accepting the CV. The CV involves Aristotle in a contradiction within one and the same work.<sup>134</sup> This is already a motivation to reinterpret charitably, if a possible interpretation can be found.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, it is a very flagrant contradiction – so flagrant that, if the CV reading of I.1 is accepted, it is hard to see how Aristotle could have missed it. (Aristotle insists that current handbook writers have told us nothing about *the pisteis* (1354a13), nothing about *the entechnoi pisteis* (1354b21), one of which is the *pathê* of the listeners.) Explanations in terms of redactors, or different periods of Aristotle's own thought,<sup>136</sup> should be a last resort if an interpretation cannot be found that makes sense of the treatise as

<sup>134</sup> Note that problems of inconsistency in the *Rhetoric* have been a key part of the arguments put forward by those who argue against the unity of the treatise. Solmsen [1929]; Barnes [1995] 262-3.

<sup>135</sup> The aim of avoiding attributing inconsistencies to the author is an interpretative principle that applies whether or not the work was published. And to acknowledge the need for caution about attributing inconsistencies need not spring from dogmatic insistence upon consistency for all authors in all cases (*pace* Wisse [1989] 11).

<sup>136</sup> Solmsen [1929]; Fortenbaugh [1992]; Barnes [1995]

it stands – after all, such hypotheses are urged principally on the basis that the text we have cannot otherwise be explained.<sup>137</sup>

However, quite apart from these considerations, the CV seems to raise as many difficulties as it solves. The reading of 1354a11-26 involved in the CV has all emotion-arousal in its scope. But this will entail attributing to Aristotle the belief that all emotion-arousal would have been ruled out by Areopagus rules. Such a belief would be false, and Aristotle surely would have known it. That the CV commits Aristotle to believing that the Areopagus rules would have ruled out all emotion-arousal is clear. On this view, 1354a16-18 declare all emotion-arousal to be “outside the issue” (1354a16-18). This is supposed to be grounds for thinking (“ὥστ’” a18) that any such technique would fall foul of the Areopagus rules or any similar laws in well-governed states, thereby leaving the handbook writers with “nothing to say” (a20-1). Thus, if emotion-arousal generally is “outside the issue”, any rhetorical technique that involves it thereby (a22-3) violates the Areopagus rules. That the Areopagus rules did *not* in fact prohibit all emotion-arousal is clear.<sup>138</sup> Although we have only three surviving examples of speeches before the Areopagus from the relevant period, all by Lysias,<sup>139</sup> they do not seem to support the CV. All of these end with explicit appeals for the judges’ pity, and at the very outset of Lysias 7 the trial situation is summarised in a way that is clearly

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<sup>137</sup> Views of this redactional or developmental kind are charted in both Grimaldi [1972] 28-31, and Wisse [1989]

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Laani’s proposal ([2005] 125-6) that appeals to pity were not considered irrelevant to the charge.

<sup>139</sup> Evidence surveyed in Ober [1989] 341-9. The three speeches are Lysias III (defence against Simon), IV (defence on a Wound by Premeditation) and VII (defence in the matter of the Olive Stump).

designed to arouse fear. The most obvious way to account for this is to suppose that these appeals to emotion *were* permitted by Areopagus rules because they were *relevant*.<sup>140</sup> But the CV involves supposing that Aristotle denied this. So, the CV not only attributes to Aristotle a contradiction, but a false and rather implausible view of what would have been permitted by the rules of the Areopagus.

The attempts to explain the contradiction (as hyperbole, the “rhetoric of the rhetoric”,<sup>141</sup> the ‘ideal rhetoric’ view of I.1, “polemic tend[ing] towards emphatic statement ... a brief passage of arms”,<sup>142</sup> etc.) in other ways are unconvincing. It is quite hard to get a clear view on what the ‘rhetoric of the *Rhetoric*’ view amounts to, and indeed how it explains anything. The most charitable construal of it seems to be that Aristotle was so intent upon denigrating competing approaches to teaching rhetoric, that he incautiously advanced against his opponents exaggerated arguments that count against significant swathes of his own theory too. The sense of “rhetoric” at work here would be the use of arguments that are chosen more for their impact than because they

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<sup>140</sup> It is of course not the *only* way to account for these features of the Lysias speeches. One might suppose that the form in which we have them is not the form in which they were delivered. One might suppose that these supposed violations of the Areopagus rules (as the CV envisages them) somehow escaped censure. But these are surely less plausible than to suppose that prohibiting all irrelevant speaking did not rule out (and was not taken by Aristotle to rule out) all arousal of emotion.

<sup>141</sup> Kennedy [1985]; Wisse ([1989] 19) mentions this view although it is unclear whether he wholeheartedly subscribes to it.

<sup>142</sup> Grimaldi [1972] 20f.. As is clear from the preceding chapters, in opposing these views, I am not denying that Aristotle is concerned with criticising the views of others. The issue under dispute is whether his arguments are properly interpreted as reflecting his considered views, and indeed whether they are properly described as “arguments” at all.



state Aristotle's precise position. One can see the advantages of this view: Aristotle's considered position on emotion-arousal is the one he develops in *Rhetoric* I.2 and II.1-11;<sup>143</sup> we should not take seriously the precise views expressed in a brief "passage of arms" whose purpose is better understood as merely a forcible assertion of the superiority of his own views over those of his predecessors. They are a kind of exaggerated overstatement of his real views.<sup>144</sup> However, this will not do as a view of the opening chapter. Firstly, the "passage of arms" in question is far from brief. Aristotle's rejection of the handbook writers' methods is, as we have seen, woven into the entire argument of 1354a11-55a20. A central contention of this section, a conclusion repeated three times (1354a15ff; 1354b16ff; 1355a19f) is that the subject matter of these rhetorical handbooks is "outside the issue", which is taken to be (at 1354a11-16 and 1354b16-22) a reason for thinking it no part of the art of rhetoric. Citing the rules of the Areopagus against irrelevant speaking, and lengthy argument for their correctness are all supposed to support this point. The structured argument against the handbook writers extends certainly to 1355a3, and more likely to 1355a20. So the "rhetoric of the *Rhetoric*" view is committed to an extremely lengthy passage of invective (1354a11-55a20) that is not to be taken to represent Aristotle's considered views. But a further problem

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<sup>143</sup> Rather puzzlingly, Wisse ([1989] 20) suggests combining this view with the claim, "we may conjecture, Aristotle was in the end as much out of sympathy with *pathos* as he claims to be in the first chapter." If, as this suggests, the first chapter does after all reflect Aristotle's genuine views, then this "rhetoric of the *Rhetoric*" theory simply fails to provide a "way out of the difficulty" at all. Wisse is correct to label this a "conjecture" on his part, for there is not a shred of evidence outside *Rhetoric* I.1. for this view. The "rhetoric of the *Rhetoric*" theory is much more plausibly thought of as a way of marginalising as polemical hyperbole the anti-emotion-arousal views of I.1. Cf Kennedy [1985].

<sup>144</sup> "Deliberate exaggeration" Kennedy [1985] 132.

is that this view faces great difficulty making plausible sense of the things Aristotle says. If what we have here is some kind of exaggerated overstatement of Aristotle's position, what could be the more sensible set of arguments of which this is an exaggerated version? To put the point another way, this view faces a dilemma. If there is a kernel of good argument, sincerely advanced by Aristotle, in these sections, and this core of argument really does count against the arousal of emotion generally, then it counts against Aristotle's own position later in the treatise and the contradiction is as stark as ever. If there isn't or it doesn't, then it is hard to see what remains of any value in this long section of *Rhetoric* I.1, on this view, once the alleged hyperbole has been stripped away. Aristotle's polemic here is that the handbook writers' techniques were for irrelevant speaking, and were for that reason no part of rhetoric: it is very hard to see how that can be separated out into sensible core argument and exaggerated hyperbole. Finally, in relation to this view, it seems to me not to take seriously the careful argument and serious tone of this first chapter. What we have in *Rhetoric* I.1 is simply not a torrent of invective, it is a series of carefully constructed arguments. The section 1354a11-55a20 repays careful study of its arguments, as I hope has been evident from previous chapters, and even linguistic considerations indicate what kind of writing this is. The section is replete with logical connectives (for example, "γὰρ" occurs 12 times, "εἰ" 4 times, "ἄν" 6 times, "ὥστε" 5 times, "ἦ" 19 times, "μὲν" 13 times, "οὖν" 4 times) and 1355a18-20 certainly purports to offer a summarised conclusion of a section of *arguments*. Of course this "rhetoric of the *Rhetoric*" view is correct in claiming that Aristotle here is advancing a polemic, in the sense that he is arguing for his own view in preference to other views with which he signals his disagreement. But this either does nothing to remove the

apparent contradiction with later parts of the *Rhetoric*,<sup>145</sup> or it does so by an objectionably cavalier approach to the sincerity and thoughtfulness of Aristotle's arguments in the text of I.1. For sure, we are dealing here with polemic, but it is polemic advanced through careful philosophical argument.

One way<sup>146</sup> of attempting to soften the contradiction supposes that Aristotle's criticism of the handbook writers is for the fact that they focus on the arousal of emotion *to the exclusion of everything else*. Undoubtedly this is an aspect of their failings ("οὐδὲν ... ἄλλο ... πλὴν" 1354b19f; perhaps "τὰ πλεῖστα" 1354a16, "μόνον" 1356a16). But this simply does not constitute the main or only thrust of what Aristotle actually says against the handbook writers. It is not just the exclusion of other things, such as enthymemes, that Aristotle finds objectionable; it is also their emotion-arousal techniques *themselves* (1354a16-8, 24f., b16-20).

There are further difficulties for the CV. The CV involves supposing that the subject matter of Aristotle's targets here is the *pathê* in general. However, this makes it mysterious why *diabolê* ('slander') is in the list, indeed at the very head of the list. It is not a *pathos*, nor, out of several extant lists of *pathê*<sup>147</sup> from the period, is there any in which it appears.

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<sup>145</sup> Kennedy ([1985] 132) seems to concede this, carefully noting that this view is compatible with continuing to make recourse to developmental hypotheses to explain the apparent contradiction.

<sup>146</sup>Cf. Cooper [1994] 194-5, Cope [1867] 6 and Schütrumpf [1994] 101f., where this strategy is invoked *alongside* another way of addressing the apparent contradiction.

<sup>147</sup> Plato, *Philebus* 47e1; Aristotle, *DA* I.1.403a16-18; *EN* II.5.1105b21-3; *EE* II.2.1220b12-5; *MM* I.7.1186a11-14; Ps-Aristotle, *Rhet ad Alex* 34.1440a38-b2;

The CV has to reinterpret *diabolê*<sup>148</sup> as a substitute for the results of *diabolê*, which are normally taken to be anger (a problem for this view, since it is already in the list), antagonism or hostility.<sup>149</sup>

A further problem relates to Aristotle's views about the passions. If the aspect of the handbook writers' methods that Aristotle has in mind is the arousal of the *pathê* generally, then this commits Aristotle to a hugely implausible generalisation about the passions. On this view, he is saying that anger, pity and passions in general are not "*peri tou pragmatos*", that is, they are not 'concerned with the issue'. *Prima facie*, this generalisation is simply false – one can be angry at a murder, a fraud, a theft, a rape, and the same is true of pity, hostility, and the rest. Whether taken as a claim about the *pathê* themselves, or about their arousal, it just seems absurd to think that they cannot be about (say) the central issue of a trial. The claim would have been as implausible to

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<sup>148</sup> e.g. Barnes [1995] and Wisse [1989] both translate διαβολή as '[the arousal of] prejudice'. LSJ has both "slander" and "prejudice" as meanings of διαβολή – the latter translation is perhaps possible, but none of the passages cited support a view of *diabolê* as an emotion. In support of our insistence that *diabolê* is not an emotion: Cope [1877] says "It denotes the exciting of suspicion and ill-will in the minds of the judges or audience, in order to prejudice them against the opponent with whom you are in controversy: and is therefore improperly classed with the πάθη or emotions such as ἔλεος and ὀργή. This has already been noticed by Victorius and Muretus: the latter says, 'διαβολή non est παθος, sed pertinet ad iudicem ponendum ἐν παθει.'" p.7. Cf. also Rapp [2002] 44f.. Grimaldi [1980] 10f. notes "In itself διαβολή is not an emotion; it produces an emotion." He also cites the long opening excursus of Demosthenes *On the Crown* (1-9) on the illicit advantages brought by accusation and slander, and draws attention to phrase "τοῖς ἔξωθεν λόγοις" (18.9) as a reference to slander, a phrase that clearly refers to the activity of the speaker and not to the mental state of the listener.

<sup>149</sup> cf. 1416a4f.; 1382a2f..

Aristotle and his readers as to us.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, it seems very difficult to reconcile with the evidence we *do* have for Aristotle's views on the passions.<sup>151</sup>

That his generalised claims about the irrelevance of the *pathê* are hard to make plausible on the CV is another reason for suspecting this view.

So, there are not inconsiderable motivations for seeking a better alternative.

### III

We saw above that, at least *prima facie*, 1356a14-19 shows that what Aristotle objected to in the handbook writers is the very same thing as

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<sup>150</sup> Plato (*Phileb* 50b-c) thought that emotions had truth-apt contents. Thus the issue in, for instance, a trial seems just the category of thing that might constitute a suitable object for the passions.

<sup>151</sup> Aristotle clearly thinks that passions *can* be "about" something, and there is no reason to suppose that this could not include the "issue" at stake in a trial. Although Aristotle nowhere in the *Rhetoric* uses *peri* plus genitive for what a passion is about, he frequently uses *peri* plus accusative. For example, "φανερὸν ἐκ τούτων καὶ τὸ θαρρῆν τί ἐστὶ, καὶ περὶ ποῖα θαρραλέοι εἰσὶ καὶ πῶς διακείμενοι θαρραλέοι εἰσὶν." 1383a14ff; "ἔστω δὴ αἰσχύνη λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ περὶ τὰ εἰς ἀδοξίαν φαινόμενα φέρειν τῶν κακῶν," 1383b13ff; "σχεδὸν περὶ πάντα φθόνος ἔστι" 1388a2f.. In fact, "ἐπι" plus dative is Aristotle's favoured construction for specifying the contents of an emotional state, but it is clear from the variation in constructions in *Rhetoric* II.1-11 that he took "περὶ" plus accusative to be interchangeable with it. On the CV interpretation, Aristotle's generalisation in I.1 about the passions could only be made consistent with these remarks from book II by supposing that whilst passions may be *peri* the issue (accusative) they are not *peri* the issue (genitive).

he includes in his own account as one of three kinds of technical proof. Nevertheless, we will be claiming that this is not in fact the case.

Let us initially note a number of indicators that suggest that the subject matter treated by the handbook writers criticised in I.1 is not the same as that which in Aristotle's own scheme is one of the three *entechnoi pisteis*.

The item at the head of the list of things Aristotle criticises in the handbook writers has no place in Aristotle's own account of the proofs. *Diabolê* is not a state of mind at all; in Aristotle's terminology it is not a 'passion of the soul',<sup>152</sup> and it is not among the emotions whose arousal has a place in Aristotelian rhetoric. In fact, *diabolê*, so far from being an emotion, is an *activity* – slandering or maliciously accusing someone;

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<sup>152</sup> LSJ has "prejudice" among the possible meanings of διαβολη, but this is misleading. In none of the passages cited does the word seem to refer to the mental state of the listener, nor to require any other meaning than slander. The occurrence of the word elsewhere that seems nearest to requiring the meaning "prejudice" is in Antiphon *De Caede Herodis*, 71, where the jurors are urged to deliberate "μη μετ' ὀργης καὶ διαβολῆς". Yet even here, the meaning "slander" is quite possible – indeed sections 74ff. make it clear that it is precisely slander made by the opposing speaker that is being referred to. The word does not refer to the mental state of the listener. The point of mentioning anger and slander together is that they are two corrupting influences on deliberation that the jurors are here instructed to avoid. But this does not mean that they exert their influence on deliberation in the same way – indeed at section 91 of the same speech, they are distinguished on precisely this point. Moreover, both elsewhere in the same speech (86, 91), and elsewhere in Antiphon (*Tetr.I.4; Choreut* 7-9), *diabolê* and *diaballô* always either permit or require being understood as referring to slander or false accusation made by an opponent, rather than to the mental state of the listener. The English word "prejudice" is only apt in connection with *diabolê*, if treated as a verbal noun: *diaballein* might thus be translated as 'to (attempt to) prejudice' someone against someone else.

and there is an associated activity of countering such slander. These activities are strongly associated with the *proemium* section of the speech – not just by Aristotle’s predecessors, but by Aristotle himself (III.14-15). It is an activity therefore that centres around the listeners’ states of mind prior to the narrative of events, or the argumentation for accepting the speaker’s claims. If we take seriously Aristotle’s own view of *diabolê*, from III.14-15, it is an activity which may occupy whole sections of the speech (this part of book III is arranged according to the sections of the speech:<sup>153</sup> 14 on *prooimion*; 15 on *diabolê*; 16 on *diêgêsis*; etc., such that there is perhaps even a suggestion that *diabolê* may at times itself be a distinct section of a speech), or which will more usually belong in the conclusion or the proem.<sup>154</sup> Crucially this puts it separate from any claims about the facts of the case, their narration in the *diêgêsis*, or arguing for them in the *pisteis* section. Indeed, it is clear that for Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, the activity of *diabolê* is something entirely distinct from any kind of argument for the orator’s conclusion, even an argument from character. Arguments and their rebuttal are discussed under ‘*pisteis*’, in III.17, entirely separately from *diabolê* and

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<sup>153</sup> The numbering of sections is obviously not Aristotle’s own, but the division of this part of the treatise into sections dealing successively with each section of a speech is clearly signalled in the text itself. This is the fundamental arrangement of this part of the treatise (III.13-19) on *taxis*. Aristotle’s view is that certain activities are associated with each section, but that these activities may not be confined to that section alone. For instance (1415b9ff), gaining listeners’ attention is one of the central purposes of an introduction, but may be needed in other parts of the speech too. Likewise, *diabolê* and countering *diabolê* ‘belong’ with ending and introduction but can be found elsewhere too.

<sup>154</sup> For Aristotle, if you are prosecuting, your *diabolê* should be at the end to make it remain in the listeners’ minds, if you are defending, your countering of *diabolê* will need to be at the beginning, to secure the listeners’ open-minded attention at the outset. III.14.1415a29-34.

its rebuttal. And whereas the defending orator is told that he will need to undermine *diabolê* right at the start of his speech, in order to gain the fair-minded attention of the listeners, there is no similar instruction to start one's speech by countering the opponent's *arguments*.<sup>155</sup> These are dealt with as part of what is covered under *pisteis*, in III.17. The result of *diabolê* is not a case that needs to be refuted, but the production of "κωλυοντα" (1415a32), hindrances or obstacles. Removing these is one of the "ιατρειματα" – antidotes – that are needed before the orator's case can get underway. This should alert us to the possibility that in Aristotle's complaint about *diabolê* in I.1, he is not criticising the arousal of some *diabolê*-related emotion, but criticising the very use of *diabolê* itself. Considering *diabolê* on its own for the moment, it is obvious how *diabolê*, 'slander', can be plausibly charged with being 'not about the issue'. Indeed it is notable that Aristotle himself makes this very point again, when he discusses *diabolê* in book III. When advising how *diabolê* can be undermined, he suggests attacking your opponent's use of *diabolê* on grounds that it shows a lack of faith in the *pragma*, the actual facts of the case at hand (ὅτι οὐ πιστεύει τῷ πράγματι. III.15.1416a37). Both in book III and in book I, he can take it as simply obvious that *diabolê* is not related to the facts of the case at hand.

A further signal that what Aristotle criticises in I.1 is distinct from the emotion-arousal he advocates elsewhere in the treatise is what he seems to take as *obvious* in his critical arguments at I.1. In relation to slander and the other things criticised at 1354a16ff, Aristotle is able to take it as *simply obvious* to his readers that these things are "outside the

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<sup>155</sup> A familiar example of this is Socrates' in Plato's *Apology*, who right at the start tackles *diabolê* and spends considerable time on this before getting to the actual indictment only at 24b.



issue". To the extent that Aristotle provides arguments to support this claim, these are found at 1354a31-b16. Yet these merely establish that the "issue" in question for the jurymen is confined to establishing the facts of the case. Beyond this, Aristotle just takes it as *obvious* that the kinds of thing that are the objects of his criticism are irrelevant to "the issue" thus specified. Do these categories include Aristotle's own methods of emotion-arousal? On the face of it, they do, since it is natural to understand his words "pity, anger and similar passions of the soul" (1354a17) as referring to all arousal of these emotions. But it is hard to see how Aristotle could have held the view that all such things are "outside the issue", let alone taken this to be so obvious as not to require argument. Consider the contrast on this point between emotion-arousal and slander. It is abundantly clear in both Aristotle and elsewhere (particularly in the orators) that *diabolê* is the presentation of irrelevancies – this is perhaps even part of what it is for something to be *diabolê*.<sup>156</sup> On the other hand, it seems equally clear that when Aristotle suggests that (for example) referring to someone's gratuitous acts of *hubris* is a good means of arousing anger against them (1378b25), he is *not* advocating speaking irrelevantly. What surely is obvious here is that it is just such matters as these that are highly likely to be relevant in a forensic situation. Thus "obvious irrelevance" (in the eyes of Aristotle and the audience he envisages for the *Rhetoric*) seems to apply to the handbook writers' methods but not to Aristotle's proofs through emotion-arousal. Therefore when we are seeking an interpretation of 1354a16f, "pity and anger and similar passions", we would ideally want this to refer to a category of things whose irrelevance was *as obvious as* that of the first item in that list, *diabolê*, and to a category that did *not* include such things as the

<sup>156</sup>cf. Demosthenes 57.33; Isaeus *Fragmenta*. 3, fr.1: 2.6; Lycurgus in *Leocratem*, 1,149;

Lysias 3.46.

reference to someone's deliberate acts of *hubris* – whose irrelevance is certainly far from obvious! This is good reason to seek an interpretation such that the categories of activity that are the objects of Aristotle's criticisms at 1354a16ff. do not include the kind of emotion-arousal that he advocates as one of the three kinds of technical proofs.

We have touched already on the awkwardness of attributing to Aristotle the view that the rules against irrelevant speaking actually observed in the Areopagus prohibited all use of emotion-arousal. We may now go further and say that this reference to the Areopagus suggests that what Aristotle criticises in 1354a14-31 is likely to be things that typically *were* ruled out by the Areopagus rules. Since Aristotle's own proposed use of emotional proofs – emotional arguments with emotional premises – are not of this kind (and since at least *diabolê* at a16 clearly is), this should give us further reason to suspect that the use of emotion-arousal that he recommends is something distinct from the things he criticises in 1354a14-31.

Further evidence for this distinction is to be found in *Rhetoric* book III. The treatment of *taxis* (arrangement [of the speech]) occupies Aristotle from III.13 to III.19. Within this section, Aristotle seems to echo material *both* from the parts of I.1 containing the criticisms of the handbook writers *and* from the sections setting out his own view of the *pisteis* (in relation to emotions, particularly I.2 and II.1-11). But the way in which these echoes occur suggests that Aristotle thinks of these as quite distinct subjects. *Rhetoric* III.14 (on *prooemia*, introductions) and III.15 (on *diabolê*, slander) contain several echoes of Aristotle's criticisms of the handbook writers from I.1 – principally related to

techniques that are “aimed at the listener”<sup>157</sup> or irrelevant<sup>158</sup> or distort the listener’s judgement.<sup>159</sup> And perhaps most significantly, these criticisms recur once again in a context in which they are closely connected with *diabolê*. Despite all this, Aristotle does not seem to see any connection here with the emotions. These sections contain no echo of or reference back to I.2 or II.1-11, even though, to the extent that they concentrate on *eunoia* (goodwill) and *diabolê*, we might be inclined to say that they have a good deal to do with emotion-arousal. They do not use the word “πάθος”, nor Aristotle’s standard words for the individual emotions. This is surely rather surprising on the view that in I.1 the defects – centering on irrelevance and distortion – highlighted by Aristotle in the handbook writers’ techniques arose precisely from their use of audience emotions. Aristotle’s use of terms like “πάθος” returns with his treatment in III.16 and 17 of the sections of the speech designated for setting out the speaker’s case and proving it. These sections – i.e. the sections on the parts of the speech that Aristotle sees as central to proof and properly belonging to the *technê* of rhetoric (i.e. as ἔντεχνόν) – do include discussion of how to use *logos*, *êthos* and, crucially for our interests here, *pathos*. So this section of book III on *taxis* seems to show familiarity with *both* of the earlier supposedly-contradictory passages, but treats the subject matter of each quite distinctly.<sup>160</sup> We suggest that this is evidence that they *were* distinct.

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<sup>157</sup> 1415a35 cf. 1354a18

<sup>158</sup> 1415b5, 6; 1416a37; cf. 1354a15f., 17f., b16f., 27; 1355a1-2, 19.

<sup>159</sup> 1416a36f. cf. 1354a24-26.

<sup>160</sup> This presents a particular difficulty for attempts to explain the supposed incompatibility between earlier sections by assigning different sections to different times or different authors (e.g. Barnes [1995]).

However, the central claim of this chapter will be that what Aristotle criticises in I.1 is much more specific than emotion-arousal in general: emotion-related activities closely associated with speech introductions and with important similarities to *diabolê*. What is wrong with these activities, as we shall see, is not their connection with the passions but their lack of connection with the issue at hand. If this can be established, then Aristotle's remarks in book III are rather less surprising. On this view it is just what we should expect that when Aristotle speaks of *prooemia* and *diabolê* (III.14-15), we get echoes of his criticisms at I.1, but no echoes of his account of the *pathê* at I.2 and II. 1-11. Whereas when Aristotle speaks of the core of the art – statement of case, and proof (III.16-17) – we do find references to the *pathê*, consistent with his own view of their role in providing proof and hence their status as genuine exercises of rhetorical expertise. Of course, this leaves puzzling why, back in *Rhetoric* I.1, Aristotle uses the phrase “and pity and anger and similar passions of the soul” as part of his criticism of the handbook writers, and more must be said to explain this. Nevertheless, it seems that the cross-references, and the summary recapitulations of his position found in book III tell in favour of associating his I.1 criticism with *diabolê* and speech introductions, and against interpreting it as a criticism of *all* arousal of the *pathê*.

If, then, despite initial appearances and the apparent evidence of 1356a14-19 we have good reason to think that what Aristotle criticises in this opening chapter of the treatise is distinct from what he later recommends, we should turn our attention to providing a characterisation of what it is that Aristotle is so concerned to oppose in this opening passage. We are rejecting the CV claim that it is the

arousal of emotions as such that Aristotle has in mind here. In doing so, we need to propose a plausible alternative.

What Aristotle is really criticising at 1354a14-31.

The question of what and whom Aristotle is criticising can be helpfully approached by what will at first sight seem a perverse move, namely by ignoring for the moment most of the key phrase (i.e. “slander and pity and anger and passions of the soul like these” 1354a16-17) he uses to describe the targets of his criticism. This will be helpful in taking a view of the other considerations bearing on the question. The considerations adduced so far show that it would make for a very attractive interpretation of *Rhetoric* I.1 if a plausible target for Aristotle’s criticism could be produced that was obviously open to the charge of irrelevance, clearly likely to fall foul of the Areopagus rules on relevance, and could allow *diabolê* to fit naturally into the list, with its normal meaning of slander. Just such a target is found historically in the use of theatrical techniques for generating (especially) pity,<sup>161</sup> in the use of set-piece speech sections learned from a collection, in long introductory sections, in the use of *diabolê* – irrelevant and often false material whose only purpose is to show one’s opponent in a bad light. In many cases, particularly with introductions and *diabolê*, the irrelevance would be clear because these techniques would be deployed before the speaker had even set out his case in a *diêgêsis* (‘narrative’ or ‘statement of case’) section, let alone proved it with *pisteis*. Of these techniques, some are very likely to have found their way into rhetorical handbooks by the time Aristotle is writing. Thus, we have relevant ancient evidence that the way in which emotion-arousal in rhetoric was taught involved using standard *topoi*, that could

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<sup>161</sup> cf. Plato *Apology* 34b-35b.

be learned up and deployed more-or-less irrespective of the particular people or particular facts of the case. Aristotle's objections would surely be well targeted here, since the deployment of such formulaic *topoi* is unlikely to relate in any important way to the truth of the matters under consideration. Examples of this use of formulaic *topoi* for emotional effect would be Thrasymachus' *Eleoi* ('Pities'), and exercises such as Pseudo-Demosthenes' *Exordia* (Introductions).<sup>162</sup> If there were a plausible way in which what Aristotle says about the methods and the authors he is criticising at 1354a14ff. could refer to techniques such as these, this would represent an attractive interpretation of this passage, and one that would not generate a contradiction with Aristotle's own position.

In support of this, 1354b16ff. sheds light on the *grounds* on which Aristotle makes his criticism of the handbook writers. Aristotle here seems to be repeating his criticisms from 1354a13ff, the crucial lines, but here his description of his targets is illuminating. He says that those accused of giving instructions in irrelevant speaking are "those who define other<sup>163</sup> things, like what the introduction or the narrative should contain, as well as each of the other sections of the speech. For in them, they treat of nothing except how to put the judge into a particular frame of mind." (1354b17-20) What is interesting about this description of those Aristotle is opposing is that it seems his own work fits the description. At *Rhetoric* III.13-19, he spends time defining what the different sections of the speech should contain. Moreover, in doing so, he is attentive to how each part of the speech should affect the

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<sup>162</sup> Gorgias' question and answer method of teaching rhetoric may be a further example. *Sophistici Elenchi* 34.184b35-185a8.

<sup>163</sup> Other, that is, than those related to "what happened or didn't happen, what will happen or won't, what is the case or isn't." 1354b13-14.

listener's state of mind. While this might seem to involve Aristotle in still greater internal contradiction within the *Rhetoric*, in fact it points to how the apparent inconsistency can be resolved. Aristotle would readily admit that what he has to say about *taxis* in book III is "outside the issue". His consistent view about rhetoric, throughout the *Rhetoric* is that since it is about providing proofs, some things are essential to the art, and other things are merely accessory. Indeed, the proofs, the *pisteis*, are essential, and everything else is accessory. This distinction should be understood as follows. Any non-accidental instance of rhetorical success can be fully explained by reference to things that are essential components of the art itself.<sup>164</sup> Nevertheless, the instance will have lots of other features which do not play a role in explaining why this person was persuaded of that conclusion. The latter are the 'accessories'. This then forms the principle on which the treatise itself is organised – the first two books set out the materials for proofs, and once that is done, space is given in book III to accessory matters. Accessory matters are, by definition, those which do not count evidentially in favour of any particular view of the issue at hand (if they did, they would be part of the proofs). So, the suggestion at 1354b16ff. is that the handbook writers have spent their whole energy on topics Aristotle relegates to book III. Those topics quite naturally include how to counter *diabolê* as well as other methods of ensuring that the audience pay appropriate attention to your case in the various sections of the speech. But these topics are quite distinct from the use of emotion in addressing the facts of the case as part of offering listeners proofs in favour of the orator's conclusion. 1354b16ff. is best understood as a recapitulation of the point made at 1354a10ff: "Only the proofs belong to the art, everything else is accessory ... they mainly

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<sup>164</sup> 1354a7-11.

treat of what is irrelevant to the subject at hand!"<sup>165</sup> And if that is correct, it is not their use of emotion-arousal *per se* that constitutes Aristotle's grounds for criticism. Rather it is that their techniques are bound to consist in irrelevant speaking, and thus – at best – they will be techniques for what is accessory to rhetoric, not for things that themselves amount to exercises of the *technê*.

#### IV

##### The Solution to the Contradiction Problem

So, our proposal is that in I.1, it is not the use of emotion generally that Aristotle criticises in the work of his predecessors, but something much more specific. My contention here is that when he says "slander and pity, anger and similar passions of the soul," this is not a list of passions but a list of activities. He is referring to the activity of *diabolê*, and the activities advocated by handbook-writers in their set-piece 'recipes' for emotion-arousal – recipes used to generate sections in a speech (often in the introduction) included to affect the state of mind of the listener, unconnected with the specific subject matter at issue. Such techniques are designed to prejudice the listeners in favour of the speaker, and against his opponent, irrespective of the strength of each side's case. The kind of thing, I suggest, that Aristotle had in mind was the stirring up of hostility because of how someone dressed, because of his parentage or racial origins, or the arousal of pity by bringing friends, wife or children weeping onto the *bêma*.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> 1354a13-16.

<sup>166</sup> Techniques well-attested in Athens: Plato *Apology* 34c; Aristotle *Rhetoric* III.15, 1416a21-4, b1-3.



So, the list is a list of activities advocated by the handbook writers. What these activities have in common is that adapting them to make them work on any particular occasion does not depend on the presence of features that have any bearing whatsoever on the truth or falsehood of the orator's claims about "the issue".

Aristotle says that these activities are irrelevant (1354a17f.). They therefore contribute nothing to proofs, and so techniques for such activities contribute nothing to the art of rhetoric. Crucially this does nothing to rule out from the art of rhetoric such things as emotional *proofs*, or emotionally apprehended *premises* in proofs, where those proofs *do* bear on "the issue" – but these are entirely different from what the handbook writers had offered (i.e. from what Aristotle criticises here).

The key part of this proposed solution that is new, and that requires careful justification is the way in which the phrase "slander and pity and anger and similar passions of the soul" (a16f.) is being understood. The case in favour of the proposed new understanding of this phrase is built up from a number of considerations. Firstly, careful attention is paid to the nature of *diabolê*, and how Aristotle thinks of slander throughout the *Rhetoric*. Support is secondly derived from the production of historically plausible targets for Aristotle's criticism. This is partly a matter of surveying the ancient evidence for how set-piece 'recipes' for the arousal of emotions formed an important part of how Aristotle's contemporaries attempted to teach the art of rhetoric. It will be particularly striking how apt a target Thrasymachus is, given both the general nature of Aristotle's criticisms and their specific wording. Nevertheless, whether or not I.1 is so specifically targeted,

Thrasymachus is vital to our case because he provides an example of the use of emotion words to refer not to emotions themselves, but to rhetorical set-pieces designed for the arousal of emotion, provided by a teacher of rhetoric for inclusion in speeches – a use of these words that is pivotal to the proposed new reading of 1354a16f.. A final part of the case involves offering an alternative understanding of a passage (1356a16ff.) that seems problematic for our proposal here. We will need to show that it is not decisive in favour of the CV.

### Diabolê

The passages dealing with *diabolê* have been referred to above. Commentators have typically looked at the phrase “*slander and pity and anger and similar passions of the soul*” (1354a16ff.) and worked from the end of the phrase backwards. Here, it is suggested, is a list of *pathê*, a generalisation involving ‘*the passions of the soul*’, and that even though slander does not properly fit this category, its effects do, so this must be what is in view; thus the phrase is a way of picking out the general category of ‘passions of the soul’ – with three examples at the head. On the reading I am suggesting here, *diabolê* is to be taken at face value, and understood entirely consistently with what Aristotle has to say about it in book III: it is an activity, slander, strongly associated with the opening and ending of a speech. I have argued for this above, and reemphasise that this interpretation finds significant support in the fact that the criticism Aristotle makes in I.1 is a criticism repeated in book III in connection with *prooemia* and *diabolê*.

There are then two possible ways of reading the rest of this key phrase.

One is to see the rest of the phrase as an explication of *diabolê* and how such use of *diabolê* is envisaged as working.<sup>167</sup> On this first view, then, the phrase could be paraphrased roughly as “slander, and the pity, anger and similar passions of the soul associated with it”. The whole phrase is, on this view, about *diabolê*.

A second view is that this is a list of coordinate items, but all of the items in the list refer to set-pieces that could be composed or selected for use from a collection, along the lines recommended by a ‘master rhetorician’ like Thrasymachus. On this view, rather than massaging the meaning of “slander” to make it more like pity, anger and passions of the soul, one instead interprets references to “pity, anger and suchlike passions of the soul” to make them more like slander. We know from the work of Thrasymachus, of which Aristotle was specifically aware,<sup>168</sup> that these words could be used in this way. So, the phrase could, on this second view, be paraphrased roughly as “slander, ‘doing pity’, ‘doing anger’, and ‘doing other similar passions’”. This is offered more as a paraphrase than a translation, in order to make clear how I think this phrase can be understood. It is possible even that this list of terms – slander, pity, anger – would have been recognisable to Aristotle’s readers as a list of chapter headings from such a rhetorical handbook.<sup>169</sup>

Thus these words at 1354a16-17 are, in effect, in inverted commas.

<sup>167</sup> This view was suggested by a remark of Stephen Halliwell’s that the list is ‘coloured’ by having *diabolê* at the head. The view considered here is not simply that the pejorative *tone* is inherited by the rest of the list, but that what they *refer to* is made specific to their connection with *diabolê*. Something like this seems to have been the view of Ludwig Radermacher, as appears from a passage quoted by Grimaldi (Radermacher [1951] 216; Grimaldi [1972] 44), although it is unclear both precisely how Radermacher’s view worked, and how Grimaldi understood it.

<sup>168</sup> *Rhetoric* III.1.1404a14-15, also more generally 1409a2, 1413a8.

I prefer this second reading. It fits well with the ancient evidence, as we shall see, and avoids a problem with the first reading, which is that pity is not obviously an emotion stirred up by slander. Whereas it is an emotion strongly associated with set-piece appeals unconnected with the central facts of the case.

### Ancient Rhetorical Set-Pieces in General

One advantage of the reading proposed is that it gives a realistic and plausible target for Aristotle's criticism. It does not involve him in any wild generalisations about emotions. But it does involve him engaging with a recognised feature of how rhetoric was taught in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. From this period we have a collection of set-piece speech openings (the *Exordia*) attributed to Demosthenes, and DK 85B4 attests a published collection of Thrasymachus' *Prooimia*. Socrates, in the *Apology*,<sup>170</sup> says that he is not going to use the familiar tactics for appealing to pity – tears, weeping friends and young family, and the like – and it seems pretty clear that these are well-worn set-piece methods that stand apart from the actual argument of the case. Indeed, Socrates makes that very contrast at 35c. Thrasymachus produced a work called “Eleoi”<sup>171</sup> – literally “Pities”, normally rendered “Appeals to Pity” – which Aristotle highlights for the fact that it touched in part on delivery, but which is most plausibly thought of as having been a collection of ‘recipes’ or techniques (obviously including such things as

<sup>169</sup> In case this seems over-speculative, we might note that the section of Plato's *Phaedrus* (267c-d), quoted below, in which almost exactly these terms can be found associated with Thrasymachus belongs in a section of that dialogue where Plato is making extensive (and perhaps mocking) use of the ‘technical’ rhetorical terminology of each of the rhetorical theorists mentioned.

<sup>170</sup> 34b-35b

<sup>171</sup> Attested in the *Rhetoric* III.1.1404a14f.

a sobbing and trembling manner of delivery) for arousing pity in a rhetorical audience. Indeed, as we shall see, this was far from Thrasymachus' only work of this nature.

### Thrasymachus

The figure of Thrasymachus is particularly interesting in relation to Aristotle's criticism in I.1 – he seems to be so apt a target for this criticism that it is tempting to think that Aristotle has him specifically in mind. The case for this can get no better than a conjecture – but I shall argue that it is a highly plausible one. If one is not convinced that Aristotle was here specifically targeting Thrasymachus, this evidence ought to convince us that here is at least one apt target for the criticism construed in the way suggested above.

An important reason for suggesting that 1354a16ff. refers specifically to Thrasymachus comes from Plato's *Phaedrus*.

*As to the art of making speeches bewailing (οἰκτρογόων – Lit. 'piteous-wailing') the evils of poverty and old age, the prize, in my judgement, goes to the mighty Chalcedonian [i.e. Thrasymachus]. He it is also who knows best how to inflame [Gk. ὀργίσει, lit. enrage / anger] a crowd and, once they are inflamed, how to hush them again with his words' magic spell, as he says himself. And let's not forget that he is as good at producing slander (διαβάλλειν) as he is at refuting it, whatever its source may be. (267c7-d2)<sup>172</sup>*

Note initially that here in one passage, we have Thrasymachus connected with pity, anger and *diabolê*, the very items Aristotle lists in

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<sup>172</sup> Translation is Nehamas & Woodruff [1995], with comments in parentheses mine.

*Rhetoric* I.1. We should note that where Nehamas and Woodruff refer to the ‘art of *making* speeches ...’, the text has only ‘τῶν ... οἰκτρογόων (etc.) ... λόγων ... τέχνη’ which could refer as much to the art as Thrasymachus taught it and wrote about it, as to the art as he practised it. So, when Plato comes to summarising in this short statement Thrasymachus’ views on the art of rhetoric, what he mentions is the command of the trio of pity, anger and slander. If it was in relation to this trio that Thrasymachus was well-known, then when Aristotle says “slander, pity, anger ...”, there is at least the possibility that he is using this as a way of signalling that Thrasymachus is among his targets.

We have seen already that in relation to pity specifically, Aristotle is aware of this connection with Thrasymachus. He refers to Thrasymachus’ work “Pities” (Eleoi) at III.1.1404a14f..

Still from Plato, we should also note that in the *Phaedrus*, Thrasymachus is the principal name associated with teaching the *technê* of rhetoric. At 261c he is named alongside Gorgias and Theodorus, as authors of *technai peri logôn* (Arts of Speaking). At 266c, it is “Thrasymachus and the others” who claim expertise in the *technê logôn*. 266-267 contains something of a survey of those, including Thrasymachus, who have contributed to the art of speaking. At 269d, as Socrates signals his disagreement with this tradition about what the art of rhetoric consists in, he names Lysias and Thrasymachus as its representatives – we should note that Lysias is a *practitioner* of rhetoric, rather than a writer of an ‘Art of Rhetoric’, which leaves Thrasymachus as the figure representative of those who wrote and taught more theoretically about the art.<sup>173</sup> Hence, when Socrates comes to stipulate

<sup>173</sup> It is perhaps indicative of his greater influence by the time of the *Phaedrus* that it is Thrasymachus not Gorgias who plays this role.

what, on his own view, should be taught by someone trying to educate others in the art of rhetoric, he says the following.

*It's clear then that for Thrasymachus and whoever else teaches the art of rhetoric seriously their first task will be to write with utmost precision to enable us to understand the soul ... (271a4-6)*

So, Thrasymachus stands in the *Phaedrus* as a prominent representative, if not *the* prominent representative, of those who write and teach the art of rhetoric.

Further, out of those listed by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, as associated with the art of rhetoric,<sup>174</sup> there is only a small subset likely to be apt targets of Aristotle's criticisms at the start of the *Rhetoric*. These are Thrasymachus, Gorgias, Theodorus and Licymnius. These are the ones mentioned in the *Rhetoric*, and we might note that in both Plato and Aristotle, Theodorus and Licymnius are mentioned solely in relation to the *taxis* (arrangement) and *lexis* (style) aspects of rhetoric. Of these four names, the ones more closely connected with issues of emotion-arousal are Thrasymachus and Gorgias. This further reinforces Thrasymachus' prominence in connection with emotion-arousal in the technographic tradition as seen through the eyes of Plato's academy – very likely the eyes with which Aristotle would have seen it.

We see this picture further reinforced from Aristotle's own writings. In *De Sophisticis Elenchis* 34.184b, he names three predecessors in relation to the art of rhetoric, Tisias, Thrasymachus and Theodorus. Again, we

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<sup>174</sup> Thrasymachus, Tisias, Gorgias of Leontini, perhaps Prodicus, Theodorus of Byzantium, Polus, Hippias of Elis, Licymnius of Chios, Protagoras of Abdera and Zeno of Elea.

note that of these, it is Thrasymachus who is the best candidate to be the target of Aristotle's critique in relation to slander, pity, anger and the like in *Rhetoric* I.1.

The only other figure mentioned in Aristotle as having written an 'Art of Rhetoric' is Licymnius of Chios, at *Rhetoric* III.13.1414b17. He will perhaps fall within the scope of Aristotle's criticism for preoccupation with different sections of a speech, and such 'accessory' matters. But there is nothing in Aristotle or other ancient evidence available to us that might link him specifically to the criticism related to emotion-arousal, in the way that is so clearly present with Thrasymachus.

We can see, then, even independently of our interpretation of *Rhetoric* I.1 that Thrasymachus is an apt target for Aristotle's criticism. He is not only prominently connected with teaching and writing about rhetoric as an art. He is also specifically connected with slander, pity and anger. However, there is a further strand to Aristotle's criticism, on the view I am recommending. That is that the use of slander and the arousal of emotion was taught as a matter of using set-piece sections which could be learned and used quite in isolation from consideration of the facts of the case at hand. In Thrasymachus' case, there is good evidence that this was precisely how he taught. We have evidence of various works of his. DK 85A1 lists among his works, "Playthings" (Παιγνια<sup>175</sup>) and "Rhetorical Resources" (Αφορμαί Ρητορικάι), DK 85B4 has a collection of "Introductions" (Προοίμια), DK 85B5 (=1404a14) has "Appeals to Pity" (Ελεοί), DK85B7 "Knockdown Arguments" (Υπερβαλλοντες Λογοί). Even the most substantial fragment of his, DK 85B1, can

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<sup>175</sup> The word is the same as that used by Gorgias as a way of describing his *Encomium of Helen*.



plausibly be thought to be a rhetorical set-piece.<sup>176</sup> It is tempting to use what we know of the content of Thrasyarchus' *oeuvre* to fill out what we do not know – the nature of the contents of his supposed *Megalê Technê*. If Thrasyarchus did write such a work as his definitive handbook on rhetoric, it may not be unreasonable to suppose that a significant part of its contents was such set-pieces, perhaps organised by where they would come in the speech. This might be one way in which a work likely dominated by model speech-sections might define what each section should contain, and show how to affect the listener in particular ways.<sup>177</sup> The evidence we have is for a “(Great) Art of Rhetoric” by Thrasyarchus, and that the provision of set-pieces was a very large part of the way in which he sought to teach the art of rhetoric.

If the view urged above is correct in its interpretation of Aristotle's criticism of previous writers of Arts of Rhetoric for their views on slander and emotion-arousal, then we find that all of the features criticised come together in Thrasyarchus.

### Gorgias

The case should not be overstated. Thrasyarchus is not necessarily the only person in view. It is simply that he is very striking for being strongly associated point by point with every aspect criticised by Aristotle, as his criticism has been reconstructed here. If he is the principal target, he is still probably not the only target.

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<sup>176</sup> Yunis [1997]. The suggestion, made by White [1995], that B1 was actually delivered, and originally belonged to a full speech, and that we may reconstruct a specific diplomatic context for B1, is not convincing.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. *Rhet* I.1.1354b17-20.

Another figure who would surely be an object of Aristotle's criticism is Gorgias. As we saw in chapter 1, his *Encomium of Helen* reveals a view of the power of speech to persuade that is strongly associated with the power of speech to excite the emotions. Fear, upset, joy, pity, yearning are all mentioned as associated with the power of speech. There is thus a plausible line connecting Gorgias with emotion-arousal.

In the passage at the end of the *De Sophisticis Elenchis* cited above, Aristotle goes on to comment on the way in which Gorgias taught rhetoric. He handed out speeches in the form of question and answer. Aristotle's criticism is that this is not actually to teach a *technê*, but merely to make available the products of a *technê*. It seems natural to suppose two things from this criticism. First, Gorgias did not supplement the set-piece examples mentioned with a systematic account – if he had, Aristotle's criticism would have been unfounded. Secondly, it is natural to suppose that the force of Aristotle's point comes from the fact that Gorgias was *purporting* to teach the art of rhetoric, as an art, a *technê*.<sup>178</sup> If this is right, then it is a reason for thinking that Gorgias as well as Thrasymachus, is within the scope of Aristotle's criticism at I.1. He purported, by his writings, to be conveying the art of rhetoric. He saw a key part of this as involving the arousal of emotions. Likewise, he appears to have been someone for whom rhetorical set-pieces were a significant part of his *oeuvre*, and someone who saw the learning of these set pieces as a key component of learning the art of rhetoric.

Finally, on Gorgias, we should note what is put into his mouth in Plato's *Gorgias* in the speech 455d-457c. He there claims that the ability

<sup>178</sup> This point seems historically very likely, since Plato makes this Gorgias' central claim at the start of the *Gorgias*, 449a-b.

his rhetoric gives is a power to influence people on matters such as medicine, or indeed any other craft, regardless of how well or badly qualified the speaker is to know what he is talking about. The claim seems to be that the power of the speech is derived independently of the strength of the case. Gorgias could deploy his power to get patients to take poison or medicine, or to get the citizens to appoint him as their general, chief architect, envoy, or whatever he chose.<sup>179</sup> Rhetoric is like skill in boxing, he says (456d) – it’s an ability to punch both bad guys and good guys. Aristotle seems to have reflected on this claim<sup>180</sup> and yet insisted, against Gorgias (or certainly Plato’s Gorgias) and probably against many others too, that rhetoric’s persuasive power is *not* independent of the appropriateness of its deployment.<sup>181</sup> For Gorgias and others, rhetoric is a matter of learning and deploying techniques. Skilfully deployed, they will always enable you to win: learn the speeches, read the handbooks, use their recipes, and you will win. For Aristotle, the skill of rhetoric will enable you to see *in any case whatsoever* what the available persuasive features are that tell in favour of your side of the case, and to make the best of those features. But still the eventual strength of your case will depend on what facts there actually are to appeal to! Someone arguing for the truth will generally have a stronger case (1355a36-8). The key difference is that for Aristotle, rhetoric is always about looking at the facts of the issue at hand and seeing how they tell for and against each side of the case. Whereas the rhetorical techniques of Gorgias have a power that is independent of the particular situation of deployment. If something like Gorgias’ view was shared by Thrasymachus and whoever else may be in view in Aristotle’s criticism at the start of the *Rhetoric*, and their

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<sup>179</sup>See also ch. 1 above on Gorgias *Helen*.

<sup>180</sup> *Rhetoric* I.1.1355a35-b7, including the boxing / wrestling comparison.

<sup>181</sup> A similar point is made at *Phaedrus* 268a8-269c5.

techniques were designed accordingly so as not to depend on the strength of your case, they would be just the kind of technique that Aristotle could dismiss as not even being “about the issue”.

My claim is that the most plausible targets of Aristotle’s criticism, Gorgias and – more especially – Thrasymachus, give support to my key contention about the nature of that criticism. *Diabolê* need not be reinterpreted as an oblique way of referring to some emotion – it is criticised in its own right. And it is not emotion-arousal *per se* that Aristotle criticises, but the inclusion of sections of emotion-arousal deployable independently of the orator’s argument – the very kind of emotion-arousal that was so characteristic of Thrasymachus and Gorgias, emotion-arousal using set-pieces that could simply be lifted from a collection and used without reference to the facts of the case, and whose rhetorical power would be independent of the underlying strength of the speaker’s position.

V

I wish now to deal with some difficulties for the position I am recommending. The answers to some of these will already have become evident.

Firstly, one difficulty is that it is not the most natural way to understand 1354a16f. “slander, pity, anger and similar passions of the soul”. The most natural reading (if there is such a thing) of this is as a list of ‘passions of the soul’. If it were a list of types of rhetorical set-pieces, then the summarising phrase “and similar passions of the soul”

perhaps seems out of place. Likewise, it is easier to see 1354a24f. as a repetition of the same point if the earlier list was a list of *passions*.

One possible explanation is that the phrase ‘passions of the soul’ does not properly belong in the text at all. This was Kassel’s view in 1971 when he wrote his introduction to the text of the *Rhetoric*.<sup>182</sup> It seems his main reason was that it is not a good end to a list headed by *diabolê*. Thus amended, the sentence reads, “For slander and pity and anger and the like are not concerned with the issue but directed at the judge.” Nevertheless, the phrase is attested in most of the main manuscripts and in the Arabic translation (although significantly the Arabic text does not have slander but fear (*khawf*) at the head of the list). Kassel himself does not seem wholly convinced of his excision and gingerly (“*dubitanter*”) reinstates the phrase in his 1976 text.<sup>183</sup>

Assuming that the text is correct as it stands, there is no knockdown argument against this difficulty, as far as I can see. We should note that of the two interpretations of the list at 1354a16ff. offered above, the “*diabolê* and its associated emotions” interpretation is already consistent with the most natural or obvious reading of the list. So, the difficulty arises only for the interpretation where ‘*eleos*’ is taken to mean an appeal to pity of the kind recommended in Thrasymachus’ *Eleoi*, and ‘*orgê kai ta toiauta pathê tês psuchês*’ is taken to refer to ploys of a similar kind. But this is my preferred interpretation, and it seems to require understanding “καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς” to mean “and similar set-piece emotion plays” or more vaguely to mean “*et cetera*”. The objection is that there is perhaps something more natural

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<sup>182</sup> “πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς mit διαβολή sich trotz aller versuchten Interpretationskunststücke schlecht genug verträgt” Kassel [1971] 118.

<sup>183</sup> Citing 1419b25-27, presumably for the inclusion of δεινωσις in a list of παθη..

about interpreting this phrase as the end of a list of passions. Nevertheless, I have contended that this traditional interpretation as a whole faces some serious problems, which make it worth considering alternatives, even if they are not quite so natural as a reading of these lists. Moreover, in the light of the use of these terms by Thrasymachus, it may have been a perfectly familiar usage to employ emotion terms like “ἔλεος” to mean a set-piece designed to evoke that particular emotion.<sup>184</sup> If the combination of slander, pity and anger was a sufficiently clear signal to readers that Thrasymachus was the target, then it might be perfectly natural to use emotion terms in the way *he* used them. We speculated above that “slander”, “pity” and “anger” might be something like chapter titles in Thrasymachus’s work. If some such thing were correct, then “similar passions of the soul” could just be variables for similar chapter titles. Thus, Aristotle would be saying, “‘slander’, ‘pity’, ‘anger’ and any other ‘passion’ in a Thrasymachean handbook’. At the very least, there are some possible alternatives to the traditional interpretation of this phrase that would be consistent with the view I am proposing. In the end, it is still perhaps right to concede that the traditional interpretation is more natural, and to weigh this against the wider merits of the view urged here.

Next, one of the passages cited at the outset of the chapter, *Rhetoric* I. 2.1356a14-19, appears precisely to identify the passions for which Aristotle has a central role in his own theory, and the passions treated so obsessively by his predecessors. For convenience, I repeat the passage here.

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<sup>184</sup> On the other hand, the title of Thrasymachus’ work uses ‘ἔλεος’ in the plural, which signals a meaning for the word distinct from the main meaning of ‘ἔλεος’, namely ‘pity’, in a way that is not so obvious for the singular at 1354a17.

*[Proof] through the listeners, whenever they are brought into an emotional state by the speech: for we do not make judgements in the same way when upset as when we are glad; or when hostile as when friendly. And this is, as we said, the only thing the recent handbook writers attempt to treat systematically (Gk. πρὸς ὃ καὶ μόνον πειρᾶσθαί φάμεν πραγματεύεσθαι). These things will be made clear one by one when we speak about the emotions.(1356a14-19)*

On the face of it, this makes it very hard to resist the CV. After all, it seems to refer back to the handbook writers' treatment of emotion arousal, i.e. the target of criticism at I.1. And in the same breath, it is a reference to the passions as one of the three kinds of technical proof in Aristotle's own theory. The two here are seemingly identified: there is something that Aristotle criticised in the handbook writers to which he now gives a key role in his own theory. The result is that Aristotle's argument in I.1, ruling out such passions from having a role in proof and hence in rhetoric, stands in flat contradiction to the view he is starting to develop in this passage, the view that forms the basis for his treatment of the passions in book II.

Nevertheless, I do not think that we are forced in this direction by this passage. There are two possible and related strategies, both of which seem plausible to me, for understanding it in a way that is consistent with the position developed here.

The first strategy involves no retranslation. It focuses on the word "attempt" (Gk. πειρᾶσθαί) at a17: Aristotle is saying that the handbook writers were well aware of the significance of emotions in

persuasion, and how powerfully they worked. Nevertheless, they failed in their attempt to give the right kind of explanation of the persuasive power of emotion that is required for a *technê*. His contention here, therefore, is that what he *successfully* explains in I.2 and II.1-11, they were *attempting to* treat. Since they did not succeed in connecting their techniques for arousing the passions with the subject matter of the case at hand, they fell foul of the relevance requirements that are at the heart of the criticisms of I.1. At best, their techniques contribute to the shady business of *diabolê*, or to gaining the unprejudiced attention of the listener, mere ‘accessories’ of the art of rhetoric. At worst, what they have written about is no part of rhetoric at all. This is consistent with what Aristotle says here – they were *trying* to treat systematically the contribution of the passions to the successful use of rhetoric, but ended up treating something quite different: slander and manipulative set-piece emotion plays. On this reading, Aristotle is claiming to have succeeded where they had failed.

A second strategy in dealing with this passage is to retranslate in a way which makes it a much stronger assertion of the kind of position attributed to Aristotle in the first strategy. In the standard translation, “πρὸς ὃ καὶ μόνον” is all taken together to mean that it was ‘to this feature alone’ that previous writers directed their efforts. However, “καὶ μόνον” may be taken with what follows (i.e. with *peirasthai* - “attempting”) as an emphatic connective:<sup>185</sup> it was this feature of persuasion that the contemporary writers ‘were *merely* striving towards’.

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<sup>185</sup> Denniston [1950] 316-8.



I think that these are the two most pressing difficulties for the view I am urging.

## VI

It is important to make clear how this differs from the views of others who have found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* a consistent position on the role of emotion. Prominent among these are Edward Cope, William Grimaldi, John Cooper and Robert Wardy.<sup>186</sup> After all, several of these writers have seen relevance to the subject of the case at hand, or relevance to the orator's argument, as being central to Aristotle's criticism at I.1. There is indeed some important shared ground between these interpretations and mine, particularly in relation to the *general position* attributed to Aristotle. Nevertheless, there are significant exegetical differences between the position offered here, and other proposals of a harmonised position for Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*. I hope to show now how my position is different, and how it is not vulnerable to some criticisms that have rendered implausible these previous attempts at seeking a consistent position for Aristotle.

### Previous Harmonising Views of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

Both Cooper and Wardy argue that the criticism of I.1, whilst having all emotion-arousal in its scope, does not reject it wholesale from having a place within rhetoric. Some key arguments support this position.

Cooper cites 1354a11-13 in this way. "Now the framers of the current treatises on rhetoric have constructed but a small portion of that art."

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<sup>186</sup> Cope [1867]; Grimaldi [1972]; Cooper [1999]; Wardy [1996].

This sentence, it is argued, presupposes that they have supplied part, albeit a small part, of the art of rhetoric. What is criticised by Aristotle, on this interpretation, is their *exclusive* focus on emotion-arousal: they have focussed on one of the technical proofs to the exclusion of the other two.<sup>187</sup>

This position also appeals to a phrase which is pivotal to Aristotle's criticism in I.1, namely "ἔξω τοῦ πράγματος" (outside the issue). The claim is that his criticism is correctly understood not as a rejection of all emotion-arousal, but as a rejection of emotion-arousal *if* it is unconnected with the issue at hand.

Wardy argues that the criticism "might be restricted to emotional manipulation; after all, Aristotle insists a little later that 'one must not *warp* the juryman by leading him into anger or envy or pity;"<sup>188</sup> He finds in "διαστρέφειν" (warp) a restrictive connotation. The proposal seems to be that Aristotle is here expressing no general objection to leading juryman on to anger, envy or pity, his censure is rather *restricted* to cases where arousing these emotions *amounts to warping* the juryman.

So, we read the following.

"... he does not imply that a good system of laws would forbid appeals to the judges' emotions. He means only that good laws would forbid appeals to emotion that detracted from and were no part of the orderly presentation of the case itself being argued. So it is *irrelevant* appeals to emotion made by the orator in and through his speech (e.g. by describing shocking or

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<sup>187</sup> Cooper [1999] 391-3. A similar point is made by Cope [1867] 4-5.

<sup>188</sup> Wardy [1996] 115, emphasis his.

uplifting events and circumstances having no bearing on the matters in dispute or on the questions of right and wrong before the court), not appeals to emotion altogether, that Aristotle here objects to.”<sup>189</sup>

“I conclude that what Aristotle rejects is not emotional appeal *per se*, but emotion appeals which have no ‘bearing on the issue’, in that the *pathê* they stimulate lack, or at any rate are not shown to possess, any intrinsic connection with the point at issue – as if an advocate were to try to whip an anti-Semitic audience into fury because the accused is Jewish ...”<sup>190</sup>

The position eventually ascribed to Aristotle here is, I think, right. But the exegesis is wrong, and has been rightly rejected.<sup>191</sup>

First, I do not think, as Cooper maintains, that “Aristotle immediately grants that this [viz. emotion-arousal] is a part, though only a small part, *oligon morion* (1.1, 1354a12-14) of the art”.<sup>192</sup> This crucial assertion depends on a disputed textual variant<sup>193</sup> and is impossible if the alternative text is correct. But even if one grants the text that this view requires, the point still does not go through for two reasons. First, on Aristotle’s view, emotion-arousal is not a ‘small part’ of rhetoric, it is a very significant part of rhetoric, one of three kinds of technical proofs, and worthy of a full eleven chapters of book II. As he says, it makes a great deal of difference in relation to persuading people (II.

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<sup>189</sup> Cooper [1999] 392.

<sup>190</sup> Wardy [1996] 116.

<sup>191</sup> E.g. by Barnes [1995] 262; Wisse [1989] 19.

<sup>192</sup> Cooper [1999] 391; similarly Grimaldi [1972] 44.

<sup>193</sup> See above n. 117.

1.1377b24f.). So even if these writers were guilty, as this view suggests, of treating virtually nothing except emotion-arousal, there would still be a problem with suggesting that they had only treated a small part of the art of rhetoric. By Aristotle's own lights, they would have treated a substantial and very significant part.

Another reason to reject this suggestion is that it makes no sense of the structure of the argument of I.1. The argument turns on the fact that if something is "outside the issue", then it is not part of providing proofs, hence not part of rhetoric.<sup>194</sup> Since "slander, pity, anger, etc." are outside the issue ("διαβολή γὰρ ..." 1354a16), discussion of them fails to be discussion of the proofs, and hence of rhetoric ("αἱ γὰρ πίστεις ..." a13). Since this is what the handbook writers spent most of their effort on (a16), it follows that they spent most of their effort on something other than rhetoric. If arousing the *pathê* mentioned at 1354a16f. is *itself* one of the technical kinds of proof, then the whole argument of this section is undermined. The premise about the *pathê* provides no support for the conclusion about how little Aristotle's predecessors have contributed to the art of rhetoric.

A final reason to reject this first argument for the Cooper / Wardy harmonisation is that it creates a contradiction with what Aristotle says barely one Bekker page later.

*For in discussing these [viz. divisions of a speech] they busy themselves with nothing except how to put the judge into a certain condition, and they set out nothing (οὐδὲν) about the proofs that belong to the expertise. (1354b19-21)*

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<sup>194</sup>See above ch. 1.

Here there is no variant textual reading. Moreover the structure of the argument makes it abundantly clear that this is supposed to be a restatement of just the same point as was made at 1354a11-13. It could not be clearer. The handbook writers have said lots about emotion, but nothing about the proper constituents of the art of rhetoric, namely the technical proofs. It is not that they have said *a little* about these kinds of proof, they have said *nothing* about them. Hence, even if (allowing the textual variant at 1354a12f.) it is to be conceded that they have contributed “a small part” of the art of rhetoric, it would not be in virtue of the emotion-arousal under discussion in I.1 that they have done so.

The remaining reasons offered for the Wardy / Cooper view can be dealt with more quickly. They imply that Aristotle’s criticisms are directed at “slander, pity, anger and similar passions” *if* they are off-subject: that is, they are directed at a subset of appeals to emotion – namely, the ones that are off-subject.

“So it is *irrelevant* appeals to emotion ... not appeals to emotion altogether, that Aristotle here objects to.”<sup>195</sup>

“what Aristotle rejects is not emotional appeal *per se*, but emotion appeals which have no ‘bearing on the issue’”<sup>196</sup>

The text simply does not say that “slander, pity, fear, etc.” are not part of rhetoric *if* they are off-subject, nor does it give any grounds for supposing it is *merely a subset* of what these terms are referring to that

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<sup>195</sup> Cooper [1999] 392.

<sup>196</sup> Wardy [1996] 116.

is being criticised. It asserts categorically that these things *are* off-subject, and hence cites a preoccupation with these things as a reason to suppose that previous writers have failed to contribute anything (much) to the art of rhetoric. There just isn't any "if" in the text, nor any hint at discriminating between different slanders, pities, angers, etc.. The sentence involving *diabolê* and the *pathê* at 1354a16-18 offers an unqualified generalisation, and is the basis for Aristotle's concluding that these things are no part of the art of rhetoric.

How sympathetic one is to the restrictive reading of "warp" (διαστρέφειν) at a24 seems to me to depend on one's view of the strength of the case built up elsewhere for a similarly restrictive view of the criticisms of I.1 generally.<sup>197</sup> It is not an impossible reading, but it is not plausible in isolation from the Cooper / Wardy reading of the preceding passages of I.1 – a reading which I have argued is far from compelling exegetically, as a solution to the contradiction problem, even if it finally attributes the right general position to Aristotle.

There are others who have argued on grounds different from these for a harmonised position for Aristotle. Edward Cope, whilst sharing a number of the arguments just discussed, offers an explanation based on a distinction between rhetoric as it ideally should be, and rhetoric as

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<sup>197</sup>Thus, this reading of 1354a24f. – leaning heavily on the connotations of διαστρέφειν – is compatible with the view I propose here, although it is not the only way to restrict the scope of these lines. A more natural reading, given my view of 1354a16ff., is that the phrase "leading the juryman to anger, envy or pity" is simply a further reference to the same practices Aristotle was discussing immediately beforehand – the practices recommended by the handbook writers.

it must be practised in the real world.<sup>198</sup> On this view, some aspects of rhetoric are part of the art, but only as a concession necessitated by the failings of listeners (“διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ μοχθηρίαν,” III.1, 1404a7f.). Emotion-arousal is one such aspect. Ideally it would not be part of rhetoric, but in fact it is, as a concession to the real world. “The depraved judgement and taste of an ordinary audience *requires* this kind of ‘flattery,’ as Plato calls it, and the speaker is therefore *obliged* to give way; to relax the rigorous observance of the rules of his art, and to humour their perverted inclinations.”<sup>199</sup>

This explanation is surely far from compelling, as an attempt to elucidate the relationship between Aristotle’s criticisms in I.1 and what he says in I.2, and book II.<sup>200</sup> This “concessive” view is typically supported from passages in book III. But there is nowhere so much as a hint of such a view in the material that deals with the *pisteis*. He makes concessions to the failings of the audience twice (to my knowledge) in the *Rhetoric*: in relation to *hypokrisis* (‘acting’) at III.1.1403b34-5, and in relation to gaining or distracting the attention of jurors in the *prooimion* at III.14.1415b4-6. None of this does anything to recommend such a view of the technical kinds of proof in books I and II. We may put the point more strongly. There is good reason why the concessive view only surfaces in book III. Books I and II have been dealing with what is *entechnon*, that is, what belongs essentially to the art of rhetoric – i.e.

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<sup>198</sup>This view has much in common with the views of Sprute [1994] and Schütrumpf [1994], including their weaknesses, cf. above n. 37.

<sup>199</sup> Cope [1867] 5-6; Sprute [1994] 118-122; Engberg-Pedersen [1996] 131-135; Halliwell [1994] 212f.. Additionally, Grimaldi ([1972] 19 n.3) lists Vater, Spengel and Russo as advocating this view.

<sup>200</sup> We argued above (chapter 2) that this view is not required to explain Aristotle’s concern in I.1 with how the laws *should* stand.

the *pisteis*. When he gets to book III, he announces that he has finished dealing with the *pisteis*, he is now dealing with other matters, what he called ‘accessories’ in book I. It is easy to see why excellent delivery and gaining the audience’s attention are accessories. Successful persuasion can take place without them – audiences often pay attention of their own accord, and follow a speaker’s argument even if delivered unimpressively. Conversely, without the essential components of rhetoric, i.e. proofs, you may have all the attentiveness and excellent delivery you like, but no persuasion will take place. If all you have are ‘accessories’, the best you can do is create conditions in which persuasion *could* easily take place successfully. On this view, it is clear why concessive arguments would apply to things like *hypokrisis* and attention-gaining, but not to the technical kinds of proof. Still, my exegetical argument does not depend on this precise explanation of the structure of Aristotle’s wider rhetorical theory. There simply is no suggestion in the text of books I and II that Aristotle’s theory of the technical proofs is in any way concessive, and any attempt to argue this from passages in book III back into the earlier books would require some justification. The explanation above suggests that it is no accident that such concessive passages are to be found only in book III. If correct, it tells strongly *against* attempts to apply concessive principles from book III back into the earlier passages about the *pisteis*.

Finally, among the harmonisers, is William Grimaldi. His case for a consistent position for Aristotle is argued partly on grounds that have already been covered.<sup>201</sup> But most of his attention in addressing this

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<sup>201</sup> He shares Cooper’s view that Aristotle concedes that the technographers have constructed a “small part” of the art. He also seems to share the view that emotion-arousal is criticised *to the extent that* it is irrelevant, but his exact views here are hard to make out. Grimaldi [1972] 44.



contradiction problem is directed towards establishing that “one cannot claim that Aristotle is arguing simply for the logical and rational proof of the case.”<sup>202</sup> Now, even if he is right about this, it does not solve the contradiction problem. Indeed, it scarcely touches it. For even if, as Grimaldi urges, Aristotle allows a role within rhetoric for *some* things other than the “logical and rational proof of the case”, it does not follow that one of those things is emotion-arousal. The issue in the contradiction problem is whether Aristotle rules out all emotion-arousal from amounting to an exercise of rhetorical expertise. The contradiction problem arises because Aristotle appears to do just that at 1354a11-18. Grimaldi is no doubt correct to observe that these lines do not contain an Aristotelian insistence on *logos*-proof alone (or *pragma*, to use Grimaldi’s preferred term for this technical kind of proof). He has no doubt served the cause of scholarship by undermining such a claim. Moreover, had those lines contained an insistence on *logos*-proof alone, they would certainly have generated a contradiction problem (in relation to I.2 and II.1) deeper still than the one considered here. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for all that Grimaldi has said, 1354a11-18 may rule out any role in the art of rhetoric for arousing the ‘passions of the soul’.

I conclude that in relation to previous attempted resolutions of the contradiction problem, there are insuperable difficulties. No solution has been found persuasive, and many have thought the problem insoluble.<sup>203</sup>

However, careful attention to the meaning of *diabolê*, and to the use of emotions and emotion-terminology by Thrasymachus and other

<sup>202</sup> Grimaldi [1972] 44, a position which he describes at pp.18-20.

<sup>203</sup> Barnes [1995] 262; Wisse [1989] 19-20.

technical writers of the period, suggests a resolution of the problem that makes exegetical sense of the prominent passages, and gives Aristotle a consistent view of *pistis*, *diabolê*, and the parts of a speech, through the whole of the *Rhetoric*.

## Chapter 5 – Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* on what the emotions are.

In earlier chapters, we sought to make clear how, in Aristotle’s view, the arousal of the passions can be a way in which a speaker offers listeners a proof (*pistis*). From some key arguments at the start of the *Rhetoric*, we set out Aristotle’s view on the nature and purpose of rhetoric. The expertise, in his view, is exercised in the production of proofs (*pisteis*), and we have laid out a set of conditions that something must have if it is to count as a proof. Chapter 3 concluded with a sketch of how emotion-arousal might accordingly be a way in which an orator could offer listeners proof. The last chapter dealt with a possible difficulty facing the picture thus emerging, in the apparent denial in I.1 that any kind of emotion-arousal could count as giving a proof.

With that difficulty removed, there are still a number of important challenges remaining. The account offered above of how arousing emotions can be a way of providing proof is not compatible with every way of understanding emotions. The chief aim of this and the next chapter is to show that Aristotle’s view of the emotions in the *Rhetoric*, particularly in book II, is compatible with the role which we have claimed he sees emotion-arousal playing in the exercise of rhetorical expertise. So, in the *Rhetoric*, are emotions the right “shape” for the role they play in rhetorical proofs?

One particular issue is pressing. Our account of *pistis* presented in chapter 3 requires that the speaker invite the listener to believe the conclusion *because of what has been presented as a proof*. The definition of

*pistis*<sup>204</sup> contained the following requirement for what is presented to a listener (B) as proof (P) for some judgement (J).

P is so related to J that, if B regards the elements of P as reputable and is correct to do so, then it would be an exercise of good judgement on B's part if B were inclined to make judgement J because of P.

The claim then about how proof could involve emotion-arousal was this. One way in which the listener might regard something as reputable, in such a way as to make it a matter of good judgement to draw the conclusion because of it, would be for the listener to *feel* that things are as the speaker (in offering the proof) represents them to be. That is, the listener's emotion would itself constitute his acceptance (as true or at least plausible) of the premises presented to him by the speaker in the proof. In the case where those premises are (if true) a good basis for accepting the conclusion, and where the listener is correct to feel as he does, it is an exercise of good judgement to be inclined to accept the conclusion *because of feeling that way*. Thus emotions take the role in apprehending parts of an argument that might otherwise be taken by beliefs. If the following inelegance may be excused, cases of correctly '*feeling* the premises', just like correctly *believing* the argument's premises, rightly incline a listener to accept the argument's conclusion (to which, we are supposing, they are related in the required way).<sup>205</sup>

Whether emotions are capable of taking this role depends crucially on what kind of thing the emotions are. Clearly, if emotions involve (or

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<sup>204</sup> Above p. 99.

<sup>205</sup> See Burnyeat [1990] for a discussion of what kind of connection between premises and conclusion is admissible in rhetorical arguments. cf. also EN I.3, 1094b23-27.

simply *are*) judgements or beliefs, then getting listeners to *feel* a certain way can be just a particular way of getting them to accept a premise in an argument.<sup>206</sup> Such a view nicely fits the account of proof we are putting forward. It is not part of the current project to defend views of this particular kind. They are mentioned here simply as one broad category of views that will be fully compatible with our proposals about proofs and the place of emotion-arousal in the provision of proofs.

However, we will be concerned here with a view proposed in recent years that emotions involve merely the *appearance* of things being a particular way. This kind of view has been proposed both within theories of the emotions themselves, and as an account of Aristotle's view of the emotions.<sup>207</sup> In the latter regard, it is usually *Rhetoric* II that is cited in support of the proposal. It is important to see that if this proposal correctly represented Aristotle's view, then his view of the emotions would not be compatible with what we have suggested is his view of the rhetorical proofs that work by emotion-arousal. Much of the next chapter will be taken up with showing that this "appearance" view of Aristotelian emotions does not in fact accurately represent Aristotle's position in the *Rhetoric*. But here, we should briefly see how this view, if correct, would pose serious problems for Aristotelian proofs by emotion-arousal (at least on the view set out here that locates them within a more general view of rhetorical *pistis*).

The "appearance view" (as we shall call it) – in common with many other views of the nature of emotions – accepts that experiencing an emotion involves a distinctive outlook on the object(s) of that emotion.

<sup>206</sup> cf. e.g. Nussbaum [1994] ch. 3, [1996], [1999].

<sup>207</sup> cf. Cooper [1996], [1999]; Striker [1996]; Sihvola [1996]; Prinz [2003].

So, in the outlook of the person that feels pity, whatever it is that they pity is suffering undeservedly. The appearance view is a claim about the relation between the subject of the emotion and the outlook distinctive of that emotion. On the appearance view, the relation is one of appearances: the distinctive outlook is 'how appearances stand', i.e. how things *look*, from the perspective of (e.g.) the pitying person.

For our purposes, it will not matter whether how things look is *ipso facto* some good reason in favour of believing that things are that way. The essential feature of appearances with which we are concerned here is that they do not involve the subject in taking the way things appear to be the way things are. Things may look a particular way to me, but (even if I recognise that how things look is *some* good reason to believe this is how they are) I need not take it that they are that way. Indeed, I may perhaps know that in this particular case appearances are misleading. In such a case, that things are a certain way may be exactly the way they correctly should look to me, but that things are that way is not something I ought to believe.<sup>208</sup>

It is obvious why arousing this kind of state will not count as providing proof. The key condition for proof set out above simply required the premises of the proof to be appropriately related to the conclusion they recommend. The thought was that on Aristotle's account of rhetorical proof, once this condition is fulfilled, correctly *accepting the premises as reputable* is sufficient to make it the case that it would be an exercise of good judgement to accept the conclusion because of them. Proofs using emotion-arousal count as proofs because of the possibility that emotions are ways of accepting certain things as

<sup>208</sup>"Ought" here is to be understood as related solely to considerations bearing on the truth of what is believed.

(at least) reputable. But this requirement is not met if the stance towards a premise that emotions would involve is merely that this is 'how things look'. For, even if things look exactly as they should look, its being the case that *appearances to me are such-and-such a way*, is compatible with my taking it to be the case that 'that things are that way' is not something I ought to believe. It is obvious that in such a case, it would not be an exercise of proper judgement for me to proceed to some further judgement on the basis of an inference from how things looked. Appearances do not suffice for regarding the content of those appearances as reputable. They are not sufficient (even when impeccable as appearances) to make it an exercise of good judgement to proceed inferentially from them to further judgements. But it is the latter that would be required for arousing emotions – conceived of in accordance with the "appearance view" – to count as providing proof.

The same point is underscored by the way in which appearances can quite properly coexist with knowledge that things are not as they appear. There is no failure of perceptual systems when the stick in water still looks bent to me even if I know it is straight. This is often claimed as an advantage of an "appearances view" of emotions, since we can fear spiders that we know are not dangerous (or fearsome). On the appearances view, fearing the spider involves it merely *appearing* dangerous, and this is obviously compatible with *knowing* that this is not so. Aristotle's exact views of "appearances" will be the principal focus of the next chapter. For the present, we note that (whatever its merits elsewhere) this possibility of conflicting appearance and knowledge creates a serious problem for how emotion-arousal could provide proper grounds for conviction, i.e. rhetorical proof. Since even

properly-formed appearances can persist even when they are known to be misleading, they cannot alone constitute proper grounds for conviction of something else. Indeed, it would constitute very poor judgement to draw any conclusion on the basis of appearances one knew to be mistaken.

The problem is that appearances are sometimes evidentially valuable, rightly inclining us to suppose that things are as they appear, and providing also a good basis for drawing further conclusions. But sometimes they are of no evidential worth.<sup>209</sup> If the appearance view of emotions were to be correct, then the account of proofs using emotion-arousal would need to be supplemented in order to exclude the arousal of emotions where the appearances involved did not provide any basis on which the subject should properly be inclined to accept the proof's conclusion.<sup>210</sup> The beauty of Aristotle's view of proof, as we have presented it, is that it is built around a very simple notion – inferential relations. Rhetorical proofs are pieces of reasoning, and they are worthy of being called proofs just if the premises stand in the right relations to the conclusion. This is why concepts such as *sullogismos* and *apodeixis* are so important, why enthymeme is the body of proof, and why the similarities with dialectic are so strong. Premises may not

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<sup>209</sup> The stick would look bent in water whether it was bent or straight: hence its appearing bent when in water is no evidence one way or another as to whether it is bent.

<sup>210</sup> We might note further that the most plausible way in which the account might be supplemented would be to require that the subject be justified in taking appearances to be trustworthy. But this is itself revealing, because thus supplemented it seems as though now it is not only the case that things *look* thus-and-so to the subject, but that the subject *takes it to be the case* that plausibly things are thus-and-so. And it is clear that what legitimates any further inferences from this is not how things look, but how things are taken to be.



necessitate conclusions, nor may premises turn out to be true, but where they are appropriately related to the conclusion, if the listener is correct to *accept* the premises, he ought to be inclined to accept the conclusion. This applies whether the listener's apprehension of the proof proceeds through simple belief or through trusting the speaker or through feelings. Since appearance is not itself a kind of acceptance, it does not fit this model. Advocates of the appearance view of the kind of distinctive outlook involved in emotions take it to be an advantage of their view that my feeling that things are a certain way does not entail that I take it (or accept) that they are that way.<sup>211</sup> It is precisely this feature that makes it hard for emotions, thus understood, to take the kind of role in rhetorical proof that we suggest Aristotle envisages.

The appearances view of emotions thus would not be compatible with the account defended above of proofs through the listeners' emotions, and how these fit into Aristotle's overall account of technical proofs in rhetoric.

With this consideration in mind, and with the general purpose of getting clear Aristotle's understanding of what the passions are, the next chapter is devoted to scrutinising the exegetical claim that Aristotle's presentation of the passions in the *Rhetoric* is in accordance with the 'appearance view'. Clearly if this claim could be upheld it would be highly problematic for the account of rhetorical proofs here ascribed to Aristotle. I will argue for the rejection of this claim.

For the remainder of this chapter, we will attend to Aristotle's generalised remarks about the passions in *Rhetoric* II.1, particularly

<sup>211</sup>Such a theory clearly has no difficulty allowing that it is possible for someone to fear as dangerous a spider they know to be harmless.

1378a19-22. This is an obvious starting point for a careful examination of Aristotle's understanding of the nature of the passions. Thus, although our overall argument about emotion-arousal in rhetorical proof does not depend on a particular interpretation here, it may nevertheless be helpful to indicate in outline how this passage is being understood.

*The passions are those [things] on account of which we change and differ in relation to our judgements [Gk. pros tas kriseis],<sup>212</sup> and that are accompanied by pain and pleasure, for example, anger, pity, fear and any other similar passions and their opposites. (II.1.1378a19-22)*

With this sentence, Aristotle introduces an extended section (running through to *Rhetoric* II.11) dealing with the passions. I take it that what Aristotle is offering here is a definition: that is, he is not simply characterising the passions so that his audience can identify what he is talking about,<sup>213</sup> he is identifying the essential features of a passion. More significantly, perhaps, I take it that what is defined here is *the passions*. That is, Aristotle here sets out what it is to be a passion. In doing so, I take it that he defines not those passions only that are

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<sup>212</sup>“Judgements” here means instances of judging, not faculties of judgement.

<sup>213</sup> I am inclined to think that the language here is rather more precise and technical in character than one would expect if Aristotle were simply highlighting some characteristic features of passions in order to indicate his subject matter.

relevant to rhetorical purposes,<sup>214</sup> but the passions or emotions as a category.

As far as the text is concerned, the claim is as follows. What is defined here is identified in the text as “*ta pathê*” (a19): this seems best understood as meaning the passions. This meaning for “*pathê*” is a regular non-technical meaning of the word, and is a short version of an implied longer phrase “*ta pathê tês psuchês*” - the passions or affections of the soul.<sup>215</sup> Against this background, it is clear that it has been this meaning that has been intended in the references forward to this section from earlier in the treatise, and it is equally clear from the way in which the section is announced in its immediate context.<sup>216</sup>

It will become clear as we look at the definition in detail that the various elements of the definition serve to differentiate emotions from other states of the soul. In this regard one might puzzle over why the construction Aristotle uses is apparently strangely general, “emotions

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<sup>214</sup> If Aristotle were here identifying a subset of the passions, it makes it the more surprising that he includes a condition (accompaniment by pain and pleasure) that not all of the types of state he discusses will meet. That said, there are puzzles here on any understanding of 1378a19ff.. More significantly, it seems unlikely that Aristotle is identifying a subset of passions relevant to rhetoric, because his discussion of the passions throughout II.1-11 suggests a more systematic interest in the passions extending much wider than their rhetorical usefulness, cf. Leighton [1996], Cooper [1999]. For this reason, some writers have seen this section as originally developed independently of concerns with rhetoric. cf. Kennedy [1991], Fortenbaugh [2002] 106.

<sup>215</sup> cf. Leighton [1996] 220-31; LSJ v.sub. *pathos*, II; Gill [1984]. Note also several examples of this non-technical meaning in earlier uses of “*pathos*” phrases in the *Rhetoric* itself, e.g. 1354a16 (the longer phrase), 1356a14, 19, 1369b15.

<sup>216</sup>Forward references: 1356a14, 19, 1369b15; immediate context: 1377b30-78a5, 1378a18f..

are *those things* on account of which ..." (Gk. *di' hosa*, a19).<sup>217</sup> There are two ways in which we might respond to this observation. One is to dismiss the worry as an inappropriate demand for precision from Aristotle here. On this option, one might observe that there is perhaps enough in the context (perhaps 1377b30-78a5) to suggest that what is in view here is conditions of the soul, and hence that the scope of "*hosa*" is implicitly restricted to conditions of the soul. Perhaps something similar is implied by the fact that this is a definition of the *pathê*, and that this term suggests its longer equivalent, "*pathê tês psuchês*" - *passions of the soul*.

My preferred response to this worry is more complex, but more satisfying. On this option, the definition serves to differentiate the "*pathê*" (and its implied equivalent "*pathê tês psuchês*") that are the subject of this definition, i.e. the emotions, from a wider meaning that "*pathê tês psuchês*" can have. We can get a sense of how this would work from the ambiguity of two slightly archaic senses of the English word, "affection" - that is, as meaning an attribute or characteristic, and meaning (roughly) an emotion. The definition here, then would begin as follows.

*The affections are those on account of which ...*

This seems a not unnatural reading, and implies a repetition of "affections", and that the first (explicit) use of the term has a narrower meaning than the second (implied) use. The sentence thus differentiates those affections (of the soul) we are interested in defining, i.e. the emotions, from other affections (of the soul). In support of this reading, we note that there is a *technical* use of terms like "*pathê*", with a wider reference than emotions. An obvious

<sup>217</sup>A very similar construction is used at 1390b14f. where Aristotle seems much more careful to make clear the scope of "*hosa*".

example of this use is *DA* I.1, 403a3-8, where the list of such *pathê* includes perception and thinking. This technical use seems to mean something like “condition of the soul” – Aristotle is certainly not supposing in this passage from the *De Anima* that (as we would put it) perceiving and thinking are *emotions*. He is using *pathê* in its recognised technical sense of ‘condition’ or ‘attribute’.<sup>218</sup> Thus, here in our passage from *Rhetoric* II, what I think is happening is that Aristotle is distinguishing the emotions, the *pathê tês psuchês*, in that familiar sense, from the *pathê tês psuchês* in the technical sense, i.e. from conditions of the soul generally. Emotions are, in fact, a sub-set of conditions of the soul.<sup>219</sup> A reading of this kind fits with the careful analytical tone that is most clearly evident in the lines immediately following (a22-29), in the careful distinguishing of three questions applying to each type of passion. That we have the marking out of a subset (the passions (i.e. emotions)) within a larger category (the “passions” (i.e. conditions of the soul)) is signalled by the parallel between the use of “*di’hosa*” here and at 1390b14, where it is clearly used for a classification of just this kind.

Some such strategy is helpful to see off a worry that Aristotle had omitted here to include in his definition anything approaching the obvious requirement that a *pathos* be a mental state – something affecting the soul! Without this, such material things as pleasurable

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<sup>218</sup> Rorty [1984] and LSJ v.s. III.

<sup>219</sup> Leighton [1996] is exercised additionally on how to relate these remarks on the emotions in *Rhetoric* II to the account of different types of motivation in I.10, and in particular why *epithumia* does not appear in the list at 1378a21-2, nor among the emotions described in II.2-11. Cf. also Cooper [1999]. The puzzle about *epithumia* seems to me to be softened by 1378a3 and especially 1388b32, which make it hard to deny that at least some kinds of *epithumia* count as emotions for Aristotle.

mind-altering drugs might pose a threat to the definition's sufficiency for emotion. One might also consider bodily conditions like being drunk or sleepy: these can both affect judgements and be accompanied by pleasure or pain, and yet neither being drunk nor being sleepy amounts to a passion. We have suggested two strategies for how such a worry might be allayed.

On either strategy, it seems to me that this definition marks out a coherent category of conditions of the soul, not dissimilar to our own category of passion or emotion. Indeed, arguably we have here an adequate definition of emotion. To see this, let us consider the various elements of the definition.

The requirement that emotions be accompanied by pain and pleasure requires some clarification. A full treatment of the emotions in the *Rhetoric* would require us to look at this in more detail exegetically, and to bring the evidence of II.2-11 to bear on this question. Space does not permit this here. Our views are summarised in an appendix below. For present purposes, we will merely venture some simple observations from 1378a19-21 itself. We will also consider how this part of the definition will need to be understood if the definition of the passions is to be successful. Firstly, although Dorothea Frede is no doubt correct to see Aristotle here as engaging with the Platonic position expressed at *Philebus* 46b-c and 47d-50c, namely that the passions are mixtures of pleasure and pain,<sup>220</sup> it does not follow that he is straightforwardly endorsing the Platonic position. Certainly a20-21 alone cannot be taken as confirming such a view. In fact (and especially in the light of the accounts of individual emotion-types that follow), it

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<sup>220</sup>Frede [1996] 258-60.

is better to read Aristotle's requirement here as that each passion be accompanied by pleasure *or* pain (or both). Secondly, we should note that within the definition, the specification of passions as states that are accompanied by pleasure and pain serves to distinguish passions from other conditions of the soul that explain a difference in judgements. Obvious examples would be thoughts, sensations, opinions and beliefs, perhaps also some or all desires. If this is correct about the function of this part of the definition, it is very illuminating about how it should be interpreted. The kinds of state just mentioned are all clearly distinct from passions, and yet it is possible for any of these to occur concurrently with pleasure or pain, without this combination amounting to an emotion. It must be more than simple concurrence that is meant by a20-21. Indeed, it will not even be adequate to insist that the connection be necessary rather than contingent. Perhaps there are some thoughts that are so long and complicated and require so much concentration that for humans thinking them necessarily results in headaches. This would not make thinking those thoughts amount to an emotion.<sup>221</sup> In fact what seems to be needed is for Aristotle to be insisting that emotions have as an essential feature pain and pleasure *that is connected in the right kind of way* to the rest of the emotion.<sup>222</sup> In fear, it is not merely any pain that is involved, but pain that is connected to the apparent advent of something bad. The sense in which the pain or pleasure *follows* the emotion's other features involves a very close connection. We have suggested already that emotions involve a distinctive outlook: feeling that things are a certain way. It is

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<sup>221</sup>Nor even is it simply a matter of emotions having the presence of pain or pleasure as an essential characteristic. For this could just be a conceptual matter – and a concept whose essential features included the conjunction of thoughts about Plato and pain in the lower abdomen would not thereby be the concept of an emotion.

<sup>222</sup> cf. Leighton [1996] 217-220.

tempting to think that what Aristotle has in mind here is that the kind of pain and pleasure that will distinguish emotions from other judgement-affecting mental states is pain or pleasure *at* those things' being that particular way.<sup>223</sup> This of course goes beyond the text we are considering here. For now, we note that if the definition of emotion is to be adequate, it requires the strong reading of "*hois hepetai*" (are accompanied by) just described.

Aristotle's other condition is that emotions be states of the soul on account of which we change and differ in judgements. So, if the definition is to be adequate, we would expect this condition to combine with the pleasure/pain condition in such a way as to distinguish emotions from other states of the soul connected in the relevant way with pleasure or pain. Such states might be things like hunger or thirst, perhaps in general certain sorts of desire. Again, it seems clear that in order to distinguish emotions from these states, this part of the definition requires careful interpretation. After all, there will be cases of hunger that account for a change in judgements. While strolling around Paris mid-morning, I judge that it is vital to find for lunch a restaurant with the perfect balance of ambience, value, good food and attractive locality, but then I start to feel hungry and come to judge that all that is needed is to find the nearest restaurant with a table for two! Or this process might be more subtle: I retain all my previous criteria but under the influence of hunger, I come to judge that a restaurant previously rejected for poor ambience is after all more attractive than I had previously thought. My hunger causes my judgements to be more sympathetic, in ways that conduce to eating sooner!<sup>224</sup> It is a

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<sup>223</sup>See further the appendix below.

<sup>224</sup> I see no reason to deny, with Leighton [1996] 225, that the desire alters judgement. Even on his account, supposing the desire to give rise to anger, irritation, despair or



commonplace in the philosophy of emotions that emotions are distinguished from bodily desires like hunger by features such as standing in inferential relationships with other mental states such as beliefs, and being assessable for rationality. Aristotle's requirement merely that emotions account for changes in judgement seems too weak by comparison. The most obvious way of strengthening this in the required way is to suppose that what Aristotle means here by saying that it is on account of emotions that people "differ in relation to judgements" is that emotions themselves involve distinctive judgements.<sup>225</sup> Thus, coming to feel an emotion is a matter of coming to make the relevant judgements (or at least to make them in the way required for emotion). On this interpretation, one might worry that there is a problem with how emotions can explain or account for ("di' reflection on these, and that it is these that are the immediate cause of an alteration in judgement, it remains the case that the desire has accounted for a difference in judgements.

<sup>225</sup>If this is correct, Aristotle's choice of vocabulary here seems to make his definition over-restrictive. "*Krisis*" generally means a verdict or decision reached after considering both sides of an issue. This is too narrow: clearly not all emotions involve a difference in 'verdicts' in this sense. Perhaps instead Aristotle is using "*krisis*" to mean 'discriminations' or 'how someone discerns things to be' (though if so it is not, I think, out of a concern here for including non-human animals' emotions (on which, see below)). This might add a connotation that these *krisis* have a quasi-perceptual salience to the subject. Or perhaps Aristotle's point is after all just that emotions involve a distinctive outlook ("judgements" in the sense of 'what one takes to be the case'), and he was tempted to use the over-restrictive word "verdicts" because of its political and legal connotations, which emphasise the relevance of emotions to the orator's practical concerns. See further below. Cf. also LSJ s.v. *krisis* A.I.1, 2; II.1. Interestingly, Aristotle does not repeat his use of '*krisis*' in his detailed treatment of the emotions (*Rhetoric* II.2-11). Arguably our understanding of this term here, in a definition of the emotions *generally*, should be informed by a wider consideration of how Aristotle characterises *in detail* the cognitions involved in different types of emotions. On this, see below, chapter 6.

*hosa*" a19) a change in judgements if they themselves are that very change in judgements: the *explanans* and the *explanandum* need to be distinct if explanation is to occur. There are two possible responses to this – one is to reject the requirement for *explanans* and *explanandum* to be distinct. (In answer to, "Why is Sue so intent on hurting Bob?" we might say, "Because she is angry with him." This can be an intelligible explanation even where Sue's desire to hurt Bob is not distinct from her anger.) Another response is to insist that Aristotle's point here is that emotions, by themselves involving distinctive judgements, change their subject's total set of judgements. So, just as adopting a new belief explains a change and difference in one's (set of) beliefs, likewise emotions explain a change and difference in one's (set of) judgements. I think that this latter response is the more important, and is plausible as a reading of a19-20. It thus seems that if these lines are an adequate definition of emotion, this suggests that Aristotle's view is that emotions involve distinctive judgements. This view is put forward tentatively at this stage and will be explored more in the next chapter.

Before moving on from these lines, there are a couple of significant words to comment on.

Firstly, it is worth noting that Aristotle refers here to a change (*metaballontes* a20) as well as a difference in judgements among the things accounted for by emotions. What kind of change is he referring to? In fact, it is hard to tell what Aristotle has in mind here. He may be referring to the bodily changes that he regards as part of having an emotion (cf. *DA* I.1, 403a16-18). The phrase may refer to changes in judgements. It might conceivably be read with "*diapherousi*" as *hendiadys*, meaning 'change so as to be different', i.e. just a stylistic way

of talking about change, and on this view too it would refer to changes in judgements.<sup>226</sup> Or Aristotle may simply be leaving this open – it is clear simply that in emotion, people change in one way or another. My speculation is that Aristotle is hinting towards his awareness of the importance of bodily changes in emotion, but because this is largely irrelevant in the context of rhetoric, we get no more than this unspecific hint.

The second philological point relates to the word we have translated “judgements”, in Greek *kriseis*. Sihvola has suggested that Aristotle’s choice of this word is motivated in part by a desire to keep open the nature of the cognitions involved in emotions. As he explains,

“In Aristotle, *κρισις* is a very general cognitive term covering [a] wide range [of] selective and discriminating activities. It can refer to any case where something like assent to something’s being the case is involved. It apparently covers both perception and belief and is applicable to both human beings and other animals. The use of this term hints that when defining at a general level the *παθη* which we would call emotions Aristotle did not want to commit himself to either belief-or appearance-based interpretation.”<sup>227</sup>

I suggested above that if Aristotle is aiming for an adequate definition of emotions, he has in mind here the kinds of judgement that will distinguish emotions from (e.g.) bodily desires or sensations. This view does not leave room for emotions to involve mere perceptual

<sup>226</sup>That said, this seems a surprising stylistic device to find in the context of a definition.

<sup>227</sup> Sihvola [1996] 74. The phrase amended above is actually printed “... covering wide range or selective ...”, which doesn’t make sense. Accordingly, we assume this is a printing error, with the version above restoring the intended sense.

appearances. The issues here will be explored more fully in the next chapter. But the key point here is that the choice of the word *krisis* here has nothing to do with a cautious openness to various kinds of discriminating activities that might be involved in emotion, still less to leave open the possibility of animals having emotions. Such concerns are not in view here. In fact, the choice of this word surely has to do with the contexts in which rhetoric is exercised, lawcourts and assemblies. In the very introduction to *Rhetoric* II.1, as part of stressing how important a role *pathos* will play, *krisis*, *krites* and *krinesthai* are used several times (1377b21, b22 twice, b24) in reference to the verdict or the judgement involved particularly in both deliberative and forensic rhetoric.<sup>228</sup> This is all no more than one Bekker page before the passage we have been examining (and indeed the intervening page is mostly taken up with a brief treatment of the role of *ethos* as a means of persuasion) – so it is very much in the immediate context. In assemblies and courts, listeners form verdicts (*kriseis*). Aristotle here is highlighting the rhetorical usefulness of emotion-arousal. It is not that here '*krisis*' needs to mean the dropping of a voting pebble into an urn. Rather, Aristotle is, by the use of this word, drawing attention here to the relevance of the emotions to the judgements, the mental 'verdicts', about the issue at hand that dicasts and ecclesiasts express when they cast their votes.

We have considered Aristotle's opening remarks and his general characterisation of the passions as he introduces the large portion of *Rhetoric* II devoted to them. If these lines are to be interpreted as a definition of the emotions (or even as a definition of Aristotle's subject matter, supposing this not to include things like hunger, thirst and

<sup>228</sup> At 1377b21-2 it is explicitly stated that both deliberative and forensic situations are focused on a κρισις, a judgement or verdict.

sensations, or thoughts and opinions), then it seems that finding here an adequate definition requires firstly that pleasure and pain be closely connected with the other features of an emotion, and secondly that emotions somehow involve “judgements”.<sup>229</sup>

It is the second of these tasks that is most crucial to our overall project of showing how for Aristotle arousing emotions could be a way of providing proper grounds for conviction. Accordingly, the next chapter is concerned with how to characterise the cognitions involved in Aristotelian emotions.

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<sup>229</sup>If this proves unpalatable, one might fall back on a looser interpretation of these lines as offering a general characterisation of his subject matter, not an attempt at an adequate definition.

## Chapter 6 – “Appearances” and “beliefs” in Aristotelian emotions.

### Do Aristotelian Passions require Belief or mere Appearances?

In considering Aristotle’s definition of the emotions at 1378a19f., we found indications that when Aristotle says that emotions make people “differ in relation to their ‘judgements’ (or ‘verdicts’)”, he is referring to the distinctive outlook involved in emotional experience itself. It is natural to take the reference to ‘judgements’ to mean that a person *takes things to be* the way they are represented as being in that distinctive outlook. We have argued that this is important if emotion-arousal is to count as providing proof in the sense set out in the earlier chapters – that is providing proper grounds for conviction.

In this chapter, we shall take up the claim of some recent commentators that Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, supposed that emotional experience involved things merely *appearing* to the subject to be the way they are represented, rather than the subject’s actually taking them to be so. This proposal is offered as an explanation of Aristotle’s frequent use in *Rhetoric* II.1-11 of *phantasia* and *phainesthai* and cognates in connection with the emotional person’s distinctive outlook.

### Proposals emphasising the use of “phantasia”

The view that Aristotelian emotions involve mere appearances is one – the most credible, and the most important for our purposes here – of a number of views prompted by the observation that Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, frequently (1378a31-2; 1378b9; 1382a21; 1382a25; etc.) uses *phantasia* and *phainesthai* and cognates to describe the distinctive

outlook of the passionate person.<sup>230</sup> It has seemed natural to take this as a deliberate and careful use of terminology. In all of the following views, this terminology is read in the light of passages elsewhere in Aristotle, principally *De Anima* III.3, in which a technical account of *phantasia*<sup>231</sup> is given. To see this, let us in section I of this chapter look carefully at the claims made by those who cite this terminology as a basis for denying that for Aristotle an emotion's having its distinctive outlook is a matter of taking things to be the way they are represented as being in that outlook. In section II, we shall look critically at why they propose understanding this terminology in the way they do, and argue for an alternative understanding. Sections III and IV centre around the use of *De Anima* III.3, its treatment of cases where appearances and belief conflict, and its general picture of *phantasia*. In section V we highlight a number of important conclusions.

## I

### Gisela Striker<sup>232</sup>

A key passage for Striker's view is the following.

"It is evident that Aristotle is deliberately using the term "impression" [her translation of *phantasia*] rather than, say, "belief" (*doxa*) in his definitions in order to make the point that these impressions are not to be confused with rational judgements. Emotions are caused by the way things appear to

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<sup>230</sup> Sihvola [1996] 56-7 sets out the evidence in full, calling it "a pattern which requires explanation". I agree but prefer an explanation very different from Sihvola's.

<sup>231</sup> Hereafter, mention of *phantasia* should be taken to include cognates of both it and *phainesthai*.

<sup>232</sup> Striker [1996] esp. 291f..

one unreflectively, and one may experience an emotion *even if one realizes that the impression that triggered it is in fact mistaken.*"<sup>233</sup>

There are several contrasts implied by Striker here. We might highlight the following claims. The outlook involved in an emotion is arrived at "unreflectively" rather than (presumably) through reflection and deliberation. And the use of the term *phantasia* ("impression"), as contrasted with *doxa* ("belief"), signals also that Aristotle thinks of emotions as involving a kind of stance that will explain why they can persist even when one realises that the stance is mistaken.

Her view appears to be implicitly informed by the kind of account of *phantasia* offered in *De Anima* III.3. This is suggested by the contrast between *phantasia* and *doxa*, the identification of the latter as involving a kind of reflection that the former lacks (cf. 428a22-4), and the persistence of *phantasia* in the face of conflicting beliefs (cf. 428b2-4).

She offers this account as an explanation of why Aristotle is, in the accounts of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II, making regular use of "*phantasia*" and cognates.

John Cooper<sup>234</sup>

Cooper likewise attributes an appearance view to Aristotle as an explanation of his use of terms like "*phantasia*" in *Rhetoric* II.

"It seems likely that Aristotle is using *phantasia* (and *phainesthai*) here to indicate the sort of non-epistemic appearance to which he draws attention in *De Anima* 3.3, 428b2-4, according to which something may appear to, or strike one, in some way (say, as

<sup>233</sup> Striker [1996] 291, emphasis and comments in square brackets mine.

<sup>234</sup> Cooper [1993], [1996], [1999].



being an insult or belittlement) even if one knows there is no good reason to take it so. If so, he is alive to the crucial fact about the emotions, that one can experience them simply on the basis of how, despite what one knows or believes to be the case, things *strike* one – how, as it were, they look to one when, for one reason or another, one is disposed to feel them.”<sup>235</sup>

Cooper also attributes to Aristotle the view that the emotions involve a kind of stance, contrasted with belief and knowledge, that will explain why they can persist even when one realises that the stance is mistaken. This stance is characterised as “non-epistemic”, and as simply a matter of how things “*strike* one”. The *De Anima* reference confirms that Cooper has in mind simply things looking a certain way, appearances standing a particular way to the subject experiencing an emotion. The characterisation “non epistemic” suggests that such appearances may not constitute any good reason whatever to believe that things are as they appear.

Cooper seems to suggest that characterising this aspect of emotions in terms of *phantasia* was motivated in part by an alertness to the need to explain “the crucial fact about the emotions” that they can conflict with the subject’s beliefs or knowledge.

Cooper too, explicitly, claims that Aristotle uses “*phantasia*” and cognates in *Rhetoric* II with a similar sense to how they are used in *De Anima* III.3.

Juha Sihvola<sup>236</sup>

<sup>235</sup> Cooper [1993] 191-2, underlining mine.

<sup>236</sup>Sihvola [1996].

Sihvola's case is more complex. He considers a number of different ways in which Aristotle's use of *phantasia* terminology might be understood here. He is also very careful about attributing to Aristotle reasons for adopting the view (whatever its exact contours) that "the cognitive content of the emotions" is "perceptual appearance instead of belief". He puts the point in terms of the advantages to the interpreter of ascribing such a view to Aristotle.<sup>237</sup> But the advantages he sets out are advantages of *having* such a view, and it is hard not to suppose that Sihvola thinks of these as reasons Aristotle himself might have had for developing and adopting the view that he did. The advantages are as follows. Firstly, as with Striker and Cooper, the appearances view helps explain how emotions can have an independence from the subject's beliefs. Secondly, the appearances view easily allows for emotions to be experienced by non-human animals who (by Aristotle's lights) lack beliefs – a view that is obviously problematic on a view of all emotions as requiring the kind of beliefs that only humans can have.

"If emotion could be based on perceptual appearance rather than belief we could perhaps explain how Aristotle is able to ascribe emotions to animals without granting them belief." (Sihvola [1996] 60)

The options Sihvola sets out for what Aristotle's view might be of the emotional person's distinctive outlook seem to be the following. First, it may be that Aristotle's view is that emotions involve mere appearances (how things look), where it is not part of the emotion that assent is given to these appearances. The emotion itself does not involve taking things to be a certain way, it involves their looking a certain way. A second option is that emotions do involve taking things

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<sup>237</sup>Sihvola [1996] 59-60.

to be a certain way, but the use of *phantasia* signals that this consists in (or results from) an unreflective assent rather than the kind of reflective assent that only humans can undertake. A third kind of position that Sihvola considers is that Aristotle's *phantasia* language sets out the *minimum* conditions for having an emotion: thus emotions need only involve appearances (however these are understood) rather than belief in things being a certain way, but they might equally involve more complex, more reflective or more committed states like belief. Sihvola sets out these options, and speculates that different accounts might be required for different emotions.<sup>238</sup>

Sihvola, however, clearly supposes that Aristotle is deploying the same kind of understanding of *phantasia* in *Rhetoric* II.2-11, in implied contrast with *doxa*, as that which we find in *De Anima* III.3.<sup>239</sup> Thus, interpretative options for understanding *phantasia* in *DA* III.3 are used to supply interpretative options for the same terms in *Rhetoric* II.

### Striker, Cooper, Sihvola and "Appearance Views"

Although they differ in a number of areas, these interpreters have some important things in common.

The Motivation for Attributing an Appearance View to Aristotle:

All three find Aristotle's use of "*phantasia*" and cognates striking and in need of explanation. They offer between them three kinds of explanation of why Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* might have held a view of emotions whose proper description would require terms like "*phantasia*". One is that understanding emotions as involving appearances rather than beliefs enabled him to explain how emotions

<sup>238</sup>Sihvola [1996] 73f..

<sup>239</sup>Sihvola [1996] 57-8.

can conflict with the subject's beliefs. Another is that understanding emotions in this way enabled him to explain why emotions do not require reflection and deliberation. Another is that this view enabled Aristotle to attribute emotions to non-human animals who lacked *doxa*.

The appeal to *De Anima* III.3:

All these scholars see the use of terms like "*phantasia*" in *Rhetoric* II as similar to their use in *De Anima* III.3.<sup>240</sup> And Cooper and Sihvola refer specifically in this connection to the discussion there of how the sun can appear small when it is believed to be huge.

Versions of the "Appearances View" of Emotions attributed to Aristotle:

On that basis, some or all of the following are attributed to Aristotle.

- Emotions do not involve the subject's taking things to be a certain way.
- Emotions do involve things appearing (or looking) a certain way.
- Emotions involve taking things to be a certain way, but unreflectively.

We will focus below on the first two of these views because they seem most central to what motivates the adoption of this kind of view and to what motivates ascribing it to Aristotle. Although we shall hope to show that the third claim is as unmotivated exegetically as an understanding of "*phantasia*" terms in *Rhetoric* II as the first two claims, we see no reason to suppose that Aristotle would deny that the distinctive outlook involved in emotions could be adopted unreflectively.

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<sup>240</sup>This view is also shared by Victor Caston ([1996] 41, n46.).

### Rejecting the “Minimum Condition” view

Let us also at this point deal with the suggestion that *phantasia* represents a “minimum condition” for the kind of outlook involved in emotion.<sup>241</sup> Such a suggestion might amount to one of two things. The first is that even though emotions themselves only involve appearances as of things being a certain way, it is possible that (independently of his emotional state) the subject additionally believes or takes it to be the case that things are that way. Allowing this latter possibility adds nothing to a view of the nature of the emotions themselves, which is what is at issue here. This is not a genuinely different kind of “appearances view”. However, the second version of this “minimum condition” view suggested by Sihvola is that Aristotle in *Rhetoric* II.2-11 states or implies that experiencing emotions *need* only involve the appearance that things are a certain way but *might* involve the belief that they are that way. *Phantasia* is the “minimum condition for the cognitive content of emotion”,<sup>242</sup> but emotions *might* involve any stance that is in the relevant way ‘superior’ to *phantasia*. Nevertheless, this cannot be Aristotle’s view as we have it in the text of the *Rhetoric*. On this last proposal, terms like “*phantasia*” must still be taken to mean appearance as distinct from belief or from taking something to be the case. But then it seems simply impossible to find this view in what Aristotle *actually says* about the emotions. Consider pity. “Let pity be some kind of pain at apparent (*phainomenôî*) destructive or grievous harm to one who does not deserve to encounter it.” (1385b13f.). How could the relevant part of this sentence possibly mean “destructive or grievous harm that is *either* how things appear to the subject *or* is the object of some superior cognitive state of theirs”? There is no basis for

<sup>241</sup>Sihvola [1996] 71.

<sup>242</sup>Sihvola [1996] 71.

such a view in the text. The same applies to the other parts of the text in which we find similar terminology. At best, this could be what Aristotle “might ... have” said “if pressed”,<sup>243</sup> (i.e. Aristotle’s more sophisticated underlying view, which he *should* perhaps have expressed to secure his view against certain criticisms); at worst, it is not Aristotle’s view at all.

### Evaluating the Appearances View

So, having dealt with some less plausible ways of attributing an appearances view to Aristotle, we turn to the task of assessing the more plausible claims. We will first consider and reject the apparent motivations for attributing views of this kind to Aristotle. Instead, we propose a simpler alternative explanation of Aristotle’s use of “*phantasia*” and cognates in *Rhetoric* II. We will then look in detail at the account of *phantasia* in *De Anima* III.3 and in particular the way in which it accommodates the possibility of conflict between *phantasia* and beliefs in the same person. On this basis, we will be able to assess whether this is how Aristotle understands the nature of the emotional person’s distinctive outlook in *Rhetoric* II.

## II

Why, then, does Aristotle in *Rhetoric* II use terms like “*phantasia*” to describe the distinctive outlook of the emotional person? According to Cooper and Striker, these terms express a view Aristotle has adopted in order to accommodate an otherwise problematic fact about emotions. Aristotle, on this view, is aware of the occurrence of cases where emotions are in conflict with what one knows or believes to be

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<sup>243</sup>Sihvola’s formulation seems to reflect these difficulties ([1996] 71).

the case, and he has crafted his account of the emotions to allow for such cases.

The thought is that if Aristotle held that emotions involve beliefs, he would face a problem. The problem is as follows. In ordinary circumstances, when humans become aware that they hold beliefs they recognise to be conflicting, they abandon one or both beliefs (perhaps ending in a state of *aporia* about them,<sup>244</sup> or perhaps going from side to side between them, but certainly not with undimmed simultaneous commitment to both of a pair of contradictory beliefs). However, this does not seem to be the case with emotions. In this respect the emotions are like perceptions. Just as in the Müller-Lyer illusion one line still looks longer than the other even after one has measured them both and verified that they are the same length,<sup>245</sup> in the same way I may know that the spider in the bath threatens me no harm, but still *feel* as though it is terribly dangerous! If emotions involve beliefs (i.e. if the distinctive emotional outlook is taken to be of the way things are), it is puzzling why they do not behave like other beliefs. That is, it is puzzling why they do not get dispelled by better-grounded beliefs that are seen to contradict them.<sup>246</sup> If Aristotle thinks that emotions involve

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<sup>244</sup> To clarify: to have moved from believing p and believing q (which the subject is aware entails not-p), to believing that there is strong evidence in favour of p and strong evidence in favour of q, would, in the terms I am setting out here, count as being in a kind of state of *aporia* in relation to p and q. Regarding a proposition as being in good epistemic standing is not the same as believing it, so one can abandon belief in a proposition whilst still thinking that it has strong epistemic support.

<sup>245</sup> Aristotle was clearly aware of this phenomenon in relation to perception cf. *De Anima* III.3, 428b3-4.

<sup>246</sup> Nussbaum's ([2001] 35-36) judgement theory certainly faces this issue. Nussbaum's response is to question whether it is really true of beliefs in general that they get extinguished by other better-grounded beliefs that contradict them. Her contention is

Chapter 6 – “Appearances” and “beliefs” in Aristotelian emotions. page 210 of 272

*doxai*, which at the very least involve taking something to be so, these puzzles will arise on his view. By contrast, supposing that emotions involve mere appearances explains this phenomenon. Emotional appearances are on this view just like any other appearances – the spider continues to (emotionally) appear dangerous even when we know it is not, in just the same way as the sun continues to appear about a cubit across even when we know it is huge.<sup>247</sup>

Attributing the appearances view to Aristotle is thus typically a matter of taking his use of words like *phantasia* in *Rhetoric* II as a careful strategy in which he makes the same kind of use of this terminology as he does in *De Anima* III.3. The suggestion is that he thereby hints at his awareness that the arguments used against views of *phantasia* as involving *doxa* in *DA* III.3, will also count against views of emotions as involving *doxa*. He supposedly hints too at a view in which the kind of careful understanding of *phantasia* that enables him in *DA* III.3 to explain how the sun can appear a foot across when we know it is huge, may also be deployed to explain how the spider can emotionally-appear to be harmful when we know it is harmless.

So, what evidence is there that Aristotle had thought about such cases? In fact the only textual evidence cited by Cooper or Striker (or Sihvola) is his use of words like “*phantasia*” in these passages in *Rhetoric* II, i.e. the very usage that his supposed awareness of such cases is supposed to explain. In fact, there is nowhere in *Rhetoric* or elsewhere in Aristotle’s work a single reference to a case of the relevant kind.<sup>248</sup> Of course, whether his account has the resources to explain such cases is that some beliefs – particularly (though not exclusively) value-laden beliefs like those involved in emotions – are stubborn and hard to get rid of.

<sup>247</sup>cf. *De Anima* III.3, 428b3f..



important in considering whether Aristotle's account of the passions is *correct* – it is perhaps a constraint on a theory of the passions that it explain such cases. But there is not a hint in the text of Aristotle that this played any part in the formulation of his views on the passions. That is, there is not a trace of the motivation ascribed to him by Cooper and Striker.<sup>249</sup>

The case is similar in relation to the suggestion by Striker and Sihvola that Aristotle's use of terms like "*phantasia*" in *Rhetoric* II is intended to emphasise that the distinctive outlook involved in emotions need not be arrived at *reflectively*. Perhaps such a view of the emotions is correct, and perhaps Aristotle would have agreed. But the only *evidence* that this is what he intends in the *Rhetoric*, in using terms like "*phantasia*" is the terms themselves, coupled with an appeal to *De Anima* III.3. We shall suggest below that there is both a better explanation for Aristotle's use of this terminology in the *Rhetoric*, and good reason to suppose that he is not using it here in the same kind of way as in the *De Anima*.

Sihvola claims that Aristotle's use of "*phantasia*" in *Rhetoric* II expresses an understanding of the nature of emotions compatible with his view expressed elsewhere that non-human animals may experience emotions.<sup>250</sup> It seems to me true that nothing in the account of human

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<sup>248</sup> Unless such a case is in view at *DA* I.1, 403a23-24, but this certainly outruns what Aristotle actually says there. *EN* VII.6, 1149a24-b3 likewise is not such a case. I am grateful to Giles Pearson for helpful discussion of this passage. Similarly with the pathological pleasures and fears at *EN* VII.5, 1148b15-49a20, but these merit further consideration than can be given here.

<sup>249</sup> Cooper [1999] 416-7; Striker [1996] 291.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Sihvola [1996] 60-68, and evidence cited there.

emotions in *Rhetoric* II rules out the possibility that non-human animals also experience emotions.<sup>251</sup> But it seems to me incorrect to suppose that it was any part of Aristotle's reason for using "*phantasia*" and cognates that he was concerned to ensure his view was compatible with the possibility of non-human animal emotions. There is not a trace of such concerns in the *Rhetoric*. Sihvola may be right in the general view of emotions he ascribes to Aristotle; but he is wrong to suggest that this is what explains Aristotle's use of terms like "*phantasia*" in the *Rhetoric*. This usage can be explained much more satisfactorily in other ways.

I have suggested that there are not substantial exegetical grounds for supposing that in formulating his account of the emotions in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle was trying to emphasise that emotions do not require prior reflection, or to allow either for the possibility of emotions in conflict with what one knows or believes, or for the possibility that emotions might be experienced by non-human animals. These proposals will be further undermined if without them we can provide a satisfying account of why Aristotle did so frequently use words like "*phantasia*" in his accounts of the emotions.

"*Phantasia*" and cognates are important words in the *Rhetoric* as a whole, and are used to indicate how the listener *takes things to be*. The words are used to make clear that this is not necessarily how things

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<sup>251</sup>If, for example, all emotions require taking it that things are thus and so, then *phantasia* could be sufficient to meet this requirement in (non-human) animals but insufficient in humans (supposing humans can dissent from appearances and animals cannot). It would not compromise the possibility of animal emotions for there to be requirements on human emotions that non-human animals could not fulfil.

actually *are*.<sup>252</sup> So, someone can be persuaded by something that he thinks is a piece of good rhetorical reasoning, even if it is not – this would be a case of persuasion by “apparent enthymeme”, *phainomenon enthymema* (1356b2-3)<sup>253</sup> – just as in dialectic, someone can be brought to draw a conclusion based on what they *take to be* a reasonable inference, even if the inference in question is not *in fact* reasonable. In cases like these, there is no question that somehow the apparent enthymeme is something that has the visual or auditory appearance of an enthymeme. This has nothing to do with sensory appearances at all. It simply marks how the listener takes the matters under discussion (not just signs or sounds) to stand. The word “apparent” (*phainomenon*) emphasises that how the person takes things may not be correct – they take this to be an enthymeme but it may not actually be one. This is how “*phantasia*” and cognates are used throughout the *Rhetoric* (noting one exception<sup>254</sup>), and this powerfully suggests that this is the correct way to understand them in the sections on the passions. So, we should understand these sections in the following kind of way: “fear may be defined as a distress or disturbance as a result of *taking it that* some destructive or grievous harm looms.” (1382a21-2). If this is correct, we would expect in the sections on the passions that Aristotle might sometimes happily use *oiesthai* and *dokein* to refer to aspects of

<sup>252</sup> Thus, Nussbaum [1994] 83-6, emphasises that *phainesthai* may be contrasted not only with *dokein* but also with *einai*. The latter is the more plausible in *Rhetoric* II.

<sup>253</sup> On apparent enthymemes, see above Chapter 3.

<sup>254</sup> It seems reasonable to bracket I.11, 1370a28-30 as an exception. Here *phantasia* is closely connected with *aisthêsis*, and is discussed because it is taken to be involved in remembrance and anticipation (*en tōi memnêmenōi kai tōi elpizonti*, a29). This nest of technical psychological concepts signals that *phantasia* here is closely connected with perception, as it is in *DA* III.3. Elsewhere in the *Rhetoric*, there is nothing to signal this more technical usage of the word. And, we note, even here, *phantasia* is not specifically contrasted with how the agent takes things to be.

emotional experience that he elsewhere describes using cognates of *phantasia*.

In fact, this is precisely what we find. Aristotle, in a number of places in *Rhetoric* II.2-11, seems to use *phantasia* and *phainesthai* and words that are clearly marking how someone takes things to be – *dokei* and *oiesthai* – as ways of referring to the same cognitive features of emotions (cf. 1380b37 and 1381a18, 1382b29-34, 1383a26, etc.<sup>255</sup>). This suggests that Aristotle is not using the appearance words in their technical sense explored in *De Anima* III.3. He is using these words to indicate that, for example, what is involved in fear is not that harm actually threatens, but that the fearful person *takes it that* harm threatens.<sup>256</sup> That is, he is alive to what really is a crucial and central fact about emotions, namely that they are related to the subject's *perspective*.<sup>257</sup>

I have argued briefly that there is insufficient exegetical reason for linking the use in *Rhetoric* II of words like “*phantasia*” to the technical way in which they are used in *De Anima* III.3, with a view to solving some supposed problem faced by Aristotle over animal emotions, conflict between beliefs and emotion, or the unreflectiveness of the outlook involved in emotions. The text can be understood as well if not better, certainly more simply, without this approach.

### III

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<sup>255</sup> Other examples are documented in Nussbaum [1994] 83-6.

<sup>256</sup> This view need not exclude the possibility that Aristotle's frequent preference for *phantasia* in *Rhetoric* II.2-11 is influenced also by its possible connotations of the liveliness, vividness or salience to the subject of an emotion's distinctive outlook.

<sup>257</sup> cf. from the recent emotions literature De Sousa [1987] 156-158; Solomon [1993] 16-20, 196-206; Goldie [2000] esp.12-18 and ch. 7.

I now wish to argue that taking *phantasia* and cognates in their *De Anima* III.3 sense raises far more problems than it solves. So, even if there were a case for supposing that when Aristotle uses terms like “*phantasia*”, he is hinting at the kind of use that we find in *De Anima* III.3, this will not yield the advantages envisaged by Sihvola, Cooper and Striker. Indeed, his remarks there raise serious difficulties for appearances views of emotions.

### The “Appearances View” of Emotion

It will be helpful in the discussion below to have a clear formulation of what we are calling the “appearances view”.

*De Anima* III.3 is taken by the interpreters mentioned above to support a view of emotions in which the distinctive outlook involved in an emotion is *how things appear to the subject*. We will refer to this view simply as the “appearances view” of emotion. It is to be contrasted with the view, which we will refer to as the “beliefs view”, in which the distinctive outlook involved in an emotion is *how the subject takes things to be*.<sup>258</sup> Accordingly, the appearances view and the beliefs view are competing views of what kind of stance is involved towards how things are represented as being, in the distinctive outlook involved in emotions. Let us suppose that, for instance, pitying the victim of a land-mine involves an outlook according to which they are suffering undeservedly. The appearances view would be that to the person feeling pity *appearances are* that the land-mine victim is suffering

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<sup>258</sup>Let “belief” here mean simply taking something to be the case.

undeservedly. By contrast, the beliefs view is that the person feeling pity *takes it to be the case* that they are suffering undeservedly.<sup>259</sup>

We will consider whether Aristotle's arguments about *phantasia* in *DA* III.3 would count against a "beliefs view" of emotions, and whether they suggest that understanding emotions using a similar notion of *phantasia* would help Aristotle towards a solution to the problem of emotions persisting in the face of better beliefs. A careful examination of Aristotle's arguments in *DA* III.3 will show not only that they would do neither of these things, but also that appearances views of emotion in general will not be able satisfactorily to solve this problem of emotions conflicting with better beliefs. It will further become clear that an understanding of *phantasia* along the lines set out using this and similar words in *DA* III.3 cannot possibly be what stands behind the use of these words in relation to emotions in *Rhetoric* II.

### *De Anima* III.3: *Phantasia, Doxa and the Size of the Sun*

Let us see in detail how Aristotle's account of *phantasia* is supposed to work in dealing with the case (428b2ff.) of the sun "appearing" to be a

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<sup>259</sup>We see a potential difficulty for the "beliefs view" - the view recommended here - related to feeling emotions in response to fiction. In what sense can we take it to be the case that Cassandra is suffering undeservedly whilst knowing that she doesn't really exist? There will be a problem, on this view, in relation to tragic emotions in the *Poetics*, or possibly a problem over consistency between the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* in relation to emotions. Either way, it seems beyond our scope here. Pitying Cassandra is not like fearing the spider in the bath I know to be harmless. Emotions apart, there is no sense in which I take it to be the case that the spider is fearsome, whereas there is an important sense in which I take it to be the case (it is the case *in the tragedy*, perhaps) that Cassandra is suffering undeservedly. This suggests that the issue here may be a more general one related to our beliefs about fiction, rather than some special difficulty for a "beliefs view" of emotions.

foot across when we know it to be larger than the inhabited part of the earth. Aristotle presents this example as problematic for accounts of appearances (*phantasia*) that involve belief. These problems he takes to be among a whole raft of reasons<sup>260</sup> why such views should be rejected. Obviously, his own view must offer a coherent explanation of such cases, so it makes sense to ask precisely how this will work.<sup>261</sup>

In doing so, we will have two questions in mind. The first is the following. Let us suppose (as Cooper implies) that Aristotle has noticed that emotions can sometimes conflict with better-grounded beliefs. Might he have realised that his negative arguments in DA III.3 against a view of *phantasia* involving belief, based on occasions where *phantasia* and belief can be in conflict, would also carry weight against a view of emotions as involving beliefs? The second question is as follows. Aristotle considered that his positive account of *phantasia* offered a successful explanation of why *phantasia* and belief could conflict. Might he have thought that an understanding of emotions as involving *phantasia* would likewise successfully explain why emotions and belief can conflict?

### The Sun Example and the problem of belief

λείπεται ἄρα ἰδεῖν εἰ δόξα ...[argument against supposing that *phantasia* is *doxa*] ...

φανερὸν τοίνυν ὅτι οὐδὲ δόξα μετ' αἰσθήσεως, οὐδὲ δι' αἰσθήσεως, οὐδὲ συμπλοκὴ δόξης καὶ αἰσθήσεως, φαντασία ἂν εἴη, διὰ τε ταῦτα καὶ διότι οὐκ ἄλλου τινὸς ἔσται ἡ δόξα, ἀλλ' ἐκείνου, εἶπερ ἔστιν, οὗ καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις· λέγω δ', ἐκ τῆς

<sup>260</sup> As is clear from 428a24-28.

<sup>261</sup> Indeed, the need to explain perceptual error generally (whether or not recognised as such) is prominent throughout DA III.3, 428a12, a18, b2-9, b17-30.

τοῦ λευκοῦ δόξης καὶ αἰσθήσεως ἢ συμπλοκὴ φαντασία ἔσται· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐκ τῆς δόξης μὲν τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, αἰσθήσεως δὲ τῆς τοῦ λευκοῦ. τὸ οὖν φαίνεσθαι ἔσται τὸ δοξάζειν ὅπερ αἰσθάνεται,

μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκός. φαίνεται δέ γε καὶ ψευδῆ, περὶ ὧν ἅμα ὑπόληψιν ἀληθῆ ἔχει, οἷον φαίνεται μὲν ὁ ἥλιος ποδιαῖος, πιστεύεται δ' εἶναι μείζων τῆς οἰκουμένης· συμβαίνει οὖν ἦτοι ἀποβεβληκέναι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀληθῆ δόξαν, ἣν εἶχε, σωζομένου τοῦ πράγματος, μὴ ἐπιλαθόμενον μηδὲ μεταπεισθέντα, ἢ εἰ ἔτι ἔχει, ἀνάγκη τὴν αὐτὴν ἀληθῆ εἶναι καὶ ψευδῆ. ἀλλὰ ψευδῆς ἐγένετο ὅτε λάθοι μεταπεσὼν τὸ πρᾶγμα. οὐτ' ἄρα ἔν τι τούτων ἐστὶν οὐτ' ἐκ τούτων ἢ φαντασία.<sup>262</sup>

*So it remains to see if it [appearance] is belief ...*

*It is clear then that appearance could not be either belief with sensation or by means of sensation, nor a mixture of belief and sensation, both for these reasons and because the object of the belief will be the very same thing that is (if it exists) the object also of the sensation. What I mean is that appearance will be the mixture formed from the belief that it is white and the sensation of white, certainly not from the belief that it is good and the sensation of white. Therefore things appearing is a matter of believing the thing that one senses, non-accidentally. And yet there can be also false appearances, about which the subject simultaneously has a true judgement. For example, the sun appears to someone to be a foot across, and yet he is convinced it is larger than the inhabited part of the earth. Thus what happens is either that he has lost his previously-held true belief, with no change in*

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<sup>262</sup>Ross [1956]



*the facts, and though he has not forgotten it nor been persuaded to change his mind; or else, if he still retains it, necessarily the same [belief] is true and false. But [a belief] becomes false when the facts change without one's noticing. So, appearance is neither any one of these [viz. sensation, belief, knowledge, etc.] nor formed out of them.*  
(DA 428a18-19, a24-b9)

The discussion of the case of the sun features as part of a section (428a18-b9) where Aristotle, having argued that *phantasia* cannot be *aisthêsis*, *epistêmê* or *nous*, argues that it cannot be either belief or a combination of belief (*doxa*) and sensation (*aisthêsis*). Aristotle reserves most space for the latter, where his target appears to be what we shall call the “mixture view” of appearances advanced in Plato’s *Sophist*.<sup>263</sup> This view is that appearances are a combination of belief and sensation, and it is the involvement specifically of belief that plays the key role in explaining how appearances can sometimes be false. Aristotle’s use of the sun example here as an objection to this view centres around the role of belief in the Platonic view. I propose to look in detail at Aristotle’s arguments in this section. Understanding these arguments will show whether they would count against a view of emotions as involving beliefs.

By 428b2, Aristotle has already clarified that this mixture theory would need *phantasia* to be a combination of a sensation and a belief (*doxa*) *with the same object* (428a27-b2).<sup>264</sup> His argument is that this will give the Platonic mixture theorist insuperable difficulties over a particular

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<sup>263</sup> *Sophist* 263d-264b.

<sup>264</sup> The exact nature of this constraint is tricky: “with the same object” may mean ‘about the same thing’, e.g. something white (or ‘the white’), or ‘about the same proposition’, e.g. that it is white.

range of cases. There are cases where what ‘appears’ to us is false (e.g. the sun appears about a foot across) and at the same time we appear to have only correct beliefs about the very same matter. That is, we have the correct belief that the sun is larger than the inhabited part of the earth. In such cases, the mixture theorist about appearances faces a dilemma. The first option is that the belief that the sun is huge is “lost” (428b5). It is lost presumably because, in having the *phantasia*, the person has (on the proposal under consideration) a sensation and a belief that the sun is quite small. The belief that the sun is small causes the belief that the sun is huge to be lost (“ἀποβεβληκέναι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀληθῆ δόξαν”, b5). Aristotle draws attention to how problematic this option would be. The loss of the correct belief that the sun is huge would have happened without the occurrence of any of the usual processes by which our beliefs are changed: there is no change of the facts, no forgetting and he has not been persuaded to change his mind.

So, Aristotle seems to view this first option as unattractive. The second option is that the person retains their belief that the sun is huge. Aristotle’s argument is quite difficult to make out. He says, “if he still retains it, necessarily the same [belief] is true and false. But [a belief] becomes false when the facts change without one noticing.” (428b7-9).<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>265</sup>Ross ([1961] *ad loc.*) is puzzled by the aorist (ἐγένετο) and the optative (λάθοι) – but there is no obvious puzzle here – Aristotle is recording the process by which generally a state of belief becomes false. The aorist is gnomic (and we note that a couple of manuscript traditions have the imperfect, “*egineto*”), and the optative yields the sense “whenever” (though there is perhaps some awkwardness from the absence of “*an*”).

On Ross's interpretation, the feminine noun to be understood at b7 (*tên autên*, "the same") is not *doxan* but *phantasian*. The objection to the belief-plus-sensation account of *phantasia* is then that on this second option, where the true belief (that the sun is huge) is retained, it makes the state of *phantasia* both true and false, which is absurd. On this view, it would be true in virtue of the true belief, and false because of the false sensation. While this view is a possible<sup>266</sup> construal of the Greek, it seems highly unlikely that this is Aristotle's objection. Firstly, it violates the constraint on the view under criticism that the sensation and the opinion have the same object – a constraint that Aristotle has immediately before this spent some 5 lines setting out (a27-b2).<sup>267</sup> Secondly, the view does not accurately represent Plato's view in the *Sophist*, where false appearances are false because the belief part of the mixture is false. Thirdly, and relatedly, Aristotle would – on Ross's interpretation – be objecting to a rather incoherent version of the mixture view, lacking the very feature (a false belief) that for Plato explained how appearances could be false in the first place.<sup>268</sup> Of course, these latter objections do not rule out this interpretation: Aristotle is not engaged in exegesis of Plato's views, he may be criticising merely what Plato literally says.<sup>269</sup> Still, this way of

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<sup>266</sup> Though in truth it is unlikely. There has been no use of the feminine noun φαντασια since 428a29, since when appearances have been referred to using τὸ φαίνεσθαι and φαίνεται (twice). It is difficult, in fact, to find any plausible alternative to thinking that τὴν αὐτήν (b7) refers back to τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀληθῆ δόξαν (b5).

<sup>267</sup> Ross's construal seems to require that the sensation part of *phantasia* be able to be false, and hence that the object of the sensation be a proposition. Cf. n.278 above. But then the mixture account of the content of appearances would already have been abandoned.

<sup>268</sup> Plato *Sophist* 264a-b.

<sup>269</sup> cf. Annas [1982] 323-6.

(mis)interpreting the position of his Platonic opponent is highly unlikely in this particular case given the fact that at a47-b2, Aristotle seems to cast this whole discussion of the sun example as a problem arising from the fact that on this view what is perceived and what is believed must be non-accidentally *the same*. A final objection to Ross's interpretation is that, on this reading, the problem for the Platonist that he highlights in Aristotle's text is trivial compared to the other weaknesses of the Platonic view thus interpreted. If Aristotle is really suggesting that the belief involved in the state of *phantasia* here (the state in which it appears to the subject that the sun is about a foot across), is the belief *that the sun is larger than the inhabited part of the earth*, then – granted – the same overall state of *phantasia* will be in a way true and in a way false. But this would be a trivial problem for this view (thus interpreted) compared to the difficulty it would then face of explaining how this appearance could be *of the sun's being about a foot across* in the first place.

In contrast, both Hamlyn<sup>270</sup> and Lycos<sup>271</sup> take it that Aristotle's objection is that the same *belief* cannot be both true and false. This gives a more natural reading of the Greek text, and yet it is hard to see any sense in which the belief *that the sun is larger than the inhabited part of the earth* is false. Hamlyn suggests that it is false *ex hypothesi* as the belief involved in the appearance. That is to say that since it must (somehow) be the belief involved in the appearance that the sun is about a foot across, it must be false, since that appearance is false. Of course, this would be a paradoxical result,<sup>272</sup> that a true belief could – without

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<sup>270</sup> Hamlyn [1993] *ad loc.*

<sup>271</sup> Lycos [1964] 501-2.

<sup>272</sup> And apparently at odds with what Aristotle says at 428b8-9, “[a belief] becomes false when the facts change without one's noticing.”

changing its content – become false through being incorporated into a mental state which was false. And, quite apart from the puzzle about how the belief that the sun is huge could turn out false, there would be a further puzzle faced by the mixture theorist (thus interpreted) – the same worry faced on Ross’s interpretation above – about how the belief *that the sun is huge* could possibly be part of what constitutes the appearance *that the sun is a foot across*. Aristotle is presenting a problem faced by the mixture theorist in finding a response to the second horn of his dilemma (i.e. the supposition that the subject *retains* their belief that the sun is huge). On this interpretation, Aristotle imagines that the mixture theorist’s response would be as described above – with the highly paradoxical (if not absurd) features we have highlighted. But then he presents the difficulty of this horn of the dilemma simply by saying “the same [belief] would be bound to be true and false.” It stretches credibility to suppose that if this is how Aristotle understood the mixture theorist’s position, he would present, as his objection to it, not its most obvious absurdities, but the fact that it would make the same belief true and false. We may note again that on this interpretation too, the mixture account would have given up all the resources which it needed to explain false appearances in the first place.

Lycos<sup>273</sup> has a variant of this interpretation in which the belief in question is still the belief that the sun is huge, and this belief is true because it has the sun’s size correct, but false “*as the belief element in the appearing*”. It is difficult to make out what Lycos is suggesting here, but the thought seems to be either identical to Hamlyn’s view, or it is that the belief is not the correct belief to be part of the appearance that the

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<sup>273</sup> Lycos [1964] 502f..

sun is a foot across. An appearance that the sun is about a foot across, if it is to have a belief among its composite parts, requires such a belief to be a belief *that the sun is about a foot across*. Thus the belief *that the sun is huge* has the wrong content for comprising part of an appearance that the sun is a foot across. The suggestion seems to be that at b7-8, Aristotle is saying, “this same belief [that the sun is huge] must be both true and wrong [i.e. the wrong belief to be part of an appearance that the sun is about a foot across].” If this is the suggestion, it is implausible as an elucidation of Aristotle’s Greek. Aristotle’s “*alêthê kai pseudê*” simply means “true and false”, and is best translated thus, although it might at a stretch be rendered “right and wrong”, since these English words can mean true and false. But this feature of English should not mask the meaning of Aristotle’s Greek. The English words “wrong” and “incorrect” can be used to express unfitness for a particular purpose – on this suggestion Lycos has Aristotle highlighting the fact that the belief is unfit for the purpose of constituting the belief component of an appearance that the sun is a foot across. However, the Greek word “*pseudê*” simply means false, and, as with “false” in English, this cannot mean unfit for some purpose. Since this is what b7f. says, the puzzle remains. How can a belief that the sun is larger than the inhabited part of the world be *in any plausible sense at all* false?

Two further options seem to offer a more fruitful approach to the passage.

One possibility not considered by interpreters is that “the same [belief] must be true and false” at 428b7f. records a verdict that the subject himself is committed to. The idea is that firstly the belief that the sun is

huge is retained (b7). But this is now alongside the *phantasia*, which includes the belief that the sun is quite small (b3f.). Each of these beliefs entails both its own truth and the falsity of the other. Thus these two beliefs commit the subject to – what is an absurd inconsistency – two different verdicts on the same belief.<sup>274</sup> He must (“*anankê*” b7) think that the “same belief”<sup>275</sup> is at once true and false. Now this interpretation requires supposing that there is an unstated “in his (the subject’s) view” to be understood in lines b7-8. Textually, this is rather speculative. Still, if it is possible, this interpretation has Aristotle drawing out the conclusion for the mixture view of appearances that it casts the “sun example” as an example of someone having inconsistent beliefs. How, though, would this constitute an *objection* to the mixture view – which is what b7-8 clearly is? After all, the mixture view is Plato’s, and he would have been happy to grant that human beings often hold inconsistent beliefs.<sup>276</sup> It is the business of philosophy, and was supremely the business of Socrates, to face people with this uncomfortable fact. There is a challenge for this interpretation to identify Aristotle’s objection.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup>The unstated noun at b7 is indeed surely *doxan* rather than *phantasian*.

<sup>275</sup>“The same belief” may refer specifically to the belief under discussion throughout the dilemma (b4ff.), namely ‘that the sun is larger than the inhabited part of the earth’, or may refer in a general way to whichever of the two beliefs one is considering.

<sup>276</sup>This is distinct from allowing that people might *consciously* hold beliefs that they *recognise to be* inconsistent.

<sup>277</sup>A related possibility is to suppose from the context that the believing subject is presumed *correct* with regard both to his retained belief (that the sun is huge) and to how things appear (which *ex hypethesi* includes a belief that the sun is quite small). Their being correct about both of these, however, entails on the mixture view that “the same belief” (on which cf. n. 276. above) actually *is* both true and false.

A final interpretative option is that suggested by Hicks.<sup>278</sup> One might take *tên autên* (the same) as referring to the same *type* of attitude – i.e. *doxa*, that the subject adopts in relation to the size of the sun. So, it is not a token instance of believing that is both true and false, but rather ‘what the subject believes’. What is “necessary” therefore here is that the answer to the question, “What does the subject believe about the size of the sun?” be both, “that it is a foot across,” and, “that it is huge.” Hence, when considering the subject’s belief about the size of the sun, we must admit that it is both true and false. If this is somehow a possible reading of the Greek text,<sup>279</sup> Aristotle would be pointing out that on the mixture view of appearances, in cases like the sun case the subject adopts two attitudes towards the size of the sun, attitudes of exactly the same kind – namely attitudes of belief, such that one is true, the other false. So, there is one type of attitude (or possibly one ‘faculty’ exercised), namely belief, but two token attitudes, one true belief that the sun is huge, and one false belief – the one involved in the appearance – that the sun is a foot across. This is presumably exactly what the proponent of the mixture account of appearances would be likely to say. But then it is again unclear how this would constitute a point against their view.

On the last two interpretative suggestions, we need to identify Aristotle’s objection. For Aristotle, like everybody else, knew that people can sometimes have (albeit unrecognised) inconsistent beliefs. I think this challenge can be met. It can be met firstly in terms of

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<sup>278</sup> Hicks [1907] 466-7. The reading of this and related passages in Everson [1999] 212-213 seems to have much in common with his interpretation.

<sup>279</sup> It is certainly awkward to suppose that “τὴν αὐτὴν [δόξαν]” b7 could mean the same *faculty of belief*, or the same *kind of attitude*, i.e. *belief*.



Aristotle's dialectic. His criticisms are of Plato. On the Platonic account, I cannot (in the same way, with the same part of the soul) believe that the sun is huge and believe that it is a foot across.<sup>280</sup> And yet, if – on Plato's account of appearance – appearance that things are a certain way involves belief that they are that way, this is precisely what is entailed.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, even without the dialectic with Plato, there is something plausible about this account of Aristotle's criticism. When I believe something and believe the negation of that same thing, knowingly and explicitly, I am in an important way irrational. Finding one's self in such a situation brings doubt and puzzlement. But when, believing that the sun is huge, I find it nevertheless appears about a foot across, I am guilty of no such irrationality and am attended by no doubt or puzzlement or conflict of any kind. Common sense suggests that it is precisely *not* the very same kind of stance I take to "the sun as huge" as I take to "the sun as a foot across". In fact, Aristotle wants to insist, the whole of my believing about the size of the sun is entirely true. There is nothing I am getting wrong here. For my believing to become false, there would need to be some change in the world that had escaped my notice (b8f.). That has not happened in this case. Before I look at the sun, I simply have the belief that the sun is huge. Then I have simply looked at the sun, seen it looking the way it normally looks, but have not changed in my belief about its size. In fact, there has been neither a change in the facts, nor anything that has escaped my notice. On that basis, as a result of seeing the sun, my belief about it has not become false in any way. This natural picture is

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<sup>280</sup> Cf. *Republic* IV. 439b5f..

<sup>281</sup> We might wonder how great a difficulty this would be for Plato. Could he not simply accommodate this by supposing here that the two beliefs are held with different parts of the soul? Still, on the basis of what we actually have in the *Sophist*, this difficulty stands.

at odds with a view of *phantasia* as being a mixture, or weaving-together of belief and perception. Indeed, it cannot involve belief.

This account of the nature of Aristotle's objection at b7f. is compatible with either of the latter two interpretative options proposed. Neither is without some difficulty as a reading of the text, but despite this, they seem the most preferable readings of how this part of the 'sun example' works as an argument. My preference is for the former.

#### Applying the DA III.3 arguments about *phantasia* to the passions.

Supposing this is right about Aristotle's objection to belief's being a component of perceptual *phantasia*, we should proceed to the issue we highlighted earlier. Do these arguments show that there will be something similarly problematic about an account of the passions in which they are partly constituted by beliefs?<sup>282</sup> An account of perceptual *phantasia* in which one constituent is belief will struggle to explain cases where one concurrently has a false *phantasia* in conflict with a true belief about the very same object. Similarly, it might be suggested, an account of the passions in which one constituent is belief will struggle to explain cases where one concurrently has a 'false passion' in conflict with a true belief, both about the same object. The kind of case I will consider is where one is afraid of a spider in the bath that one knows to be harmless. The fear is false in just this sense: it involves representing<sup>283</sup> the spider as dangerous, and the spider is not in fact dangerous. I propose to contend that Aristotle's objections to the

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<sup>282</sup> Recall that the sense of 'belief' in use here is simply taking something to be the case.

<sup>283</sup> Here, what is in dispute is the kind of representational state involved here, whether belief or *phantasia*. But both of these are representational states that are truth-apt.

mixture account of perceptual *phantasia* do not count against the view that Aristotle thinks of the passions as partly constituted by beliefs. Situations of the kind represented by my fear of a spider I know to be harmless, will – on the view that passions involve beliefs – involve the holding of incompatible beliefs. My ordinary belief that the spider is harmless is incompatible with the belief involved in my fear of the spider – the latter belief would be that the spider threatens me some harm. We suggested that Aristotle’s point runs as follows. The sun example showed that if belief is involved in *phantasia* then it would be irrational for the sun to look a foot across when we believe it is huge. But obviously this is not irrational. So the theory that belief is involved in *phantasia* must be false. However, these last steps come out very different in relation to the involvement of belief in *passions*. For if belief is involved in the passions, then it will be irrational to feel afraid of the spider when believing that it is harmless. And of course, this *is* irrational! In fact it is in precisely such cases that we talk about *irrational* fears. While we do not think that there is anything wrong with how things look to us when the sun looks a foot across, we do think that there is something wrong with us when we fear what we know to be harmless spiders. So, whereas it is a bad theory that makes the sun case irrational, it is a *good* theory that makes the spider case irrational. Indeed, this point would seem to count *against* the ‘*phantasia* view’ of the cognitive contents of passions: on that view, the irrationality of fearing harmless spiders in the bath is no greater than that of the sun looking a foot across, i.e. there is no irrationality whatsoever. But this seems to get the wrong verdict. Fearing spiders known to be harmless *is* irrational, and this should count against a theory that says it is not.<sup>284</sup>

<sup>284</sup> Besides the way this counts against interpretations of Aristotle’s view of the passions, this will be a problem faced by some modern ‘perceptual’ theories of

All of this can be said without taking up any position one way or another about whether the beliefs involved in the passions are of exactly the same kind as other kinds of beliefs. In short, Aristotle's arguments in rejection of Plato's 'mixture view' of perceptual *phantasia* as involving beliefs do not rule out the possibility that his own view of the passions might involve beliefs.

(We should note here an important implication of this objection to the 'appearances view'. It is a *desideratum* of any theory of the kind of representational states involved in emotional experience, that it account not just for the *occurrence* of passions that conflict with our dispassionate judgements, but also for their *irrationality*. The appearances view fails to meet this *desideratum*. Indeed, this looks as though it will be problematic for *any* perception-based view of the passions. By assimilating this aspect of passionate experience to perceptual representation, the possibility of conflict with dispassionate beliefs has been so smoothly allowed for that there turns out to be no irrationality involved in such cases at all. This is clearly the wrong result, and counts against theories of the emotions that entail it.<sup>285</sup>)

#### IV

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emotions too. For example, Prinz's theory of emotions as perceptions struggles in the face of this difficulty (Prinz [2004] 237-240).

<sup>285</sup> This of course touches on a much wider issue in the philosophy of the emotions.

Cases like the spider case seem to require treatment in a way that recognises that they are possible, that they are irrational, but also that the irrationality involved is not as stark as that involved in at once dispassionately affirming and denying the very same thing. Together, these constitute a very challenging set of *desiderata*. Cf. Nussbaum [1999], [2001]; Roberts [1999]; Sorabji [1999].

As well as arguing that Aristotle's position in *De Anima* III.3 is consistent with a view of the passions as involving beliefs, I wish further to argue that the positive account Aristotle offers there of *phantasia* could not be applied to explaining how we could have emotions in conflict with our (other) beliefs, even though it will serve as an explanation of why the sun looks a foot across. On Aristotle's view, *phantasia* turns out to be<sup>286</sup> a change coming about from the exercise of perception. So, the explanation of how we can have a *phantasia* as of the sun's being a foot across is as follows. Here I follow closely the account of *phantasia* offered by Caston.<sup>287</sup> On this account the intentional content of a *phantasma* is given by its causal powers to affect the person whose *phantasma* it is. Specifically, the content of a *phantasma* will be whatever an instance of perception with the same causal powers would be a perception of. So, often, it will turn out that *phantasmata* are produced by perceptions of the very objects they represent – my dream representations of my father are caused by my waking perceptions of my father. This is taken to be the substance of what Aristotle is asserting when he claims that a change that results from an exercise of perception will be *similar* to the perception that produces it (428b14, 429a5, 432a9f.) – similar, but not necessarily identical, since error is possible. On this model, the sun affects our eyes and produces a change which has the causal powers that a perception of a foot-wide sun would have. Hence, the change, the *phantasma*, is as of a foot-wide sun. The model, it seems to me, needs an additional nuance here in order to account fully for how the sun looks a foot across. After all, the change brought about by the perception of the (huge) sun also has the causal powers that a perception of a huge sun

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<sup>286</sup> Aristotle's positive argument for his own view, I take it runs from 428b10 to 429a2, with the conclusion coming at the end. Cf. Wedin [1988] ch 2, Caston [1996].

<sup>287</sup> Caston [1996], [1998].

would have: this is obvious, since it *is* the perception of a huge sun! So, it seems that here, the change brought about when I look at the sun has causal powers that are *both* those that a perception of a foot-wide sun would have *and* those that a perception of a huge sun would have. A perception of a foot-wide sun would have those causal powers if the sun was seen from fairly nearby, and a perception of a huge sun would have those causal powers if seen from much further away, as is actually the case. The model therefore needs to account for why the appearance to us, when we look at the sun, is that it is a foot across *rather than* huge.

### Standard Perceptual Conditions

It seems we ought to say something like the following. Any given *phantasma* is a state with certain causal powers. In order to determine what content is represented by it, we would need to identify what a perceptual state with the same causal powers would be a perception of, provided that the perception was under standard<sup>288</sup> perceptual conditions.

<sup>288</sup> What standard perceptual conditions are might vary relative to a subject or group of subjects. So, for subjects similar to those Plato describes in *Republic VII*, who have lived all their life in the murk of a cave, the gloomy perceptual conditions inside the cave are more “standard” (at least initially) for them than the bright light outside. So for a *phantasma* to represent a sheep to them, it seems likely that it would need to have the causal powers that a perception of a sheep *in cave-like conditions* would have. If a *phantasma* had the causal powers that a perception of a sheep *in more objectively optimal perceptual conditions* (i.e. in brighter light) would have, it seems likely that it would represent something else – a heavenly sheep, or a radio-active sheep, perhaps. We should note that if this is correct, we can make precise what is meant by “standard” perceptual conditions on the basis simply of what was statistically usual for the subject among those perceptions that were involved in the subject’s development and “calibration” of her ability to have intelligible perceptual experiences. (In fact, it is plausible to suppose that a fully developed theory here would have to take account of complexities brought by the extent to which this

When we learn to perceive objects, as opposed to having undifferentiated perceptual experiences, most of the objects perceived during this process are fairly nearby, and in many cases we have the means to judge their distance, and hence compensate for perspective. This, we suggest, is a rough account of why objects do look a certain size, and why we are not constantly confused by the effects of distance and perspective. It is a tiny minority of objects featuring in this development process that are millions of miles away: there is thus something distinctly *non-standard* to us about perceiving things from that kind of distance. This account, or something like it, is required to explain why it is that the sun looks quite small, rather than huge. It is also clear that there is nothing in this general account of *phantasia* to yield any difficulty in supposing that things can look different from how we know them to be. The physical change that is the *phantasma* will happen to someone, and the facts about the causal powers that would be possessed by their perceptions under standard conditions will obtain regardless of their beliefs about the actual size of the sun.

If this is right, could this be the correct way to account for how we can sometimes have passions that involve representations we know to be false? For someone to be afraid of a spider in the bath they know to be harmless, the claim will be that there is a change they undergo that constitutes the relevant appearance. The content of this appearance is the spider, represented as dangerous.<sup>289</sup> For this to be a case of *phantasia*, the change must have been brought about by perceptual

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development and calibration is subject to ongoing adjustment.) The key point here is that standard perceptual conditions can be specified independently of the *accuracy* of the perception that results.

<sup>289</sup> Let “dangerous” serve for the moment as a placeholder for how fear’s objects are represented.

activity, and must have the causal powers that a (true) perception with the same content, made under standard perceptual conditions, would have. So, in this case, the change that constitutes the false *phantasia* (a harmless spider appearing to be a dangerous spider) must have the causal powers that a perception of a dangerous spider would have under standard perceptual conditions. Now, there are a number of difficulties here.

If this is to work, there needs to be some account, as there was in the sun case, of why the harmless spider appears as a dangerous spider and not simply as what it is – a harmless spider. For here, too, the change involved in the supposed exercise of *phantasia* has the causal powers that *both* would be possessed (we must suppose) by a change brought about by the perception of a dangerous spider *and* would be possessed (indeed, *ex hypothesi*, they *are* possessed) by a change brought about by the perception of a harmless spider. In the sun case, appeal could be made to the notion of standard perceptual conditions, but that doesn't look promising here. It is far from obvious that under standard perceptual conditions *this* kind of change would be brought about by a dangerous rather than a harmless spider, indeed the reverse seems more plausible – that the kinds of perceptions of spiders to which most (certainly British) arachnophobes are exposed are overwhelmingly of harmless spiders. Aristotle seems to acknowledge (428b21f.) that there can be cases of *phantasia* in which one mistakes one individual for another – where I mistake Cleon's son for Diares' son. We might speculate that the reason why someone who is actually Cleon's son looks to me not like Cleon's son but like Diares' son is that changes of the kind I am undergoing when I look at him are *standardly* caused in me by perceiving Diares', not Cleon's, son. I am used to



registering that kind of experience as a perception of Diare's son, and this is because predominantly when I have had such experiences they have in fact been perceptions of Diare's son. Presumably the best option for seeing as *phantasia* the representations involved in fear in the spider case would be to find ways of employing a similar model. If Caston is right that the contents of a veridical perception are its cause, and the contents of a *phantasma* are given by whatever would have caused it had it been a veridical perception (an *aisthêma*), then the worry is that the wrong result will be yielded in the emotional case of the spider in the bath. After all, in standard conditions, it would be a perception of a *harmless* spider that would cause this kind of change. Still, it had better not be impossible for there to be fear-relevant *phantasiai*, since these will be what Aristotle will need to explain fear in children and animals. And in general, it ought to be possible for something to 'look dangerous', and on any view, this would be a case of *phantasia*. Probably the most plausible prospect is to suppose that there is some feature of the spider (perhaps its shape, colour, hairiness, or whatever) that makes it look *like a dangerous thing*. So, to the person feeling afraid the spider does not look like anything other than a spider, but still, it looks (falsely) like a dangerous thing. And the explanation for this is that there are causal powers possessed by the change brought about by perceiving this (harmless) spider – causal powers related to the spider's shape/colour/hairiness – that would be possessed by a perception standardly of a dangerous thing. On that basis, this change, this *phantasma*, constitutes the spider looking dangerous. So, perhaps this difficulty can be met: harmless spiders can look dangerous – the kinds of *phantasia* invoked in the appearance view of emotions do exist.

Nevertheless, it still seems to me that invoking an account of ‘appearances’ to explain emotional cases like the spider case will be far less plausible overall than the way this account serves to explain purely perceptual cases of misleading appearances like the sun example. Firstly, it is not obvious that this ‘appearance’ view of emotions will be able to account well for the way in which the representations involved in our emotions *are* responsive to what we believe. In the spider case, for example, it seems to me that invoking *phantasia* rather than belief as the kind of representation involved does not make it easy to explain the effect on my fear of an annoying older brother telling me that the spider might have teeth, or might be poisonous, and that sometimes if spiders bite you your flesh swells right up, and so on. For the effect of this kind of teasing is to increase a person’s fear *by making the spider seem more dangerous*. If the kind of seeming involved in fear is a matter of how the spider *looks*, it is not obvious why these remarks should make any difference. Indeed, there is every reason to think that they ought to make *no* difference to how things “appear” and hence (on the appearances view) to the fear. Yet, it is obvious that this is just the kind of thing to make someone more afraid, and that it works by affecting how the spider is represented. Supposing, on the other hand, that emotions involve belief (i.e. taking something to be the case) makes this kind of phenomenon very easily explicable. The older brother’s remarks increase our fear because of the extent to which we *believe* them – to that extent, we are thereby believing that the spider is (or may be) more dangerous than we previously had thought. The spider thus ‘seems’ more dangerous to us in the sense that the spider is believed to be more dangerous, and so our fear is increased.

Similarly, it is clear that in many cases, coming to believe that things are not such as to merit emotion of a particular kind does stop people from having an emotion of that kind. (Arguably this is a much more frequent occurrence than the much-discussed cases like the spider case, where emotions persist despite a conflict with beliefs.) When someone believes that the person dressed as a beggar is in fact a rather wealthy actor involved in a publicity stunt, her pity evaporates. A sense of relief at the baby's calm, peaceful appearance in his cot turns to horror if I believe he is not breathing. The alarm at not seeing the car parked outside the house immediately dissipates when you remember that it has not been stolen but is at the garage for repairs. How things *look* simply does not generally command our emotions above and beyond how we take things to be. And our emotions are generally highly responsive to how we take things to be even if this involves little or no change to how things *appear*.<sup>290</sup> On the appearance view, this is not what one would expect.

There is a further, related, problem for the appearance view, that it suggests that emotions are more easily aroused than in fact they are. The appearance view (and perception-based views generally) of the representational content of emotions allows emotions too much independence from people's considered judgements. There are two problems with this. One is that such theories will simply prove false empirically. It takes more than someone looking successful to arouse my envy, if I know these looks are illusory. If I know I am in fact in jeopardy, it will not be enough to make me feel confident that there is the appearance that deliverance is at hand. The seasoned desert-

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<sup>290</sup> Aristotle appears to make this or a related point at *De Anima* III.3, 427b21-4, on which see below.

traveller is not heartened by what he knows to be a mirage, even though it still *looks* like an oasis.

So, we have sought a careful understanding of Aristotle's account of the sun example in *De Anima* III.3. On either of the plausible ways of understanding his argument against supposing that *phantasia* involves belief, his argument would not count against the view that the emotions involve belief. Indeed, his argument involves some important considerations about irrationality that would actually count *against* the appearances view of emotions. Even supposing, despite this, that Aristotle did hold the appearance view of emotions, we have seen that this would not give him the resources – as Cooper and Striker claimed – to explain cases where our emotions conflict with dispassionately-held beliefs.

The *De Anima* III.3 sense of “*phantasia*” does not fit *Rhetoric* II on emotions.

We saw earlier in the chapter that linking Aristotle's use of words like “*phantasia*” to their more technical use in *De Anima* III.3 was exegetically undermotivated. We will now see from a careful examination of Aristotle's positive account of *phantasia* in *De Anima* III.3, and his accounts of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II.2-11, that an understanding of *phantasia* from *DA* III.3 is very ill-suited to elucidate what Aristotle says in *Rhetoric* II about the outlook distinctive of various types of emotion. Thus we should reject the view that in *Rhetoric* II, Aristotle uses words like “*phantasia*” in the kind of way these terms are used in *DA* III.3.

### Phantasia in DA III.3

It is an important part of Aristotle's definition of *phantasia* in the *De Anima* that it is a change produced by the exercise of perception (429a1f., also 428b13f., 25f.; cf. also *De Insomn* 459a17f.). While it is conceivable that this might apply to the way we represent things when we fear a spider that we can see in front of us, it is not so obvious how this would generalise for all cases of the passions. So, what does Aristotle mean when he says of *phantasia* that it is a change produced by the exercise of perception? His central examples give a clue: the thing before us appears to be a man (428a14), the sun appears to be a foot across (428b3f.), things appear to us when we have our eyes shut (428a16), and things appear to us in dreams (428a8). In some of these cases, it is obvious that the appearance is caused more-or-less simultaneously by a perception. In other cases, Aristotle's thought seems to be that the stimulation of the sense organs that takes place in actual exercises of perception generates continuing movement and change of a similar kind even after perception has itself ceased.<sup>291</sup> This then accounts for the fact that after looking at the sun for a while, if we close our eyes or look elsewhere, we still appear to see it.<sup>292</sup> On the face of things, this does not fit well with wanting *phantasia* to be Aristotle's account of how things are represented in emotion generally. For there are occasions where the representations involved do not seem to be produced by perceptual activity in any important sense. For example, I

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<sup>291</sup> We should note that the connection between perceptual activity and the causing of a *phantasma* will clearly need to be much closer and more immediate than the connection between perception and thinking generally. For Aristotle, all thinking involves *phantasmata*, as he says at 431a16f. and elsewhere, and hence thinking will always have *some* causal ancestry in perceptual activity.

<sup>292</sup> Aristotle gives numerous examples, and expounds this point at length in the *De Insomniis*, cf. especially 459a23-b23, 460b28-461b7, cf. Caston [1996] 46-52

may become angry at having been outsmarted in a business negotiation, as I recheck the calculations: in my anger I represent the salesperson as having wronged me by exploiting my mistakes, but it is not obvious that this representation is the after-effect of perceptions. It seems rather that it is the after-effect of my calculations, and my tardy realisation of what has been done to me. Still, it may be that this objection can be met. Aristotle does acknowledge that what we call imagination is a case of *phantasia*, and he cites this as an example of where *phantasia* is up to us whenever we want.<sup>293</sup> In those cases, it must be that we are marshalling mental images that need not have been caused immediately before we use them. This might suggest that what is happening in my anger at the salesperson is that I am making use of stored *phantasmata* that in fact were originally caused by perceptual activity, as Aristotle's views on *phantasia* require: as with imaginative use of mental images, it is no objection to their being *phantasmata* that they were not caused immediately prior to the onset of my anger. Still, this is only a partial answer to this worry. It is not clear on this account what these *phantasmata* are, originally caused by perceptual activity, that are being made use of in how I represent things in my anger. Perhaps a more precise account can be given on this point. Still, one factor which threatens to make this very difficult is the next point – a restriction on the range of objects that an exercise of *phantasia* can have.

In the *De Anima*, Aristotle specifies that *phantasia* has the same objects as perception. This seems to be a restriction that will not make *phantasia* well-fitted to be the kind of representational content involved

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<sup>293</sup> *De Anima* III.3, 427b17-20 “πρὸ ὁμμάτων γὰρ ἔστι τι ποιήσασθαι, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημονικοῖς τιθέμενοι καὶ εἰδωλοποιοῦντες.” This should not be taken as an endorsement of a general view of all instances of *phantasia* as involving mental images.

in passions in general. In particular, there are several instances of how the contents of passionate representation are described in *Rhetoric* II, in connection with particular types of passion, where it seems impossible that this restriction could be met. Moreover, some of these are precisely cases where Aristotle uses the words *φαντασια* and *φαινομαι* in describing the way in which the passionate person sees things. We may recall that it is the use of these particular words that has tempted interpreters to suppose that Aristotle has in mind in relation to the passions a technical use of these words of the kind we find in *De Anima* III.3 and elsewhere in his psychological writing. Over the course of *Rhetoric* II.2-11, the items that are said to be the what a passionate person has a *φαντασια* of, or of which some part of *φαινομαι* is used are as follows.

Passion	Greek Text	Purported object of <i>phantasia</i>
ὄργη	ὄρεξις μετὰ λύπης τιμωρίας [φαινομένης] διὰ φαινομένην ὀλιγωρίαν	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● [Apparent] Revenge</li> <li>● Apparent Belittling</li> </ul>
Πραοτης	φανερόν ὅτι καὶ τοῖς μηδέν τούτων ποιούσιν ἢ ἀκουσίως ποιούσιν ἢ φαινομένοις τοιούτοις πρᾶοί εἰσιν.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Someone who apparently didn't do any of these things</li> <li>● Someone who apparently did them involuntarily</li> </ul>
Φοβος	λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ ἐκ φαντασίας μέλλοντος κακοῦ φθαρτικοῦ ἢ λυπηροῦ	The appearance of a future harm that is destructive or painful
Θαρσος	ὥστε μετὰ φαντασίας ἢ ἐλπίς τῶν σωτηρίων ὡς ἐγγύς ὄντων	Expectation with the appearance of deliverance as being near
Αἰσχυνη	λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ περὶ τὰ εἰς ἀδοξίαν φαινόμενα φέρειν τῶν κακῶν, ἢ	Bad things – present, past or future – that appear to bring you into disrepute

	παρόντων ἢ γεγονότων ἢ μελλόντων,	
ἔλεος	λύπη τις ἐπὶ φαινομένῳ κακῷ φθαρτικῷ ἢ λυπηρῷ τοῦ ἀναξίου τυγχάνειν, ὃ κἂν αὐτὸς προσδοκῆσειεν ἂν παθεῖν ἢ τῶν αὐτοῦ τινα, καὶ τοῦτο ὅταν πλησίον φαίνεται:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An apparent destructive or painful harm</li> <li>• Whenever it appears near that you could suffer (yourself or someone close to you) the same thing [as the pitiable person]</li> </ul>
Φθονος	λύπη τις ἐπὶ εὐπραγίᾳ φαινομένη τῶν εἰρημένων ἀγαθῶν περὶ τοὺς ὁμοίους	The apparent flourishing of someone like you
Ζηλος	λύπη τις ἐπὶ φαινομένῃ παρουσίᾳ ἀγαθῶν ἐντίμων	The apparent presence [in the person to whom one feels emulation] of prized advantages

The claim here is that Aristotle cannot, in the *Rhetoric*, be using *phantasia* in the technical sense of that word deployed in the psychological works, for the reason that if it were being so used here, the objects of *phantasia* would include only things that can be objects of sensory perception, since that is a necessary feature of *phantasia* in its *De Anima* III.3 sense.<sup>294</sup> But that is not at all what we find in the *Rhetoric* accounts of emotions. Specifically, here, the objects of *phantasia* would need to include

<sup>294</sup> Many of the more recent writings on *phantasia* in Aristotle convincingly reject Schofield's earlier view that there is no unified account of *phantasia* in *De Anima* III.3 (Schofield [1978]; cf. e.g. Wedin [1988], Everson [1999], Caston [1996], [1998]). But it is not clear even if Schofield were right that this would substantially undermine our present argument against the particular sense of *phantasia* appealed to by those invoking *DA* III.3 to elucidate the use of this and other terms in *Rhetoric* II.



- a. Abstract objects: anger involves the appearances of slight and of revenge; envy involves the appearance of flourishing, and confidence can involve the appearance of deliverance.<sup>295</sup> None of these seems to be a possible object of *aisthêsis*, as would be required for *phantasia* proper.
- b. Things in the Future or the Past: fear involves the appearance of *future* harm, pity seems to involve the appearance of one's own future suffering as possible; shame involves the appearance of bad things that bring disrepute – things “in the present or the past or the future” (1383b14).
- c. Causal Properties of Objects: when one experiences shame, it seems that one takes the object of shame to be something that will bring you into disrepute.<sup>296</sup>
- d. States of Affairs: at 1385b15f., the ‘appearance’ involved in pity is of a state of affairs as being near. The state of affairs is that the subject (or someone close to them) suffer in future the same thing as the pitied person. But this is problematic on the view that the kind of *phantasia* being spoken of here is of the same kind as is outlined in *De Anima* III.3 – for Aristotle goes on to say there (*DA* III.8, 432a10f.) that *phantasia* does not involve asserting one thing of another.

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<sup>295</sup> This latter may not be abstract – the expression used is “τα σωτηρια”, which perhaps can be objects of sensory perception.

<sup>296</sup> That this is how we should read “περὶ τὰ εἰς ἀδοξίαν φαινόμενα φέρειν τῶν κακῶν” at 1383b13f. is confirmed by the resumtive phrase at 1384a21f. “ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ ἀδοξίας φαντασία ἐστὶν ἢ αἰσχύνῃ” – what the objects of appearance would need to be, on the *phantasia* view being considered, is not the situation of disrepute, but the things themselves (τα ...) and their connection with (περὶ) disrepute. The connection these things are represented as having with disrepute is a tendency to bring one into disrepute!

These things present a problem only to the technical understanding of Aristotle's use of *phantasia* in relation to the passions. It is just such a use of the word that is being seen in the *Rhetoric's* description of the passions by proponents of the appearances view of Aristotelian emotions.

A related worry is that the content of *phantasia* in *DA* III.3 is quasi-perceptual. That is to say, it involves the representation of objects *as they would be perceived by the senses*.<sup>297</sup> So, even if the previous objection could be answered, such that all objects of the passions were in the relevant sense objects of perception, there might still be a problem, since the *way* in which they are represented in an Aristotelian *pathos* would still need to be the way in which they could be perceived by the senses. And Aristotelian passions simply do not seem to fit this pattern. For example, what 'appears' to someone experiencing *praotês* is a person towards whom they are feeling calm (this much is certainly such as could be perceived by the senses), appearing *as* not having done anything to insult them, or *as* having done those things

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<sup>297</sup> 428b14, "It [viz. a change coming about by the exercise of perception, which will turn out to be *phantasia*] is bound to be similar to perception". That *phantasia* involves representation of things as they would be perceived by the senses is also central to what Schofield is highlighting in describing *phantasia* as 'non-paradigmatic sensory experiences' [1978 (1992)] 252-255. Cf. also *DA* 431a14f. and esp. 432a9f. "States-of-appearance are just like states-of-perception except without matter." The point is even clearer in the *De Insomniis*, where Aristotle argues from the nature of *phantasia* as a movement caused by the exercise of perception that its content is sensory in character, 461a25-b3. Everson [1999] 157-64, it seems to me, is correct to stress the close connection between *phantasia* and sense-perception: indeed, so closely is *phantasia* connected with *aesthesia* that it seems to require the physical perceptual apparatus of perception in a way that thinking does not, cf. *DA* 403a8-9; 428b11-13, b15f.; *De Insomniis* 459a14-17; cf. *DA* 429b4-5.

involuntarily. These just do not seem to be the kind of things that, in Aristotle's view, we simply *perceive*. This represents a further challenge to the view that for Aristotle the representations involved in passions generally are exercises of *phantasia*.

Finally, and significantly against the use of the *DA*-style use of *phantasia* in *Rhetoric* II, we note that Aristotle himself has some very negative things to say about the connection between *phantasia* and emotion at *De Anima* III.3, 427b21-4.

*Furthermore, whenever we believe something terrible or fearsome, we immediately have an emotion, and likewise if it is something encouraging. Whereas in the case of appearance, we are in the kind of state we would be if seeing terrible or encouraging things in a painting. (427b21-4).*

The contrast here is between belief and *phantasia*, as the context makes clear,<sup>298</sup> in relation to a similar object. Aristotle's point is that belief is sufficient for emotion, whereas *phantasia* is not. Taken together, this strongly suggests (though it is not explicit) that Aristotle's position is that belief is also necessary for emotion. If that were correct, then Aristotle's position here is entirely consistent with the position we set out earlier from the *Rhetoric*, that it is essential to emotions that they involve taking things to be a certain way, i.e. that "beliefs" are essential to emotions. Interestingly, Aristotle's assertion about fear in this passage is very close to what he says in *Rhetoric* II.5, 1382b33, "those who believe they might suffer something necessarily are afraid." By contrast, those who take Aristotle's view of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II to be the appearance view, on the basis of his use of words like *phantasia*, will have great difficulty squaring what Aristotle says about

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<sup>298</sup> See esp. Hicks [1907] *ad loc.*

fear at *DA* 427b21ff. with his definition of fear in the *Rhetoric*. “Let fear be some pain or disturbance from the *appearance* (*phantasia*) of a coming destructive or painful harm.” If the same sense of *phantasia* is involved, the passages are clearly incompatible over whether *phantasia* of something fearsome causes fear. The difficulty is immediately resolved if in *Rhetoric* II, Aristotle uses words like *phantasia* in their looser, everyday sense, to express his view of emotions as involving (fallible) beliefs, e.g. that some destructive or painful harm is (or may be) coming. This seems a much more obvious, simple and attractive understanding both of the *De Anima* and the *Rhetoric* passages than the manoeuvres that are required by the appearance view. Faced with this problem, the appearance view is forced to say that Aristotle uses *phantasia* in a different sense at 427b21-4 from that used elsewhere in the same chapter, and that he does so without any indication of a change in meaning.<sup>299</sup> In short, 427b21-4 seems to rule out that Aristotle held the appearance view: at best it is a severe problem facing this view. It fits our proposed “belief” view without difficulty.<sup>300</sup> Indeed, this passage seems to be a rather general observation about emotional experience, and as such suggests that Aristotle took it to be simply *obvious* that emotions involve beliefs.

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<sup>299</sup> This position would find some support from the early article of Schofield [1978].

<sup>300</sup> There is perhaps a difficulty about how Aristotle can think that that paintings of terrible or reassuring things do not cause emotions, and yet that tragedies cause pity and fear in audiences. This difficulty seems to me not insuperable, but a full treatment would take us too far afield. Suffice to observe that if there is a difficulty here, it relates to the fact that the clause introduced by “*hōsper*” is clearly intended to mean “not in an emotional state”, and will obtain regardless of one’s understanding of *phantasia* in the previous clause. cf. also above n. 273.

The conclusion proposed here is that the appearance view be abandoned as an account of Aristotle's view of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II. Instead, we propose understanding his view of (for example) fear as involving<sup>301</sup> *taking it that* some destructive or painful harm is coming. That is, emotions involve taking something to be the case.

It should by now be clear how the adoption of this position, and the denial of the appearances view of Aristotelian emotions, poses no special problems for Aristotle in thinking that non-human animals had genuine emotions, even though they have *phantasia* but not *doxa*. As Sihvola notes, there are two possible contrasts to be made between *phantasia* and *doxa*.<sup>302</sup> One, the contrast he has in mind in denying *doxa* to animals at 428a19-24, is between taking something to be so in a way that is capable of happening reflectively (*doxa* in humans) and unreflectively taking something to be so (*phantasia* in animals). The position we have been defending is that emotions involve taking something to be the case. Thus it is a second contrast between *doxa* and *phantasia* that we have employed: namely between something's being *taken to be* the case, and its merely *appearing to be* so. In humans, states of *phantasia* fall short of taking something to be the case. But this is not so with Aristotle's non-human animals. Aristotle could scarcely deny that animals take things to be the case. For Aristotle, non-human animals do not have a distinction between appearance and reality, and

<sup>301</sup> Fortenbaugh's ([2002] 11-16) suggestion that the emotional state is merely *caused by* how the fearful person takes things to be seems to me a mistaken interpretation of Aristotle's position in the *Rhetoric*. Some reasons for rejecting his view are summarised in the Appendix.

<sup>302</sup> Sihvola [1996] 58. Aristotle's purposes in *De Anima* III.3 do not require the careful distinguishing of these contrasts. They are of course related, in that in humans it is the capacity to reflect that prevents it from being the case that everything that appears to be the case is taken to be so.

thus for animals anything that appears to be the case is taken to be the case. Hence, insisting that emotions involve taking things to be the case, presents no special obstacle to animals having them.

We considered earlier the motivation for attributing to Aristotle an appearances view of emotions in *Rhetoric* II. Exegetically the case seemed weak, both in terms of the lack of evidence for Aristotle's supposed reasons for holding it, but also because a superior explanation of his use of words like "*phantasia*" is available. We have now assessed whether, irrespective of its exegetical merits, the appearances view would give Aristotle the philosophical advantages claimed by Cooper, Striker and Sihvola in relation to emotions that conflict with beliefs. We have argued that it would not. In summary:

1. Aristotle's arguments against Plato's 'mixture' theory of appearances do not present any obstacle to the view that Aristotelian passions might involve beliefs, even if Aristotle had been concerned in the *Rhetoric* to allow for the possibility of conflict between emotions and dispassionate beliefs.
2. There are substantial difficulties in applying Aristotle's use in *De Anima* III.3 of *phantasia* to explain perceptual error to the case of passions that conflict with dispassionate beliefs.
3. There are a number of ways in which the representations involved in emotional experience described by Aristotle in book II of the *Rhetoric* do not fit his account of *phantasia* in the *De Anima*, despite the use of the words "*φαντασία*", "*φαινομαι*" and cognates.
4. Ascribing the appearance view of emotion to Aristotle is sharply at odds with what he says about emotions, *phantasia* and belief at *De Anima* III.3, 427b21-4, which is especially problematic if

ascribing the appearance view to Aristotle is motivated by appeal to *De Anima* III.3.

The significance for Aristotelian rhetoric of rejecting the appearances view

This conclusion is important. Let us recall why it is important for the role of emotion-arousal in Aristotelian rhetoric that Aristotelian emotions involve not mere appearances, but taking something to be the case. If emotional appearances are completely compatible with believing or even knowing things to be otherwise than they appear, then it is not at all clear how arousing emotions (on this view, merely involving appearances) could amount to providing a proof. On the appearance view of emotions, using emotion-arousal to persuade would involve getting listeners to make inferences from how things appear – that is, from premises that the listener does not necessarily even endorse, and whose use in inference does not seem sensitive to whether they are known to be true or misleading. By the listeners' own lights, in making inferences from appearances, they may not have any proper grounds for conviction. This applies even if listeners are entirely correct about how things *appear*. Thus, when considering whether someone is proceeding correctly in drawing a conclusion from premises they believe, one needs to establish whether the inference from the premises to the conclusion is acceptable, and whether they are right to believe the premises. However, if one is considering whether someone is proceeding correctly in drawing a conclusion from how things appear to them, it will *not* be enough to establish that the inference is correct and the appearance properly formed. This shows that if the appearances view were right, arousing emotion (even emotions that the subject is correct to have) would not be sufficient for

providing proper grounds for conviction. If the appearances view were correct, then – on the account of *pistis* set out in earlier chapters – Aristotle would face a serious inconsistency in claiming that arousing emotions was one kind of *pistis*.

However, we have set out compelling reasons for thinking that Aristotle did not subscribe to the appearances view of emotions, and that this is not what lies behind his use of words like *phantasia* in his accounts of emotions in *Rhetoric* II. Rather, Aristotle seems to have supposed that human emotions involved a distinctive outlook on the world in the sense of taking that to be the way things are. Some of the reasons for preferring the belief view to the appearance view as an account of Aristotle's understanding of the emotions have also brought to light good reasons for preferring it as an account of the emotions themselves.

### The challenge of irrational emotions

Consideration of irrational emotions in relation to Aristotle's account is largely a modern concern – there is scant evidence that when writing about the emotions Aristotle even considered cases of conflict between emotion and belief.<sup>303</sup> Still, it seems that emotions that are irrational in this sense are possible. If this is so, then they present a tricky pair of *desiderata* for theories of emotion. A theory of emotion must allow that such cases of irrational emotion are possible, but it must not make it impossible (as a *phantasia* view does) to account appropriately for what is irrational about them.

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<sup>303</sup> Perhaps *De Anima* I.1, 403a21-24 might hint at such considerations in the background, but what is explicitly said in that passage concerns a discrepancy not between passion and belief but between passion and the absence of an appropriate object.



These *desiderata* seem to make trouble for those theories of emotion where the cognitions involved in emotion (whether or not there is more to emotional experience than these cognitions alone) are identified with another kind of cognitive attitude. The two most common kinds of such theory are those in which emotional cognitions are judgements and those in which they are perceptions. Perceptual theories will find it hard to account for what is irrational about emotions that conflict with the subject's beliefs,<sup>304</sup> in just the way set out above in relation to the *phantasia* view ascribed to Aristotle.<sup>305</sup> Judgement theories will find it hard to account for how such emotions can be possible in the first place, since they seem to involve situations in which the subject simultaneously judges and denies the very same thing.<sup>306</sup> They also risk overstating the irrationality involved. Perhaps these worries can be alleviated by nuanced theories of this kind. But if not (and perhaps even if so), there will be a motivation to look for a theory of emotion that can accommodate these cases more easily.

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<sup>304</sup> More precisely, showing that such an emotion is irrational will require the fulfilment of some further conditions relating to how well epistemically warranted the belief is, and how much better epistemic warrant the belief has than the cognition involved in the emotion.

<sup>305</sup> Prinz [2004] (pp. 237-240) attempts to address these concerns, in response to a much earlier paper by Pitcher ([1965]), but fails to do so satisfactorily. See also Döring [2003] and Salmela [2006].

<sup>306</sup> Nussbaum attempts to address these worries principally by insisting on the possibility of holding inconsistent judgements, by pointing out how difficult it can be to eradicate some kinds of judgements, and by allowing for experiences in the absence of the relevant judgements that are emotion-like but do not properly qualify as emotions ([2001] pp 35-6, [1999]), cf. Roberts [1999], Sorabji [1999].

We have argued for rejecting the claim that Aristotle holds the *phantasia* view of the stance involved in emotions towards their contents, claiming instead that emotions are ways of taking something to be the case.

On this basis, emotions can be ways of accepting premises in a proof. Thus, arousing emotions can amount to (or contribute to) providing the listener with a proof. The way is clear for emotion-arousal to be part of an expertise in providing listeners with proofs: that is, part of an expertise in rhetoric.

## Conclusion

The principal claim defended in this thesis is that for Aristotle arousing the emotions of others can amount to giving them proper grounds for conviction, and hence a skill in doing this is properly part of an expertise in rhetoric.

We have set out Aristotle's view of rhetoric as exercised solely in the provision of proper grounds for conviction (*pisteis*) and have shown how he defends this controversial view by appeal to a more widely shared and plausible view of rhetoric's role in the proper functioning of the state. We have then explored in more detail what normative standards must be met for something to qualify as "proper grounds for conviction", applying this to all three of Aristotle's kinds of "technical proofs" (*entechnoi pisteis*). In the case of emotion, meeting these standards is a matter of arousing emotions that constitute the reasonable acceptance of premises in arguments that count in favour of the speaker's conclusion. We have then sought to show that Aristotle's view of the emotions is compatible with this role. This involves opposing the view that in *Rhetoric* I.1 Aristotle rejects any role for emotion-arousal in rhetoric (a view that famously generates a contradiction with the rest of the treatise). And it also requires rejecting the view of *Rhetoric* II.2-11 on which, for Aristotle, the distinctive outlook involved in emotions is merely how things "appear" to the subject.

Our treatment of Aristotle's positive views on the emotions has been limited. The appendix summarises some important arguments about the role of pleasure and pain which would form part of a fuller

treatment. But one important feature of Aristotle's views defended in the body of the thesis is this. For emotions to constitute acceptance of premises, they must involve *taking certain things to be the case* (i.e. – in the special sense in which we have used the term – “beliefs” ).

The principal claim of the thesis entails that Aristotle thought emotion-arousal could be a legitimate way of persuading someone to believe something, and that he was correct to do so. It should be noted that this position gives Aristotle only a partial defence against worries about the illegitimate (e.g. manipulative) use of emotion-arousal in persuasion. Certainly, emotion-arousal will constitute providing proper grounds for conviction only where it enables good inferential reasoning to the orator's proposed conclusion. This is enough to rule out many illegitimate uses of emotion in public speaking. But, as with all techniques in rhetorical and dialectical argument, it does not rule out that the practitioner may appeal to premises that the listener may *incorrectly* accept as reputable (emotionally or otherwise) without adequate grounds. And there is a further worry that the *emotional* acceptance of considerations in favour of the speaker's conclusion might enable those considerations to count more strongly in favour of that conclusion with the deliberating listener than the considerations themselves merit, precisely because of the way emotions command the subject's attention. Do such concerns significantly undermine the contribution Aristotle sees rhetoric as making to the proper functioning of the state? Or to what extent are these concerns mitigated by the structure of (e.g.) Athenian public deliberation where listeners get to hear multiple opposing speakers? The investigation of these remaining questions must be undertaken elsewhere.

In the end, Aristotle's approach to what will count as offering proof by emotion-arousal centres round whether the speaker is offering a good argument for their case. Because emotions are ways of taking things to be the case, they can be ways of accepting the premises in arguments. If the premises are part of a good argument, then by arousing acceptance of them, the speaker is providing the listener with proof of his conclusion. As such, emotion-arousal will be no different from any other kind of proof.

## Appendix – The role of Pleasure and Pain in Aristotelian Emotions

The main argument of the thesis does not require extensive claims about Aristotle's understanding of the emotions. He needs them simply to be ways of taking something to be the case. However, it might be wondered how, for Aristotle, this feature fits in with other features of emotions (and indeed how they might differ from non-emotional ways of taking something to be the case). One issue of particular importance is the role of pleasure and pain in emotions, a role highlighted in Aristotle's definition of the emotions at 1378a19-21.<sup>307</sup> Space has not permitted the detailed examination of this to be included, but it will be useful to offer a summary of Aristotle's position, and how it fills out his positive understanding of the nature of the passions.

### A Theory of Emotions

John Cooper has suggested that, in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle offers no "overall theory" of emotions, merely "a preliminary, purely dialectical investigation" and "no more than that".<sup>308</sup> Undoubtedly Aristotle's account of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II.1-11 has limitations, but it seems to me that this is a rather misleading summary. There are indeed – as I shall indicate – many areas in which his views are less explicit and exact than we might wish, and some in which they seem underdeveloped. Nevertheless, our assessment needs to take into account that this is a work not of psychology but of rhetoric. And it is possible

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<sup>307</sup>Cf. also the connection with emotions at *EN* II.5, 1105b21-23; *EE* 1220b12-14; *MM* I. 7, 1186a13f..

<sup>308</sup>Cooper [1996] 238-9, 251-2.

that Aristotle thought that what was interesting and important about the passions lay not so much at the level of the passions generally, but at the level of individual types of emotion. Accordingly, Cooper's verdict seems to me to be too hasty. Given its context, what Aristotle has to say seems most remarkable for the detail and coherence it *does* have. It suggests that his own reflections were well on the way to being something very like a "theory" of the passions, a theory we see reflected particularly in the definition at 1378a19-21, centering on pleasure and pain.

In fact, our proposal is that Aristotle thinks that emotions *are* pleasures and pains. This should not be taken as a claim about the *genus* of emotions,<sup>309</sup> nor as an endorsement of Socrates' view in the *Philebus* that emotions are mixed pains and pleasures.<sup>310</sup> His proposed position is as follows.

1. To have an emotion is to experience pain, pleasure or both.
2. The pain and pleasure involved in having an emotion is pain/pleasure is intentional and representational: it is pain/pleasure at the emotion's object or 'target' and involves that target being represented in ways that give 'grounds' for the particular emotion experienced.

*Thus, being afraid of the bear is to experience pain, and this is pain at the bear ['target'], at the bear's being a source of future harm (i.e. fearsome) ['grounds'].*

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<sup>309</sup>On which Aristotle either held no position, or held that this differed between emotions. Cf. esp. on anger (not defined as a pain, but as a desire-*cum*-pain): *Topics* 127b26-32., 150b27-151a19, 156a32-33; cf. *Rhet* 1378a30-32.

<sup>310</sup>*Pace* Frede [1996] 258-60. Cf. *Philebus* 46b-c and 47d-50c.

### Emotions as Pains and Pleasures

The textual evidence for the first claim may be summarise as follows. Six passion types discussed by Aristotle are described as being “a pain” (e.g. ἔστω δὴ ὁ φόβος λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ ...), or “being pained” (τῷ γὰρ λυπεῖσθαι ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀναξίαις κακοπραγίαις ...), and three “opposites” are similarly connected with pleasure.<sup>311</sup> The proposed view obviously fits well with these, and it is these that take up the bulk of Aristotle’s attention in *Rhetoric II.2-11*.

What, however, about gratitude and ingratitude, anger and calmness and love and hatred, where this kind of expression is not used? And what should be said generally about those “opposites” to some types of passion where the opposite is most plausibly construed as simply the absence of the original passion’s pleasure or pain? In some of these cases (anger, love, gratitude), the difficulties are minimised by careful attention to what Aristotle says.<sup>312</sup> Of some of the problematic “opposites”, it seems the thing to say is that strictly speaking they are not *pathê* but that they belong in *Rhetoric II* because the aspiring orator needs to know how to dispel as well as how to arouse each type of emotion. These strategies do not resolve every detail, but bring most of *Rhetoric II.2-11* into line with the proposed theory.

### Emotional Pains and Pleasures as Intentional and Representational

The claim that for Aristotle emotions are pains or pleasures that are intentional and representational is established from careful attention to the constructions used to specify the nature of the pain (and

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<sup>311</sup>Fear (1382a21-2), shame (1383b12-14), pity (1385b13-14), indignation (1386b10-11), envy (1386b18-21), emulation (1388a32-4), ‘righteous satisfaction’ (1386b26-9), ‘happy for’ (1386b30-32), *schadenfreude* (1386b34-1387a3).

<sup>312</sup>Cf. esp. Konstan [2006] on gratitude.



occasionally pleasure) involved in emotions. The favourite construction is to speak of pain at (*epi* + dative) something, and this is used sometimes to specify the emotion's target,<sup>313</sup> sometimes its grounds.<sup>314</sup> A number of other constructions are used, each of which has its own nuance (*peri* + dative; dative on its own; *dia* + accusative; *hoti* + clause): in many cases this is a matter of characterising the subject's perspective on the circumstances at which pleasure or pain is taken. How Aristotle specifies the pains and pleasures involved in emotions strongly supports the claim that he saw them as intentional and representational.

I thus reject Fortenbaugh's suggestion that for Aristotle neither emotions nor the pleasure and pain associated with them are representational or intentional.<sup>315</sup> His view is that the emotions and their pains and pleasures are *caused by* thoughts with the relevant content. Aristotle's position, he claims, is like his view of eclipses as "deprivations of light from the moon *caused by* the obstruction of the earth."<sup>316</sup> This view finds some textual support in two cases where Aristotle does assert a causal connection between an emotion and the thoughts that trigger it.<sup>317</sup> But these are two atypical cases, and Fortenbaugh's view sits unconvincingly with much of the rest of the evidence. Moreover, there is no difficulty for the representational view

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<sup>313</sup>E.g. pity 1386b12f.; indignation 1387a8f.; righteous satisfaction 1386b27-9; happy for 1386b30f..

<sup>314</sup>E.g. pity 1385b13f., 1386b9; indignation 1386b10f.; envy 1386b18-21, 1387b23f.; emulation 1388a32f.; *schadenfreude* 1387a2f..

<sup>315</sup>Fortenbaugh [2002] 12-13, 110-112.

<sup>316</sup>*An. Post.* 90a15-18.

<sup>317</sup>On anger: *apo* + gen 1378b1-2; on fear: *ek* + gen 1382a21-2.

in allowing that representational pains or pleasures can be caused by thoughts with the same content.

Representational Pleasure and Pain in Emotion and Aristotle's Accounts of Pleasure.

If the above account is accepted, there is an important question about whether Aristotle has an account of pleasure and pain that is compatible with the way pleasure and pain are characterised in his account of the emotions in *Rhetoric* II.1-11.

One general difficulty faced by those seeking to answer this question is that Aristotle's remarks on the emotions focus much more on pain than on pleasure, whereas his accounts of pleasure and pain (*EN* VII and X, *Rhet* I.11) are almost entirely focussed on pleasure. The latter assume that pain is pleasure's opposite, and that an account of pain can be inferred from what is said about pleasure.<sup>318</sup>

The accounts of pleasure in the *Nicomachean Ethics* face the additional problem that they seem to be accounts of what it is to enjoy some activity, whereas what is required for the *Rhetoric* is pleasure and pain at an object with certain attributes (e.g. pain at one who suffers undeservedly, 1386b12f.), or a putative state of affairs (e.g. pain at undeserved suffering, 1386b9). It is not obvious how the accounts from the *Nicomachean Ethics* can accommodate emotional pleasures and pains without distorting them. Pleasure at another's suffering (*ho epichairekakos* 1386b34-87a3) is not the same as enjoying *knowing* about his suffering. Pain at the success of an equal (*phthonos* 1387b23f.) is not the same as loathing *knowing* about the success of an equal. There is a

<sup>318</sup>Cf. e.g. *Rhet* I.11, 1369b35, *EN* VII.11, 1152b1; and for worries about whether pain and pleasure are opposites, Ryle [1954] ch.4.

difficulty in even making this distinction on the accounts in the *Ethics*. They thus risk misidentifying what it is that is found pleasant or painful. Perhaps these difficulties can be overcome: at the very least, there is an interesting challenge to explain how the *Ethics* accounts of pleasure are compatible with the way pleasure and pain are understood in *Rhetoric* II.1-11.

The account of pleasure in *Rhetoric* I.11 in some ways is more difficult still. There are huge difficulties in finding an interpretation of the definition of pleasure that is both plausible in itself and makes plausible sense of even the first handful of examples of pleasant things offered immediately afterwards. Discussion of these cannot be reproduced here.

Nevertheless, the list of pleasant things that occupies most of *Rhetoric* I. 11 suffices to show that Aristotle needed an account of pleasure (and pain) that allowed for these to be felt “at something’s being the case”, and where he seems to take it that the pleasure (or pain) itself will be representational.<sup>319</sup> We even find in this chapter some of the key locutions used later for the pain and pleasure of emotions (e.g. “lovers are constantly glad about (*peri* + genitive) the beloved” (1370b20) and that at the onset of love “pain arises at (dative) the [lover’s] absence” (b24), and that while grief involves a mixture of pain and pleasure, “the pain is at (*epi* + dative) the fact that they are not there” (1370b26)).

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<sup>319</sup>Some things are pleasant only because we believe them to be so, or because we come to view them in a certain way, e.g. winning (1370b32ff.), honour and good reputation (1371a8ff.), being loved (1371a18f.), being admired (1371a21f.) and even flattery (1371a22ff)!

Arguably, in *Rhetoric* I.11, which is a treatise on rhetoric not scientific psychology, Aristotle offers a quick and rather Platonic sounding definition of pleasure (that clearly only fits a very narrow range of cases) plus some gestures in the direction of how it might be extended to cover the full range of things he recognises as pleasant. Working out the complex details is not attempted. But it is already clear that a representational account of pleasure is what would be required.

#### Advantages of Understanding the Emotions as Pleasures and Pains

If Aristotle's understanding of the emotions is indeed in terms of pleasure and pain, this has a number of advantages.

Some advantages would depend on the details of the account of pleasure and pain involved. Suppose that emotions are pleasures and pains, and these are representational in ways that could involve various cognitive attitudes, such that these pleasures and pains might be constituted by pleasant and painful sensations, imaginings, beliefs or the like. Although such an account could not itself solve the challenge of irrational emotions presented at the end of chapter 6 above, it would almost certainly be consistent with *whatever* turned out to be the correct resolution.

An account of emotions as pleasures and pains also seems well-placed to offer an appropriately unified account of various features of emotions. The features in question are the cognitions and consequent rational and inferential relations, the phenomenology, associated motivations, and possibly also the physiological changes involved.

Pitying Colin, on this account, might be the painful judgement<sup>320</sup> that he is suffering undeservedly (where what is painful about the judgement is its object: that he is suffering undeservedly).

The fact that this is a judgement means (e.g.) that it is rational if the subject has good evidence that Colin is suffering undeservedly, and that pity for him should cease if they knew that his suffering had ceased, or was deserved. The fact that the judgement is painful accounts for its phenomenal character. But additionally, for the judgement to be genuinely painful probably requires the deployment of some specific bodily apparatus in the way the judgement is instantiated. The fact that Colin's undeserved suffering is found painful readily explains why pity of this kind constitutes a motivation to bring it about that he not suffer undeservedly, i.e. to alleviate his suffering.

### Conclusion

Aristotle insists on two key features in his account of the passions. One is that they play a role (or are capable of playing a role) in verdict formation. The other is that they involve pleasure and pain. We have argued for the view that pleasure or pain is essential to Aristotelian emotions, and that this view does not involve him in strong or implausible claims about pleasure or pain being the *genus* of any or all passions. Nevertheless, this claim does put pressure on an account of pleasure and pain, since it must be the case that there *are* genuine pleasures and pains of the right kind to be involved in the passions. This requires a representational theory of pleasure and pain, not merely one specified in terms of physiological process.

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<sup>320</sup>Or other cognitive attitude. The rational and inferential relations would obviously differ depending on what kind of cognitive attitude was involved.

Whilst it seems to me correct to insist against Cooper that Aristotle's interesting and subtle account of the emotions is not improperly described as a theory, we may still agree that it is not fully worked out. The view that the emotions are pleasures and pains seems strangely neglected within the recent philosophical literature on the emotions.<sup>321</sup> It seems clear already that working out the details of a theory within the framework Aristotle provides in *Rhetoric* II.1-11 promises to yield a rewarding contribution to this field.

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<sup>321</sup>See Goldstein [2003] and Helm [2001] for two exceptions.

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