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The μῦθος of Pernicious Rhetoric:
The Platonic Possibilities of λογός
in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

Abstract: This essay argues that Plato's use of narrative conceals within Socrates' explicit rejection of rhetoric an implicit authorial endorsement, manifested in the dialectical and rhetorical failures surrounding Socrates' deliberations over *logos.* I suggest that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is consonant with Plato's view in its general affirmation of rhetoric's power, utility, and necessity as well as in its specific recommendations regarding *logos.* I employ Martin Heidegger's explication of *logos* in Aristotle to illuminate how the term conforms to Plato's implicit position regarding *logos* and rhetoric. This interpretation entails an expanded meaning of *logos* as it is found in *Rhetoric*, assigning it a more primary, pre-logical, oral content.

Keywords: Plato, Aristotle, Heidegger, logos, rhetoric

W hile recent scholarship, on the one hand, has acknowledged the integral function of dialogue and narrative for correct interpretations of Plato's texts[1] and, on the other hand, initiated a return to unified readings of Plato and Aristotle's philosophies[2] (common in antiquity), with few exceptions, little work

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[1] For more on the subject of Plato's use of irony, myth, and dialogue see Drew Hyland, *Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogues* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995) and "Why Plato Wrote Dialogues," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1:1 (1968), 38–50; Max Latona, "The Tale is Not My Own (οὐκ ἐμὸς ἡ μῦθος): Myth and Recollection in Plato," *Apeiron* 37:3 (2004): 181–210; James L. Kastely "In Defense of Plato's *Gorgias*," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America 106:1 (1991): 96–109.

[2] See Christos Evangeliou , *Hellenic Philosophy: origin and character* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006). For evidence of a Platonic interpretation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* see James J. Murphy, "On Memory and Recollection," *Rhetoric Review* 21:3 (2002): 213–228. For a review of other such sources, see Poster "Aristotle's *Rhetoric* Against Rhetoric,"

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has been done to suggest how these two scholarly trends might affect interpretations of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. One such exception is Carol Poster, who urges rhetorical scholars both to interpret Plato's characters (including Socrates) as "parts of a literary construct that as a whole is intended to have certain effects on its immediate audience,"[3] and to recognize that the unity of Aristotle's thought with Plato's indicates that the former's treatise on rhetoric ought to be interpreted as an implicit anti-rhetorical polemic.[4] Poster's hermeneutic comes as a response to those who argue that the consonance between Plato and Aristotle entails that the latter's *Rhetoric* is an attempt to fulfill the former's requirements for a good rhetoric as they are defined by Socrates *Phaedrus*,[5] as part of a larger effort to act as academic "advocates for rhetoric."[6]

In the narrative of Plato's dialogues themselves, however, it is Socrates and not Aristotle who attempts to fulfill the requirements recorded in *Phaedrus.* I argue that this dramatic development makes way for a third option in addition to the two outlined by Poster above. While there is abundant reason to read Aristotle's thought as consonant with Plato's, this synthesis need not obligate us to find in Socrates' words an exoneration of rhetoric nor a condemnation in Aristotle's. Rather, Plato's use of storytelling, dramatic irony, and

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cited in n. 4, below. Of particular note in Poster's review are Hans Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); and *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

[3]Carol Poster, "Framing *Theaetetus*: Plato and Rhetorical (Mis)representation," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35:3 (2005): 31–73.

[4]Carol Poster, "Aristotle's *Rhetoric* Against Rhetoric: Unitarian Reading and Esoteric Hermeneutics," *American Journal of Philology* 118 (1997): 219–249.

[5]Cf. Murphy, "On Memory and Recollection," cited in n. 2, above. On this point, Poster also critiques Harvey Yunis, *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). Poster rejects these interpretations on the basis of the fact that Plato's posture toward rhetoric developed in the Platonic corpus as a whole is overwhelmingly negative. This disposition against rhetoric cannot be mitigated, Poster argues, by a chronological reading of the Platonic corpus because the late dialogue *Sophist* maintains a staunchly anti-rhetorical view. In response, Poster advocates that readers of the *Rhetoric* resist "assuming in any straightforward manner that Aristotle necessarily assented to all of the opinions he compiled" (p. 226) and recognize instead the likelihood that the true imprint of Plato's ideas on Aristotle's rhetoric can be found in the latter's implicit identification of rhetoric as "an unfortunate necessity" (p. 243), and even "a list of the dirty tricks Aristotle's students would need to know in order to act effectively in the political or ethical arena" (p. 230).

[6]Carol Poster, "Framing Theaetetus," cited in n. 3 above, p. 55.

dialogue seems to conceal within Socrates' consistent condemnation an authorial affirmation of rhetoric's necessity and value. Aristotle, then, does not go quite so far as to attempt satisfaction of Socrates's demands for good rhetoric (an impossible task as it is ironically defined in the *Phaedrus*), but rather makes recommendations for how it should best be used. In between Socrates' overt condemnation and Aristotle's overt acceptance, Plato's affirmation of rhetoric whispers just offstage, waiting in the wings, as it were, throughout his dramatic disavowal in the voice of Socrates. Aristotle's rhetoric is consonant with Platonic thought not because he indirectly condemns it as pernicious as Poster claims, or because he slakes the insatiable Socratic demands, but because he directly confirms what Plato will acknowledge only obliquely: rhetoric's power, utility and necessity. This affirmation emerges more clearly, I will show, when we consider the trace of Socrates' deliberations over the term *logos* in Aristotle's rhetorical *logos*. Ultimately, this trace potentially expands the range of meanings typically assigned to *logos* as it is used in Aristotle's *Rhetoric.*

This paper presumes a consonance between Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Plato's recommendations regarding rhetoric. I argue that these recommendations cannot be conflated with those voiced explicitly by Socrates, but that the narrative action as a whole recounted by Plato implicitly yet fundamentally affirms the necessity, and not the necessary evil, of the arts of rhetoric. I will show that these recommendations emerge most apparently in Socrates' struggles with *logos*. Finally, I propose that Socrates' dramatic dealings with *logos* not only disclose Plato's embrace of rhetoric, they also indicate a potential expansion for the concept of rhetorical *logos* as it is inherited by Aristotle and employed in his *Rhetoric.* I argue that Martin Heidegger's explication of *logos* in Aristotle neatly illuminates how the term may be consonant with Plato's implicit position, entailing an expanded meaning of the *logos* as it is found in *Rhetoric*, and assigning it a more primary, pre-logical content.

SOCRATES' ANTI-RHETORIC, PLATO'S *POESIS*

In the narrative development of the Socratic dialogues, Plato reveals both the origins and outcomes of Socrates' resistance to rhetoric. Socrates is clear that his prohibitions regarding rhetoric emerge from a more fundamental fear regarding the powers of *logos* (it is this same fear, in fact, that gives rise to his prohibitions regarding poetry). In this section I will demonstrate how, over the course of the dialogues,

Socrates attempts to manage philosophically the power of *logos* by gaining true knowledge of it (and in this way follow carefully his own prescriptions in *Phaedrus*). Plato has Socrates condemn the supernatural power of rhetorical and poetic speech and, in emphasizing these dangers, promise a superior use for *logos* in his demonstrated methodical and propositional mode of inquiry. Nevertheless, Socrates fails dramatically in this philosophical pursuit, which Plato cleverly represents as a larger *rhetorical* failure that will entail his death.[7]

Socrates' criticisms of rhetoric are well-known: rhetoric deals in arguments from possibility and not truth, in belief and not knowledge, it is a knack and not a *techne*, a kind of flattery, deceit, and trickery. And while Plato may now be widely recognized as having coined the term "rhetoric"[8] , his relationship to rhetoric is nevertheless commonly defined by these critiques voiced through Socrates and not by any other positive contributions he may have made to the art of rhetoric.

Leaving aside for the time being this distinction between the character Socrates and the author Plato, as we know, the dialogue *Phaedrus* is typically cited as evidence that Plato's own position on rhetoric softened over time. Indeed, in this dialogue Plato seems to present Socrates as having a more tempered attitude toward rhetoric, allowing that its effects do not necessarily conflict with the pursuits of philosophy. However, this interpretation of Socrates' recommendations is problematic, and not only because the dialogue may have been composed much earlier than is commonly thought.[9] In order to allow the possibility of a "good" use of *logos* for rhetoric (as opposed to a necessarily base one), Socrates erects a nearly impossible hurdle for the good rhetor: in short, he must know all the forms of the human soul, the many classes of speech, and which type of soul is moved by which type of speech[10] . Furthermore, he must obtain true knowledge of every topic that composes the content of his speech.[11] Herein

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[7]This is perhaps a further confirmation of Poster's thesis that Aristotle had borrowed from Plato the idea that a "self-defensive rhetoric" was an absolute necessity. In a sense, Aristotle abandons the struggle and chooses not to attempt stabilizing *logos*, instead conscripting it in his primer on self-defense. It remains to be seen, however, whether Plato's, and therefore Aristotle's, attitude toward rhetoric was fundamentally *negative*—a necessary *evil* as opposed to simply necessary.

[8]Schiappa, Edward, "Did Plato Coin *Rhētorikē*?" *The American Journal of Philology* 111:4 (1990): 457–470.

[9]Cf. Carol Poster, "Framing *Theaetetus*," cited in n. 3 above, p. 37.

[10]*Plato in Twelve Volumes* 9, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 271d. Web: Perseus Project.

[11]*Phaedrus*, cited in n. 10, above, 277b,c.

Socrates creates a distinct hierarchy to facilitate the non-pernicious rhetoric: true and comprehensive knowledge must precede rhetoric; only then can the dangers of rhetoric be safely managed. As we shall see, the enormous rigor required by these endeavors precludes even Socrates himself from ever succeeding. So while many read *Phaedrus* as a more accommodating text for rhetoric, this is a Cinderella accommodation. Rhetoric is allowed to go to the ball, but only after it has completed such tasks as would necessarily preclude it from ever shedding its base rags. Indeed, the volume and rigor of the work, which Socrates admits cannot be completed "without much diligent toil,"[12] attest to the persistence of the awe, and even fear, of rhetoric, and more generally *spoken language*, that Socrates communicates throughout his dialogues.

It is in *Gorgias* that Plato most clearly associates Socrates' resistance to rhetoric with his fear of the power of *logos*. Socrates responds with a shudder to Gorgias' assent that rhetoric is the art that harnesses speech (*logos*) to its greatest effect: "That is just what surprises me, Gorgias, and has made me ask you all this time what in the world the power of rhetoric can be. For viewed in this light, its greatness comes over me as something supernatural."[13] And Gorgias concurs: "So great, so strange, is the power of this art."[14] It is because rhetoric

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[12]*Phaedrus*, cited in n. 10, above, 273e.

[13]456a. All references to Plato's *Gorgias* are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 3, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). Web: Perseus Project.

[14]*Gorgias,* cited in n. 13, above, 456a. ἡ μὲν οὖν δύναμις τοσαύτη ἐστὶ καὶ τοιαύτη τῆς τέχνης· This is a similar position on the power of speech that Gorgias develops in his *Encomium of Helen* (*The Older Sophists*, ed. Rosamond Kent Sprague, trans. George Kennedy (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972)): "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." It seems Socrates and Gorgias are in complete accord on this point. In the same way that Gorgias considers language a kind of "witchcraft", Socrates deems it a supernatural power. According to Charles Segal ("Gorgias and the Psychology of the *Logos*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 66 (1962): 99–155), in Gorgias' thought, "the force of the *logoi. . .* works directly on the psyche; they have an immediate, almost physical impact upon it" (p. 105). For this reason, the *logoi* also possess a profound capacity to deceive. Vessela Valiavitcharska has countered recently in "Correct *Logos* and Truth in Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen*," Rhetorica 24:2 (2006), 147–161, that, in contrast to Segal's account, Gorgias "sees an intrinsic connection between truthful speech (ἀληθὴς λόγος) and correct speech (ὀρθὸς λόγος)" (p. 149). Like Gorgias, Aristotle uses the physical term *dynamis* to explain the function of *logos*. If Aristotle may be read as hearkening to an earlier concept of *logos*, and the nature of this *logos* confounds the idea that truth is somehow other than its appearance, then these two hypotheses on the *logos* of Gorgias may not be at odds with one another.

possesses this ability to uncork the potent dram of language that Socrates demeans it as "base." Rhetoric's baseness is accounted for not by the fact that it produces a powerful effect, but that it does so solely by means of language. In *Gorgias* as in *Phaedrus*, Socrates consistently insists that these effects ought to be realized through the power of knowledge and not merely the enchantment of *logos* alone.

He takes the same stance in the *Republic* on the power of *logos* as it is realized in poetry. Socrates attacks poetry because of the power of *logos* over the hearer—because the imitative, poetic language has such a visceral affect on the audience. Socrates implores: "we must beg Homer and the other poets not to be angry if we strike out these and similar passages, not because they are unpoetical, or unattractive to the popular ear, but because the greater the poetical charm of them, the less are they meet for the ears of boys and men who are meant to be free, and who should fear slavery more than death."[15]

The enslaving power of *logos* is derived in part from the style of the poet, as hypothesized by Eric Havelock[16] —his rhythm, the music to which the poem is set, etc. But it is not only these adjuncts to language that Socrates would correct in this dialogue. It is also the function of *logos* itself. Certain *logoi* have a power comparable to music and rhythm—more specifically, says Socrates, when the poet "takes the person of Chryses, ... he does all that he can to make us believe that the speaker is not Homer, but the aged priest himself."[17] The problem with this, Socrates suggests, is that Homer is not and can never be Chryses. As such, his words can only be a form of mimesis and deception of the audience. Rather, words ought to accurately and proportionately describe reality. Narration is acceptable, imitative discourse is not.

Though the object of concern here for Socrates is the mimetic problem, one cannot overlook in this part of Book III the singular power he assigns to the language of discourse as opposed to narration. That is, the problem isn't only that the poet imitates someone who he is not; the problem is ultimately that he, in doing this, is able to *make us believe that he is someone else*.[18] And this is a power that resides in the language itself, not only in the adornments added to language. In short, Plato's Socrates is not merely critiquing the poetic

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[15] 387b. References to Plato's *Republic* are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 5 & 6, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969). Web: Perseus Project.

[16] Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

[17] *Republic*, cited in n. 15, above. 393b.

[18] We are immediately reminded, of course, of Plato's own power to make us believe he is Socrates through his own use of dialogue.

flourishes as a way of correcting *logos*. His is a normative argument about *logos* itself—it ought not unfurl its potential power, or evoke in its immediacy and drama the visceral and emotive responses of the audience. Rather, given the essential interconnectedness of speech and wisdom,[19] it ought to be a "formal abstract language" that communicates propositionally rather than poetically.[20]

This dialectical dividing and classifying *logos*, as opposed to the rhetorical and poetic power-exploiting *logos*, is readily identifiable throughout the dialogues in the Socratic method of inquiry. Socrates uses this method even when *logos* itself is the object of that inquiry. In *Theaetetus*, Plato depicts a Socrates who attempts to define a *logos* that is not exploited for its mysterious power, but is instead used in the careful acquisition of knowledge. In discussing "the doctrine that the most perfect knowledge arises from the addition of *logos* to true opinion,"[21] Socrates pauses to inquire: "what are we intended to understand by *logos*? I think it means one of three things."[22] The three possible meanings of *logos*, as Socrates presents them, are (1) speech, (2) the "orderly approach to the whole through the elements,"[23] and (3) "the ability to tell some characteristic by which the object in question differs from all the others."[24] That is, Socrates means to

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[19]C.f. Christopher L. Johnstone, "Sophistical Wisdom: *Politikē Aretē and 'Logosophia'*" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39:4 (2006): 265–289.

[20]For further explanation of this argument regarding Plato and *logos*, see Eric Havelock *Preface to Plato*, cited in n. 16, above: p. 266.

[21]206c. References to Plato's *Theaetetus* are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 12, trans. Harold N. Fowler, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921). Web: Perseus Project. Here, Socrates invokes explicitly the Heraclitean concept of *logos* as precisely this unifying concept that facilitates true knowledge. The maxim with which Socrates struggles so diligently, "*logos*, if added to true judgment, becomes the most perfect of knowledge" (*Theaetetus* 206c), mirrors neatly Heraclitus' maxim, "The wise is one thing, to be acquainted with true judgment, how all things are steered through all" (B 41). While this fragment does not contain the *logos* terminology, there is an obvious parallel between "how all things are steered through all" [B 41] and "all things come to pass in accordance with this *logos*" [B 1]. While it would be a fruitful avenue of inquiry to assess the residue of Heraclitean *logos* on Aristotelian rhetorical *logos*, this is outside the scope of this paper. The above offers a preliminary indication that a Heraclitean, fluctuating, and mysterious *logos*—an extremely difficult and contestable topic—somehow leaves its mark on Aristotle's notion of the same. This is rather the inverse of what Carol Poster argues in "The Task of the Bow: Heraclitus' Rhetorical Critique of Epic Language, *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39:1 (2006): 1–121: that Heraclitus' *logos* is itself rhetorical, and therefore a kind of stability that is asserted over and against the flux and flow of the universe.

[22]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 206c.

[23]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 208c.

[24]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 208c.

define *logos* as either mere speech or speech that divides, or speech that classifies.[25]

Socrates systematically rules out each of these options. The first, *logos*-as-speech, he suggests, is not rigorous enough. "That's something which anyone can do more or less quickly—I mean, indicating what he thinks about something—if he isn't deaf or dumb from birth."[26] If knowledge is *logos* added to correct judgment, and *logos* is nothing more than speech, then correct judgment fully suffices as knowledge, making *logos* ancillary rather than essential in knowledge. So if the definition of knowledge as *logos* and correct judgment is valid, then *logos*-as-speech clearly is an incomplete notion.

Socrates then considers the possibility that this *logos* is not merely speech, but the speech that accounts for all the varied particularities of something and explains the thing as a whole by dividing it into its constitutive parts. The example he gives of this is a wagon—we truly know what a wagon is if we can give an account of each of its constitutive parts. This itemization, says Socrates, is also inadequate to define *logos*, for one might know each constitutive part in one case (the wheel, the axle, etc.), and thus seem to have true knowledge, but upon encountering another thing that shares an identical constitutive part, one might be incapable of identifying the whole that the part comprises (such as an automobile, for example). This lack of knowledge transference suggests a lack of knowledge, Socrates suggests, despite the fact that it fulfills the requirements of knowledge if *logos* is taken to be an ability to explain something by dividing it into its constitutive elements.

The third definition of *logos* is "being able to state some mark by which the thing one is asked for differs from everything else."[27] For example: 'the sun is "the brightest of the heavenly bodies that go round the earth'"[28] —we have knowledge of the sun when we are able to classify it according to its distinct properties. The problem with this concept of *logos* is the same as with the first—where *logos* should be distinct from the correct judgment, it is indiscernible from it. Socrates shows it to be impossible that the correct judgment could have ever lacked this discernment of classifying particularity.[29] As such, he concludes, "telling us to add something we already have

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[25]Conspicuously absent from this list of possible meanings is the *logos* Socrates fears for its supernatural and enslaving power.

[26]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 206d.

[27]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 208c.

[28]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 208d.

[29]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 209c.

in order to get to know what we have in our judgments looks like the behavior of someone who is well and truly in darkness."[30]

With a bit of poetic flair, Plato has Socrates abort his attempt to employ this dividing and classifying *logos* as a way of defining *logos*, demeaning their discourse as "the results of false pregnancies."[31] And to punctuate the failure, Socrates leaves the scene to go and face Meletus' charge against him at the *stoa* of King Archon.

The failure expands from the realm of dialectic to the realm of rhetoric in the scenes that occur just before the trial and in the trial itself. In his conversation with Euthyphro before the trial, Socrates is offered another opportunity to consider rhetoric's value, but again he declines. Euthyphro boasts that he could demonstrate for Socrates arguments that would convince the jury, but Socrates silences him by changing the subject, preferring instead to discuss the nature of piety.[32] This conversation also leads nowhere, and Plato ends the dialogue with Socrates' lamentation: "You go away and leave me cast down from the high hope I had that I should learn from you what is holy, and what is not, and should get rid of Meletus's indictment by showing him that I have been made wise by Euthyphro about divine matters and am no longer through ignorance acting carelessly and making innovations in respect to them, and that I shall live a better life henceforth."[33] Socrates' conviction on this point demonstrates his persistence in the belief expressed earlier to Phaedrus: *logos* that expresses true knowledge and wisdom will also be rhetorically compelling.

In Plato's portrayal of the trial itself, Socrates again explicitly denounces rhetorical and oratorical skill,[34] conceding that it is his lack of rhetorical skill that makes him unpopular and, therefore, accused and brought to trial.[35] But he does not see this as dangerous or problematic, since he still believes his plain *logos* will ultimately reveal the truth, and the truth will set him free. At several points during the trial, he calls on the gods as his witnesses and as his jury, as though he were in complete defiance of the very real exigency presented by the human members of the courtroom.

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[30]*Theaetetus*, cited in n. 21, above, 209e.

[31]*Theaetetus*, cited in n.21, above, 210b.

[32]9a-9c. References to Plato's *Euthyphro* are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 1, trans. Harold N. Fowler, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). Web: Perseus Project.

[33]*Euthyphro*, cited in n. 32, above, 15e-16a.

[34]17b-18a. References to Plato's *Apology* are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 1, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). Web: Perseus Project.

[35]*Apology*, cited in n. 34, above. 24a-24b.

This is the crux of the issue for Socrates, who seeks true knowledge above all else as a means of human freedom and the only way to escape the grotesque bondage of the cave. But the culmination of this pursuit, which relies explicitly on *logos* that does not sway or move with a mysterious power but divides and classifies with a scientific precision, is dramatically represented by Plato as a series of philosophical and rhetorical failures that result in imprisonment, and finally death. Socrates the character goes happily and nobly to that end, but we witness in that final scene the bitter agony that must have been endured by Plato and his circle (despite the fact that Plato demurs from placing himself in the scene): "in spite of myself my tears rolled down in floods, so that I wrapped my face in my cloak and wept for myself; for it was not for him that I wept, but for my own misfortune in being deprived of such a friend."[36]

ARISTOTLE AND RHETORICAL ΛΟΓΟΣ

The implications for rhetoric of this holistic reading of the Socratic dialogues are threefold: (1) Plato's depiction of Socrates' dialectical failure indicates that he does not advocate but rather is skeptical of Socrates' exclusively dialectical *logos* that seeks true knowledge solely through the means of division and classification; (2) Plato's depiction of Socrates' rhetorical failure in the courtroom indicates a realism on Plato's part regarding the need to use different types of *logos* in the presence of different types of audiences; and (3) Plato's poetic compositions represent a very real defiance of Socrates' admonitions regarding the "psychic poison"[37] of poetic *logos*. This defiance is arguably indicative of a larger defiance of Socrates' warnings about quashing the potentially frightful, supernatural, even magical power of rhetorical *logos*. In this way, Plato may be understood as the docent who oversees the transfer of Greek *logos* from the poet to the philosopher and from the concrete to the abstract,[38] but he may not be read as the author or even an advocate of that transfer. Rather, his own poetic composition may be understood as an attempt at keeping the older *logos* alive against the literate tide. In what remains, I will recommend that this potential survival of this *logos* in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* may be

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[36] Plato's *Phaedo*, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes* 1, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). Web: Perseus Project. 117c-117d.

[37] Havelock *Preface to Plato*, cited in n. 16, above, p. 5.

[38] Havelock *Preface to Plato*, cited in n. 16, above, p. 63.

a promising direction for further study. I will present one aspect of the textual evidence that favors this possibility, relying primarily on Martin Heidegger's unconventional exegesis of Aristotle's use of this term.[39] Heidegger explicitly insists that Aristotle's *logos* was a basic, non-technical term. His interpretation supports the possibility that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is similarly defiant of Socrates' admonitions regarding the dangers of rhetorical speech.

The impact of the first two of the above implications on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is apparent. From the outset of Book I,[40] Aristotle legitimates rhetorical *logos* as a counterpart to dialectical *logos*, and delineates between the two on the basis of the needs of the audience rather than the Socratic distinctions of truth and opinion.[41] The

[39]This is not an unproblematic source from which to draw an interpretation. The methodological divide between classicists and philosophers typically weighs the former against and the latter in favor of Heidegger's reliability as an exegete of classical texts. Nevertheless, Heidegger's contributions to contemporary understanding of Greek thought is significant. C.f. the edited volume *Heidegger and the Greeks*: *Interpretive Essays*, Drew Hyland John Panteleimon Manoussakis, eds., (Bloomington: Indiana UP (2006)); Glenn Most, "Heidegger's Greeks" *Arion* 10:1 (2002): 83–98; and John Sallis, *Echoes: After Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana UP (1990)) and *Being and Logos* (Bloomington: Indiana UP (1996)).

[40]Except where noted, references to Aristotle's Rhetoric are from *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[41]From the very outset of Book I, Aristotle's general defense of rhetoric reflects these two points: Aristotle grants dialectic and rhetoric an arguably equal dominion over speech. He bases this equality on the inevitable demands made by different kinds of audiences. He extracts *logos* from the exclusive domain of dialectic by claiming in his opening line that rhetoric is the counterpart to dialectic, given that "all people, in some way, share in both; for all, to some extent, try both to test and maintain an *logos* and to defend [ἀπολογεῖσθαι] themselves and attack" (I.1.i). The difference between these types of *logos* (dialectic and rhetoric) is not accounted for by the Socratic distinction between *logos* that seeks true knowledge and *logos* that seeks only to persuade—Aristotle dismisses this Socratic critique with the assurance that "it belongs to the same capacity both to see the true and what resembles the true, and at the same time humans have a natural disposition for the true and to a large extent hit on the truth. . . rhetoric is useful because the true and the just are by nature stronger than their opposites" (I.1.xiv). On this point, Aristotle is emphatic, stressing again that "facts are not equally good in each case; but true and better ones are by nature always more productive of good syllogisms and, in a word, more persuasive. In addition it would be strange if an inability to defend oneself by means of the body is shameful, while there is no shame in an inability to use speech; the latter is more characteristic of humans than is use of the body" (I.1.xii). This may well be a direct response to Socrates: "And if it is argues that great harm can be done by unjustly using such power of words [δυνάμει τῶν λόγων], this objection applies to all good things except for virtue, and most of all to the most useful thing" (I.1.13).

question remains, however, whether Aristotle's recommendations regarding rhetorical *logos* sustain or undermine Plato's defiance. In short, we are left to determine whether Aristotle's recommendations regarding *logos* found in the *Rhetoric* would teach rhetors to embrace and exploit the primary, supernatural power of rhetorical *logos* (as Plato's dialogues arguably embrace and exploit the power of poetic *logos*), or whether his recommendations attempt to intervene in, constrain, and mitigate the potential of that power by instructing rhetors to use an abstract, scientific *logos* that divides and classifies for rhetorical purposes (in a manner similar to Socrates as portrayed by Plato).[42]

Interpretations of Aristotle's rhetorical *logos* are drawn primarily from a very small portion of the second chapter of Book I. It comes after Aristotle's general defense of rhetoric's utility[43] and its definition as "an ability [or power: δύναμις], in each case, to see the available means of persuasion."[44] Of *logos* Aristotle writes that it must be found [εὑρεῖν] by the speaker: "Of the *pisteis* [πίστεων] provided through the speech, there are of three species: for some are in the character of the speaker, and some in disposing the listener in some way, and some in the *logos* [λόγῳ] itself, by showing or seeming to show something [διὰ τοῦ δεικνύναι ἢ φαίνεσθαι δεικνύναι]."[45]

Rather, Aristotle delineates the rhetorical and dialectical *logos* on the basis of audience—the very thing that Socrates refuses to acknowledge according to his depiction in the *Apology*. They are both necessary and useful, but their necessity and utility are of different sorts because, Aristotle writes, "even if we were to have the most exact knowledge, it would not be very easy for us in speaking to use it to persuade some audiences. Speech based on knowledge is teaching, but teaching is impossible [with some audiences]" (I.1.xii). This seems to suggest, contrary to Poster's hypothesis, that the traditional reception of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*—that it constitutes a positive endorsement of the arts of rhetoric—remains well founded.

[42]This question of where to situate Aristotle's *Rhetoric* on the continuum of orality and literacy has recently been taken up by Ekaterina Haskins, *Logos and Power in Isocrates and Aristotle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004). Haskins concedes that "Aristotle displays both possibilities" of defining rhetoric as oral, poetic and "an ever-evolving social performance" as well as a literate, ordered "highly-disciplined" endeavor. She concludes, however, that he gravitates to the latter, and that he "subverts performativity in order to extract from the poetic and rhetorical discourse its propositional content" (p. 6). While Aristotle's *endoxa* may be characteristic of oral thought, Haskins hypothesizes that his *logos* is strictly literate. The analysis of *logos* presented here intends to indicate the potential value of considering Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as a discipline that endeavors to retain the social value of the former vision of rhetorical activity.

[43]*Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.1.

[44]*Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.2.i.

[45]*Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.2.ii-iii.

A little later in the same chapter, Aristotle refers again to *logos*, this time indirectly defining it in terms of its effects or the abilities that facilitate its use rather than in terms of what, in itself, it *is* (a notable contrast to Socrates' method in *Theaetetus*). He suggests that "Persuasion is produced by the λόγων, when we establish the true or apparently true [ἀληθὲς ἢ φαινόμενον] from the means of persuasion applicable to each individual subject."[46] This persuasion through *logos* occurs because it "excites a more favorable audience reaction," or because it "seems true to people of a certain sort" who are "in need of an argument" and "already accustomed to deliberate among themselves."[47] The concepts contained in the above passages—the appearance of truth and its effect on the audience—will be enormously important for our application of Heidegger to Aristotle's rhetorical *logos*.

Aristotle's scant and truncated explanation of *logos* suggest very little that might be interpreted as a definition of the term. However, this relative silence in itself indicates a likelihood that Aristotle relies on a non-technical concept of *logos* (after all, one needn't define term that one is using in a basic and primary sense). Furthermore, when viewed in light of Heidegger's analysis of primary *logos*, the language Aristotle uses to explain rhetorical *logos* reveals positively as well as privatively the presence of a non-technical *logos*.

The primary and secondary *logoi* are objects of explicit inter-pretive concern throughout the corpus of Heidegger's thought. He distinguishes between the primal Greek *logos*, or "basic" *logos*, "in its primary content,"[48] and later developments that equate it with logic or reason. One of Heidegger's more ambitious claims is that, through the *de-struction*[49] of tradition and the history of the term's develop-ment, he could reconstruct this originary content. While Heidegger's commentary on the *Rhetoric* is somewhat limited[50] and viewed pri-

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[46]*Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.2.vi.

[47]*Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.2.x-xi.

[48]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* [SZ], trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), §32.

[49]He succinctly explains this method at the outset of *Phenomenological Interpre-tations of Aristotle*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 3–4.

[50]His most extensive treatment is found in *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009) where he interprets the *Rhetoric* as a phenomenology of speaking and human speech. As Stuart Elden ("Reading Logos as Speech: Heidegger, Aristotle, and Rhetorical Politics,"

marily as an idiosyncratic perspective,[51] he credits Aristotle as the thinker who keeps the basic *logos* alive alongside the development of later concepts of *logos* as logic, reason, etc., which would come to replace its more original sense.[52] This citation of Aristotle indicates the potential importance of the primary *logos* for the *logos* found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Nevertheless, as is well known, the dominant receptions of the latter equate rhetorical *logos* with dialectical *logos*,[53]

Philosophy and Rhetoric 38:4 (2005): 281–301) explains, "for Heidegger, *logos* is speech. It is a peculiarly practical sense of speech though, that finds its ultimate outcome in what speech does, of which rhetoric is a privileged form" (p. 282).

[51] For receptions of Heidegger's interpretation of *Rhetoric*, see *Heidegger and Rhetoric* (2005), eds. Daniel M. Gross and Ansgar Kemmann (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005); and Stuart Elden "Reading *Logos* as Speech," cited in n. 50, above, pp. 288–294.

[52] Heidegger specifically credits Aristotle with resisting a concept of *logos* would define truth as correspondence. He writes: "we must not overlook the fact that for the Greeks. . .this primordial understanding of truth was also alive, even if pre-ontologically, and it even held its own against the concealment implicit in their ontology—at least in Aristotle" (SZ §225). He argues that for Aristotle *logos* has the "*double possibility*" of either discovery or covering over: "This *double possibility* is what is distinctive about the truth of the *logos*; it is the attitude which *can also cover over*" (SZ §226). He similarly credits Heidegger with maintaining the primary *logos* in the beginning of both *Ontology*: *The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) and his course, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[53] Aristotle's translators and commentators seldom emphasize the potential imprint of Plato's critique of Socrates on the former's terminology. More often, they cleave to definitions of *logos* that emphasize its sense as a species of dialectical *logos* by equating it with logic or rational argument. For example, George Kennedy's translation, cited in n. 37, above, explains Aristotle's *pistis* as "logical proof" (p. 30 n. 9) and *logos* as "logical argument" (p. 58). This is in spite of the fact that Kennedy translates *logos* in other instances of the Aristotelian corpus as "discourse" or "speech" (c.f. *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 54). Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, in summarizing Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, explain *logos* according to its "traditional" sense as "logical appeal" (*The Rhetorical Tradition* (Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 1994), p. 146). Richard Lanham identifies the interpretive breadth of *logos*, "a word which carries many meanings" (*A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 166), but still defines it as "rational argument" (ibid.). And while Thomas Conley goes so far as to interpret Aristotle's *logos* as "speech," he nevertheless bypasses the significance of this move and emphasizes instead the instantiating necessity in the *Rhetoric* to "reason 'logically'" (*Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 15).

The equation of rhetorical *logos* with logical demonstration is not unsupportable. In fact, interpretive coherence of this kind has been explicitly argued for recently in rhetorical scholarship; see for example James J. Murphy, "The Metarhetoric of Aristotle," cited in n. 2, above. Moreover, Aristotle seems to provide support for this interpretation within the *Rhetoric* itself. He suggests that *logos* furnishes belief when it

defying even Aristotle's admission that the *Rhetoric* makes use of the power of *logos*.[54]

Heidegger's reconstruction of the primordial Greek *logos* is manifestly difficult, requiring a reversal of what Walter Ong memorably called "the pre-emptiveness of literacy."[55] In his later work he attempts this recovery by poetically embodying it in the language of verse, song, and divine speech.[56] In his early work, however, it is the object of painstaking and conscientious definition. Despite variation in the method of investigation, the *logos* Heidegger attempts to reconstruct is consistently that which he defines at the outset of *Sein und Zeit* and the very core of his phenomenological method.

In *Sein und Zeit*, he emphasizes that the primary *logos* cannot be grasped through our customary understanding of speech or reason, as these concepts necessarily rely on a correspondence theory of truth. By the latter account, *logos* is true when it provides an accurate and adequate representation (of thought, reality, the forms, etc.). The correlation between these concepts was fundamentally different for the Greek mind, and this difference is represented in the meaning

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proves or seems to prove the case (I.ii.3), and this occurs when "something has been demonstrated [ἀποδεδεῖξθαι]" (III.i). Aristotle's use of *apodeixis* in connection with *logos* at this point ostensibly marks *logos* as a property of dialectical, and therefore logical, demonstration.

However, synthesized interpretations of the Aristotelian corpus and terminology have not always been de rigueur. In the early 20th century, for example, debate raged about whether *logos* should be allowed interpretive breadth within single entries in the Aristotelian canon. Cf. J. Cook Wilson, "On the Meaning of ΛΟΓΟΣ in Certain Passages in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics," *The Classical Review* 27:4 (1913): 113–117; A. R. Lord, "On the Meaning of ΛΟΓΟΣ in Certain Passages in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics." *The Classical Review* 28:1 (1914): 1–5; John Burnet, "On the Meaning of ΛΟΓΟΣ in Aristotle's Ethics." *The Classical Review* 28:1 (1914): 6–7; W. Rhys Roberts, "Notes on Aristotle's 'Rhetoric.'" *The American Journal of Philology* 45:4 (1924): 351–361.

[54]See n. 41, above. Aristotle explicitly defends learning how to use that power, and answers the Socratic critique of rhetoric by noting that the same kind of harm could be realized in any number of ways. This does not diminish the power of *logos*, but merely suggests that its power does not warrant one's avoidance of it.

[55]Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 1982), p. 12. While it would be anachronistic to suggest that Heidegger was contributing to scholarship on orality, the parallels between his concept of the primary *logos*, and the developments that mark the transformation from oral to literate thought are undeniable (c.f. Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); and Havelock *Preface to Plato*, cited in n. 16, above).

[56]C.f. *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); and *On the Way to Language*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

of *logos* and *aletheia*.[57] Heidegger inextricably links the primary *logos* and *aletheia* to the concept of *phainomenon* (phenomenon, or "self-showing"). These concepts are interconnected, he argues, because they collectively reveal how for the Greek mind *logos* and truth are a self-showing, the truth of which is not due to some correspondence with reality, but due to the function of letting something be seen, *discovered*, or blocking something from discovery. In this way truth, *aletheia*, is discovered or kept from discovery in speech as opposed to represented or misrepresented by speech. "*Logos*," he writes, "lets something be seen (*phainesthai*), namely what is being talked about. . . Speech 'lets us see,' from itself, *apo-*. . ., what is being talked about."[58]

This notion of "appearance" as "self-showing" contrasts with notions of "appearance" that emerged with later meanings of *logos* and *aletheia*, which connote a separation between a thing and its semblance.

> Only because something claims to show itself in accordance with its meaning at all, that is, claims to be a phenomenon, *can* it show itself *as* something it is *not*, or *can* it 'only look like. . ..' The original meaning (phenomenon, what is manifest) already contains and is the basis of *phainomenon* ('semblance'). . . But what *both* terms express has at first nothing at all to do with what is called 'appearance' or even 'mere appearance.'[59]

Heidegger is characteristically reticent with the textual evidence to demonstrate this point. Nevertheless, as the following analysis indicates, Aristotle's terminology in *Rhetoric* provides evidence of Heidegger's hypothesis (not cited by Heidegger) that primary sense of these terms (*logos, aletheia, phainomenon*) connoted for the Greeks a profound emanative presence that functions as truth when it allows something to be *discovered*, and fails to do so when it keeps something from *discovery*.[60]

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[57]This observation is not unlike Havelock's observation in *Preface to Plato*, cited in n. 15 above, that the oral record "cannot use the timeless copula. . . [and] Kantian imperatives and mathematical relationships and analytic statements of any kind are inexpressible and unthinkable" (p. 182).

[58]Heidegger, SZ, cited in n. 48, above, §32.

[59]Heidegger, SZ, cited in n. 48, above, §29.

[60]In *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy* (New York: Harper, 1984), Heidegger emphasizes the importance of *legein* for understanding this basic concept of *logos*. *Legein*, commonly translated as to speak or to say, conceals its own peculiar complexity for us: "λέγειν properly means the laying-down and laying before which gathers itself and others" (p. 62). This "laying down before" came to refer to speaking and talking because, as Heidegger argues, for the Greeks, "Saying

A particular aspect of the opening passages from the *Rhetoric* cited above corresponds directly with Heidegger's concept of the primary *logos.* In brief, Aristotle's explanation of the rhetorical *logos* indicates that it effects belief for the audience when it *shows truth or what is manifest.*

δια δε των λόγων πιστεύουσιν, όταν αληθες η φαινόμενον δείξωμεν

But they believe through the logos *when we show truth or what shows itself/is manifest.*[61]

In this excerpt, αληθες η φαινόμενον is an accusative noun phrase[62] that receives the action of the verb δείξωμεν (show, point out). Quite simply, audiences believe through *logos* when we show *truth or the apparent* (*what is manifest, what shows itself*). Here, Aristotle indicates directly that he is not employing a more formal sense of *logos* like that which is argued for by Socrates in Plato's dramatic representations. Rather, if Heidegger's exegesis of the basic concept of *logos* is reliable, it is likely that Aristotle is making an explicit appeal to precisely that concept, over and against the more formal concepts of *logos* that were in circulation during that very time in history.[63] He straightforwardly admits that the *logos* of rhetoric is the one that functions as a self-showing, allowing the discovery of truth, and not, for example, the *logos* hat approaches truth through propositions that divide and classify.

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and talking occur essentially as the letting-lie-together-before of everything which, laid in unconcealment, comes to presence" (p. 63). The converse implication of this definition—saying and speaking as laying something before another—is that hearing becomes, not "the activation of the body's audio equipment," (p. 65) but bodily coming toward what is laid before oneself. This connection between *legein* and *logos* (laying down as an act of disclosure, "unconcealment," or making present) and the earlier connection between *phainomenon* and *logos* bear an obvious resemblance to one another.

[61] *Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.2.vi.

[62] Whether the case of this phrase is nominative or accusative is the subject of philological debate. The dispute has little bearing on this interpretation, as it provides no ground for disambiguating the phrase as two separate and contrasting concepts rather than two complementary and interchangeable concepts.

[63] Havelock, cited in n. 16, above, hypothesized that the Socratic project in the Platonic dialogues was primarily an attempt to develop this revolutionary concept of *logos*—a "quest for a non-poetic language and a non-Homeric definition of truth" (p. 91), and a rigorous discourse that could circumvent the psychic spell of language. This *logos*, Havelock writes, is an "abstract language of descriptive science to replace and concrete language of oral memory" (p. 236).

Translations of this particular excerpt reveal the very tendency Heidegger critiques. They supply an implicit correspondence between a thing and its appearance that, Heidegger insists, may have been present in Greek ontology but, at least Aristotle, is absent in the conception of truth.[64] This supplemental correspondence materializes in translations of the accusative noun phrase, which formulate ὅταν ἀληθὲς ἢ φαινόμενον δείξωμεν as "when we establish the true or apparently true"[65] or "when we show the truth or apparent truth."[66] Both of these translations create a crude contrast between the truth and its appearance, and as a result connote that truth and its appearance are separate from one another. This connotation stems from a disambiguation of the ἢ. In both of the above translations, ἢ is unambiguously exclusive rather than potentially inclusive. In other words, *logos* succeeds when the speaker's speech shows the truth or something that *appears to be* the truth *but is not necessarily truth*. These two concepts of truth and appearance are translated as manifestly contrasting alternatives and exclusive to one another.

However, as we can see, this contrast is not unambiguously present in the text. The accusative phrase articulated by Aristotle and further defined by Heidegger may more reliably be read to as an inclusive positive disjunction rather than an exclusive positive disjunction: that *in using rhetorical* logos, *we show truth or what's manifest,* and that these two concepts (truth and manifestation) are, for Aristotle, synonymous and *interchangeable* rather than contrasting and *mutually exclusive*. By such a reading, *logos* does not rhetorically succeed when we show or establish the truth or something that appears to be the truth. Rather, it succeeds because of its own inherent power to make manifest such that an audience may discover what is made manifest.

CONCLUSION

A narratological view of Plato's dialogues as dramatic portraits and poetic compositions complicates our reception of his commentary on rhetoric. On the one hand, the dialogues demonstrate as

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[64]See n. 52, above.

[65]*Art of Rhetoric*, trans. J. H. Freese (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), I.2.vi.

[66]*On Rhetoric*, cited in n. 40, above, I.2.vi.

much as they prescribe for their reader a dialectical *logos* that liberates her from the enslaving poetic and rhetorical *logos*. At the same time, however, the narrative arch of the dialogues as a whole jettisons the dialectical *logos* through Socrates' rhetorical failures. A potential openness to rhetoric is found, therefore, not in Plato's composition itself. Rather, it is found in the contrast between Socrates' prescriptions regarding poetic, rhetorical, and dialectical *logos* and their unfulfillment.

The *logos* referred to so strangely by Socrates and Gorgias as a supernatural power and witchcraft might be explained by Heidegger's analysis, which offers a view into how, for the Greeks, speech possessed the phenomenal self-showing power of truth. Moreover, there seems to be terminological evidence in the text of Rhetoric that corresponds to Heidegger's analysis of *logos*, indicating that the rhetorical logos is not the form of rational or logical argumentation it is commonly interpreted to be. Rather, these are anachronistic interpretations of logos in Aristotle's Rhetoric. Applying Heidegger's analysis of ancient Greek *logos* to our interpretation of Aristotle reveals the possibility that the latter's rhetorical logos retains its earliest meaning—it is a peculiar and perhaps even supernatural power of human speech to conjure belief in hearers through its unique truth-power. This interpretation opens the possibility that the *logos* of Aristotle's Rhetoric, and perhaps his Rhetoric as a whole, is more closely linked to the originary *logos* of orality than is commonly believed.[67]