Windsor Studies in Argumentation

The Epistemology of Rhetoric

Plato, Doxa and Post-Truth

Erik Bengtson

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Introduction

Aims of this study

Engaging with the discussions on post-truth rhetoric, I have found two epistemological exigencies determined by this post-truth condition. Firstly, that the field of rhetorical studies needs to reassess its theoretical principles in order to move beyond the limitations of 'postmodern' theory, while not abandoning its key insights. Secondly, the field of rhetorical studies needs to provide an understanding of political argumentation that is capable of and suited to comparison and evaluation of knowledge formation.

The overarching purpose of this study is thus to develop a contemporary epistemology of rhetoric by taking into account the current post-truth condition in society, contemporary rhetorical scholarship and the history of rhetoric.

Accordingly, this study pursues a dual focus. On the one hand, I focus on rhetoric as an academic discipline within the humanities, trying to develop principles for knowledge production within this discipline through investigation of the possibilities that lie within contemporary theoretical approaches, as well as in the multifacetted corpus of scholarship that constitutes its history. In tandem with this first focus, I also concentrate on political argumentation and sketch an idea for how argumentation can be understood in a way that is open, inclusive and relevant for knowledge production within the public realm. These two focal points are most clearly pronounced in part 3, where chapter 14 is devoted to the reconsideration and reassessment of rhetorical theory, whereas chapter 15 is devoted to the reconsideration of rhetorical argumentation.

The path to these two final chapters will not, however, be dichotomous, but rather the opposite. In part 1, I investigate the opposition between opinion (*doxa*) and true knowledge (*epistēmē*),

the friction between which has been said to constitute the birth of rhetoric itself[1]. In part 2, I study various examples of rhetorical scholarship which attempt to re-invent the concept of *doxa* for the purposes of contemporary rhetorical study. Both parts of this book ultimately contribute to the same task, namely, to gather and interrogate material from classical texts and contemporary scholarship to facilitate theoretical work.

Using the results of this dual approach, part 3 tackles the specific epistemological challenge that lies at the heart of post-truth rhetoric; proposing ways to reconsider our understanding of both rhetorical theory and of argumentation.

The post-truth condition

In *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition*, American professor of rhetoric and composition Bruce McComiskey (2017) issues the following warning:

> If Post-Truth Rhetoric goes unchecked then . . . Xenophobia will replace social justice, isolationism will invalidate cultural freedom, shouting will trump listening, disruption will drown our response, insults will replace respect, exclusion will diminish diversity, divisiveness will preclude negotiation, invective will erode support, fear will challenge safety, and success at all costs will invalidate responsible inquiry. This is not post-truth bullshit; this is the Trump effect, and it is already happening. (43)

McComiskey was writing in the wake of the turbulent year of 2016, a year in which real estate mogul, and TV-celebrity Donald Trump was elected president of the US and the British people

1. I use ‘episteme’ when primarily referring to the contemporary discussion as that is the form used by most contemporary scholars. Conversely, I use ‘epistēmē’ when referring to Greek texts. This inconsistency illustrates a tension in my study as I am both discussing a contemporary technical term and a classical Greek word. The more detailed transliteration is applied in references to the classical texts to disambiguate whether the letter 'e' corresponds to the Greek letter eta (marked with a bar) or epsilon. Similarly, for certain words, it serves to distinguish whether the letter 'o' denotes omega (marked with a bar) or omicron.

voted to leave the EU. McComiskey defines *post-truth* as "a state in which language lacks any reference to facts, truth, and realities." Post-truth rhetoric is colloquially understood in terms of 'bullshit', fake news and the practical use of *ethos* and *pathos* at the expense of *logos*. McComiskey's recipe for positive change is education of the public through teaching creativity, flexibility, openness, and critical thinking to students (2017, 40).

McComiskey's passionate call for action makes sense in relation to the questionable rhetorical practices that he describes. Reasonable intellectuals must oppose the "Trump effect" wherever it surfaces.[2] While Trump did lose the 2020 election, and thereby some momentum, there are lasting ramifications of the type of rhetoric that he personifies – a rhetoric that can now be found in authoritative nationalist political movements around the globe. Hence, the notion of post-truth remains relevant as a signifier of a certain shift in political logic, and as a challenge for contemporary rhetorical studies. When looking at McComiskey's answer to this challenge, we find that he investigates certain trends in political rhetoric and mediation, but settles with a simplified, and therefore problematic, understanding of the relation between truth, fact and rhetoric.

In my view, there are several reasons for scholars of rhetoric to study the *epistemological* implications of the post-truth condition more closely. First off, the very term 'post-truth' puts the question of truth – or rather the lack thereof – at the centre of the post-truth debate. Second, the question of truth – or rather the lack thereof – has been haunting the discussion of rhetoric since its Greco-Roman beginning, so much so that the very notion of an epistemology of rhetoric, by some is to be considered an oxymoron. Hence, a thorough treatment of post-truth rhetoric should consider both the epistemological implications of the post-truth condition and how rhetoric, as an intellectual tradition and a modern-day field, has grappled with the questions of truth, opinion, and knowledge. To not do so constitutes a missed opportunity and a very real political risk. In order to fight back against the practice of post-truth

2. For discussions of Trump rhetoric, beside McComiskey, see e.g. McIntyre (2018), McGranahan (2017) and Connolly (2017).

rhetoric – which McComiskey urges scholars of rhetoric to do – we need a clear understanding of the terrain of this key battleground.

Another notion that the concept of 'post-truth' brings to the table is postmodernism, understood both as a historical period and as an intellectual movement.[3] The notion of postmodernism is not discussed by McComiskey, which is problematic since the idea of post-truth society is clearly linked to postmodernism as a historical process, and because the field of rhetorical studies is clearly anchored in postmodernism as an intellectual movement. Admittedly, the term 'postmodernism' has lost its intellectual flair as an academic key-word, but several analysts have noted the strong affiliation between Trumpist politics and postmodernism, describing him as turning postmodernism against itself, or as the first postmodern president.[4] When it comes to modern-day rhetorical studies, the field is clearly rooted in the scholarly traditions of poststructuralism, deconstruction and social constructivism, all of which could be labelled as postmodern theories.

The fact that contemporary rhetorical studies are based on what could be described as postmodern perspectives, while post-truth rhetoric has been criticised for being 'postmodern', provides an interesting tension. When scholars of rhetoric discuss the practices of post-truth rhetoric, we need to consider the relationship between those practices and the postmodern foundations of our own discipline.

In the monograph *Post-Truth*, American philosopher Lee McIntyre (2018) investigates how (American) society arrived at its present post-truth condition. Among many other influences, he treats the relationship between post-truth politics and left-oriented

3. For an introductory discussion of the notion of postmodernism, see Butler (2002).
4. McComiskey's book was a relatively early text in the scholarly post-truth debate, but the connection between Trump and postmodernism was being established in public debate; Trump's way of doing politics was portrayed as feeding on the presumption that all truth is relative and that morality is subjective. See e.g. David Ernst's, "Donald Trump Is The First President To Turn Postmodernism Against Itself," (*The Federalist*, 23 January 2017). or Jeet Heer's, "America's First Postmodern President," (*New Republic*, 8 July 2017).

academic postmodernism.[5] McIntyre questions that postmodernist ideas would support the right-wing ideology of post-truth, but still argues that "postmodernists have contributed to the (current) situation by retreating within the subtlety of their ideas, then being shocked when they are used for purposes outside what they would approve" (2018, 126–27) .

The notion of postmodernism has today been popularised as a right-wing curse-word for unconservative values, but from a scholarly position, there are both problems and merits in the broad academic tradition that would go under the label. Regarding postmodern approaches to rhetorical theory, a general aspect that appears problematic is that they are habitually constructed to question truth claims, whilst providing no answer to the question of how we can support particular knowledge claims in competition with others. To deal with the practice of post-truth rhetoric, however, scholars need more than tools and perspectives for questioning truth; they need a theory for actually substantiating knowledge claims. Hence, rhetorical theory cannot stay in a postmodern state of constant questioning and play but must break free. This transformation should however be executed without devolving rhetorical theory into dogmatism. In other words, we need to reconsider rhetorical theory in light of post-truth without retreating to a pre-postmodern belief in narrow-minded reasoning or pre-given absolute truths. Neither fact-dogmatism, nor logically oriented argumentation theory constitutes a productive or meaningful way forward. The weaknesses of the postmodern foundations of rhetoric do not mean that the critique of rationality and of the correspondence view of knowledge was mistaken. On the contrary, we need to acknowledge the merits of this critique, but must still make an about turn and ask ourselves how one can not only criticise truths and knowledge claims but also how we substantiate them.

5. Other aspects, discussed by McIntyre (2018), includes psychological mechanisms that can explain the effects of post-truth rhetoric, the decline of traditional media, the logic of social media and fake news, as well as corporately supported science denialism.

Epistemology and rhetorical theory

What does the phrase epistemology of rhetoric actually mean? To answer that question, we must first describe the dual meaning of the term rhetoric. 'Rhetoric', in the phrase *epistemology of rhetoric*, can denote a practice, but also an academic discipline. Are we then in search for an epistemology of the *discipline* of rhetoric, or an epistemology of the *practice* of rhetoric?

My short answer is that we are in search of both. We need an epistemology of the practice of rhetoric to tackle the challenges of post-truth society and we need a new epistemology for the discipline of rhetoric to stay relevant in an ever-changing world. We must, however, add nuance to our understanding of the theory-practice dichotomy that haunts the notion of rhetoric itself. To begin with, both 'rhetoric' as denoting practice and 'rhetoric' as denoting a scholarly field – and the theory within that field – are, in fact, references to practices. Just as a custom is constituted by practice, so are theories and disciplines. What is more, all these practices have in common that they are deeply embedded in knowledge use as well as knowledge formation. The practice of political rhetoric is knowledge use and knowledge formation, since it works as argumentation, supporting views, claims and actions by utilising other views, claims and actions. The same is true for rhetorical theory and the scholarly discipline of rhetoric. They are both embedded in uses and formations of knowledge. Even though rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism function at the meta-level, describing the processes of rhetorical practice, they nonetheless constitute rhetorical practices with epistemological dimensions within the boundaries of academia.

There are, however, pragmatic reasons to treat academic and political practices somewhat separately. We must acknowledge that particular conditions come into play when we discuss knowledge within an academic discipline, whilst others occur in the realm of public debate.

Nevertheless, when developing principles for the scholarly field of rhetorical studies (the epistemology of the discipline), those

principles must not be at odds with how that same field views the knowledge-forming aspects of the practice of rhetoric in politics (the epistemology of political argumentation). We need to anchor our epistemology in a rhetorical understanding of argumentation, and, at the same time, provide a rhetorical understanding of argumentation that is coherent with the principles of rhetorical theory. If we, instead, should turn to traditional, logically oriented argumentation theories to form an epistemology of rhetoric, that would lead to contradiction since the premises of those theories clash with a rhetorical understanding of human persuasion.

Epistemology and rhetoric as argumentation

I proposed above that rhetorical theory, facing post-truth society, should consider rhetorical practice, in its widest sense, argumentation that supports knowledge claims. I have indicated that one interpretation of epistemology is – more or less – synonymous with argumentation. Now, however, it is time to become more precise and answer what it means to state that rhetorical practice is 'argumentation'?

From the perspective of rhetorical theory, argumentation could be described as *a process, performed through symbols, that facilitates persuasion*.[6] This understanding can be contrasted to the perspective of logic, which renders argumentation as a law-abiding structure of propositions, or the perspective of new dialectics, which renders argumentation as a communicative process regulated by certain normative argumentative procedures (cf. Tindale 2004, xi). Rhetorical argumentation requires some form of *difference of opinion* – or at least an implicit potential difference of opinion – and some form of *audience*, consisting of one or several persons, that receives the argumentation and might be persuaded by it. A third requirement is that some kind of *reasons must be put forward in support of an opinion* or as a critique of an opinion.

6. For a more extensive treatment of the traditions of rhetoric, logic and dialectics, see Tindale (2004, 5–24), or van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Henkemans (1996, 29–45).

This final remark is the core of the claim that rhetoric is argumentation; it acknowledges that rhetoric is a process of reason-giving.

These remarks constitute a minimalistic description of argumentation with the aim of being open, non-confrontative and inclusive; but for some this very openness is what makes it provocative. Argumentation could be seen as valuable because it is separate from other symbolic practices. To clarify some points of controversy let us look at the definition of argumentation by van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans in *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory* (1996)*:*

> Argumentation is a verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptance of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge. (5)

My description of argumentation differs from this quote on several points. Firstly, van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans state that argumentation is verbal and that the audience therefore either listens or reads. I instead describe argumentation as performed through symbols, which opens the definition to the possibility of non-discursive argumentation, for example through images, dance or architecture. Secondly, van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans state that argumentation needs a "standpoint" that is supported by "a constellation of propositions." Consequently, they delimit the verbal dimension even further, to the specific form of a hierarchy of propositions. In this context, the term "standpoint" also becomes something significantly different than the "views" or "opinions" that I spoke of that are not necessarily captured in verbal form. Thirdly, van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemans state that argumentation is an activity "of reason" that requires a "rational judge," which can be contrasted to my less restrictive condition that reasons needs to be put forward in support of an opinion. The two formulations might seem similar, but mine is sig-

nificantly less rigid since it is not locked to discursivity or limited to logical rationality.[7]

When van Eemeren and Grootendorst's present their pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, in *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation: The Pragma-Dialectical Approach* (2004), they begin by making the observation that there is a division in the contemporary field of argumentation studies between "new rhetorics" and "new dialectics". They also claim that the key feature of the rhetorical approach is its focus on persuasion of audiences, whilst the key feature of the dialectical approach is its focus on how standpoints can be evaluated critically within a regulated discussion (42–52). I agree with this description and accept the conclusion that pragma-dialectical theory does not belong to the rhetorical tradition. There is, however, another and more controversial point that I want to make, namely that clear discrepancies arise when these argumentation theories are included in contemporary rhetorical studies. This is the case also for the argumentation theory of Stephen Toulmin or that of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca.[8] To me, an explicit focus on audience and persuasion is not enough to substantiate the bearing of an argumentation theory for the contemporary field of rhetorical studies; there are also other aspects of the rhetorical tradition and other dimensions of contemporary rhetorical theory that need to be adhered to and put to work. Hence, this study will not accept any existing rhetorical theory of argu-

7. To clarify the controversial nature of these differences we can note that the definition of argumentation, quoted above, is not a definition of argumentation specific to the pragma-dialectical tradition, to which the authors belong. On the contrary, it is presented as a general definition of argumentation in their handbook on argumentation theory, considered as a standard work on argumentation theory, including rhetorical perspectives. The authors therefore imply that the definition should stand, also for rhetorical theories.

8. The nature of these discrepancies is discussed in chapter 14, but to be clear, neither of these discrepancies or tensions excludes the possibility that research within rhetorical studies that uses these perspectives on argumentation can provide interesting results. My goal is, accordingly, not to criticise such a practice, but to prospect the possibility of an alternative. In contrast to my stance, Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004) claim that the approach of Stephen Toulmin as well as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca can "be placed in the rhetorical tradition without much difficulty" (46).

mentation as a starting point, but rather begins a process of theory development by inquiring into *the rhetorical tradition* – focusing on classical Greek antiquity – and *modern-day scholarship* – focusing on the re-invention of *doxa* from the 1950s and onward.

Working with words and concepts

Working actively with the inheritance of classical rhetoric can be very fruitful, but it is also laden with risks. Below I outline these risks and describe how I have handled them methodologically.

In *The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric*, Kathleen Welch (2009) studies modern-day receptions of classical rhetoric as processes of appropriation. Her book is highly critical of many revivalists of classical rhetoric and, therefore, useful for a discussion of the risks inherent to such appropriation. Welch's criticism is especially focused on scholars belonging to what she calls "The Heritage School." Welch describes how these scholars treat classical rhetoric as a self-evident reality that can be retrieved without reflecting on the process of historicising (8–11). According to Welch, these revivalists understand classical rhetoric as a unitary, objective and unchanging system.

Despite her harsh criticism of some revivalists of rhetoric, Welch is essentially positive toward the contemporary relevance of classical rhetoric. She does, however, argue that contemporary appropriations should build on "contemporary epistemological constructions that . . . are capable of producing an interpretation of classical rhetoric" (11). She does not want us to import a simplified and standardised classical pattern, but rather to learn to work actively with historically situated texts and concepts. We must learn to think in relation to a classical heritage that is often fragmentary and contradictory.

To further develop an idea of what such a constructive use of classical rhetoric might look like, I turn to Jacques Derrida's well-known reflection on philosophy in "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (2007). Inspired by Derrida, I claim that we cannot move to a new understanding of rhetoric by

turning our backs on what has come before.[9] It is neither possible to invent entirely new concepts without any historical baggage, nor to rid rhetorical concepts of their heritage, since the concepts of classical rhetoric always carry with them ancient presuppositions regarding the nature of rhetoric itself (249–51). As a consequence, it might seem like we are stuck within a historical understanding of rhetoric, but there is, according to Derrida, a constructive way of handling this situation; an approach that could be found in the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss. It consists of:

> conserving in the field of empirical research all these old concepts, while at the same time exposing here and there their limits, treating them as tools which can still be of use. No longer is any truth-value attributed to them; there is a readiness to abandon them if necessary if other instruments should appear more useful. (Derrida 2007, 254)

When applying this perspective to rhetorical studies, we accept both the premise that classical rhetoric could be considered unfit to handle the radically new of contemporary discourse and the premise that it is adaptable and therefore still useful.

Derrida describes this way of working with the help of two concepts from Lévi-Strauss: *bricoleur* and *bricolage* (Derrida 2007, 255–60). That the contemporary rhetorical scholar is a *bricoleur* means that she or he can use the "means at hand." The *bricoleur* is an intellectual handy-man who uses that which is already there in creative ways for new purposes. *Bricolage*, says Derrida, is the necessity that all our conceptual tools must be taken from a broken heritage, borrowed from systems that despite any appearance of coherence are always, more or less, in ruins. Lévi-Strauss opposes the *bricoleur* to the structured construction work of the engineer, but for Derrida there is no other possibility than that of *bricolage*. My theory development, presented in this book, will use thoughts from classical rhetoric, American rhetorical studies, Scandinavian rhetorical studies, French literary theory and German philosophy. Such an approach can self-evidently never pretend to be anything other than *bricolage*.

9. My use of Derrida here is inspired by Rosengren's (2010, 47–49) reading.

The understanding of scholarly work as *bricolage* should not, however, be understood as a lazy or easy way out of the set of problems discussed above. Instead, it is important to continually acknowledge the conceptual transformations and the creative uses that are made, which Derrida points out in the quote above. The awareness of the nature of productive misuses is there presented as a value in itself. When old concepts are used in new contexts, their inaptness contributes to the questioning of the presuppositions of the heritage they represent, but awareness of their inaptness also contributes to a theoretical understanding of the present that is less blind to its own presuppositions. Hence, Derrida's and Welch's emphasis on contemporary usefulness is not opposed to an initiated approach to historicising or to an awareness of the problems of *translatio*; it is built on it.[10] Welch considers translation as a creation of new knowledge, but it is important to her that the "new realization or translation should maintain complexity rather than kill it." In relation to this dimension my own study includes a critical edge. I accept that contemporary scholars work as *bricoleurs*, but still take it upon me to identify some of the hidden cracks, undeclared transformations or misleading simplifications that their work harbour. In doing so, I hope to point out some presuppositions that possibly might prevent us from finding new paths.

Via my treatment of Welch and Derrida, I have shown how an understanding of history (in my case that of classical Greek antiquity) can be utilised in the development of contemporary theory without denying historical difference. The failure of what Welch calls the heritage-school would, from the point of view of Derrida, be that they do not point out the necessary unaptness in a contemporary use of classical concepts. To avoid this methodological shortcoming in my own work and to sharpen my critical gaze on the works of others, I pay particular attention to the historicity of words and concepts.

In doing so, I connect this project with an established tradition of rhetorical scholarship, best exemplified by Heinrich Lausberg's

10. I am using the Latin form *translatio* to signal that "translation" is here meant in its broadest sense. It is not just a question of changing language, but a transferal between different times, places and cultures.

Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik (1960; 1998), as well as the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* (*HWdR*), published in seven volumes from 1992-2005. This method of grappling with rhetoric through classical terminology has been highly influential in the Western rhetorical tradition, but the approach is not uniform. In fact, the two works mentioned could be used to exemplify Welch's description of different relationships to the history of rhetoric. Lausberg presents a rhetorical system that is coherent and stable and which easily lends itself to the kind of unreflected transhistorical imports criticised by Welch as the heritage school. The stated methodology of the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* is, however, more complex. The editor Gert Ueding (1994) acknowledges the importance of the contemporary scholarly position and describes *Begriffsgeschichte* (the history of concepts) not only as an enterprise of gathering information, but as a methodology for theory development (11).[11]

With all this in mind, I need a terminological toolbox to support the following readings of classical texts and facilitate the analysis of the approaches to specific words and concepts in the works of contemporary scholars. Most importantly, this study needs a terminology to conceptualise words as signs. In this regard, I follow Reinhart Koselleck (2011, 16–22), discussing, on the one hand, the 'word' (*Wort*) and, on the other hand, the 'concept' (*Begriff*). I am, however, critical towards the tendency in Koselleck's writings to treat these two aspects of the sign as if it were possible to clearly, objectively and independently of specific contexts separate between them.[12] Thus, I will also rely on Ferdinand de Saus-

11. Ueding also quotes Manfred Fuhrman (1983, 11) and his declaration that every attempt to renew rhetoric, should begin with the process of orienting oneself in the historical material. "Jeder Versuch die Rhetorik in Theorie und Praxis zu erneuern, sollte sich, jedenfalls zunächst, am geschichtlichen Befund orientieren." My study can, I hope, be seen both as such a renewal of rhetoric, anchored in an active appropriation of the historical material – and as a study of other scholars who, also, have been striving to renew rhetoric by reworking historical material.
12. Koselleck's approach lends itself to arguments that discuss words and concepts as if they had separate histories. Koselleck names his own approach *Begriffsgeschichte*, which clarifies that the objects of his studies are the concepts, and not specific words.

sure's semiotic model. While Saussure divides the sign as a whole (*le signe*) in two dimensions, the signifier (*le signifiant*) and the signified (*le signifié*), he emphasises that the language user does not separate the word-image from the mental concept, but only encounters the sign as a whole (Saussure 1966, 65–70). I also supplement the use of 'word', 'concept', 'signifier', 'signified' and 'sign' with the use of 'term' and 'terminology'. The two latter terms are used to signify that the words discussed should be understood as having a special meaning within a scholarly field where they have acquired a status as technical terms.[13]

A noteworthy dimension of this study is that it focuses on basic concepts (*Grundbegriffe*),[14] meaning a limited number of concepts, within a discipline, that are central to that field's constitution. The centrality, inescapability and ambiguousness of these concepts evoke an ongoing conflict regarding how to determine their meaning, or rather meanings. To use them is to invoke some of these meanings, contest others and become part of the conflict (Koselleck 2011, 32–33). In this book, I discuss concepts – *doxa* in particular – that I consider as basic concepts both in a contemporary understanding of classical antiquity and in a contemporary reinvention of rhetoric. Since I cannot accept a separation between the concept and the signifier, I do not discuss basic concepts (*Grundbegriffe*) or counter-concepts (*Gegenbegriffe*) as existing on a conceptual level, but only as signified by specific words.

Another dimension that come to play in this study is the idea of an onomasiological (*onomasiologisch*) and semasiological (*semasiologisch*) approach to the history of concepts, where the onomasiological approach studies different words for expressing the same concept, while the semasiological approach studies the different meanings of the same word.[15] An attention to these aspects is important to describe the modern-day history and contemporary

He makes this distinction explicitly when differentiating between his approach and *Wortgestchichte* (1972, XIII–XXVII; 2011, 16–19).

13. When compared to the terminology of Saussure, my use of 'term' is on the same level as 'sign'; it includes a signifier as well as a meaning.
14. This term is taken from Koselleck, but my use is formed by my particular approach.
15. These concepts are used by Koselleck (2011, 19), but were derived from linguistics.

use of classical words and related concepts. My investigation in part 1 and 2 of the word *doxa* has the form of a semasiological study where different uses of the word are described. However, through my study of Plato's writings, in part 1, it becomes obvious that Plato's works do not follow any stable or coherent division of words. Instead, different words fulfil similar functions in different texts, or in different sections of the same text. Hence, my analysis includes onomasiological parts when that becomes necessary. Also, in part 2, where I study the use of the term *doxa* in the works of several theorists, it becomes clear that their approaches toward the word *doxa* tend to differ from a strict semasiological approach. Barthes, Amossy and Rosengren use the word *doxa* as a common denominator for concepts that in the theoretical texts they rely on are often expressed in other words.[16]

It is my impression that a recurring flaw in the writings of twentieth century scholars engaging with ancient rhetoric, is that they are often unclear about whether the specific words used in their own works, such as *doxa*, are used in the texts that they refer to. As readers, we must guess whether these words should be understood as analytical terms, introduced by the scholar, or if the scholars have assumed the actual terminology used in the texts that they work with. This lack of clarity becomes problematic when a word is used both as an analytical term imposed on the material by the theorist and is present in the material itself, albeit not universally.

This study, in focusing on *doxa*, uses a semasiological approach in relating the field of contemporary rhetorical studies to its constructed history. In doing so, I follow in the tradition of the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, but my general goal is theory development and more specifically the construction of an epistemology of rhetoric for the field of rhetorical studies today. My analyses of the uses of specific words and my investigations of the history of contemporary rhetoric serve to make sure that my research process, as a piece of *bricolage*, will be performed as

16. Ruth Amossy (2002a), for example, presents an onomasiological study of different terms in francophone research that she interprets as linked and as signifying a single concept, which she in turn names *doxa*.

clearly as possible without the false comfort of clearly structured definitions.

The structure of the book

It is my firm belief that the question of the epistemology of rhetoric can never be settled once and for all; it must be constantly revisited and answered anew.

To probe into the question of how to develop an epistemology of rhetoric, adept at meeting the challenges of today, I begin this book by investigating in part 1 the contemporary notion that rhetoric has been situated in an epistemological conflict between *doxa* and *episteme* since its genesis in classical antiquity. The first chapter begins with scrutiny of the contemporary description of this epistemic tension in rhetorical handbooks and encyclopedias, showing how these two terms are being used to formulate a basic opposition in the field of rhetorical studies. Thereafter, the focus shifts to a reading of the use of the words *doxa* and *epistēmē* in historical texts by Plato, specifically the *Gorgias* (chapter 2), the *Phaedrus* (chapter 3), the *Theaetetus* and *Meno* (chapter 4) as well as the *Republic, Sophist* and *Statesman* (chapter 5). The goal is to better understand the contemporary construction of this epistemic tension by studying the material available to contemporary scholars, and thereby to stimulate reflection on their interpretive choices. This process includes the revealing of certain cracks in the traditional rendering of Plato within rhetorical studies and the pointing out of various possibilities open to contemporary scholars that want to re-engage with this material (chapter 6). Part 1 ends with an analysis of the relation between Plato's works and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, examining the idea that Aristotle provides a way out of the tensions that Plato is said to have placed upon rhetoric (chapter 7).

In part 2, I investigate attempts that have been made by modern-day scholars to break free from the above-mentioned epistemic tension through a constructive focus on the concept of *doxa*. In other words, the second part of the book explores different possible

ways of re-inventing the term *doxa* in contemporary rhetorical studies. Chapter 8 presents an overview of the re-inventions of *doxa* in rhetorical studies from the 1950s to the present. Thereafter, I take a closer look at four strands within this re-invention of *doxa*. Firstly, in chapter 9, I engage with the structuralist and poststructuralist account of *doxa*, focusing on Roland Barthes. Secondly, in chapter 10, I probe into the tradition of rhetorical ontology and its account of *doxa*, focusing on Robert Hariman and Martin Heidegger. Thirdly, in chapter 11, I describe the tradition of pragmatic studies of argumentation in discourse, focusing on Ruth Amossy's account of *doxa*. Lastly, in chapter 12, I explore the tradition of rhetorical-philosophical anthropology, focusing on Mats Rosengren's doxology, with reference to Pierre Bourdieu.

Parts 1 and 2 together describe both the premises of the establishment of the *doxa–episteme* dichotomy in the contemporary construction of the birth of rhetoric, and how the term *doxa* has been transformed and utilised by contemporary scholars to perform certain functions. Part 2 ends with chapter 13, where I identify some common questions or dimensions that have been accentuated in the preceding chapters, suggesting how they might indicate a way forward for the development of an epistemology of rhetoric.

Finally, in part 3, I acknowledge the duality of the term rhetoric, considering epistemology as a question of, on the one hand, the theoretical premises for rhetoric as an academic discipline that aims at producing knowledge within the humanities, and on the other hand, epistemology as an understanding of the rhetorical practice of argumentation, that is of substantiating knowledge through reason-giving. I discuss these two dimensions separately. First of all, in chapter 14, I present seven principles for rhetorical theory based on the previous studies. Second, in chapter 15, I draw on the previous chapters and revisit Plato's *Republic* to sketch an epistemology of rhetoric in the sense of a perspective for understanding public argumentation as reason-giving.

I

1.

Engaging epistemic tensions

In the introduction, I argued that the contemporary post-truth condition demands that scholars of rhetoric re-configure the foundations of the discipline, and that they map out an epistemology of rhetoric more apt for our time.

Since the modern-day field of rhetorical studies is constructed in relation to history, we need first to gain a better understanding of that history. This understanding is important for two reasons; to begin with, the strength of a postmodern intellectual tradition in contemporary rhetorical scholarship is, arguably, supported by rhetoric's historical siding with the opinion-driven sophists in opposition to the truth-speaking of Plato. Secondly, the possibilities for rhetoric to provide an epistemologically useful answer to the *problematique* of the post-truth condition lies in its unique history, a history in which the role of opinions, the views of the masses and the practices of public rhetoric are taken seriously. This history is a body of knowledge that should be called upon, not only to eliminate contemporary blind spots, but also to find new perspectives that may cast current challenges in a different light.

When looking back at the so-called birth of rhetoric, contemporary scholars tend to describe rhetoric as situated in a conflict centred on knowledge: an epistemic conflict. It is clear that the question of epistemology is constructed as part of the very birth-myth of rhetoric itself.

To help us better understand the nature of the epistemic conflict at the genesis of the rhetorical tradition, this chapter studies how influential rhetorical encyclopedias and textbooks establish the notion of a historically situated tension between *doxa* and *episteme*. This is followed by a study of how contemporary scholars

of rhetoric actively engage with the notion of an epistemic tension, related to the established dichotomy between *doxa* and *episteme*. In the chapters that follow I then investigate how the contemporary descriptions of epistemic tension relate to the historical material. Which words are used by contemporary scholars and in the ancient Greek texts? What interpretative roads have been preferred within the field of rhetorical studies and what roads have been left untraveled? The goal is not to situate rhetoric in Athens and classical Greece, as history, but to better understand the forms, motives, and consequences of the contemporary constructions of a birth of rhetoric in epistemic tension, as well as to point to previously ignored possibilities. The engagement with the classical Greek texts, mainly Plato's dialogues, serves the purpose of strengthening our understanding of contemporary rhetorical theory by studying its relation to a constructed history.

This investigation is done within a tradition of rhetorical scholarship that connects to the history of rhetoric, through the study and reuse of terminology from classical Greece. This line of scholarship is, as discussed in the introduction, most evident in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* and Lausberg's *Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik*, but an interest in terminology of ancient Greek origin is also widespread in student-oriented handbooks of rhetoric, as well as being important to widespread engagements with the heritage of ancient Greek literature in continental philosophy.[1]

Doxa and *episteme* in textbooks and encyclopedias

In Samuel IJsseling's *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (1976), the author takes his starting point in Plato's *Gorgias* and highlights the conflicting views on knowledge discussed there:

1. One should note here that the focus and use of terminology from the ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians have a somewhat stronger standing within European scholarship on rhetoric in comparison to the large American field of rhetorical studies. This is particularly true for German scholarship, but also for Scandinavian and French scholarship on rhetoric. See e.g. Janne Lindqvist's (2016) Swedish introduction to rhetoric, or Roland Barthes' (1994, 1970) classic work "The Old Rhetoric: An Aide-Mémoire".

> At this point Socrates remarks that rhetorical or persuasive speech can impart no actual insight or no real knowledge (episteme) but only urges on us convictions or opinions (doxa). (7)[2]

IJsseling's description is typical of how an epistemic tension is constructed in contemporary textbooks and handbooks. It is related to Plato, and particularly Plato's *Gorgias*, articulated as a conflict between *doxa* and *episteme* and presented within a general framework where rhetoric is opposed to philosophy.

The *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition*, edited by Theresa Enos (1996), discusses this opposition under the heading *Oratory*, where Barbara Biesecker et al. (1996) state that sophistic oratory "operated unabashedly in the service of *doxa* rather than *epistēmē*, belief and opinion rather than knowledge," but also under the heading "Philosophy of Rhetoric," where James Comas (1996) claims that the separation between rhetoric and philosophy was "established in Plato's *Gorgias* as the difference between pure knowledge (epistēmē) and opinion (doxa)."

In *The Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, edited by Thomas O. Sloane (2001), the words *doxa* and *episteme* are used and defined under the heading of "Philosophy: Rhetoric and Philosophy," in a reading of Plato's *Gorgias*. Plato is criticised for fighting a strawman when letting Socrates, unquestioned, state that rhetoric produces conviction without knowing:

> that is, a conviction not resulting from learning (*mathēsis*), but from persuasion alone, based on *doxa*, opinion (454b–455a); that rhetoric has no rational principle or *logos*, and hence no status as a technē, a systematic discipline, based on science or knowledge (*epistēmē*). (Vickers 2001)

In James A. Herrick's textbook, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric* we also find the *doxa–episteme* dichotomy in the reading of the *Gorgias*. Herrick (2005) states that:

2. Original quote: "Socrates merkt hierbij op dat het retorische betoog of het persuasive spreken geen werkelijk inzicht en geen echt weten (episteme) kan bijbrengen, maar slechts overtuigingen, opinies of meningen (doxa) opdringt." (IJsseling 1975, 13).

> The Sophists' rhetoric, according to Plato, aimed only at *persuasion* about justice through the manipulation of public opinion (*doxa*), whereas an adequate view of justice must be grounded in true knowledge (*episteme*), and aim at the well-being of the individual and of the city-state (*polis*). (55)

A more elaborate account can be found in the article on 'Doxa' in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, where Stanley K. Stowers (1994) describes the ancient use of the word *doxa* and its meanings in theoretical arguments from pre-Socratic thinkers to Augustin.[3] Stowers presents an opposition between *doxa* and "Wahrheit" (truth) that is discussed throughout the article. The explicit opposition between *doxa* and *episteme* is established in the presentation of Plato:

> Platon kontrastiert Wissen (ἐπιστήμη, ėpistḗmē), das eine Erinnerung an die Formen sei und das Sein erfasse, mit der unsicheren und auf Wahrnehmung gegründeten D[oxa]. (Stowers 1994)

While the article on 'doxa' in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* remains in the historical context, the article in *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, by James Jasinski (2001, 183–86), focuses on contemporary scholarly uses of the word *doxa*, which are discussed further below.[4] Jasinski's change of focus does not, however, affect the historical claims, where he still describes the *doxa–episteme* dichotomy as originating in Plato's attack on the Sophists in general and the attack performed in the *Gorgias* in particular.

It is, as seen, clear that a dichotomy between *doxa* and *episteme* is recurrent in encyclopedias and textbooks on rhetoric and that its origin is repeatedly localised to Plato's *Gorgias* and to a conflict between rhetoric and philosophy. The condensed passages in these encyclopedias and textbooks on historical epistemic framing do not, however, give us much material to work with, but the sug-

3. The authors of the articles of *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, often go beyond the ancient history and include contemporary uses of concepts, but in the article on *doxa* Stanley K. Stowers stays within the ancient context.
4. See "Contemporary scholarly engagements with a *doxa-episteme* dichotomy," below.

gested translations of the Greek do give us a clue as to the perspective applied by the textbooks and encyclopedias: *doxa* is often translated as opinion, but also as belief, convictions and public opinion. *Epistēmē* is translated as knowledge, true knowledge, real knowledge, pure knowledge, *Wissen* and science. The most interesting pattern here is the qualification of knowledge as "real", "true" or "pure," which either can be interpreted as implying a critique toward *doxa*, by establishing a normative hierarchy between the concepts, or as a ridiculing of *episteme*, by positioning the proponents of "pure knowledge" as detached from the real world and caught by theoretical hubris. These counterposed evaluations are only hinted at in the encyclopedias, but, as will be shown below, they structure the arch-conflict between rhetoric and philosophy that contemporary scholars attribute to Plato. It could also be argued that the ridicule of the "pure" *episteme* is a counterargument constructed as a comment on an existing normative hierarchy, where *episteme* is elevated and *doxa* distained.

A final and significant, but easily missed, aspect of these passages from encyclopedias and textbooks is that they all, regardless of the exact wording, underpin the basic premise that there is an epistemic conflict at the birth of rhetoric, which in turn leads to an understanding of rhetoric as innately related to questions of knowledge. The following section discusses contemporary scholarly engagement with the *doxa–episteme* dichotomy, but it is worth keeping in mind that these scholars do not only contribute to various constructions of an epistemic tension in relation to rhetoric; they also contribute to constructing the question of knowledge as central to rhetoric.

Contemporary scholarly engagement with *doxa-episteme* dichotomy

With regards to the contemporary scholars who actively and explicitly engage with the conceptual birth of rhetoric in epistemic tension and its labelling as a conflict between *doxa* and *episteme*, we can see that their approach adheres to the typical framing in

the encyclopedias and textbooks. The scholars tend to describe the tension in relation to Plato, to engage with what they see as a normative hierarchy between *doxa* and *episteme* and accentuate the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy.

In *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, where the term *dox*a is given its own entry, Jasinski (2001, 183–86) initially focuses on Eric Havelock's (1963, 235–39) reading of Plato, describing *doxa* as a "state of mind" related to an oral culture that tolerates inconsistencies and contradictions within the world of appearances. Plato's response to this way of conduct is characterised as the replacement of the concrete with the abstract, which Jasinski argues persists even today. Jasinski also calls attention to Robert Hariman's (1986) re-invention of *doxa*, which Jasinski claims goes beyond the understanding of *doxa* as opinion to show how the world of appearance manifests itself through a discursive dialectics between revealing and concealing, which he also describes as relevant today. Jasinski's treatment of *doxa* represents a changed focus from describing classical antiquity to a focus on contemporary challenges.[5] His references to Hariman also lead our attention to a specific contemporary controversy, namely the American *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate.[6]

The starting point of this debate was Robert L. Scott's (1967) article, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic", where he relates Plato's *Gorgias* to contemporary political discussions on rhetoric and describes how Plato's dialogue presents truth as the normative prerequisite of ethical discourse. Thereafter, Scott criticises Plato's presumption and, using Stephen Toulmin's notion of substantial arguments,[7] he argues that there is no such thing as certainty. Instead, he claims that man "must act in the face of uncertainty to create situational truth" and presents rhetoric as "a way of knowing" (Scott, 137–38).

5. Jasinki's (2001, 183–86) focus on contemporary challenges also affects his references, where he refers to several scholars whose work is not primarily on classical rhetoric, but rather on theory. It includes references to Hariman (1986), McKerrow (1989), and Kuypers (1996).
6. For a brief introduction to the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate, see Scott (2001). For a more pregnant treatment of the varied contributions to the debate, see Leff (1978).
7. For Scott's references, see Toulmin (1958, 123–30, 222–23, 231, 235).

Following Scott's article, the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate flooded American communication journals with articles about rhetoric and its relationship to knowledge during the 1970s and '80s. The sheer number of articles and the lack of direction and decisive results make the debate difficult to summarise, but as a phenomenon it demonstrates the explosive force of combining the notion of rhetoric with questions of epistemology. There are a few significant contributions that accentuate Greek terminology, and they deserve special attention in relation to our study. First, we must note that Scott's choice of using the term "epistemic" has been criticised. One of the most aggressive attacks on Scott's terminology can be found in Raymond E. McKerrow's programmatic essay "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis" (1989), where he lays down the principle that rhetoric constitutes "doxastic" rather than epistemic knowledge:

> Considerations of rhetoric as epistemic are inextricably linked to a neo-Kantian definition of what constitutes knowledge, as that will always be seen in terms of independent, universal standards of judgement (whether invoked by Perelman, Toulmin, or Habermas). In the process the rehabilitation remains subservient to a Platonic, neo-Kantian perception of rhetoric's "true" role in society. A more positive approach is to reassert the value of rhetoric's province – *doxa* – and thereby resituate theory and practice in a context far more amenable to continuance. (104)

McKerrow's argumentation is rather reductive, beheading Perelman, Toulmin, Habermas and Neo-Kantianism within one and the same sentence. He also asserts far-reaching implications for the choice of terminology etymologically linked to *episteme,* without considering the nuances in the use of the terms or considering new usage as an attempt to change the meaning of the word.

McKerrow criticises the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate based on its terminological premises and promotes the perspective presented by Robert Hariman in the article "Status, marginality and rhetorical theory" from 1986, where Hariman focuses on the word and concept of *doxa* and its relationship to social status. McKerrow argues that Hariman's approach moves *doxa* away from the Pla-

tonic opposition to *episteme*, and instead associates it with the processes of concealment and revealing, as well as authorising and marginalising (McKerrow 1989, 103–5).

In 1990, Scott publishes a short article responding to several critical comments on his proposal that rhetoric should be understood as epistemic. He does not mention McKerrow's essay but discusses the terminology explicitly and acknowledges that it might have been a mistake to use the term "epistemic" when describing rhetoric's relationship to knowledge (Scott 1990). Scott reasons that "epistemology" is burdened with its relation to the question "How can I know for certain?" While Scott claims that he has tried to make the meaning of the word shift, he acknowledges that he instead of rehabilitating the term epistemology most often have succeeded in "dragging the old meaning to the detriment of the new." It is worth noting that Scott's admission that the use of the term 'epistemic' might have been a mistake is not related explicitly to Plato, but rather to a contemporary understanding of the term 'epistemology'.

Robert Hariman, whose approach will be discussed further in chapter 10, replies to McKerrow's essay making clear that he himself does not view his own article and his use of *doxa*, as in conflict with Scott's article or the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate in general (Hariman 1991). Instead Hariman argues that Scott's contribution was the argument that rhetoric has to do with knowledge, Thomas Farrell's that the knowledge of rhetoric is social and his own that the social knowledge of rhetoric is structured through status.[8] Scott, McKerrow and Hariman all relate back to Plato and to the prevailing influence of Plato's dismissal of rhetoric. Even if McKerrow's critique of the use of the term *epistemic* might be a bit dramatic it is still clear that Plato is given a central position in the debate that was initiated by Scott's article. When looking at Richard Cherwitz and James W. Hikins' contributions (1982, 1983, 1986) it becomes more than clear that Scott's article did in some ways situate the debate within what might be

8. For Farrell's contribution to the Rhetoric as Epistemic debate and his discussions of "social knowledge," see Farrell (1976; 2001).

called a Platonic framing. Cherwitz and Hikins do argue that there is a place for rhetoric, but they do this through a negative evaluation of opinions and uncertain knowledge, while arguing for the place of rhetoric in the search for and the communication of true knowledge about reality. Cherwitz and Hikins may defend rhetoric against Plato's negative evaluation, but they accept a Platonic dichotomy between true knowledge and deceptive opinion. Their solution to the Platonic critique is not to defend the sophists but to place rhetoric under Plato's epistemological umbrella.[9] Even scholars who oppose Cherwitz and Hikins find themselves trapped in a re-invented Platonic conflict between rhetoric and philosophy, making arguments around the relationship between knowledge and objective reality and explaining why rhetorical knowledge is not ethically dubious.

Except for Harriman's article, the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate does not focus on the specific terms used for knowledge in the classical Greek discourse but there is a tension between on the one hand: opinion/social knowledge/uncertainty and on the other: truth/true knowledge/certainty. It is also clear that the Greek pairing of *doxa* and *episteme* emerges as a terminology to describe this complex tension, both as a part of an intellectual history and as a useful tool for the contemporary scholarly field (Enos 1996, 484, 515; Sloane 2001, 585, 620; Jasinski 2001, 183–86, McKerrow 1989; Hariman 1986; Kuypers 1996). For McKerrow (1989) the use of terminology is essential to the question of how contemporary scholars must handle the normative hierarchy that Plato's dichotomy is claimed to impose on rhetoric.

Within the contemporary Scandinavian field of rhetorical studies, Mats Rosengren has put the opposition between *doxa* and *episteme* to the centre of discussion. Rosengren (1998; 2002), just as Scott, starts with a critique of Plato, but then promotes a rhetorical view of knowledge through what he calls a doxological rather than epistemological understanding of knowledge.[10] He argues that we

9. In this way of argumentation, the reader can easily recognise the idea of "a good rhetoric" that Plato has been claimed to present in the *Phaedrus*.

10. A difference between Rosengren and Scott is that Rosengren came to rhetoric from philosophy. While Scott proposed that rhetorical scholars should take an interest in episte-

cannot but take *doxa* as our starting point and not *episteme*, if we want to counter the Platonic influence and avoid mix-ups with the discipline of "epistemology" in an English-speaking tradition and the discipline of "épistémologie´" within a French tradition.

I return to Rosengren's notion of *doxology* in chapter 12, but already at this point we can discern similar premises in engagement with epistemic tension in the work of Rosengren and in the American scholars. Scott, Hariman, McKerrow and Rosengren all address the question of the status of rhetoric and argue in favour of rhetoric. They discuss the Platonic tradition and problematise the epistemological umbrella that Plato, according to their readings, has imposed upon rhetoric.

We have also noted that McKerrow and Rosengren both argue that contemporary rhetoric should relate to and start with the notion of *doxa* rather than *episteme*. Hariman and Rosengren present ideas about how this could be done. A difference between McKerrow and Rosengren is that Rosengren underlines that using the starting point of *doxa* does not liberate a discourse from the yoke of Plato. The word *doxa* is by necessity *doxa* in relation to *episteme:*

> to even be able to discuss questions of knowledge we are pushed towards those terms, modes of expression and terminology offered to us, but these are not neutral. They were usually coined to work within and express the view of knowledge from which doxology seeks to distance itself. This applies to everything from the term *doxa* itself, which strictly interpreted is entirely incomprehensible without reference to *episteme*, to expressions which at first sight appear innocent enough, such as the assertion that all knowledge "is at a basic level doxological." This way of expressing the situation implies that doxological knowledge is actual knowledge, whereas epistemologi-

mology, since rhetoric is about knowledge, Rosengren came to this research area from the other corner. Mainly interested in theories of knowledge, he came to the same conclusion as Scott that rhetoric was about knowledge, arguing that rhetoric can bring something valuable to the epistemological debate. The concept of doxology (Swedish: *doxologi*), was introduced in *Doxologi: en essä om kunskap* (Rosengren 2002). Also available in French as *Doxologie essai sur la connaissance* (2011a). For a further introduction, see chapter 12.

> cal knowledge merely constitutes a chimera, and thus assumes and re-establishes just that distinction which doxology attempts to question. (Rosengren 2002, 10; Quote translated by Dominic Hinde)[11]

Despite the impossibility of escape from rhetoric's Platonic heritage and the unwanted connotations of the term *doxa*, Rosengren still argues that we should use the word *doxa*, with its signified meanings, as the starting point for a process of *bricolage* that will produce a new, more rhetorical, understanding of knowledge. Common to these scholars is the belief that the history of rhetoric clearly influences the position of the discipline of rhetoric today. McKerrow and Rosengren emphasise the possibility of deconstructing historical dichotomies by changing the words used and thereby the conceptual starting point, whilst Hariman instead uses an etymologically initiated analysis of the term *doxa* to further our understanding of the relationship between rhetoric and knowledge.

In many ways, I concur with the suggestion of McKerrow and Rosengren that we should use the term *doxa* instead of *episteme*, but I would place an even stronger emphasis on the importance of studying the historical connotations of these words. This is not primarily a question of avoiding misreadings, but rather a question of opening new interpretive possibilities that pave the way for well-founded re-inventions, which is the theoretical groundwork that we are doing in this first part of the book.

11. Original quote: "för att alls kunna diskutera kunskapsfrågor är vi hänvisade till de termer, uttryckssätt och därmed begrepp som står oss till buds, men dessa är inte neutrala. Oftast myntades de för att fungera inom och uttrycka den kunskapssyn som doxologin försöker fjärma sig ifrån. Detta gäller alltifrån själva termen *doxa*, som i strikt mening är obegriplig utan dess relation till *episteme*, till uttryck som vid första anblicken ter sig oskyldiga, som till exempel att all kunskap 'i grund och botten är doxisk.' Ett sådant uttryck säger att doxisk kunskap är egentlig kunskap, medan epistemisk kunskap blott är en chimär och tycks därigenom både förutsätta och återinföra just den typ av distinktion, som doxologin försöker ifrågasätta"

The need for research on the *doxa-epistēmē* tension in Plato's writings on rhetoric

Textbooks, encyclopedias and scholarly debate all show that there is one classical author who functions as the historical centre of the contemporary discussion within rhetorical studies on the relation between *doxa* and *episteme*, namely Plato. Even when scholars such as McKerrow and Rosengren are explicitly opposed to Plato, their many references to Plato's views reinforce Plato as the (to echo Foucault) initiator of a discursive practice regarding *doxa*.[12] Thus it is reasonable to focus on Plato when we want to discuss the basis for contemporary constructions of the dichotomy between *doxa* and *episteme* in the genesis of classical rhetoric.

The purpose of my study of Plato's texts in this first part of the book is not to explain the intentions, ambitions, or ideas of a specific philosopher in the fourth century BC; this approach is rather related to Foucault's (1998) argument regarding the function of the author's name. Plato is understood as a name that performs a classificatory function at the same time as it characterises the mode of being for the discourse unified by that name, giving it a certain status within a specific scholarly field (210–11). Using the name of Plato evokes a series of descriptions associated with that name (209).

This understanding of the function of the author's name focuses on how discourse becomes meaningful in relation to a reader. Nevertheless, this approach includes an inquiry into the historical context of Plato since that is necessary to provide a reading that is to be deemed reasonable and well-founded from the perspective of contemporary rhetorical studies. Arguments for the validity of readings can be related to either the arguments in Plato's text, the

12. I do not make a strong case to include Plato in what Foucault calls "Founders of discursivity," exemplified with Marx and Freud, but only wish to indicate the similarity in so far as Plato as an author's name does not only function in relation to a group of dialogues ascribed to him, but also to a tradition of discursive practice beyond his own time. Cf. Foucault (1998, 217–20).

Greek terminology, or to a common understanding of the historical context that is implied by use of the name Plato.

In summary, my focus in this study is on terminology in the context of the presented arguments. This focus differentiates the study from an analytical dogmatic position that studies Plato to uncover a coherent philosophy, but it also differentiates it from literary dramaturgic readings which try to uncover the impact and function of the dialogues on readers at the time.[13] This focus on terminology locates this study within a tradition where rhetoric is understood and taught through a treatment of important terms with their meanings. In my attempt to avoid the problems of what Welch names the heritage school, I combine this approach with an attention to the varied meanings of key terms in the Greek language.

13. Much has been said about different general approaches to the interpretation of Plato. Initiated arguments on this can for example be found in Rowe (2007, vii–51). See also Nails (1995, 32–50).

2.

The Gorgias

The birth of rhetoric

A discussion of reasonable interpretations of Plato's texts in relation to the position of a reader within contemporary rhetorical studies requires, as we saw in the previous chapter, some understanding of the historical context; that is – the historical context – as a cluster of meanings evoked by the author's name of Plato. To fill this need, this section will introduce the dialogue *Gorgias* and present two aspects for our proposed understanding of the historical context of Plato's texts.

First, a few notes on the dramatic setting: the *Gorgias* presents a conversation in the city centre of Athens in front of a larger audience. Callicles and Socrates have been frittering their time away in the *agora* and therefore missed the opportunity to hear Gorgias speak, but Chaerophon invites them over to his place to listen to Gorgias. Socrates, however, makes clear that he would prefer having a dialogue with Gorgias. We can, already in this initial framing, notice the first contextual aspect, namely a conflict between two ideals: the orator with his public speeches and the philosopher with his dialectical process of questions and answers.

The intellectual conflict between philosophers and sophists or rhetoricians is foregrounded in contemporary textbooks and encyclopedias, as well as in the works of scholars using or challenging the dichotomy of *doxa* and *episteme*. In the *Gorgias,* this conflict may perhaps be seen somewhat self-evident since it is depicted in the very dialogue, as a conflict between Socrates on the one hand and Gorgias on the other. When discussing the historical context, it is, however, important to note that this conflict goes beyond

the dramaturgy of the dialogue. The historian of rhetoric Edward Schiappa has argued that Plato's contemporary, Isocrates, is the implied target of Plato's critique of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*.[1] Schiappa describes the rivalry between the two, not just in relation to their conflicting views, but also in relation to the fact that they, as heads of different schools, were competing for prominence within the field of education.[2]

This reading of Plato's writings in relation to a conflict between philosophy and rhetoric, personified by Socrates and Gorgias at the dramaturgic level and by Plato and Isocrates at the author context level also provides a simplistic but useful solution to the so-called Socratic problem. Views expressed by Socrates in the dialogue are not understood as Plato's standpoint, but the analogy

1. There are many arguments for emphasizing the context of competition between Plato and Isocrates, regardless of if we interpret the conflict as related to status, power and material fortune or as ideological and pedagogical. To begin with there is a link between the dramatic personage and the author's context supporting the interpretation of the *Gorgias* as an attack on Isocrates, namely the fact that the dialogue presents a conflict between Gorgias and Socrates as well as their pupils, which can be interpreted in the light of Isocrates being a pupil of the real Gorgias and Plato of Socrates. For Edward Schiappa's argument on the *Gorgias* as an attack on Isocrates, see Schiappa (1990, 465–67; 1999, 26–28; 2003, 45–46). That the dialogue *Gorgias* constitutes an attack on Isocrates is not a novel claim by Schiappa. R.L. Howland (1937, 151–59) makes a similar statement; he notes that a reading of the *Gorgias* as an attack on Isocrates should be generally accepted, and that the same should go for the dialogue *Protagoras* since that dialogue drew a counterattack from Isocrates. Then Howland presents the argument for reading the *Phaedrus* as an attack on Isocrates. See also Bloom (1955, 233), Guthrie (1975, 308–11) and Charlton (1985, 59). On Isocrates in relation to the concepts *Logos/Rhētorikē*, see Schiappa (2003, 43).
2. Isocrates founded his school around 393-390 BC and Plato his academy in 387 BC. Given that the dialogue *Gorgias* is considered an early dialogue, dated to the 380s BC, some form of competition between the two schools should constitute a part of the rhetorical situation in which the dialogue was made public. The point is not the precise datings, but their relative closeness in time and the dramaturgy of the school launches Plato as the runner up of the famously wealthy Isocrates. Mikkola (1954, 293) dates the opening of Isocrates school to 393 BC. Schiappa (2003, 45) dates it to 392 BC. Eucken (1983, 5) settles for dating it to before 390 BC. For the dating of Plato's Academy to 387 BC, see e.g. Erler (2007, 51). The *Gorgias* is dated to 386 BC by Ledger (1989, 224–25). Thesleff (1982, 236–38), however, claims that an early version was written in 388-387 BC and then reworked in 380 BC.

between Socrates' position and that of Plato makes it reasonable for a contemporary scholar of rhetoric to focus on how the perspectives of Socrates and Plato resonate together, rather than on how they differ. It is the combination of the "expressed" views of Socrates in the dialogue and Plato's general framing of the dialogue that constitute the alleged birth scene of rhetoric; a scene where Plato, according to many contemporary scholars of rhetoric, brings rhetoric under the yoke of philosophy.

There is, however, another claim in contemporary scholarship that both underscores and complicates the understanding of the birth of rhetoric in this period: Edward Schiappa argues that the very term *rhētorikē* was coined by Plato and that this happened in no other work than the *Gorgias*, where rhetoric is so famously criticised.[3] This claim constitutes the second essential aspect of our understanding of the context. Let us look at the very passage where *rhētorikē* is introduced and the following questions and answers:

> SOC.: . . . Gorgias, you tell us yourself what one must call you as a knower of what art.
> GOR.: Of rhetoric, Socrates.
> SOC.: Then one must call you a rhetor?
> GOR.: And a good one, Socrates, if you wish to call me what I boast that I am, as Homer said. (449a; trans. by Nichols)[4]

Socrates' next questions concern what rhetoric is about. In the Greek text Gorgias answers that it is about *logos*. When urged to specify what the specific *logos* of rhetoric is about, he says that it

3. Schiappa points to the fact that Plato had coined several other terms ending with *ike*, including other verbal arts (*eristike*, *dialektike*, *antilogike*) and the fact that Plato's *Gorgias* is the earliest dated use of the term in the Greek Literature. Schiappa has presented his theses on the origin of *rhētorikē* in different versions, adding new arguments and responses to critical comments (Schiappa 1999, 14–29; 2003, 39–64). Even if one would dismiss Schiappa's stronger claim that the term *rhētorikē* was in fact coined by Plato, there is still the weaker claim that *rhētorikē* was a novel word at the time and that its subsequent meaning has been influenced by Plato's use.
4. "Σωκράτης: . . . μᾶλλον δέ, ὦ Γοργία, αὐτὸς ἡμῖν εἰπὲ τίνα σε χρὴ καλεῖν ὡς τίνος ἐπιστήμονα τέχνης.ΓΟΡ. Τῆς ῥητορικῆς, ὦ Σώκρατες.ΣΩ. Ῥήτορα ἄρα χρή σε καλεῖν;ΓΟΡ. Ἀγαθόν γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰ δὴ ὅ γε εὔχομαι εἶναι, ὡς ἔφη Ὅμηρος, βούλει με καλεῖν."

is about the *"greatest of human affairs . . . and the best"* a statement which he once again is forced to specify as:

> GOR.: That which is in truth, Socrates, the greatest good and the cause both of freedom for human beings themselves and at the same time of rule over others in each man's own city.(452d; trans. by Nichols)[5]

Socrates replies that he understands this answer to state that "rhetoric is a craftsman [*sic*] of persuasion," which Gorgias agrees with (453a; trans. by Nichols).[6] Socrates complains that there are other arts that could be described as dealing with persuasion as well, and therefore once again demands Gorgias specify what rhetoric is about:

> GOR.: I say then, Socrates, persuasion in law courts and in other mobs, as I was saying just a moment ago, and about those things that are just and unjust. (454b; trans. by Nichols)[7]

In these passages rhetoric is both named and established as the theme of the dialogue. The very naming of the art as rhetoric, rather than *logon techne* or *philosophia*, combined with the explicit association of it to the deliberative and judicial public arena provides a clear-cut distinction between Gorgias's teachings and Socrates's, and therefore by association between Isocrates's teachings and Plato's own. The claim that the term *rhētorikē* was coined by Plato makes it problematic to talk generally about the art of *rhētorikē* in the early fourth century BC. Of course, many contemporary scholars have ignored that complication, but for this study – with its emphasis on the contemporary use of ancient ter-

5. "ΓΟΡ. Ὅπερ ἐστίν, ὦ Σώκρατες, τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν καὶ αἴτιον ἅμα μὲν ἐλευθερίας αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἅμα δὲ τοῦ ἄλλων ἄρχειν ἐν τῇ αὑτοῦ πόλει ἑκάστῳ."
6. "πειθοῦς δημιουργός ἐστιν ἡ ῥητορική".
7. "ΓΟΡ. Ταύτης τοίνυν τῆς πειθοῦς λέγω, ὦ Σώκρατες, τῆς ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ὄχλοις, ὥσπερ καὶ ἄρτι ἔλεγον, καὶ περὶ τούτων ἅ ἐστι δίκαιά τε καὶ ἄδικα."

minology – it becomes important.[8] The general ramification of the naming is a separation between an art of *logos* as speech, associated with the public speakers, and an art of *logos* as rational thinking. Consequently, this means that to talk about *rhētorikē* in Plato and thereafter is something different and more defined than talking about Isocrates or the early sophists' teachings on *logos*. That Plato introduces the word *rhētorikē* through the voice of the antagonist Gorgias, rather than Socrates, hides the argumentative force in the naming. For Schiappa, however, rhetoric, as a distinct discipline, cannot be found prior to Plato and Aristotle, and for him the coining of rhetoric as a term contributed to the forming of a technically oriented art of speech. [9]

Having accepted the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric and between Plato and Isocrates as a context for the beginning of rhetoric, as well as the performative position of Plato in the setting up of that conflict, what now remains for us to investigate is the wording and literal form of the epistemic tension in the Platonic texts. Is it as simple as presented in the encyclopedias and in

8. We should note that when combining the claims that the origin of *rhētorikē* is to be found in Plato and the claim that Isocrates is the implied target of the attack in the *Gorgias* it situates the birth of *rhētorikē* in a conflict between Plato, a student of Socrates, and Isocrates, a student of Gorgias. This means that the very term rhetoric, when used by Plato in this dialogue could be interpreted as an attempt to stress the political aspects of Isocrates's teachings, by associating it with the success-oriented rhetors, and to deny his intellectual qualities. Isocrates never uses the term *rhētorikē* but calls his teachings *philosophia*.
9. For this argument, see Schiappa (1999, 26–27). That the naming contributes to strengthening rhetoric as a field of study is ironical since the most likely motive was to discredit the arts of the sophists and Isocrates, combined with separating it from Plato's own teachings. This strategy did however turn out to be a double-edged sword since the imposed limitations that comes with *rhētorikē* as focused on persuasive public speaking (and not individual or collaborative dialectical reasoning or pedagogy) also gives it a clearer focus. It seems like the division performed in Plato's *Gorgias*, also has influenced later interpretations of Gorgias and other sophists' use of *logos*, delimiting the interpretation of *logos* in their works to speech and expression rather than logic, thinking and reason. This seems true both for critical accounts in the wake of Plato and for many neo-sophistical re-readings, since these also tend to frame the sophists as rhetorical theorists (Schiappa 2003, 47–49, 54–58).

the scholarly debate? Are there perhaps alternative ways of reading Plato open to us?

Our treatment of *doxa* and *epistēmē* in Plato's writings will focus on two dialogues: *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*. In the *Gorgias,* we find Plato's infamous critique of rhetoric, which many scholars claim establishes the problematic position that rhetoric has found itself in ever since. The *Gorgias* is frequently described as a key text for the establishing of rhetoric as situated in a conflict between *doxa* and *episteme.* The second text studied in detail is the *Phaedrus*, which is somewhat more complex in its relation to rhetoric than the *Gorgias* but is generally understood as the other dialogue in which Plato makes rhetoric the key subject of discussion. As a complement to the readings of the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* this study looks at the arguments on *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Meno*, *Theaetetu*s, *Republic, Sophist* and *Statesman,* which broadens the possibilities for intertextual connections.

Doxa as a non-technical term

In the following section, I continue to study the *Gorgias* and inquire into the widespread claim that rhetoric was born in a conflict between *doxa* and e*pisteme*. In doing so, it becomes relevant to inquire into the possible difference between, on the one hand, a technical or theoretical use of certain terminology, and, on the other, ordinary language use.

An important issue when discussing the use of certain words in Plato's writings and in the contemporary field of rhetorical studies is the status of the Greek language. When a contemporary scholar writing in a modern language uses a term from ancient Greek, that term immediately acquires a certain technical status, as well as a historical air, differentiating the term from the author's ordinary language. When studying Greek texts, the fact that a word is in Greek lacks significance; Greek was merely the vernacular language of Plato. All this is, of course, a restatement of obvious facts, but these somewhat obvious aspects become important when we investigate whether Plato presents a dichotomy between *doxa* and

epistēmē in the *Gorgias* or otherwise. To answer that question, we need to decide what the requirements are for such a statement to be true.

The difference between the status of Greek terminology in the contemporary field of rhetorical studies and the status of the same words in the original Greek texts raises the question of whether there is a difference between ordinary language use and technical terms in Plato's own dialogues.[10] Even though focusing on the use of specific terms is common practice in the scholarly discourse on Plato's writings, the question of how to approach Plato with a focus on terminology has received surprisingly limited attention.[11] This fact is mentioned by H. C. Baldry (1937) in his article "Plato's 'Technical Terms'." He quotes the philologist John Burnet, who describes Plato's use of *eide* in *Phaedo* as "a peculiar vocabulary which is represented as that of a school" and the philosopher Alfred Edward Taylor, who describes the same terminology as a "characteristic technical vocabulary." In the article Baldry uses these remarks to raise a general question about technical terminology:

> The validity of such language has been taken for granted by both these and many other Platonic scholars. But the assumption which it represents – that Plato employed certain words in a significance peculiar to his use of them – carries such wide implications for the history and interpretation of his philosophy that it can hardly be accepted without further investigation. (Baldry 1937, 141)

Baldry then himself performs the requested investigation of Plato's use of *eidos* and *idea*, but in the end, he still refuses to answer the specific questions of whether these words, with their meanings, constitute a technical vocabulary or not, as well as the general question of whether the talk of technical terminology is

10. An observant reader might, correctly, object that it is not the "same" word at all. This objection could be supported in numerous different ways, related to difference in time, space and culture, but perhaps most obviously by pointing to the fact that the contemporary field of rhetorical studies tends to use transliterations instead of the Greek alphabet, thus explicitly changing the signifier.
11. Especially in comparison to discussions on chronology, on the relationship between Plato and Socrates or on how to understand Plato's use of the dialogue form.

useful when reading Plato. From Baldry's refusal one could perhaps detect an underlying critique of the usefulness or correctness in discussing certain terms as 'technical terms'. I share that scepticism since the focus on technical terms constitutes an appropriation of the ancient texts shaped by a particular form of professionalisation of contemporary philosophy as well as by the rise of lexicology and *Begriffsgeschichte* since the nineteenth century.[12] Nonetheless, when approaching Greek texts from a scholarly field, such as rhetorical studies, that uses Greek words as technical terminology, there is a pressing need to differentiate between theoretically and technically central uses of certain terms and other uses. Burnet specifies that the technical terms are introduced by phrases such as "we say," which implies that the author is aware that a certain term or certain meaning signified by a word is significant for the argument. (Quoted in Baldry 1937, 141)

When studying the actual text of the *Gorgias* however, it becomes clear that regardless of how we would construe the requirements of a technical terminology, there is no construction of an opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē* as technical terms in the dialogue.

Doxa is used only seven times in the *Gorgias* and most commonly in an instrumental everyday manner when the characters in the dialogue express their personal view or discuss the opinions of others. For example in a sentence such as: "But according to my opinion, at least, Polus," (472e; trans. by Nichols)[13] or "I know that some opinion of the following sort prevailed among you" (487c; trans. by Nichols).[14] A possible exception is when Socrates says "For I think that nothing is so great an evil for a human being as a false opinion about the things that our argument happens to be about."(458a-b; trans. by Nichols)[15] Here, *doxa* is placed in the

12. For an introduction to the tradition of lexicology and *Begriffsgeschichte* in relation to rhetoric, see Franz-Hubert Robling (1995, 9–22). For a historically influential work in the mentioned philosophical tradition, see Rudolf Eucken (1879).
13. "(Σωκράτης)κατὰ δέ γε τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν, ὦ Πῶλε"
14. "(Σωκράτης): . . .οἶδα ὅτι ἐνίκα ἐν ὑμῖν τοιάδε τις δόξα"
15. "(Σωκράτης) οὐδὲν γὰρ οἶμαι τοσοῦτον κακὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπῳ, ὅσον δόξα ψευδὴς περὶ ὧν τυγχάνει νῦν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος ὤν."

centre of the discussion and is at the same time associated with falseness. In this passage, we also recognise the popularised version of Plato's view of *doxa*, but it is worth noting that *doxa* is combined with the adjective *pseudēs*, from which there follows that this passage in itself does not constitute evidence for a negative connotation to the noun *doxa*.

The fact is that aside from this singular mention of *doxa* as something that can be false, there are no reflections or theoretical elaborations on the term *doxa* in the *Gorgias*. The noun *doxa* is, just as the common verb *dokeō*, used by Plato to talk about different points of view and is never subject to any argument.

When we investigate the other side of the dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē* and study the use of the noun *epistēmē* in the *Gorgias*, we find the word in twelve instances. In most of the cases the word *epistēmē*, and its meaning, is not at all central in Plato's argumentation, but translated as knowledge, science or expertise and used in an instrumental way, for example, when Socrates talks about rhetoric and other arts that he understands as different *epistēmē*.[16] There is, however, one important passage (454c–e) where *epistēmē* is presented in opposition to *pistis*; in the same passage Socrates also makes clear that you cannot talk about true (*alēthēs*) and false (*pseudēs*) *epistēmē*.

This argument follows upon the initial definitory discussion of rhetoric, where rhetoric is positioned as concerned with the *logos* about what is just or unjust. Socrates questions the truthfulness of this understanding since rhetoric, according to him, does not bother itself with actual knowledge (*epistēmē*) about what is just, but is only concerned with producing belief (*pistis*) without knowing. This passage articulates an epistemic dichotomy, but with other terms than those we were looking for:

> SOC.: Come then, let us examine this as well. For you call one thing "to have learned?" [manthanō]

16. For example, in phrases such as "What you say is good. Come then, answer me in this manner about rhetoric as well: about what, of the things that are, is it a science?" (*Gorgias*, 449d; trans, by. Nichols). Or "Well, my excellent fellow, do you think that expertise in swimming is a grand thing?" (*Gorgias*, 511c; trans. by Zeyl).

GOR.: Yes I do.
SOC.: And how about "to have believed?" [pisteuō]
GOR.: I do.
SOC.: Now, do having learned [manthanō] and having believed [pisteuō], and learning [mathēsis] and belief [pistis], seem to you to be the same thing, or something different?
GOR.: Different, Socrates, I certainly think.
SOC.: Indeed, what you think is fine; and you will perceive it from this. For if someone asked you, "Is there false [pseudēs] and true [alēthēs] belief [pistis], you would, as I think, say yes."
GOR.: Yes.
SOC.: And what about this: Is there false [pseudēs] and true [alēthēs] knowledge [epistēmē]?
GOR.: Not at all. (454c-e; trans. by Nichols)[17]

It should be noted that when Plato's Socrates talks about (what the translator calls) truth in the *Gorgias*, he uses the term *alētheia*, which in its adjective form, *alēthēs*, is used in the quote above in relation to *pistis* and elsewhere in relation to the verb *doxazō*: "Know well that, if you agree with me on the things that my soul holds opinions about [*doxazō*], these at least are the true [*alēthēs*] things themselves."(486e; trans. by Nichols)[18] The semantic link between *pistis* and *alētheia*, as well as between *doxazō* and *alētheia* complicates any attempt to construct an epistemic dichotomy between *pistis* and *alētheia* or between *doxa* and *alētheia* from the *Gorgias*.[19]

17. "ΣΩ. Ἴθι δὴ καὶ τόδε ἐπισκεψώμεθα. καλεῖς τι μεμαθηκέναι;ΓΟΡ. Καλῶ.ΣΩ.Τί δέ; πεπιστευκέναι;ΓΟΡ.Ἔγωγε.ΣΩ. Πότερον οὖν ταὐτὸν δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι μεμαθηκέναι καὶ πεπιστευκέναι, καὶ μάθησις καὶ πίστις, ἢ ἄλλο τι;ΓΟΡ. Οἶομαι μὲν ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἄλλο.ΣΩ. Καλῶς γὰρ οἴει· γνώσῃ δὲ ἐνθένδε. εἰ γάρ τίς σε ἔροιτο· "Ἆρ' ἔστιν τις, ὦ Γοργία, πίστις ψευδὴς καὶ ἀληθής;" φαίης ἄν, ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι.ΓΟΡ. Ναί.ΣΩ. Τί δέ; ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ψευδὴς καὶ ἀληθής;ΓΟΡ. Οὐδαμῶς."
18. "Εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι, ἄν μοι σὺ ὁμολογήσῃς περὶ ὧν ἡ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ δοξάζει, ταῦτ' ἤδη ἐστὶν αὐτὰ τἀληθῆ."
19. This argument is built on the premise that there is a close affinity between the verb *doxazō* and the noun *doxa* This premise is supported by the fact that *doxazō* is an uncommon verb with only two instances in the *Gorgias*; linguistically it is derived from *doxa* with the new meaning "to have a doxa." All in all, it is arguably more intimately linked to the noun *doxa* than the common verb *dokeō*, especially if we are in search of a tech-

Socrates subsequently leads the argument about learning and belief toward conclusion, by stating that to have learned and to believe is not the same thing, even though they are both results of persuasion. Socrates then presents a dichotomy between acts of persuasion "from which believing comes into being without knowing" and "the one from which knowing comes." Plato's Gorgias (quite surprisingly) accepts without conditions that rhetoric is about the kind of persuasion that leads to belief without knowing, and not to knowledge. Socrates summarises his remarks and explains rhetoric's failure as a result of the great quantity – and thereby poor quality – of the audience:

> SOC.: The rhetor, therefor, is not didactic with law courts and the other mobs about just and unjust thing, but persuasive only; for he would not be able, I suppose, to teach so large a mob such great matters in a short time. (455a; trans. by Nichols.)[20]

After the initial discussion with Gorgias, Socrates' argumentation continues with two lengthy interactions, first with Polus and then with Callicles. It becomes clear that in the view of Socrates rhetoric is just an art of flattery since it is not concerned with what is best but only with pleasing the audience (454c–e, 462c–466a). Socrates also argues for listening to the specialists rather than the rhetors, but the over-arching conflict in the dialogue is that between rhetoric as audience-pleasing flattery and philosophy as the search for the truly good. In the later part of the dialogue, this conflict evolves into a conflict between two ideals: the ethical philosopher who searches for the true and good regardless of whether it gives him pleasure, and the unethical orator who takes active part in the political public life and in the ruling of the city based on a short-sighted self-interest. Socrates claims that all kinds of flattery and audience-oriented speech should be avoided and

nically or theoretically potent use of the terminology. (LSJ, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* s.v. 'δοξάζω').

20. "ΣΩ. Οὐδ' ἄρα διδασκαλικὸς ὁ ῥήτωρ ἐστὶν δικαστηρίων τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὄχλων δικαίων τε πέρι καὶ ἀδίκων, ἀλλὰ πιστικὸς μόνον· οὐ γὰρ δήπου ὄχλον γ' ἂν δύναιτο τοσοῦτον ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ διδάξαι οὕτω μεγάλα πράγματα."

that the only rhetoric that should be allowed is that which points to what is just; this means a rhetoric that yields to philosophy. This ideal of Socrates is motivated by ethics anchored in the belief that there is a divine judgment which awaits us in the afterlife.[21]

The *Gorgias* can be said to present the basic setting for the epistemological tension that many scholars today say has been imposed upon rhetoric by Plato. It is, however, an over-simplification and misrepresentation of the dialogue to claim, as IJsseling and others do, that Plato here presents a dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē*. We must for one note that Plato in the main argument that we summarised above, does not use the term *doxa* at all but focuses on the opposition of *manthanō (*learning/understanding) and *pisteuō (*believing), which leads to, respectively, *epistēmē* (knowledge) and *pistis* (belief). It is also not clear that *pistis* is framed as something necessarily false or misleading. On the contrary, he mentions the possibility of true belief (*pistis alēthēs*) as well as a false belief (*pistis pseudēs*). The opposition between *manthanō* and *pisteuō* in the *Gorgias* could therefore arguably be best understood as a conflict of method, where *epistēmē* is communicated through *manthanō*, learning, while *pistis* is produced through *pisteuō*, which Nichols translates as believing but can also be understood as a discursive process, most clearly revealed in Irwin's and Zeyl's translation of it as "being convinced."[22] What neither Socrates's argument nor the dialogue as a whole gives us

21. This belief is emphasised by the closing myth told by Socrates stating that "he among human beings who went through life justly and piously, when he came to his end, would go away to the islands of the blessed to dwell in total happiness apart from evil while he who lived unjustly and godlessly would go to the prison of retribution and judgement."; "τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν μὲν δικαίως τὸν βίον διελθόντα καὶ ὁσίως, ἐπειδὰν τελευτήσῃ, εἰς μακάρων νήσους ἀπιόντα οἰκεῖν ἐν πάσῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ ἐκτὸς κακῶν, τὸν δὲ ἀδίκως καὶ ἀθέως εἰς τὸ τῆς τίσεώς τε καὶ δίκης δεσμωτήριον, ὃ δὴ Τάρταρον καλοῦσιν, ἰέναι." Plato, 523b. Translation by Nichols.

22. Rosengren (1998, 31 n. 40) makes a similar point on this passage from the *Gorgias*, where he, backed up by *Liddell-Scott Greek Lexicon*, underlines that *pistis* besides faith or belief, can also mean that which produces faith or belief, like an assurance or some other mean of persuasion. The meaning of *pistis* as a rhetorical argument (later used by Aristotle), could explain Plato's choice of terminology here, opposing the teaching of *epistēmē* to the *pistis* produced by rhetors.

is a theory or a discussion about the word *doxa* with its meanings. If we were to relate the *Gorgias* to Quentin Skinner's rhetorical perspective, where individual authors transform the meaning of specific words through rhetorical means for rhetorical purposes, it becomes clear that such a rhetorical transformation of the meaning of words is not performed in this dialogue in relation to *doxa* or *epistēmē*.[23] The transformations performed in the *Gorgias* instead revolve around the meaning of *rhētorikē*, as well as around the question of what is to be considered good or bad, just or unjust.[24]

23. Though I use some terminology canonised by Reinhart Koselleck in this book, my rhetorical understanding of *Begriffsgeschichte* is closer to that of Quentin Skinner (1999, 60–73), who also focuses on the creative and rhetorically active use of specific words.
24. Plato's argument on the latter is well-known, where he argues that it is better to suffer unjustly, than to make others suffer unjustly. The reason for this is that pleasure should not be the guiding line, but what is right. This argument should however not be read as an argument against self-interest. Instead, Plato argues that doing right is in everyone's self-interest, when facing the afterlife.

3.

The Phaedrus

The debate on Plato's rhetorics

The *Phaedrus* is one of Plato's literary masterpieces as well as an important work on classical rhetoric. As such it has been the subject of debate within the field of rhetorical studies. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato could be argued to provide a description of a good rhetoric, as well as of a bad one.[1] The *Phaedrus* has been interpreted either as a part of a *pro et contra* argumentation, where Socrates criticises rhetoric in the *Gorgias*, and then presents a positive alternative in the *Phaedrus*, or alternatively as a repetition of the critique of rhetoric in the *Gorgias.* The latter interpretation dismisses the nominally 'good' rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* as not rhetoric at all, but only an aspect of dialectics or philosophy (Cassin 1990, 17).

I will, in this section, provide a general framework for the following reading of the *Phaedrus* by presenting the well-known storyline of the dialogue, as well as refer to some views that have been put forward on how to understand the *Phaedrus* in relation to rhetoric. In covering this in the introduction, I avoid burdening what follows with descriptions of the general storyline and facilitate a more focused study of the meaning of *doxa* and of the different renderings of epistemic tensions.

In the beginning of the *Phaedrus* Socrates joins the younger Phaedrus for a walk outside of the city walls. Phaedrus comes from Lysias, where he has listened to a speech by Lysias on why a beautiful boy should gratify the non-lover rather than the lover.

1. Aristotle's rhetoric is sometimes described as modelled on the "good rhetoric" of *Phaedrus*. This understanding is discussed and partly criticised by Cassin (1990, 26).

Phaedrus and Socrates walk along the Ilissus and sit down in the shadow under a plane tree, where Socrates makes Phaedrus read the speech by Lysias out loud (See 227a–230e, for the introduction, before Lyias's Speech).

Lysias presents several arguments supporting the case of the non-lover. He for example argues that there is less of a selection of men to choose from if the beautiful one decides that he wants to grant a lover, that the lover might separate him from others because of jealousy and that the lovers desire the body before the friendship of the soul, and therefore might become bored when the desire has ceased (For Lysias's speech, see 230e–234c).

Socrates's first reaction after hearing Lysias's speech is praise, but Phaedrus and Socrates soon find themselves disagreeing on whether the speech exhausted and perfected the argument or not. Socrates praises the rhetorical qualities but claims that the speech lacks several arguments. Phaedrus is provoked and forces Socrates to prove his point by giving a speech himself on the same subject (234c–237a).

This is Socrates's first speech in the dialogue and rather than merely listing arguments, as Lysias did, Socrates initially discusses how to define love and how to separate the lover from the non-lover. Then he presents arguments for choosing to gratify the non-lover, claiming that the lover is "untrustworthy, disagreeable, jealous, unpleasant, and harmful as regards property, harmful as regards the body's condition, and by far the most harmful as regards the soul's education" (241c; trans. by Nichols; For Socrates's first speech, see 238d–241d).[2] Several scholars have argued that this first speech by Socrates is modelled on the writings of Isocrates. In doing so, Plato gives Isocrates something of an intermediate status in the dialogue, positioned as a teacher of a kind of rhetoric that is better than that of Lysias, but not as good as that which will come later in the dialogue. In Elisabeth Asmis

2. "ἀπίστῳ, δυσκόλῳ, φθονερῷ, ἀηδεῖ, βλαβερῷ μὲν πρὸς οὐσίαν, βλαβερῷ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἕξιν, πολὺ δὲ βλαβερωτάτῳ πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς παίδευσιν."

(1986) reading, the rivalry with Isocrates functions as the structuring principle of the entire dialogue.[3]

Almost immediately after his speech Socrates realises that he, with these words, has committed a terrible crime against the gods by offending Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Socrates blames the speech on the influence of Phaedrus and decides to deliver a new oration, arguing for the opposing view that the beautiful boy instead should choose to gratify the lover. This time he clearly directs his speech to Phaedrus, explicating the rivalry between himself and Lysias which had already been hinted at in the text (243e).

The main argument in Socrates's second speech is that madness cannot be dismissed as a bad thing since there is a divine madness of love that is suited for a free man (For Socrates's second speech, see 243e–257c). This madness given by the gods is, according to Socrates, more beautiful than the soundness of mind (244a–245c). To understand this love, Socrates claims, we must understand the nature of the immortal soul, which he illustrates with the well-known metaphor of the winged charioteer. According to Socrates, the souls of gods and humans have the same basic constitution, but while the gods's vehicles are balanced with obedient horses and proceed easily; humans struggle with their horses and with each other. Following a god is thus the only way for a human soul to rise above the heavens and glimpse the realm of true knowledge (247c).

Socrates now argues that the beautiful boy should gratify the one who is filled with a godly desire but has acquired the capacity to reign over his own impulses. This doesn't mean a relationship without bodily pleasures, but a relationship where the "the better parts of their thought conquer, leading them into a well-arranged way of life and philosophy" (Plato, 256a–b; translation by Nichols). The difference between the godly mania of love and worldly desire is also explained within the overall metaphor, where the divinely inspired love is related to the soul remembering its

3. Asmis also refers to other scholars that have made arguments on Isocrates's role in the *Phaedrus*.

seeing the perfect forms above the clouds. This makes the capacity for godly desire directly connected to the quality of the soul. Socrates ranks the quality of different souls and gives the prime position to philosophers, which then gives them the prime position among lovers.

After this second speech by Socrates, the dialogue changes focus and in the remaining dialogue the two interlocutors explicitly thematise rhetoric and writing.[4] Socrates criticises rhetoric, and questions its status as an art. He argues that for rhetoric to be a true art the speaker must know the truth about each thing that he intends to talk about.

Socrates also emphasises the importance of initial definitions in speeches and presents a case for dialectics as the art of reducing the multitude into one single idea, as well as the art of making correct divisions. These arts are both, according to Socrates, necessary for speaking (l*egō*) as well as thinking (*phronein*) (263a–266d). In Socrates's argumentation it is implied that when the importance of dialectics is acknowledged, this does not leave much remaining weight to rhetoric, yet he seems to argue for the possibility of a well-founded rhetoric that includes a differentiation of all the different kinds of souls and instruction on how they should be persuaded. This potential art would, according to Socrates, need to build on the art of dialectics.

With this understanding of rhetoric Socrates can dismiss any existing teachings of rhetoric as at fault, since they do not include what he demands. If we interpret this argumentation in Plato's historical context, we can see that an implied conclusion would be that a young man looking for a tutor should choose a philosopher and dialectician such as Plato, rather than a proponent of rhetoric, such as Isocrates.

4. A central interpretive question for any reader of the *Phaedrus* is how to relate these parts to each other. I agree with *de Vries* (1969) who has argued that rhetoric understood as the persuasive use of words is the central theme of the dialogue, while themes such as beauty, knowledge and love are secondary topics intertwined in the overall theme. This approach is also supported by Nichols (1998, 18) co-reading of the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* as complementary writings for a fuller understanding of Plato's view of rhetoric.

As mentioned, there is extensive scholarship on the interpretation of the *Phaedrus*, and differing views on how to understand its relationship to rhetoric. Edwin Black (1958, 368–69) characterises the *Gorgias* as a refutative dialogue, while the *Phaedrus* is understood as constructive, supplementing the *Gorgias* by proposing a rhetoric that can function as a psychological application of *dialectics*. Rollin W. Quimby (1974) agrees with Black but describes the constructive nature of the *Phaedrus* as a result of the maturing of Plato's views, where the development of a clearer understanding of dialectics has made this more mature understanding of rhetoric possible. Barbara Cassin (1990) is more sceptical toward the professed constructive approach of Plato. She makes the argument that Plato presents two rhetorics, in the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*, but that the one in the *Gorgias* is turned into Sophistics and dismissed while the so called 'good rhetoric' in the *Phaedrus* is turned into philosophy, and though not dismissed *per se*, is nonetheless dismissed by virtue of it no longer being rhetoric. Cassin's reading of the *Phaedrus* puts emphasis on this process of turning rhetoric into philosophy, describing several shifts of perspective: a widening from treating public speeches, to also include private conversation, an acceptance of the premise that a knowledge of the truth is necessary to handle probability, an emphasis on the importance of dialectics, and finally the turning of true rhetoric into an eternal task by describing it as a *psychagōgia* that requires specialised knowledge of how to persuade all kinds of souls. This last shift does, according to Cassin (1990, 21–23), lead to the acceptance of a divine audience as a pathway to argumentation of high quality – since the invention of a complete *psychagōgia* would be an impossible task.

The dialogue ends with a critique of writing. The role of writing could be understood as a separate theme that runs through the dialogue, parallel to the discussions of rhetoric and love, but another and in my view more reasonable interpretation is to understand the remarks about writing as an attempt to criticise rhetoric from another angle. Socrates seems to acknowledge a place for texts, functioning as reminders for someone who already knows the truth, but he criticises writing as a pedagogical tool since texts can-

not react to the readers and defend their arguments. This claim is easily understood as an attack on rhetorical education, since rhetoric as presented in the dialogue is learned through the reading and memorising of texts.[5] Socrates instead promotes dialectics as a practice of inscription in the soul of those apt to listen.

At the end of the dialogue, Socrates makes a short prophetic comment on the future of the young Isocrates. The remark about Isocrates has an apparently positive tone; Socrates even calls him his boyfriend, but in the context of the entire dialogues of *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* the remark is best understood as ironising critique. This is especially clear when considering that the prophesy follows directly on from a critique of writing as well as of rhetoric. Elisabeth Asmis shows in her reading that Isocrates – though only being named at the end – is present, implicitly, throughout the dialogue. Asmis describes how Plato positions Isocrates as better than Lysias, but without reaching the standard of the fulfilled dialectical rhetoric that Socrates presents later in the dialogue. Asmis therefore interprets the prophetic remark about the possibility that the young Isocrates will engage with philosophy as a harsh critique, since the readers at the time when the dialogue was written knew that this is not the road that Isocrates came to choose. Asmis (1986,) summarises Plato's view, saying that "Isocratean rhetoric holds out a promise of better things. But the promise unfulfilled is a far greater danger than Lysianic rhetoric ever was" (172).

The conflicting uses of *doxa*

My reading of the *Phaedrus* does not follow the dramatic structure of the dialogue but investigates the different uses and meanings of the word *doxa*, the existence or non-existence of an explicit *doxa–epistēmē* dichotomy, and whether there are other terms used to formulate an epistemic tension.

A simple answer to the second of these questions is that we, all in all, find seven instances of the noun *doxa* in the *Phaedrus*

5. Plato uses the young Phaedrus as an example of this, when describing the way Phaedrus relates to Lysias and his speeches.

and that the term d*oxa* is nowhere directly related to *epistēmē*. This initial result gives further fuel to the preliminary result from our reading of the *Gorgias* indicating that the description of the birth of rhetoric in Plato's writings as situated in a tension between *doxa* and *epistēmē*, is an oversimplification and misrepresentation – unless we accept this description as based on a creative reinterpretation, most likely influenced by other texts than the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*. Since the explicit dichotomy is missing in the texts, such a creative reinterpretation would have to be built on a looser understanding of the connection between word and concept, formulating the dichotomy as a dichotomy of concepts, regardless of the difference in wording.

But this is merely a negative result. When looking at what we do find in the text, we can see that the word *doxa* is used in two very different ways within the dialogue. The word is in some places used to describe the constitution of the individual, and in other places strongly associated with the views of the many.

Doxa as part of the individual

The word *doxa* is used four times by Plato's Socrates in descriptions of the constitution of the individual character, three times when he discusses the difference between the lover and the non-lover and once in his well-known metaphor of the soul. These uses seem unrelated to the popularised view of Plato as a critic of *doxa*. Looking at these examples it seems like Socrates acknowledges a place for *doxa*, if it is combined with *logos*, understood as the individual capacity for reasoning.

The first of these arguments is found in Socrates' first speech, where he discusses how to separate the lover from the non-lover:

> We must further observe that in each of us there are two ruling and leading ideas, which we follow wherever they lead: the desire of pleasure that is naturally planted in us, and another acquired opinion [*doxa*] that aims at the best. These two things in us sometimes are of one mind, but sometimes they engage in factious struggle; and at one time the one, at another time the other wins mastery. Now

> then when opinion [*doxa*] leads with reason [*logos*] toward the best and wins mastery, the name of the mastery is moderation; but when desire [*epithumia*] without reason [*alogos*] drags us toward pleasure and rules in us, the name wanton outrage [*hubris*] is applied to the rule. (237d–238a; trans. by Nichols)[6]

Socrates here associates *doxa* with reasoning and striving for the best.[7] *Doxa* combined with *logos* is praised as moderation and placed on the positive side of a dichotomy, opposed to desire, *epithumia*, without reason, *alogos*, which Socrates instead criticises as *hubris*. Later, in the same speech, Socrates defines love, *eros*, as a *hubris* without reason, *logos*, that by force can master the "opinion [*doxa*] striving toward what's correct" and itself violently strive toward pleasure and the beautiful (238 b–c; trans. by Nichols).[8] *Doxa* is there, once again, situated on the side of *logos*, as reason, in opposition to the desire of pleasure and its association to a position of power.

The well-known metaphor of the soul as a winged charioteer is found in Socrates's second speech. Socrates claims that the souls of gods and humans have the same basic constitution, but as previously noted the gods's vehicles are balanced with obedient horses and proceed easily, while humans struggle with their horses and with each other. Therefore, the only chance for a human soul to

6. "δεῖ αὖ νοῆσαι ὅτι ἡμῶν ἐν ἑκάστῳ δύο τινέ ἐστον ἰδέα ἄρχοντε καὶ ἄγοντε, οἷν ἑπόμεθα ᾗ ἄν ἄγητον, ἡ μὲν ἔμφυτος οὖσα ἐπιθυμία ἡδονῶν, ἄλλη δὲ ἐπίκτητος δόξα, ἐφιεμένη τοῦ ἀρίστου. τούτω δὲ ἐν ἡμῖν τοτὲ μὲν ὁμονοεῖτον, ἔστι δὲ ὅτε στασιάζετον· καὶ τοτὲ μὲν ἡ ἑτέρα, ἄλλοτε δὲ ἡ ἑτέρα κρατεῖ. δόξης μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄριστον λόγῳ ἀγούσης καὶ κρατούσης τῷ κράτει σωφροσύνη ὄνομα· ἐπιθυμίας δὲ ἀλόγως ἑλκούσης ἐπὶ ἡδονὰς καὶ ἀρξάσης ἐν ἡμῖν τῇ ἀρχῇ ὕβρις ἐπωνομάσθη."
7. This association is even clearer in Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff's translation of the same quote (237d–238a) where the two instances of *doxa* are both translated as "judgement."
8. "So then, the desire without reason which masters the opinion [doxa] striving toward what's correct and is led toward pleasure of beauty, and which in turn mightily gaining strength from desires that are akin to itself toward the beauty of bodies, conquers in its leading, taking its name from this very might, is called love." In Greek: "ἡ γὰρ ἄνευ λόγου δόξης ἐπὶ τὸ ὀρθὸν ὁρμώσης κρατήσασα ἐπιθυμία πρὸς ἡδονὴν ἀχθεῖσα κάλλους, καὶ ὑπὸ αὖ τῶν ἑαυτῆς συγγενῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν ἐπὶ σωμάτων κάλλος ἐρρωμένως ῥωσθεῖσα νικήσασα ἀγωγῇ, ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῆς ῥώμης ἐπωνυμίαν λαβοῦσα, ἔρως ἐκλήθη.".

go beyond the heavens and glimpse the realm of true knowledge (*to tēs alēthous epistēmēs genos*) is to follow a god (247c). This metaphor is in line with the general argument of the speech, claiming that madness cannot be dismissed as bad, since there is a divine madness of love that is suiting for a free man. Socrates describes the constitution of the human soul as follows:

> Just as in the beginning of the tale we divided each soul in three, into some two horse-shaped forms and a third charioteer form, now too let these still stand for us. Of the horses, then, we assert that one is good, the other not. But we did not tell fully what is the virtue of the good one, or the badness of the bad one, but now we must say. Well then, of the two, the one in the more beautiful position is straight in form and well jointed, somewhat hook nosed, white to the sight, black eyed, a lover of honour with moderation and with a sense of shame, and a comrade of truthful opinion [*alēthinē doxa*], unbeaten guided by command alone and speech (*logos*). The other, in turn, is crooked, big and randomly slung together, strong necked, short necked, snub nosed, black skinned, gray eyed, bloodshot, a comrade of wantonness and boasting, shaggy about the ears, deaf barely yielding to the whip and goads. So then, when the charioteer, seeing the beloved's eye, heating his whole soul through with the sensation, begins to be filled with the goads of tickling and yearning, that one of the horses who is obedient to the charioteer, then as always forcibly constrained by a sense of shame, holds himself back from rushing upon the beloved. The other one no longer turns in heed either to the charioteer's goad or whip, but leaps and is carried along by force and, presenting all possible troubles to its yoke-mate and charioteer, compels them to go toward the boyfriend and to make mention of the delight of sexual gratifications. (253c–254a; trans. by Nichols) [9]

9. "Καθάπερ ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦδε τοῦ μύθου τριχῇ διείλομεν ψυχὴν ἑκάστην, ἱππομόρφω μὲν δύο τινὲ εἴδη, ἡνιοχικὸν δὲ εἶδος τρίτον, καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἡμῖν ταῦτα μενέτω. τῶν δὲ δὴ ἵππων ὁ μέν, φαμέν, ἀγαθός, ὁ δ' οὔ· ἀρετὴ δὲ τίς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἢ κακοῦ κακία, οὐ διείπομεν, νῦν δὲ λεκτέον. ὁ μὲν τοίνυν αὐτοῖν ἐν τῇ καλλίονι στάσει ὢν τό τε εἶδος ὀρθὸς καὶ διηρθρωμένος, ὑψαύχην, ἐπίγρυπος, λευκὸς ἰδεῖν, μελανόμματος, τιμῆς ἐραστὴς μετὰ σωφροσύνης τε καὶ αἰδοῦς, καὶ ἀληθινῆς δόξης ἑταῖρος, ἄπληκτος, κελεύσματι μόνον καὶ λόγῳ ἡνιοχεῖται· ὁ δ' αὖ σκολιός, πολύς, εἰκῇ συμπεφορημένος, κρατεραύχην, βραχυτράχηλος, σιμοπρόσωπος, μελάγχρως, γλαυκόμματος, ὕφαιμος, ὕβρεως καὶ ἀλαζονείας ἑταῖρος, περὶ ὦτα λάσιος, κωφός, μάστιγι μετὰ κέντρων μόγις ὑπείκων. ὅταν δ' οὖν ὁ ἡνίοχος ἰδὼν τὸ ἐρωτικὸν ὄμμα, πᾶσαν αἰσθήσει διαθερμήνας

When looking at the terms used in this metaphor, it is clear that Socrates, although he has reversed his previously negative attitude towards the mania of love, still presents a dichotomy where *doxa* is grouped with *logos* and set in opposition to the yearning for immediate physical pleasure.[10] The connection between *doxa* and *logos* is here found in the description of *logos* as the bond between the charioteer and the obedient horse. There is, however, an adjustment of the dichotomy. While *doxa* in the first speech was associated with striving for the best, here it is instead more closely associated with truth, being presented as "true doxa," *alēthinē doxa*.

We have seen that *doxa* as a part of the individual in the *Phaedrus* is related to striving for the good, as well as toward the truth, *alētheia*. The fact that Socrates's first speech is later dismissed might lead us to focus on the metaphor of the soul and the relation between *doxa* and truth, but it is important to note the similarities between the speeches, since it is the repeated use of *doxa* to denote a part of individual character that establishes this alternative meaning. The key point in relation to the overarching goals of this study is that Plato's Socrates, in this particular usage in relation to the constitution of the individual, connects *doxa* to *logos*, but not to *rhētorikē* and public speaking.

Epistēmē

Before discussing the alternative way that the word *doxa* is used in the dialogue, in relation to the public, we need first to look at the use of the word *epistēmē*. The noun *epistēmē* can be found in

τὴν ψυχήν, γαργαλισμοῦ τε καὶ πόθου κέντρων ὑποπλησθῇ, ὁ μὲν εὐπειθὴς τῷ ἡνιόχῳ τῶν ἵππων, ἀεί τε καὶ τότε αἰδοῖ βιαζόμενος, ἑαυτὸν κατέχει μὴ ἐπιπηδᾶν τῷ ἐρωμένῳ· ὁ δὲ οὔτε κέντρων ἡνιοχικῶν οὔτε μάστιγος ἔτι ἐντρέπεται, σκιρτῶν δὲ βίᾳ φέρεται, καὶ πάντα πράγματα παρέχων τῷ σύζυγί τε καὶ ἡνιόχῳ ἀναγκάζει ἰέναι τε πρὸς τὰ παιδικὰ καὶ μνείαν ποιεῖσθαι τῆς τῶν ἀφροδισίων χάριτος."

10. It is worth noting that this opposition between *doxa* and the striving for pleasure, contradicts an attempt to construct a structurally coherent association between *doxa* and *rhetoric*, taken that we also accept the characterisation of rhetoric from the *Gorgias*, where rhetoric is associated with the striving for pleasure.

nine instances, eight times in singular and once in plural. All the singular forms are being translated similarly in the three translations as *knowledge*.[11] None of the uses are explicitly linked to *doxa* or placed in an explicit dichotomy with another word and concept that form something like the binary opposition between *epistēmē-doxa*, that we are on the lookout for or *epistēmē-pistis* that is present in the *Gorgias*. A study of the use of *epistēmē* in the *Phaedrus* is however still relevant to our study, especially Socrates's use of the word in his second speech, where he recounts the myth of the soul rising to heaven to glimpse the realm of true knowledge:

> SOC.: . . . This is how it is – for one must indeed dare to say what is true [alēthēs], especially when one is talking about the truth [alētheia] – to wit, really, existing being, colorless and shapeless and impalpable, visible to the mind alone, the soul's helmsman, with which the class of true knowledge [to tēs alēthous epistēmēs genos] is concerned, occupies this place. So then the thought of god, nourished with mind and undefiled knowledge [epistēmē], and the thought of every soul that is destined to receive what is fitting, in time sees what is and greets it with affection, and looking at true [alēthēs] things is nourished and feels good, until the rotation carries it around in a circle to the same place. And on the way round it beholds justice itself; it beholds moderation; it beholds knowledge [epistēmē], not that to which coming into being is linked, nor which is in some manner different when it is in respect of different things that we now call beings, but the knowledge that is in respect of what really is being [hē en tōi ho estin on ontōs epistēmēn ousa]. And in the same way having seen and feasted upon the other beings that really are, it sinks back into the place within the heavens and goes home. (Plato, 247c–e; trans. by Nichols)[12]

11. The plural form is found in Plato, 276c, and is being translated by Nichols as sciences, by Scully as knowledge, and by Nehamas and Woodruff through a verb-form "knows what".

12. "ΣΩ.. . . ἔχει δὲ ὧδε—τολμητέον γὰρ οὖν τό γε ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, ἄλλως τε καὶ περὶ ἀληθείας λέγοντα—ἡ γὰρ ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα, ψυχῆς κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατὴνῷ, περὶ ἣν τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐπιστήμης γένος, τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν τόπον. ἅτ' οὖν θεοῦ διάνοια νῷ τε καὶ ἐπιστήμῃ ἀκηράτῳ τρεφομένη, καὶ ἁπάσης ψυχῆς ὅσῃ ἂν μέλῃ τὸ προσῆκον δέξασθαι, ἰδοῦσα διὰ χρόνου τὸ ὂν ἀγαπᾷ τε καὶ θεωροῦσα τἀληθῆ τρέφεται καὶ εὐπαθεῖ, ἕως ἂν κύκλῳ ἡ περιφορὰ εἰς ταὐτὸν περιενέγκῃ. ἐν δὲ τῇ περιόδῳ καθορᾷ μὲν αὐτὴν δικαιοσύνην, καθορᾷ δὲ σωφροσύνην,

Within this mythical tale, Socrates engages in epideictic praise of *epistēmē*, specified as true (*alēthēs*) and undefiled (*akēratos*[13]) (Plato, 247d). The epideictic rather than systemic function of these adjectives becomes clear if we bear in mind Plato's argument in the *Gorgias* regarding the unreasonableness of talking about true and false *epistēmē*. In this myth Socrates also specifies the function of *epistēmē* as related to what *being* really *is*, which clarifies that *epistēmē* refers to a particular form of ontic knowledge, knowledge of that which *is*, meaning that which *is* in the eternal world of forms.[14]

To unfold the relevance of this passage for Plato's understanding of rhetoric, we need to connect some dots. On several occasions Socrates presents *epistēmē* as a prerequisite for good speeches or writings. First in 269d he states that "you will be a rhetor of high repute when you have acquired in addition [to being by nature rhetorical] knowledge [*epistēmē*] and practice," secondly, in 276a, on the topic of the possibility of a genuine speech Socrates describes: "The one that is written with knowledge [*epistēmē*] in the soul of him who understands," and thirdly in 276e-277a Socrates states:

> But much more beautiful, I think is the seriousness that comes into being about these things, when someone using the dialectical art, taking hold of a fitting soul, plants, and sows with knowledge [*epistēmē*] speeches that are competent to assist themselves and him who planted and are not barren but have seed, whence other speeches, naturally growing in other characters, are competent to pass this on, ever

καθορᾷ δὲ ἐπιστήμην, οὐχ ᾗ γένεσις πρόσεστιν, οὐδ' ἥ ἐστίν που ἑτέρα ἐν ἑτέρῳ οὖσα ὧν ἡμεῖς νῦν ὄντων καλοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὂν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν· καὶ τἆλλα ὡσαύτως τὰ ὄντα ὄντως θεασαμένη καὶ ἐστιαθεῖσα, δῦσα πάλιν εἰς τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, οἴκαδε ἦλθεν."

13. Scully translates. *ἀκηράτῳ* as "unmixed," whereas Nehamas and Woodruff translates it as "pure."
14. This passage could be read in light of Book V, of the *Republic*; the connection is clarified in my reading of the *Republic* and its ontological discussion of *epistēmē*. See the section "Ontology and politics: on the *dynameis* of *doxa* and *epistēmē* in *Republic*, book V."

> deathless, and make him who has it experience as much happiness as is possible for a human being. (276e–277a; trans. by Nichols)[15]

When zooming in on the use of the word *epistēmē* in these sections – and reading them in light of the epideictic praise of the ontic understanding of *epistēmē* from the metaphor of the heavenly realm – we can support the claim that Plato's idea of a good rhetoric which is famously (though not undisputedly) presented in the *Phaedrus* is founded on knowledge that is not constructed rhetorically, through speech, but acquired in other ways, seen, remembered or perhaps learned.[16]

One could argue in relation to the dialogue as a whole that dialectics, for Socrates, is a way to acquire *epistēmē,* I would, however, argue that there is complexity in the relationships between *epistēmē* and the art of dialectics, which makes it precarious to describe dialectics as leading to *epistēmē* rather than starting with it. This becomes clear in the last of the quotes above, where "using the dialectical art" is described as sowing "with knowledge." This could be read as implying that the ontic knowledge precedes the dialectical art. For a scholar of rhetoric, reading Plato, it is tempting to dismiss him as inconsistent due to his disdain for rhetoric, at the same time as he is using rhetorical tools. This simplified reading would however sidestep the fact that Plato's grudge with

15. "πολὺ δ' οἶμαι καλλίων σπουδὴ περὶ αὐτὰ γίγνεται, ὅταν τις τῇ διαλεκτικῇ τέχνῃ χρώμενος, λαβὼν ψυχὴν προσήκουσαν, φυτεύῃ τε καὶ σπείρῃ μετ' ἐπιστήμης λόγους, οἳ ἑαυτοῖς τῷ τε φυτεύσαντι βοηθεῖν ἱκανοὶ καὶ οὐχὶ ἄκαρποι ἀλλὰ ἔχοντες σπέρμα, ὅθεν ἄλλοι ἐν ἄλλοις ἤθεσι φυόμενοι τοῦτ' ἀεὶ ἀθάνατον παρέχειν ἱκανοί, καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα εὐδαιμονεῖν ποιοῦντες εἰς ὅσον ἀνθρώπῳ δυνατὸν μάλιστα."

16. Here I want to note that this interpretation ignores an ambiguity of the term *epistēmē* that was clearly present in the translations of the *Gorgias*; there the word *epistēmē* was used to name different sciences, arts or kinds of knowledge, such as that of rhetoric or (perhaps somewhat sarcastical) that of swimming. If we focus on the individual quotes one could argue that the requirement that a speech must be delivered "with knowledge [*epistēmē*]" could mean that it must be delivered according to the principles of the art of speechmaking. I cannot exclude the possibility that this meaning was the intended one in any of the three quotes. However, we are not concerned with author psychology, but textual evidence and the later interpretation of these quotes seems to be more in concordance with the overall argument as well as the earlier metaphor of the soul.

rhetoric is largely played out on the battle ground of epistemology and not as a dispute about the use of certain rhetorical tricks.

An interesting aspect when discussing the systematic relevance of the mythical tale about the realm of *epistēmē* in the heavens is that it places *doxa* as a constitutive part of the soul in a potential relationship to *epistēmē*. The key for this interpretation is Socrates's use of the word *doxa* when describing one of the horses that constitute the winged charioteer. The status of this relationship is however dependent on how one understands the actual ride – is it a description of the process of *philosophia* through dialectics, then it becomes clear that *doxa* has a role in that process of *logos*, but if it instead is understood as process of the soul prior to any dialectical or rhetorical endeavour, then the potential relationship between *doxa* and *epistēmē* becomes less relevant for the discipline of rhetoric, or for Plato's potential alternative to rhetoric.[17] An argument for understanding the ride towards heaven as a discursive process is the use of the word *logos*.

Doxa as the views of the many

When looking beyond the descriptions of the constitutions of the lover and the non-lover, as well as the metaphor of the soul, we find a completely different use of the word *doxa* and its meanings. In these uses, *doxa* is instead associated with the public, and framed in a clearly negative way.

Let us go straight to the text and take a close look at the first use of the word *doxa* in the dialogue. It is from Lysias's speech, as read out by Phaedrus. To illustrate the polysemic nature of the word *doxa*, as well as the underlying coherence in diverse translations, I present the same passage as rendered by three different translators.

17. This process could also be interpreted in the light of Plato's theory of recollection as described in the *Meno*. Making that connection would allow us to argue that *epistēmē* is true *doxa* that has been tied down by a recollection, a recollection that can be assisted by *logos*, but not produced by it. See my reading of the *Meno* in the section "Reason or recollection: connecting with the *doxa-epistēmē* relation in the *Theaetetus* and *Meno*."

If we begin with Nichols, we can see that he translates *doxa* as reputation:

> But if you're afraid of the established law, lest reproach befall you when human beings hear of it, it is likely that lovers, thinking they should be held worthy of emulation by others too, just as they are by themselves, would be excited to speak and in their love of honour would display before all that they have not toiled in vain; but nonlovers, being masters of themselves, choose what is best instead of reputation [*doxa*] among human beings. (231e–232a; trans. by Nichols.)[18]

Scully instead translates it as opinion:

> Now, if you are worried about conventional mores and fear the scorn of people when they learn what you are doing, it is plausible that lovers (being inclined to think that they are just as worthy of emulation by others as they are by themselves) will be excited to talk about their affairs and to toot their own horn, revealing to one and all that they have not labored in vain. But non-lovers, possessing a measure of self-control choose to do what is best rather than to follow in the footsteps of public opinion [*doxa*]. (231e–232a; trans. by Scully.)

Nehamas and Woodruff translate *doxa* as 'glory from reputation':

> Now suppose you're afraid of conventional standards and the stigma that will come to you if people find out about this. Well, it stands to reason that a lover – thinking that everyone else will admire him for his success as much as he admires himself – will fly into words and proudly declare to all and sundry that his labors were not in vain. Someone who does not love you, on the other hand, can control himself and will choose to do what is best, rather than seek the glory that comes from popular reputation [*doxa*]. (231e–232a; trans. by Nehamas and Woodruff.)

18. "Εἰ τοίνυν τὸν νόμον τὸν καθεστηκότα δέδοικας, μὴ πυθομένων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄνειδός σοι γένηται, εἰκός ἐστι τοὺς μὲν ἐρῶντας, οὕτως ἂν οἰομένους καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ζηλοῦσθαι ὥσπερ αὐτοὺς ὑφ' αὑτῶν, ἐπαρθῆναι τῷ λέγειν καὶ φιλοτιμουμένους ἐπιδείκνυσθαι πρὸς ἅπαντας ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλως αὐτοῖς πεπόνηται· τοὺς δὲ μὴ ἐρῶντας, κρείττους αὑτῶν ὄντας, τὸ βέλτιστον ἀντὶ τῆς δόξης τῆς παρὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων αἱρεῖσθαι."

This passage does not constitute a theoretical argument about *doxa*, but we can note that the first time the word *doxa* is brought into the *Phaedrus;* its function is to place the private question about whom to have sex with in relation to the political realm, understood as the threatening judgement of public opinion. These translations also illustrate the intermingled meanings of opinion, reputation and glory that lie in the word *doxa* and cannot be expressed through any single word in English.[19]

In the passage, quoted above, the word *anthrōpōn* is used by Lysias to explicate the association between *doxa* and the people.[20] In the following quote, Socrates instead uses *plēthos*, multitude. In this latter passage an association between *doxa*, *rhetoric* and general unscrupulousness is particularly clear:

> So then, when the person skilled in rhetoric, ignoring good and bad, takes on a city . . . and having carefully studied the multitude's opinions [*doxai plēthous*] persuades it to do bad things instead of good ones, what kind of fruit do you think, after this the rhetorical art would have from what it has sown? (260c; trans. by Nichols)[21]

In both passages, just quoted, there were specific words used in combination with *doxa*, to denote the public, but also when this is not the case the link to the public is arguably implied when *doxa* is interpreted as reputation. To have a reputation is to have a quality in relation to some kind of public. In the *Phaedrus*, this relation to the public is repeatedly described as a characterised by fear, as

19. It is worth noting that Nehamas and Woodruff on two occasions (232a, 253d) choose to translate *doxa* as glory, which is the prevalent translation of *doxa* in the exegesis of the New Testament, but neither is found in Nichols or Scully's translation of the *Phaedrus*, nor in Nichols's, Zeyl's or Irwin's translation of the *Gorgias*. There is, however, a semantical link between glory and reputation, since glory is a glowing reputation for virtue.
20. Perhaps someone would object that the word ἀνθρώπων (plural of *anthrōpos*), means mankind, rather than people or public, but the three translations, above, all stay in line within the meaning cluster of people or public, supporting our reading.
21. "Ὅταν οὖν ὁ ῥητορικὸς ἀγνοῶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακόν, λαβὼν πόλιν . . . δόξας δὲ πλήθους μεμελετηκὼς πείσῃ κακὰ πράττειν ἀντ' ἀγαθῶν, ποῖόν τιν' ἄ<ν> οἴει μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν ῥητορικὴν καρπὸν ὧν ἔσπειρε θερίζειν;"

in the following passages: "if he did not fear the reputation [*doxa*] of excessive madness, he would sacrifice to the boyfriend as to a statue and a god" (251a; trans. by Nichols.),[22] and "those who have power to do what's greatest and are most august in the cities are ashamed to write speeches and to leave behind writings of their own, fearing the reputation [*doxa*] in later time, lest they be called sophists" (257d; trans. by Nichols).[23]

The word *doxa* is repeatedly associated with the public, which is given a repressive role, and this constitutes a clear difference in usage in relation to the *Gorgias*, where the noun *doxa* was repeatedly used with the neutral and instrumental meaning "my opinion" or "your opinion." There is also a pattern in the *Phaedrus* that the very passages that associate *doxa* with the public are the passages that give *doxa* a more negative role (232a, 260c, 262c), [24] while the passages where *doxa* is understood in a more positive or constructive fashion do not include or call attention to these associations. In these passages, discussed above as related to the constitution of the individual, *doxa* is instead described as acquired (237d) and as related to *logos* (237e, 238b, 253b), which once again brings to light the underlying presumption of Plato that the public as judge of opinion should be eschewed in favour of the rational speech of individuals as well as the, in some respects, speechless process of acquiring knowledge through seeing or remembering forms.

22. "καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐδεδίει τὴν τῆς σφόδρα μανίας δόξαν, θύοι ἂν ὡς ἀγάλματι καὶ θεῷ τοῖς παιδικοῖς."
23. "οἱ μέγιστον δυνάμενοί τε καὶ σεμνότατοι ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν αἰσχύνονται λόγους τε γράφειν καὶ καταλείπειν συγγράμματα ἑαυτῶν, δόξαν φοβούμενοι τοῦ ἔπειτα χρόνου, μὴ σοφισταὶ καλῶνται.".
24. I would argue that this is true also for 275a, even though Nichols translation seems to contradict it. Socrates's argument on writing is translated by Nichols as: "You are supplying the opinion of wisdom to the students, not truth. For you'll seem to be sensible judges in much, while being for the most part senseless, and hard to be with, since they've become wise in their own opinion instead of wise." Nichols thus chooses to translate "σοφίας . . . δόξαν" into "the opinion of wisdom", but the meaning of the formulation in the translation is unclear and therefore problematic; the translation by Scully as "apparent . . . wisdom" or Nehamas and Woodruff as "the appearance of wisdom" makes more sense in the passage at the same time as it stays within the cluster of meanings that we have treated in this reading.

The relation between *doxa*, *alētheia* and *eikos*

One of the questions structuring our reading of the *Phaedrus* is whether there are words other than *doxa–epistēmē* that are deployed in the dialogue to formulate an epistemic tension with bearing on Plato's understanding of rhetoric. Two words that are clearly presented in relation to each other in the *Phaedrus* are *doxa* and *alētheia*.

We have already seen that when Plato's Socrates presents his famous allegory of the soul as constituted by two horses and a charioteer, he describes the white horse as "a comrade of truthful opinion [*alēthinē doxa*], unbeaten guided by command alone and speech [*logos*]" (253d; trans. by Nichols).[25] This phrase presents *alētheia* not as in conflict with *doxa*, but as a possible quality of *doxa*. At the same time, *alētheia* in the passage on the realm of true knowledge, is also (and perhaps even more strongly) associated with *epistēmē*. This means that true *doxa* (in the winged charioteer) is, through the narrative of the metaphor, set in relation to true *epistēmē* (in the heavenly realm). The complex use of *alētheia* in the metaphor accentuates the difficulties in grasping the semantic relationship between *epistēmē* and *alētheia* as they are used in the dialogue. Perhaps one way to better understand this relationship is to activate and compare the translation of *epistēmē* as science, and the translation of *alētheia* as truth. Just as the English word 'science' describes a human process of acquiring knowledge, while 'truth' or 'true', describes a quality or a status of cognitive knowledge or of an expressed utterance, we can frame the difference between *epistēmē* and *alētheia* in a similar manner. The word *epistēmē* would, according to this understanding, refer to an activity or a process, while the words *alētheia* or *alēthēs*, functions as a stamp, signalling a certain quality or status. This interpretation would indicate that an opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē* would be something very different to an opposition between *doxa*

25. "καὶ ἀληθινῆς δόξης ἑταῖρος, ἄπληκτος, κελεύσματι μόνον καὶ λόγῳ ἡνιοχεῖται," Nichols notes that *alēthinē doxa* could also be translated as "truthful renown," see note 121 on page 59 in Nichols's translation. Scully, instead, translates it into "true opinion" and Nehamas and Woodruff into "true glory".

and *alētheia*. In line with a structural analysis of language, such an oppositional difference also affects the meaning of *doxa* within these established oppositions. In the former it is a difference of process, in the latter of quality or essence.

In the later parts of the dialogue, where Socrates and Phaedrus discuss rhetoric and writing more directly, we find arguments that positions *doxa* and *alētheia* as opposites. This framing is completely different to that previously discussed in relation to the constitution of the individual. The explicit discussion about rhetoric and truth begins with Socrates posing the (rhetorical) question of whether it isn't necessary that a person who intends to speak well, first know the truth [*alētheia*] about that which he means to discuss. Phaedrus answers in the following way:

> About this matter, Socrates my friend, this is what I have heard: there is not a necessity for one who is going to be a rhetor to learn the things that are in reality just but the things that seem [*dokeō*] so to the multitude who will give judgement, nor the things that are really good or beautiful but that will seem [*dokeō*] so. For persuading comes from these, but not from truth [*alētheia*]. (259e–260a; trans. by Nichols)[26]

In this quote the common verb *dokeō*, semantically related to *doxa*, is used to construct an opposition between the process of seeming and *alētheia*, where seeming is related to the multitude. In the following argument, Socrates goes on criticising the rhetorician who discards truth – and here he uses the noun form *doxa* – with critical remarks on the study of the "the multitude's opinions [*doxai plēthous*]" in the preparation of speeches. Socrates also dismisses the idea that it would be necessary for someone who knows the truth to also know rhetoric, in order to persuade. He, in contrast, claims that that there cannot be any "genuine art of speaking with-

26. "ΦΑΙ. Οὐτωσὶ περὶ τούτου ἀκήκοα, ὦ φίλε Σώκρατες, οὐκ εἶναι ἀνάγκην τῷ μέλλοντι ῥήτορι ἔσεσθαι τὰ τῷ ὄντι δίκαια μανθάνειν ἀλλὰ τὰ δόξαντ' ἂν πλήθει οἵπερ δικάσουσιν, οὐδὲ τὰ ὄντως ἀγαθὰ ἢ καλὰ ἀλλ' ὅσα δόξει· ἐκ γὰρ τούτων εἶναι τὸ πείθειν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας."

out grasping the truth [*alētheia*]" (260e; trans. by Nichols)[27] and that "he who does not know the truth [*alētheia*] but has hunted opinions [*doxa*] will provide for himself some ridiculous art of speeches" (262c; trans. by Nichols).[28] In this quote we can see that the lack of *alētheia* and rhetoric's devotion to *doxa* is what disqualifies rhetoric from having the status of an art.

The opposition between *doxa* and *alētheia* is clearly expressed in the *Phaedrus*, and *alētheia* is understood both as a result of a process and as an elevated quality. It is also clear, in the *Phaedrus*, that the *doxa* that disqualifies rhetoric as an art is the *doxa* of the masses.[29]

In the critical discussion of writing at the end of the dialogue, we also find an opposition between *doxa* and *alētheia*, which we will discuss further below, but before that Socrates brings the term *eikos* into the discussion. Socrates has just presented the art of *psychagōgia*, and it has become clear that it is a rather extensive enterprise. In that context, Socrates brings up and later criticises the argument that a speaker only needs to worry about that which is probable (*eikos*):

> he who is going to be competently rhetorical has no need to have a share of truth [*alētheia*] about just or good deeds, or about human beings who are such by nature or by rearing. For altogether, no one has any care for truth [*alētheia*] about these things in law courts, but for what is persuasive; and this is the probable [*eikos*], toward which he who is going to speak with art must turn. For next, one must also sometimes not say the things that were done, if they have not been done in a probable [*eikotōs*] manner, but probable [*eikos*] things, both in accusation and in defence speech; in all the ways one speaks, one

27. "τοῦ δὲ λέγειν, φησὶν ὁ Λάκων, ἔτυμος τέχνη ἄνευ τοῦ ἀληθείας ἧφθαι οὔτ' ἔστιν οὔτε μή ποτε ὕστερον γένηται" For this argument he explicitly refers to "the Lacedaemonian."
28. "Λόγων ἄρα τέχνην, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ὁ τὴν ἀλήθειαν μὴ εἰδώς, δόξας δὲ τεθηρευκώς, γελοίαν τινά, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ ἄτεχνον παρέξεται."
29. In 262c, Scully even chooses to translate *doxa* as "public opinion," despite the fact that an explicit Greek equivalent of "public" is missing in that sentence. The translation could however, easily, be supported by the immediate argumentative context, as well as by our previous remark that *doxa* is understood as innately related to a public.

> must pursue the probable [*eikos*], bidding many farewell to the true [*alēthēs*]. (272d–e; trans. by Nichols)[30]

In this passage Socrates brings another terminological opposition into the dialogue: *eikos–alētheia*. This opposition is, however, not introduced as his contribution, but referred as an idea from others.[31] The opposition is framed in a judicial argumentation discussing the probability that someone has committed a crime or not. When Socrates grapples with this opposition he relates it back to oppositions and thoughts already established in the dialogue. First, he asks Phaedrus whether "the probable [*eikos*] is anything else than what conforms to the opinion of the multitude [*to tōi plēthei dokoun*]" and Phaedrus states that it is nothing else than that. Then Socrates states that "this probability [*eikos*] happens to spring up in the many [*polloi*], through likeness with the truth [*to alēthes*]" and refers this insight back to a previous point that the one who is best suited to find that which resembles the truth is the one who knows the truth.

The noun *doxa* is not used in these two quotes, but it is clear that Socrates tries to relate this new terminological opposition to the arguments that is already established. In the first quote the phrase: "τὸ τῷ πλήθει δοκοῦν," using the common verb *dokeō*, clearly relates back to the previous wording of "*doxai plēthous*." This means that for Socrates, *eikos* is intimately linked to *doxa* through their relation to the people; the opposition *eikos–alētheia* is through this incorporated into the opposition *doxa–alētheia*. As a consequence, we also find that another potential meaning or nuance of meaning is added to the word *doxa*. From a contempo-

30. "οὐδὲν ἀληθείας μετέχειν δέοι δικαίων ἢ ἀγαθῶν πέρι πραγμάτων, ἢ καὶ ἀνθρώπων γε τοιούτων φύσει ὄντων ἢ τροφῇ, τὸν μέλλοντα ἱκανῶς ῥητορικὸν ἔσεσθαι. τὸ παράπαν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις τούτων ἀληθείας μέλειν οὐδενί, ἀλλὰ τοῦ πιθανοῦ· τοῦτο δ' εἶναι τὸ εἰκός, ᾧ δεῖν προσέχειν τὸν μέλλοντα τέχνῃ ἐρεῖν. οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὰ <τὰ> πραχθέντα δεῖν λέγειν ἐνίοτε, ἐὰν μὴ εἰκότως ᾖ πεπραγμένα, ἀλλὰ τὰ εἰκότα, ἔν τε κατηγορίᾳ καὶ ἀπολογίᾳ, καὶ πάντως λέγοντα τὸ δὴ εἰκὸς διωκτέον εἶναι, πολλὰ εἰπόντα χαίρειν τῷ ἀληθεῖ·"

31. Tisias is mentioned in the text, but the wording clarifies that there is an uncertainty about who the person behind this idea is. See note 136 on page 62 in Scully's translation.

rary scholarly position, it is, of course, open for debate, whether one wants to accept Socrates linking these two terms, or not, but this argument and the establishing of this relation is part of the material provided by Plato.

In the final discussion of writing, we once again find an opposition between *doxa* and *alētheia*, but do not find such a clear link to the opinions of the masses, as in the previously discussed opposition between *doxa* and *alētheia*, or as in the discussion of *eikos* and *alētheia*. The quoted passage below comes from Socrates's telling of the myth of the creation of writing, where Thamos the king of Egypt tells its inventor that it was not a drug for the improvement of memory but the opposite, since its alien signs only serve as external reminders:

> You are supplying the opinion [*doxa*] of wisdom [*sophia*] to the students, not truth [*alētheia*]. For you'll see that having become hearers of much without teaching, they will seem to be sensible judges in much while being for the most part senseless, and hard do to be with, since they've become wise in their own opinion [*doxosophoi*] instead of wise [*sophos*]. (275a–b; trans. by Nichols)[32]

In this passage, *doxa* seems to be associated with appearance or impression and opposed to truth. Note that to seem and appear, here, lacks clear relation to the public. In the argument that follows, Socrates develops the dichotomy into a dichotomy between the hearers and readers of text on the one side and the students of dialectics on the other.

Perhaps one could read this argument, with its partially adjusted meaning, as building on the already established dichotomy between *doxa* and *alētheia*. *Doxa* has, previously in the dialogue, been criticised because of its relationship to the public, but here Plato indicates that the faulty kind of reasoning that rhetoric pro-

32. "σοφίας δὲ τοῖς μαθηταῖς δόξαν, οὐκ ἀλήθειαν πορίζεις· πολυήκοοι γάρ σοι γενόμενοι ἄνευ διδαχῆς πολυγνώμονες εἶναι δόξουσιν, ἀγνώμονες ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλῆθος ὄντες, καὶ χαλεποὶ συνεῖναι, δοξόσοφοι γεγονότες ἀντὶ σοφῶν." In this passage we, once again, find competing translations of *doxa*, with Nichols opposing true wisdom with the opinion of wisdom, while Scully and Nehamas and Woodruff opposes it with apparent/"the appearance of" wisdom.

duces in public speeches, also contaminates the individuals that engage with the practice of rhetoric, so that they disregard reason and follow their own opinions also outside of the direct context of public speaking.

It is clear that the meaning of the word *doxa* varies in the *Phaedrus,* and a look at different English translations shows that it could either mean opinion, which is a view expressed or had by someone, or what seems or is seen, which is more akin to an impression. There is also then a third type of translation as either reputation or glory (the latter is a celebration of virtue), that could perhaps be described as semantically located between these poles.[33] It is also clear that opinions could either be understood as related to reason and argument, as judgment, or as complete falsities. The relationship between reason and falsehood is complicated by Socrates's argument about *eikos,* since that term in some way is related to reason, but as is made clear by the judicial examples brought up by Socrates, not necessarily to truth. Yet perhaps the most crucial dividing line between *doxa* and *alētheia* is that *doxa* can be seen as individual or as public. This dividing line is especially important since we in neither the *Phaedrus* nor the *Gorgias* find any positive comment on *doxa* as public opinion. In addition, the dismissal of *eikos* is related to its affinity with the masses.

To answer our initial question; Yes, *doxa* and *alētheia* are used in the *Phaedrus* to formulate an epistemic tension, but the use of *alētheia* as a possible quality of *doxa* challenges a simplistic dichotomy between the terms.[34] We must acknowledge that there is at least some conception of an individual *doxa* in the *Phaedrus* that can be regarded as true, *alēthēs*, or at the very least, as in a possible positive relation to truth, *alētheia*, a quality of the heavenly realm. In the *Phaedrus alētheia* can be understood as a quality or a certain state; the word *alētheia* by itself is never used to name a process of acquiring insight. It is clear from this study that a contemporary scholar could construct an opposition between *doxa* and

33. This dual character is thematised by Martin Heidegger and Robert Hariman, we will therefore discuss it further in chapter 10.

34. The use of *alētheia* as a potential quality of *doxa* is also central in the *Theaetetus* and *Meno*, see chapter 4 for a discussion of these two dialogues

alētheia from the material in the *Phaedrus*, but to succeed in such an endeavour one would be helped by focusing on *doxa* as related to the public, and including the word and concept of *eikos*, or probability.

Concluding remarks on the *Phaedrus*

The above analysis of the uses of *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Phaedrus* provides important nuance regarding Plato's well-known ambivalence towards rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*. If we choose to understand rhetoric as related to *doxa*, in the sense of humanly produced knowledge, which is what McKerrow and Rosengren do, it becomes clear that the vaunted form of rhetoric based on *epistēmē* that Socrates presents in the *Phaedrus* is a false friend; it subjects rhetoric to a Platonic epistemology where knowledge about what *is* is learned or received, rather than produced through persuasion. As mentioned earlier, however, there are also passages in the *Phaedrus* where *doxa* is portrayed in a positive light, and in those passages *doxa* is presented as acquired through or associated with *logos;* this does not fit with a simple dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē*, whereby *doxa* would be dismissed. Those instances are not, however, related to any kind of public speaking, but to individual reasoning that is to say to dialectics.

If we, when discussing the Platonic conflict between rhetoric and Plato's teachings as presented in the *Phaedrus,* choose to interpret Plato's idea of knowledge as a receiving of the truth prior to speech, then we can easily dismiss his arguments. He is clearly a rhetorician himself and this *receiving* cannot be performed in a non-rhetorical way, which means that it is not received at all but produced. His dialectics could, within this reading, be argued to be just a certain kind of rhetoric. If though we instead read Plato's text as written within an academic struggle between himself and Isocrates, then his ideas about, and arguments against, rhetoric appear to be a way to separate his own teachings from those of Isocrates. Such a critique constructs their approaches as two separate ways of viewing and teaching *logos*.

As mentioned, this analysis reveals that there is an opening in Plato toward a positive understanding of *doxa,* an understanding that is related to *logos* and striving for the best. Since this *logos* and *doxa*, cannot however, according to Plato, be valued through its acceptance by a public, the conflict in the *Phaedrus* revolves around the same axis as our initial treatment of Plato and his use of the term *rhētorikē* to denote the ignoble side of the art of speaking. The very core of Plato's argument in this naming, as well as in the *Phaedrus,* is that rhetoric should be dismissed through its allegiance with the practice of public speaking. He does not dismiss *doxa per se;* he dismisses *doxa* as public opinion and public reputation. The epistemic tension in relation to the arts of *logos* that is constructed in Plato could, according to the reading of the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, just as well be understood as a tension in relation to the Social; should we act through rhetoric in relation to the public opinion of the *polis* or through dialectics in relation to the divinity of the world of forms?[35]

To conclude, this reading illustrates that Plato does not present an explicit dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Phaedrus*, yet at the same time we do find arguments establishing explicit opposition between *doxa* and *alētheia,* which is related to the oppositional pair *eikos-alētheia*. Despite the lack of an explicit discussion of *doxa* and *epistēmē*, an attention to Plato's use of these words, and their varied meanings, has proven useful in providing a productive understanding of his arguments relating to rhetoric, or the more encompassing *logon techne*, in relation to different forms of knowing/opinioning. The arguments about *doxa-alētheia* and *doxa/eikos* associate the *doxa* of rhetoric with falseness, but when studying the dialogue closer we find that rather than being in strict opposition, *alētheia* can also function as a possible quality of *doxa* – a quality that can be either present or absent. In relation to the possibility of *alēthēs doxa* it is, however, clear that Socrates does not put the acceptance of an opinion by the masses as a crite-

35. This wording is of course stylised, but the idea that the notion of a divine audience can be derived from the *Phaedrus* is for example supported by Barbara Cassin (1990, 32–35), whose critique of Perelman argues that Perelman's universal audience is a Kantian transformation of the divine audience constructed by Plato in the *Phaedrus*.

rion for its quality as *alētheia*, rather the opposite; the association between public *doxa* and falseness is the foundation of Socrates's dismissal of rhetoric as an art of *logos*. The contemporary scholar that wants to utilise the opposition between *doxa* and *alētheia* from the dialogue and have a solid basis in the material would need to accept that what is discussed within such a framing is public *doxa*. We have also discussed a possible semantic difference between *epistēmē* and *alētheia*, where the former is understood as a process, while the latter is understood as a quality or status. With such an understanding of the semantic difference, putting focus on *epistēmē* brings out the differences between the rhetorical and dialectical approach, while focusing on *alētheia* might stop at a normative evaluation of the result.

This study's reading shows that the opposition between the individual and the masses is central to the epistemic tension in the dialogue and perhaps in itself the most fundamental tension. This opposition is also underlined by the very framing of the dialogue, which is completely different from that of the *Gorgias*. In the *Phaedrus*, there are only two interlocutors, Phaedrus and Socrates, and no audience at all besides the gods. This fact might make it seem less contradictory that Plato, the great critic of public speaking, in the *Phaedrus* presents important arguments through speeches. Socrates's speeches in the *Phaedrus* are not public and they are not unresponsive, as public speeches are; instead, they are presented to an individual and followed by dialogue. The opposition here could be understood as between individuals engaged in direct, personal conversation versus individuals merged into a group, a mass, or to use a different phrasing, as a conflict between on the one hand *me* and *you*, and on the other *them*.

4.

Reason or recollection

Connecting with the doxa-epistēmē relation in the Theaetetus and Meno

In chapter 1, I described how contemporary scholars portray rhetoric as situated in an epistemic tension with roots in the opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē.* But, as shown, the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* do not use or present these specific terms as interrelated.

Hence, we can infer that those contemporary scholars who talk about rhetoric as situated in a struggle between *doxa* and *episteme* when discussing the *Gorgias* must have taken their terminology from elsewhere. It seems likely that at least some of these scholars have picked up this dichotomy from other more contemporary sources and not by turning first to the Greek texts, but there are also more extensive accounts of the relationship between these words and their meanings in other writings from Plato's *oeuvre*. The *Theaetetus*, *Meno, Republic*, *Sophist and Statesman* all constitute potential geneses for the well-established dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē*. This situation, with more texts presenting themselves as avenues of study, is familiar for any scholar working on writings grouped under the Plato mantle. Regardless of the angle from which we approach these writings, there always seems to be another text that demands to be studied. In this case it is not because we need to create a coherent interpretation of Plato's philosophy, but rather that we want to find possible sources for existing readings of Plato's view of rhetoric, as well as illuminate possible routes that haven't been equally explored.

To achieve this, I will take a closer look at the *Theaetetus*, *Meno, Republic*, *Sophist* and *Statesman* – dialogues that explicitly address the relation between *doxa* and *epistēmē*. The *Theaetetus*

and *Meno* do not thematise rhetoric, which the *Republic* (and to a lesser degree the *Sophist* and *Statesman*) could be argued to do, but they are all relevant when discussing how the relationship between *doxa* and *epistēmē* can be understood in Plato. The *Theaetetus* and *Meno* will be dealt with in this chapter, while the *Republic, Sophist and Statesman* will be discussed in the next chapter.

The main theme of the *Theaetetus* is the core question of what constitutes *epistēmē*. Throughout the dialogue different potential answers are presented and criticised, which though it in the end leaves the question unanswered, deconstructs and dismisses false answers in an illustration of Socrates's maieutic method. The most important contribution to the understanding of the relationship between *doxa* and *epistēmē* given in the dialogue is the idea that "knowledge is true judgement with an account," or to use the Greek that *epistēmē* is *alēthēs doxa* with *logos* (*Theaetetus* 201c–d; trans. by Levett and Burnyeat).[1] This definition is not presented as Socrates's viewpoint, and it is criticised in different ways, finally ending up being derided as circuitous reasoning, since the understanding of *logos* necessary for the definition to be valid would have to include knowledge, *epistēmē*. The contribution of the dialogue to our theme is, regardless of its inconclusiveness, to provide a relational framing of the meaning of the words, where *epistēmē* differs from *doxa* through certain extra qualities rather than by being opposed to it. This way of framing the relation between *doxa* and *epistēmē*, through its use of *logos*, is clearly connected to the later scholarly traditions of logic and argumentation, but how *doxa* and *epistēmē* relate to rhetoric and political leadership is not at the heart of the discussion.

Epistēmē is translated by Levett and Burnyeat as *knowledge* while *doxa* is, somewhat surprisingly, translated as judgement. Both of these notions are treated in the dialogue as the result of individual processes. The process might include the support of an intellectual midwife, but the dialogue does not feature social knowledge formation in the public arena as a theme at all.[2] In

1. "τὴν μὲν μετὰ λόγου ἀληθῆ δόξαν ἐπιστήμην εἶναι."
2. There is one short section where the art of men called orators [*rhētoros*] and lawyers [*dikanikos*] is brought to the discussion (Plato, 200e–201d). In this section a difference

addition, the translation of *doxa* as judgement clouds the potential relationship to rhetoric's traditional domain, public opinion, and instead emphasises reason.

Whereas the *Theaetetus* poses a question and leaves it unanswered, the *Meno* takes the dialectical process a bit further. First a question is posed: What is virtue? Then a process of deconstructing the suggested answers continues until the interlocutor Meno, who first thought he knew the answer, exclaims that he has become numb and perplexed and no longer is in position to answer (*Meno* 79e–80b). The reader is not, however, abandoned here in the *Meno,* as the text goes on and Socrates presents the idea of recollection. He argues that learning is a recollection of the truth about reality that we as immortal souls already know. Socrates illustrates the truth of this, by discussing geometry with a slave, showing that he already knew it. The discussion of virtue, and whether it can be taught, continues with the inclusion of a discussion of the difference between true [*alēthēs*] and right [*orthe*] *doxa*, and *epistēmē*. It is stated that *doxa* of this kind and *epistēmē* can function equally well as guides for correct action, but Socrates links *epistēmē* to the presented theory of recollection, arguing that recollection is the process that ties down true or right opinions, and turns them into *epistēmē*. Thus, the difference between *orthe doxa* and *epistēmē* becomes their stability, while *orthe doxa* is potentially as useful as *epistēmē,* it will not last.

Two things are worth noting here: the first one is that the general discussion as well as the distinction between *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Meno* tends to be more oriented toward practice and correct conduct than is the case in the *Theaetetus*. The second is that the *Meno*, through the notion of recollection, presents an alternative answer to the difference between *alēthēs doxa* and *epistēmē* than those presented in the *Theaetetus*. In the *Meno* Socrates claims

between teaching [*didaskō*] and persuading [*peithō*] is constructed, but the main function of this passage seems to be to argue that "true judgement" [*alēthēs doxa*] is not the same as knowledge [*epistēmē*]. Since there are cases in lawcourts where the jury has formed a *doxa* that is *alēthēs*, but without actually knowing if that is actually the case. This discussion precedes the adding of *logos*, as a possible requirement that would equal *alēthēs doxa* with *epistēmē*.

that the immortal souls have knowledge about true reality, which gives *epistēmē* a completely different position than in the argument about *logos* as a criterion in the *Theaetetus.* Also, this understanding of *epistēmē* is not refuted in the dialogue. While it is clear from the example with the slave that words can be used to assist someone in recollecting and grasping *epistēmē*, the actual recollection is not portrayed as a product of arguments. This discussion is, just as with that of the *Theaetetus*, also not situated in the context of public speaking; instead, boastful public speeches are framed as something immature, something that Meno used to do before Socrates questions led him to understand that he knew nothing.

Approaching the situation with a broad brush it is possible to link the *Theaetetu*s and *Meno* to the positive view of *doxa* as a part of the individual expressed by Socrates in his first and second speech in the *Phaedrus*. Such a linking would give us two ways of setting a good *doxa* in relation to *epistēmē* in Plato, via two different framings of *logos*. The first speech by Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, as well as the argument in the *Theaetetus* gives *logos* a strong, positive role in relation to *doxa*. In the *Theaetetus epistēmē* is described as true *doxa* with *logos,* and in the middle speech of the *Phaedrus* Socrates, through *logos,* connects *doxa* with striving for the best. Both of these speeches/explanations are, however, explicitly dismissed in the dialogues.

In Socrates's second speech in the *Phaedrus*, with its metaphor of the soul, and in the *Meno*, we instead find a description of the process of recollection of eternal, divine ideas. This process is described as a process that might be facilitated by maieutics, but not caused by it. There, *logos* as speech is given a subordinate position.

If we at this point were to reconnect with Cassin's (1990) reading of the *Phaedrus,* we could note that none of these answers foreground the possibility of a politically oriented rhetoric concerned with *doxa*, understood as the views of the public. To find such a discussion, we would need to engage with the rhetoric of the *Gorgias,* as well as with the despised public *doxa* from the later parts of the *Phaedrus*.

Let us, at this point, leave the *Theaetetus* and the *Meno*, to pay closer attention to the link between knowledge, rhetoric, and the public life of the *polis*, by studying how Plato treats *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Republic*.

5.

Ontology and politics

On the dynameis of doxa and epistēmē in the Republic, book V.

James H. Nichols Jr., who has given thorough attention to Plato's views of rhetoric, argues that there are two themes in Plato's treatment of rhetoric, justice and love, or *eros*; in the *Gorgias* Plato deals with the rhetoric of justice, and in the *Phaedrus* he addresses the rhetoric of love (Nichols 1998, 18-21). The following reading of the *Republic* and its elaborate discussion of *doxa* and *epistēmē* yields new material for our investigation of rhetoric as connected to the just ruling of the state in relation to the judgements of the public.

The argumentative force in the term *rhētorikē*, with its association to the public rhetors and the line of conflict between Plato and Isocrates, both concern the public role of the rhetor and frames rhetoric as a discipline deeply engaged with the public negotiations about the just government of the state. Also, when bearing in mind that Socrates in the *Gorgias* defines rhetoric as "a phantom of a part of politics," it becomes clear that the *Republic* has a special standing in relation to the notion of rhetoric (*Gorgias* 463d; trans. by Nichols).[1] It is therefore interesting that the *Republic* contains a unique explicit theoretical discussion focused on *doxa* and *epistēmē*. Theodore Scaltsas (2007) notes that whereas Plato in the *Theaetetus* and *Meno* tries to analyse *epistēmē* as true *doxa* plus a condition, the *Republic* is very different, presenting *doxa* and *epistēmē* as completely separate, denying that either of them might be a form of the other. That the *Republic* is one of Plato's most

1. "ἔστιν γὰρ ἡ ῥητορικὴ κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον πολιτικῆς μορίου εἴδωλον"

well-read texts and arguably the most influential one supports the likelihood of it having influenced contemporary understandings of Plato's views in relation to rhetoric and the public arena.

The dramatic setting of the *Republic* is that Socrates and his friend Glaucon are stopped on their way back to Athens, having visited Piraeus for a festival. Polemarchus gives an order to stop Socrates, and with the threat of force, as well as with positive arguments, he and his companions compel Socrates and Glaucon to stay. The rest of the dialogue takes place in Polemarchus' home where they decide to tackle the paramount question of what justice is. Different definitions of justice are presented and disputed until Socrates, in book II, makes the signature move of the dialogue, suggesting that if they seek to understand justice in one man, they should study it in a whole city:

> "If we should watch a city coming into being in speech," I said, "would we also see its justice coming into being, and its injustice?" (*Republic* 369a; trans. by Bloom)[2]

Plato's famous ideal city state is then imagined, starting with the basic needs of the city, and thereafter deciding on questions such as the ideal division of labour, education of the citizens, rituals for procreation and the establishment of political myths.[3]

The words *doxa* and *epistēmē* are used in different forms throughout the dialogue. Here, however, I limit myself to a close reading of a key section of the dialogue at the end of book V, where

2. "Ἆρ' οὖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, εἰ γιγνομένην πόλιν θεασαίμεθα λόγῳ, καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτῆς ἴδοιμεν ἂν γιγνομένην καὶ τὴν ἀδικίαν;"
3. My use of the term "political myth" is somewhat anachronistic since I am using it in a sense that it is used in contemporary political theory, but the word *mythos* is used by Plato in the *Republic*, for example, when discussing the myth of how the Auxiliaries came to be. It is also important to note that Plato's discussions of the use of myths in the constitution of the ideal *polis*, in the *Republic*, constitute an important historical background for the contemporary theoretical use of the term "political myth". See for example the somewhat paradoxical connection made in Sabine and Thorson's *A History of Political Theory* (1973): "It is the mark of a modern mind to be able to explicitly create a 'myth' as a way of influencing others (as, for example, Plato does in *The Republic*)" (14).

the terms are presented in relation to each other and discussed thoroughly. The importance of this particular section of the *Republic* for the *doxa–epistēmē* opposition is confirmed by the amount of scholarly attention that has been given to it.[4] Our reading of the passage here does, however, focus on its relation to rhetoric and the public arena, which lends it a different framing than the philosophically oriented studies that have hitherto focused on the proper interpretation of the passage in relation to a general understanding of Plato's epistemology.

This reading of the argument about *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Republic* is done from a contemporary position within rhetorical studies and facilitated by actively linking the text of Plato to the previously mentioned context, including the discursive attempts to establish the supremacy of Plato's understanding of *philosophia* over Isocrates' understanding, which is dismissed as the false art of *rhētorikē*. The key section that we study here follows immediately after Socrates' presentation of the idea of the philosopher king.[5] Glaucon questions if the ideal state presented by Socrates is possible to realise and Socrates answers that the most important step, in practice, towards creating the closest thing possible to an ideal city state is to let philosophers rule, or to have rulers that are schooled in philosophy. He states that no other kind of city could produce private or public happiness (473e).

Socrates also makes clear that he is hesitant to put this proposition forward and that he expects critique. This hesitance seems to stem from his proposition being contrary to established opinion as well as it being directed toward those in power, challenging their background and self-understanding. It is not our goal here to draw conclusions about the actual context in the dramatic time of Socrates or in the political context where Plato wrote the text, but Plato's choice to emphasise reluctance could support a reading of the dialogue considering Plato's version of philosophy not being

4. For earlier readings of the *doxa-epistēmē* dichotomy in the *Republic*, book V, see e.g. Szaif (2007, 253–72), Scaltsas (2007) or Farner (2005).

5. The idea of the philosopher king is most clearly presented in 473c–d of Plato's *Republic*; the discussion on the relationship between *doxa* and *epistēmē* is presented in 476c–480a.

the preferred form of study for those striving for a leading position. Such an interpretation would situate the *Republic*, just as the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, within the intellectual struggle between Plato and Isocrates, as well as other teachers more attuned to teaching public oratory. Taken together, this context makes it reasonable to read the *doxa–epistēmē* dichotomy presented in the *Republic* as part of a competitive struggle for intellectual status, and not just as a clue to the general understanding of the Platonic philosophical system. This underlying conflict is also clear when Plato lets Socrates connect the proposition of the philosopher king with a critique of democracy, stating that:

> it is by nature fitting for them [the leaders] both to engage in philosophy and to lead a city, and for the rest not to engage in philosophy and to follow the leader. (474c; trans. by Bloom)[6]

Leaders should, according to Socrates, be schooled in philosophy (not public oratory), and the rest should not participate in the search for wisdom but follow the philosophers. The lengthy argument that follows in support of this controversial proposition is framed as a discussion of what it means to be a "lover of wisdom," a *philo-sophos*, but its core is an explicit argument about *doxa* and *epistēmē;* for Socrates, a lover of wisdom is a lover of learning and a lover of knowledge.

Socrates argues that someone who loves something must love all in that class, and not just a part of it (474c–475a). He draws the conclusion that philosophers are those that love all learning, and not those that are just interested in learning some special technical skills, or interested in watching the latest theatre (475d–e). The true philosophers are, according to Socrates, those who love the sight of *alētheia*, which Liddell and Scott renders as "truth" or "reality" (LSJ, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. 'Ἀλήθεια'). Both meanings clearly separate the goal of the philosopher from the goals of more practically oriented arts and skills. The philosopher

6. "τοῖς μὲν προσήκει φύσει ἅπτεσθαί τε φιλοσοφίας ἡγεμονεύειν τ' ἐν πόλει, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις μήτε ἅπτεσθαι ἀκολουθεῖν τε τῷ ἡγουμένῳ."

does, according to Plato's Socrates, take delight not in fair sounds and colours and shapes, but in the nature of the fair itself (476b).

From this starting point, Plato lets Socrates move the conversation toward an inquiry into two forms of knowing; the main point of division is their different relation to something beyond the subjective, material flux. The main argument here is an analogy, stating that the one who sees fair things, but who does not believe that there is anything akin to innate beauty, is like a dreamer who believes that the things in the dream are real. On the other side, those who are awake are those who can catch sight of beauty itself, as well as that which belongs to beauty, but which is not beauty itself. Socrates names the first process opining [*doxazō*] and its result opinion [*doxa*], while he names the other process knowing [*gignōskō*], and its result knowledge [*gnōmē*] (476b–476e). Note that the translations are Allan Bloom's, and that the Greek term for knowledge used here is not *epistēmē*, but *gnōmē;* the verb *doxazō* and not the more common *dokeō*.

Plato's Socrates elaborates on this dichotomic pairing by raising the question of whether they are concerned with something that *is* or not. In doing so, he situates the dichotomy within the framework of ontology. Once that framing has been established, Socrates starts to use another terminology for the dichotomy, namely *doxa* and *epistēmē*. This change of terminology from *gnōsis/gnōmē* to *epistēmē* takes place in 467e–477b and correlates with the explication of the ontological framework, but also with Socrates defining *doxa* as well as *epistēmē*, as *dynamis*:

> "Do we say opinion [*doxa*] is something?"
> "Of course."
> "A power [*dynamis*] different from knowledge [*epistēmē*] or the same?"
> "Different."
> "Then opinion [*doxa*] is dependent on one thing and knowledge [*epistēmē*] on another, each according to its own power [*dynamis*]." (477b; trans. by Bloom)[7]

7. "Ἆρ' οὖν λέγομέν τι δόξαν εἶναι;Πῶς γὰρ οὔ;Πότερον ἄλλην δύναμιν ἐπιστήμης ἢ τὴν αὐτήν;Ἄλλην.Ἐπ' ἄλλῳ ἄρα τέτακται δόξα καὶ ἐπ' ἄλλῳ ἐπιστήμη, κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν ἑκατέρα τὴν αὑτῆς."

The ontological framing combined with the notion of *dynamis* constitutes an essential contribution to the understanding of the dichotomy, but it is also important to note Plato's use of terminology. He first uses *gnōsis/gnōmē* and then introduces the term *epistēmē*, later he mixes both words and finally returns to *gnōsis*. None of these changes are visible in Bloom's translations, where they are all translated as knowledge, knowing etcetera, but the changes provide us with clues to a better understanding of the argument that Plato presents.

In the beginning of the argument there seems to be a difference in meaning where *gnōsis/gnōmē* and related verb-forms might be understood as loosely defined, while *epistēmē* when introduced seems to be used as a more precise technical term. This precision is related to the ontological framing, but even more important is the already mentioned correlation with the definition of *doxa* as well as *epistēmē* as *dynameis*. Bloom translates *dynamis* as "power," but in a note he gives the alternatives "capacity" and "faculty." He is, however, sceptical towards the two latter translations since the Greeks thought that every *dynamis* must be understood in relation to its end and that a *dynamis* can never be an end itself. Against this background Bloom presents "potentiality" as a more apt rendering of the meaning of *dynamis*.[8]

Taken together this gives us a rather precise understanding of *epistēmē* as a *dynamis* that can produce knowledge of that which *is*. This ontological understanding of *epistēmē* is of course not related to a modern scientific worldview, but rather to the world of eternal forms that Plato presented earlier. The argumentative process, according to this reading, would be that Socrates moves from a more general, undefined vocabulary to the more specified term *epistēmē*, which he uses as the proper name of a certain human *dynamis*. This is important since it means that the *Republic* provides exactly what we didn't find in the *Gorgias* (or in the *Phaedrus*, *Theaetetus* or *Meno*), namely a deliberate use of the words *epistēmē* and *doxa* as a specialised technical terminology to construct an epistemic dichotomy.

8. See note 39 on page 154 in Bloom's translation.

When Socrates later returns to speaking in more loosely defined terms, he does not abandon the more precise understanding of *epistēmē*. Instead, the more precise meaning of *epistēmē* seems to spill over into the terms *gnōsis/gnōmē* and *gignōskō*, allowing them to further the same argument. This means that Bloom's choice of translating the varied Greek terms to "knowledge," gives the reader a more clear-cut presentation of a dichotomy compared to the Greek text, but it also hides the introduction of *epistēmē* and *doxa* as technical terms. Describing them as technical terms does not though mean that they are presented in the dialogue as an arbitrary theoretical terminology; we must keep in mind the Platonic ontological setting. Plato strives to present the truth about being, including *dynamis*, which he describes as "a certain class of beings by means of which we are capable of what we are capable, and also everything else is capable of whatever it is capable" (477c; trans. by Bloom).[9]

This study has lingered on the notion of knowledge, as related to *epistēmē*, but the presentation of Plato's views of knowledge is not, as Julia Annas has noted, the most significant part of the argument (Annas 1981, 199-203); it rather seems to be the case that the presented view of knowledge follows what Plato has established elsewhere. The significant move in this particular passage is, instead, his attempt to establish *doxa* as the counterpart of *epistēmē* and as something ontologically different. Let us therefore study how the dialogue, through Socrates voice, describes *doxa* in relation to *epistēmē*: Socrates argues that *doxa* lies between the boundaries of ignorance [*agnoia*] and knowledge [*gnōsis*], surpassing neither ignorance in obscurity nor knowledge in clarity (478c). This is also an ontological claim placing the *dynamis* of *doxa* between the *dynamis* associated with that which *is* and the *dynamis* associated with that which *is* not:

> "Weren't we saying before that if something should come to light as what is and what is not at the same time, it lies between that which

9. "Φήσομεν δυνάμεις εἶναι γένος τι τῶν ὄντων, αἷς δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς δυνάμεθα ἃ δυνάμεθα καὶ ἄλλο πᾶν ὅτι περ ἂν δύνηται, οἷον λέγω ὄψιν καὶ ἀκοὴν τῶν δυνάμεων εἶναι, εἰ ἄρα μανθάνεις ὃ βούλομαι λέγειν τὸ εἶδος."

> purely and simply is and that which in every way is not, and that neither knowledge [*epistēmē*] nor ignorance [*agnoia*] will depend on it, but that which in its turn comes to light between ignorance [*agnoia*] and knowledge [*epistēmē*]?"
> "Right."
> "And now it is just that which we call opinion [*doxa*] that has come to light between them." (478d; trans. by Bloom)[10]

After this positioning of *doxa* as the *dynamis* in-between, Socrates tries to find the related realm, that which can participate in *to be* and not *to be* without being captured by the one or the other. He answers his own call by describing an area of ambiguity for those who do not believe in the fair itself but acknowledges that there are many fair things. In this realm Socrates acknowledges that things are just and unjust, beautiful and ugly, heavy and light, holy and unholy. The derogatory framing becomes more than clear when he likens this realm with ambiguous jokes at feasts, and a children's riddle about a eunuch. But despite the pejorative framing it is clear that Plato, with the evocation of *doxa*, has acknowledged the existence of a domain with a related *dynamis* that poses a challenge to his own philosophy by being out of reach for *philosophia* and *epistēmē*. The domain of *doxa* is described as the domain of an ambiguous plurality that cannot be fixed as either being or not being, and not as both:

> "Then, we have found, as it seems that the many beliefs of the many about what's fair and about the other things roll around somewhere between not-being and being purely and simply."
> "Yes, we have found that."
> "And we have agreed beforehand that, if any such thing should come into light, it must be called opinable [*doxastos*], but not knowable [*gnōstos*], the wanderer between, seized by the power [*dynamis*] in-between." (479d; trans. by Bloom)[11]

10. "Οὐκοῦν ἔφαμεν ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν, εἴ τι φανείη οἷον ἅμα ὂν τε καὶ μὴ ὄν, τὸ τοιοῦτον μεταξὺ κεῖσθαι τοῦ εἰλικρινῶς ὄντος τε καὶ τοῦ πάντως μὴ ὄντος, καὶ οὔτε ἐπιστήμην οὔτε ἄγνοιαν ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔσεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μεταξὺ αὖ φανὲν ἀγνοίαςκαὶ ἐπιστήμης;Ὀρθῶς.Νῦν δέ γε πέφανται μεταξὺ τούτοιν ὃ δὴ καλοῦμεν δόξαν;"
11. "Ηὑρήκαμεν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὅτι τὰ τῶν πολλῶν πολλὰ νόμιμα καλοῦ τε πέρι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μεταξύ που κυλινδεῖται τοῦ τε μὴ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ὄντος

The *dynamis* of *doxa* defined in the *Republic* through this argumentation is here described as "the many beliefs of the many" [τὰ τῶν πολλῶν πολλὰ νόμιμα] (479d). Note that Bloom's translation as "beliefs" in this phrase does not correspond to a use of *pistis* in the Greek text, instead it corresponds with the use of *nomimos*, etymologically related to *nomos*. Plato's description of the realm that is opinable, but not knowable could therefore be said to link the notion of *doxa* as popular opinion to the conventions supported by civil society.[12] That interpretation brings out the strength of the challenge that the evocation of *doxa* constitutes for Plato's art of philosophy. The challenge of *doxa* would not just be a question of how to handle widespread opinions, but also common laws.[13]

Socrates' argumentation in this passage might seem peculiar in the context of the general argument of the *Republic*. As mentioned, he has presented his ideal state only to be met with scepticism about what use an ideal form for a state is if it cannot be realised. His answer is both that an ideal has a value even if it is not realisable, and that through the leadership of philosophers one could create a city state that comes as close as possible to the ideal; regarding the latter point, Socrates considers that to be good enough. The acceptability of the latter argument requires that Socrates can substantiate that the philosophers are not just best suited to construct – or understand – ideals, but also to go beyond these ideals and actually rule. Does he provide a convincing backing for this? Let us look at the final remarks in book V, where Plato brings the epistemological discussion back to the personal level:

εἰλικρινῶς.Ηὑρήκαμεν.Προωμολογήσαμεν δέ γε, εἴ τι τοιοῦτον φανείη, δοξαστὸν αὐτὸ ἀλλ' οὐ γνωστὸν δεῖν λέγεσθαι, τῇ μεταξὺ δυνάμει τὸ μεταξὺ πλανητὸν ἁλισκόμενον."

12. Bloom points to this interpretation in note 41 on page 160 in his translation, stating that "the word *nomima*, which usually means 'the customary or lawful,' is a derivative of *nomos.* Here popular, unsure opinion is identified with the opinion supported by civil society." Unfortunately, Bloom's choice to translate *nomima* as beliefs deflects attention to the fact that *doxa*, in this passage, is defined in relation to customs, usage and laws.
13. Note that the Greek society didn't make the clear distinction between convention and law that we find in contemporary Western democracies and in the English language; the meaning of the word *nomos/nomimos* included both these aspects.

> "And, as for those who look at many fair things but don't see the fair itself and aren't even able to follow another who leads them to it and many just things but not justice itself, and so on with all the rest, we'll assert that they opine [*doxazō*] all these things but know [*gignōskō*] nothing of what they opine [*doxazō*]"
> "Necessarily," he said.
> "And what about those who look at each thing itself – at the things that are always the same in all respects? Won't we say that they know [*gignōskō*] and don't opine [*doxazō*]?"
> "Won't we assert that these men delight in and love that on which knowledge [*gnōsis*] depends, and the others that on which opinion [*doxa*] depends? Or don't we remember that we were saying that they love and look at fair sounds and colours and such things but can't even endure the fact that the fair itself is something" (479e–480; trans. by Bloom)[14]

In this quote, we see that Plato lets Socrates repeatedly distinguish between two types of characters, and just after the quote he states that the ones who only love fair sounds and colours should be called *philodoxos*, rather than *philosophos*. This statement and the quote above clearly favour the position of the philosopher and if read in opposition against Isocrates it monopolises the concept of what a philosopher is, but it does not answer the challenge posed by *doxa*, which is the question of how the philosophers, with their knowledge of the eternal forms can master the realm of ambiguity. This lingering, unanswered question might be one reason why this passage has received a lot of scholarly attention within the contemporary field of philosophy.

There seem to be two possible answers to the challenge for Platonic philosophy posed by book V. One would be to read Socrates as considering the area of ambiguity, the realm of the many things,

14. "Τοὺς ἄρα πολλὰ καλὰ θεωμένους, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ καλὸν μὴ ὁρῶντας μηδ' ἄλλῳ ἐπ' αὐτὸ ἄγοντι δυναμένους ἕπεσθαι, καὶ πολλὰ δίκαια, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ δίκαιον μή, καὶ πάντα οὕτω,δοξάζειν φήσομεν ἅπαντα, γιγνώσκειν δὲ ὧν δοξάζουσιν οὐδέν.Ἀνάγκη, ἔφη.Τί δὲ αὖ τοὺς αὐτὰ ἕκαστα θεωμένους καὶ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ὄντα; ἆρ' οὐ γιγνώσκειν ἀλλ' οὐ δοξάζειν;Ἀνάγκη καὶ ταῦτα.Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἀσπάζεσθαί τε καὶ φιλεῖν τούτους μὲν ταῦτα φήσομεν ἐφ' οἷς γνῶσίς ἐστιν, ἐκείνους δὲ ἐφ' οἷς δόξα; ἢ οὐ μνημονεύομεν ὅτι φωνάς τε καὶ χρόας καλὰς καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτ' ἔφαμεν τούτους φιλεῖν τε καὶ θεᾶσθαι, αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ καλὸν οὐδ' ἀνέχεσθαι ὥς τι ὄν;"

as irrelevant to the good ruling of the city, since the only thing that has value is that which philosophers deal with, namely true knowledge of the forms. The other reading finds support in other passages and argues that the philosopher, who knows the forms, is better fitted to face the world of ambiguity. A scholar supporting this reading is Jan Szaif (2007, 268), and he argues that the strength of the philosopher, according to Plato, is that he has the capacity to make differentiated judgements about that which both *is* and *is not* based on acquaintance with the form itself.[15] The pejorative remarks by Socrates and the framing of some people as lovers of *doxa*, would according to this reading not be a critique of the territory of *doxa per se*, but of the premise that one should work with that territory without a firm knowledge about its forms. From a position of contemporary rhetorical studies, biased toward the side of *doxa* and against Plato, it is worth noting that these responses all accept the reality, or at least the fruitfulness of Plato's world of eternal ideas. If that were to be denied – the line of conflict would be entirely different.

To sum up this reading of the *Republic*, it can be concluded that in book V the *doxa–epistēmē* dichotomy functions as a central terminological formation, and that the argumentation describes *doxa* as a power between ignorance and knowledge, with a consequent ontic realm. The evocation of this realm poses a challenge to the status of Plato's own philosophy since it presents an area outside of the expertise of the philosopher that could be argued to be relevant in a more general sense than specific technical skill. This challenge is strengthened by the fact that the general argument concerns who is best fitted to rule the city state and not what approach is the best to find absolute truths.

We note that the discussion of *epistēmē* and *doxa* in the *Republic* clearly presents a dichotomy, while the arguments in the *Theaetetus* and the *Meno* on the difference between true *doxa* and *epistēmē* rather seem to be about defining *epistēmē* by adding an extra quality to *doxa*. The difference is especially clear in relation to the

15. This interpretation could also be linked to our reading of the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates does present a parallel argument, but in relation to *doxa-aletheia* and *doxa*/*eikos*.

Theaetetus, which does not frame *epistēmē* and *doxa* as dedicated to different ontological realms, as is done in the *Meno*. We also note that the remarks in our reading of the *Phaedrus* on the difference between a *doxa-alētheia* opposition and a *doxa-epistēmē* opposition finds further support in the *Republic*. In the *Republic doxa* is explicitly opposed to *epistēmē*, with that opposition not just framed as falseness in contrast to truth, but as a different *dynamis*, a different human faculty.

Oppositions beyond the *Republic*: *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*

Beyond the elaborate discussion on *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Republic*, we also find this opposition – though less emphasised – in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. These dialogues do not have the clear focus on rhetoric that we find in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*. Nevertheless, in treating sophistry and statesmanship they do engage with questions thematically associated with rhetoric and include brief remarks on rhetoric, or on *demologikon*, which is the term used in the *Sophist*. It is also interesting to look at the *Sophist* and *Statesman* since they in focusing on those two roles, by necessity include acts of positioning in relation to the scholarly conflict between Plato's philosophy on the one hand and sophistry on the other, including manoeuvrings in relation to a target audience in that conflict, namely those young men aspiring to positions of political leadership.

Dramatically, the *Sophist* and the *Statesmen* are interlinked. The set-up of the dialogues is that Socrates asks a visitor from Elea – who is the main character of the dialogues – if the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher are considered as separate or as one and the same where he comes from. The visitor states that they are separate and thus sets out to define first the sophist and then the statesman. The philosopher is not treated in a separate discussion but is nevertheless portrayed through the very practice of definition by division performed by the visitor. The two dialogues take place on the same day which is the day after the *Theaetetus*. If the

three dialogues of the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and *Statesmen* are read in this order, the terms *doxa* and *epistēmē* are introduced already in the *Theaetetus*, but there they are not presented as opposed to each other which in fact they are in the other two. Let us first take a closer look at the *Sophist*.

The opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē* is found towards the end of the dialogue. The visitor and Theaetetus have just concluded that both false (*pseudēs*) and true (*alēthēs*) belief (*doxa*) exist, as well as false and true speech (*logos*) (*Sophist*, 263a-264b). In the argument, speech (*logos*) and thinking (*dianoia*) are understood as fundamentally the same, but whereas *dianoia* is an internal process of *logos*, *logos* as speech instead refers to a process where the mouth utters words.[16] The true or false-question in relation to both *doxa* and *logos* is framed as a matter of their relation to that which is; it is an ontic relation. Next to the concepts of thinking and speech, the dialogue also introduces the process of appearing (*phainō*), related to appearance (*phantastikon*). *Doxa* is described as the result of thinking (*dianoia*), while appearing (*phainō*) is understood as the blending of perception (*aisthēsis*) and belief (*doxa*). Following the positioning of these terms, the visitor presents a final series of divisions and thus defines the sophist (*Sophist*, 264c-268d).

The art of the sophist is understood as a human – not divine – form of appearance-making (*phantastikē*) where the human uses his own body and voice – not tools – to produce the appearances (*to phantasma*). The visitor names this process imitating (*mimēsis*), a process that in turn is taken to have two parts depending on whether the performer has knowledge or not:

> let's distinguish them by calling imitation [*mimēsis*] accompanied by belief [*doxa*] "belief-mimicry" [*doxomimētikos*] and imitation

16. Note that Plato here explicitly highlights the semantic complexity in the term *logos*; he argues that thought (*dianoia*) is an internal *logos*, and thus provides support to the understanding of *logos* as thinking. At the same time, however, he differs between *dianoia* and *logos* in that the latter involves the bodily expression of words. Hence, the polysemy of *logos* is very much in play.

> accompanied by knowledge [*epistēmē*] "informed mimicry" [*historikē tis mimēsis*]. (*Sophist* 267d-e; trans. by White)[17]

This division, where the opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē* come to the fore, can easily be linked to the argument on the realm of *doxa* in the *Republic*, book V. The question is not whether appearances should be produced or not, but rather in who should produce these appearances; *epistēmē* is presented as a quality that the producer of appearances should have prior to the act of appearance-making:

> One sort of belief-mimic is foolish and thinks he knows the things he only has beliefs about [*doxazō*]. The other sort has been around a lot of discussions, and so by temperament he's suspicious and fearful that he doesn't know the things that he pretends in front of others to know. (*Sophist* 268a; trans. by White)[18]

The first of these types is called sincere imitators, while the other is described as insincere imitators. None of these has knowledge, but the first is ignorant about this fact, while the second is deceptive. The visitor focuses on the insincere imitators and applies the division between public oratory and private conversation that my earlier readings showed to be central for Plato's conception of the art of rhetoric. The visitor discerns between "insincerity in long speeches to a crowd"[19] and the use of "short speeches in private conversation to force a person talking to him to contradict himself"[20] (268b; trans. by White). The first one – associated with long-winded speeches – is defined as *demologikon* (instead of *politikon*, which is presented as an alternative name but dismissed); the second is the long-searched-for sophist. Theaetetus explains that

17. "διαγνώσεως ἕνεκα τὴν μὲν μετὰ δόξης μίμησιν δοξομιμητικὴν προσείπωμεν, τὴν δὲ μετ' ἐπιστήμης ἱστορικήν τινα μίμησιν."
18. "ὁ μὲν γὰρ εὐήθης αὐτῶν ἐστιν, οἰόμενος εἰδέναι ταῦτα ἃ δοξάζει· τὸ δὲ θατέρου σχῆμα διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις κυλίνδησιν ἔχει πολλὴν ὑποψίαν καὶ φόβον ὡς ἀγνοεῖ ταῦτα ἃ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ὡς εἰδὼς ἐσχημάτισται."
19. "τὸν μὲν δημοσίᾳ τε καὶ μακροῖς λόγοις πρὸς πλήθη δυνατὸν εἰρωνεύεσθαι"
20. "τὸν δὲ ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ βραχέσι λόγοις ἀναγκάζοντα τὸν προσδιαλεγόμενον ἐναντιολογεῖν αὐτὸν αὑτῷ."

we cannot call the second type wise, since he does not really know anything, but since he imitates wisdom (*sophon*) we should use a name derived from wisdom, hence *sophistikon*.

Though *rhētorikē* is not explicitly treated in this series of divisions, one could argue that demologikon holds the place of rhetoric in the argumentative structure – and thus we get a definition of rhetoric as a belief-mimicry through appearance-making (*phantastikē*) by using the human body and voice in long speeches to large crowds. The difference between rhetoric and sophistry is that the former works through long monologues to large groups of listeners, while the later works through private conversation – they are both, however, insincere in that they argue from a point of ignorance but brand themselves as knowledgeable. We should also note that the link between rhetoric and politics is acknowledged here, but not explained. The philosopher is not explicitly defined in this argument, but he is mentioned earlier in the dialogue where the visitor and Theaetetus discuss the capacity to discern between that which is separate and that which blends. In that argument, the visitor explicitly brings up the philosopher and characterises him as someone with capacity to discern what things blend, and what not (*Sophist* 252e-254b; trans. by White). To succeed in that kind of practice, the visitor states that he must have "some kind of knowledge [*epistēmē*] as he proceeds through the discussion; Theaetetus agrees: "of course that requires – knowledge [*epistēmē*]" (253c; trans. by White). Thus, we recognise the pattern from the *Republic*. The dialogue does not dismiss *doxa* per se but argues that the one best fitted to deal with the realm of *doxa* and to produce appearances is the one with *epistēmē*, the philosopher.

The question of how this *epistēmē* should be understood does however remain. The earlier discussion on truth and falsehood in relation to belief and logos, as well as their relation to that which blends and not blends invites us to associate with the ontic framing of *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Republic*. That framing would make it possible for a contemporary rhetorician to dismiss Plato's philosopher and his *epistēmē* on the account of them depending on some form of divine insight into an eternal world of forms. But this is not the only possible interpretation. We could also – and that would be

more in line with these two dialogues, focus on the practice of the philosopher. With that focus, the way of the philosopher and thus the road to *epistēmē* is dialectics. This interpretation also fits well with the brief definition of the philosopher earlier in the dialogue where he is described not as the one that already has insights, but the one with a capacity to discern. Once again, we find ourselves struggling with conflicting renderings of *epistēmē* as either a passive understanding of being, or as a skilful practice. Incidentally, the *Statesman* starts with a discussion of *epistēmē*.

In the *Statesman*, the visitor from Elea goes on to define the statesman but this time in conversation with another young student confusingly named Socrates. Just as in the *Sophist*, the visitor engages in a long series of divisions to find the best definition. But, as mentioned, the question of knowledge is introduced and discussed by the visitor in the very beginning of this process:

> Now tell me: should we posit in the case of this person too that he is one of those who possess knowledge [*epistēmē*], or what assumption should we make. (*Statesman* 258b; trans. by Rowe)[21]

The young Socrates confirms that they should make that assumption and the visitor goes on to state that they must divide between two forms of knowledge, practical [*praktikos*] and purely theoretical [τὴν δὲ μόνον γνωστικήν] (*Statesman* 258b-e). The art of statesmanship or kingship is then defined as a theoretical knowledge, where one uses the force of the mind, and not as a practical knowledge, where one uses manual labour. These introductory remarks are interesting in relation to the arguments in the *Sophist*, since the positioning of the statesman as someone who has *epistēmē* arguably aligns him with the position of the philosopher. It is noteworthy, however, that both practical and theoretical knowledge are described as *epistēmē* which should encourage us to be sceptical towards any simplified, pre-given understanding of what *epistēmē* means, particularly those of a more metaphysical character. Instead, we must follow the divisions in the dialogue to understand the specific knowledge of the statesman. The first

21. “καί μοι λέγε πότερον τῶν ἐπιστημόνων τιν’ ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦτον θετέον, ἢ πῶς;”

division within the class of theoretical knowledge is between those who make judgements, and those who direct – and there kingship is described as the directive sort of expertise since the king is the master of others. Then follows an extensive and elaborate discussion, leading to a definition of Statesmanship as a knowledge that does "not itself perform practical tasks, but controls those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows, when it is the right time to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities, and when it is the wrong time; and the others must do what has been prescribed for them" (305d; trans. by Rowe).[22] Statesmanship is further described as that which "controls all of these, and the laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city, weaving everything together in the most correct way" (305e; trans. by Rowe).[23]

For this study, there is no need to flesh out all the details of the presented understanding of statesmanship or to give a detailed report of the winding processes of reasoning in the dialogue. Instead, I will focus on two passages that come to the fore as particularly interesting in relation to *doxa*, *epistēmē* and rhetoric. I will discuss them separately below.

In the first passage, we have a discussion of different constitutions, where the visitor describes the rule of the statesman with expert knowledge as an ideal constitution, and then describes three other types of constitution based on whether there is one ruler, a few rulers, or many rulers. These three forms of constitution are then each divided into two forms based on whether the ruling is in accordance with acknowledged laws or not. In relation to these two options, the visitor makes a clear-cut normative judgement:

> The requirement, then, as it seems, for a all constitutions of this sort, if they are going to produce a good imitation of that true constitution of one man ruling with expertise, so far as they can, is that—given

22. "οὐκ αὐτὴν δεῖ πράττειν ἀλλ' ἄρχειν τῶν δυναμένων πράττειν, γιγνώσκουσαν τὴν ἀρχήν τε καὶ ὁρμὴν τῶν μεγίστων ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐγκαιρίας τε πέρι καὶ ἀκαιρίας, τὰς δ' ἄλλας τὰ προσταχθέντα δρᾶν"

23. "Τὴν δὲ πασῶν τε τούτων ἄρχουσαν καὶ τῶν νόμων καὶ συμπάντων τῶν κατὰ πόλιν ἐπιμελουμένην καὶ πάντα συνυφαίνουσαν ὀρθότατα,"

> that they have their laws [*nomos*]—they must never do anything contrary to what is written or to ancestral [*patrios*] customs [*ethos*]. (*Statesman* 300e-301a; trans. by Rowe)[24]

In relation to the ruling of one leader, the visitor describes how a leader can rule either on the basis of his own "expert knowledge" [*ho epistemōn*], or on the basis of "opinion [*doxa*], according to laws [*nomōs*]" (301b; trans. by Rowe). This line of argumentation connects with two positions that have been explicated in my readings of Plato in earlier chapters. Firstly, there is an explicit affiliation between the concept of *doxa* and the concept of laws or societal customs, *nomos*, which highlights the importance of the realm of *doxa*. Secondly, the argument attributes positive qualities to the established *doxa* for the practice of statesmanship. Rather than portraying *doxa* as a realm of deceit and falsehoods, it is understood as the best grounding for political work when the leader lacks *epistēmē*. The visitor describes the worst forms of government as when the ignorant leader overturns the common laws:

> And what of the case when some one ruler acts neither according to laws [*nomos*] nor according to customs [*ethos*], but pretends to act like the person with expert knowledge [*ho epistēmōn*], saying that after all one must do what is contrary to what has been written down if it is *best*, and there is some desire or other combined with ignorance [*agnoia*] controlling this imitation? Surely in those circumstances we must call every such person a tyrant? (*Statesman* 301 b-c; trans. by Rowe)[25]

24. "Ἆρ' οὖν εἰ μὲν ἀνεπιστήμονες ὄντες τὸ τοιοῦτον δρῷεν, μιμεῖσθαι μὲν ἂν ἐπιχειροῖεν τὸ ἀληθές, μιμοῖντ' ἄν μέντοι παγκάκως· εἰ δ' ἔντεχνοι, τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι μίμημαἀλλ' αὐτὸ τὸ ἀληθέστατον ἐκεῖνο;"
25. "Τί δ' ὅταν μήτε κατὰ νόμους μήτε κατὰ ἔθη πράττῃ τις εἷς ἄρχων, προσποιῆται δὲ ὥσπερ ὁ ἐπιστήμων ὡς ἄρα παρὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα τό γε βέλτιστον ποιητέον, ᾗ δέ τιςἐπιθυμία καὶ ἄγνοια τούτου τοῦ μιμήματος ἡγουμένη, μῶν οὐ τότε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἕκαστον τύραννον κλητέον;"

Even though the visitor elevates the one ruler who rules with knowledge, he realises that such a leader might not occur and thus emphasises the value of laws:

> But as things are, when—as we say—a king does not come to be in cities as a king-bee is born in a hive, one individual immediately superior in body and mind, it is necessary—so it seems—for people to come together and write things down, chasing after the traces of the truest constitution. (*Statesman* 301d-e; trans. by Rowe)[26]

To sum up the argument in this part of the dialogue, we have a positive account of *doxa* – related to *nomos* – though the ideal statesman is still understood as a person who does not act on the basis of *doxa*, but instead on the basis of his own expert knowledge.

The other passage in the *Statesman* that is central to our discussion is located towards the end of the dialogue where the visitor and the young Socrates attempts to divide between the statesman, on the one hand, and the rhetorician, the judge and the general on the other. These arts are described not as alien to statesmanship, but as related to it, exemplifying with that "part of rhetoric which in partnership with kingship persuades people of what is just and so helps in steering through the business of cities."

The answer provided to how these arts can be separated from statesmanship is related to the idea of statesmanship as weaving. The statesman is the one that controls when the different other arts should be performed. Rhetoric is thus put under the direction of statesmanship. Let us look at the interaction between the visitor and the young Socrates regarding this particular relationship:

> VISITOR: Well then: to which sort of expert knowledge [*epistēmē*] shall we assign what is capable of persuading mass and crowd, through the telling of stories [*mythologia*], and not through teaching [*didaxē*]?
> YOUNG SOCRATES: This too is clear, I think: it must be given to rhetoric [*rhētorikos]*.

26. "Νῦν δέ γε ὁπότε οὐκ ἔστι γιγνόμενος, ὡς δή φαμεν, ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι βασιλεὺς οἷος ἐν σμήνεσιν ἐμφύεται, τό τε σῶμα εὐθὺς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν διαφέρων εἷς, δεῖ δὴ συνελθόντας συγγράμματα γράφειν, ὡς ἔοικεν, μεταθέοντας τὰ τῆς ἀληθεστάτης πολιτείας ἴχνη."

> VISITOR: And the matter of whether to do through persuasion whatever it may be in relation to some people or other, or else by the use of some sort of force, or indeed to do nothing at all: to what sort of expert knowledge [*epistēmē*] shall we attach this?
> YOUNG SOCRATES: To the one that controls the art of persuasion and speaking.
> VISITOR: This would be none other, I think, than the capacity [*dynamis*] of the statesman. (*Statesman* 304c-d; trans. by Rowe)[27]

With this last quote, it becomes clear that the art of rhetoric is portrayed as a subordinate form of knowledge in relation to that of the statesman. This is interesting in relation to the interpretation of the text within a conflict between Isocrates and Plato regarding who is best fitted to teach the leaders of the city. Since rhetoric is described as subordinate to Statesmanship, then a teacher of rhetoric cannot teach those striving for that kind of knowledge. Plato, on the other hand, teaching the way to reach *epistēmē* seems like a better choice. Many have wondered what happened to the third discussion – that about the philosopher – but as mentioned the philosopher is already defined through the practice of the dialogue – and what is more – Plato would have no need to divide between the philosopher and the statesman, after all, the true statesman must be a philosopher.

Another interesting aspect in this dialogue is the positive rendering of *doxa*, related to *nomos*, when discussing the other six forms of government than the ruling of the true statesman. This passage is interesting since it acknowledges the positive role of *doxa* and *nomos* and thus contradicts a dichotomic opposition between *doxa* on the one hand and truth on the other. In fact, this argument seems to fall neatly in line with two moves of Plato that we noticed in earlier dialogues. Firstly, in the *Phaedrus* we noticed that Plato placed Isocrates in a middle position between

27. “ΞΕ. Εἶεν· τίνι τὸ πειστικὸν οὖν ἀποδώσομεν ἐπιστήμῃ πλήθους τε καὶ ὄχλου διὰ μυθολογίας ἀλλὰ μὴ διὰ διδαχῆς;ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Φανερὸν οἶμαι καὶ τοῦτο ῥητορικῇ δοτέον ὄν.ΞΕ. Τὸ δ’ εἴτε διὰ πειθοῦς εἴτε καὶ διά τινος βίας δεῖ πράττειν πρός τινας ὁτιοῦν ἢ καὶ τὸ παράπαν <ἡσυχίαν> ἔχειν, τοῦτ’ αὖ ποίᾳ προσθήσομεν ἐπιστήμῃ;ΝΕ. ΣΩ. Τῇ τῆς πειστικῆς ἀρχούσῃ καὶ λεκτικῆς.ΞΕ. Εἴη δ’ ἂν οὐκ ἄλλη τις, ὡς οἶμαι, πλὴν ἡ τοῦ πολιτικοῦ δύναμις.”

the despised Lysianic rhetoric and true rhetoric subordinate to philosophy. Secondly, in the *Republic*, we noticed that Plato acknowledged the *dynamis* and area of *doxa* in a way that challenges the authority of his own philosophy of forms. These aspects are also found in the positive remarks on doxa in the *Statesman*. *Doxa* – and now we are talking about public *doxa* – is not dismissed just like that, on the contrary, it is given a middle position and acknowledged as a force with positive effects.

To sum up, there is no pervading dichotomy between *epistēmē* and *doxa* in the dialogue. The term *epistēmē* is commonly used in the dialogue but seems most often to refer to an expertise and thus to have *epistēmē* in the textual space that constitutes this dialogue is not to have some divine understanding of being in the world of eternal forms, but instead a skilful capacity to direct, as in the case of the statesman, or a skilful capacity to persuade, as in the case of the subordinate rhetorician.

6.

Cracks and possibilities in the contemporary rendering of an epistemic tension in Plato's writings on rhetoric

Terminological and historical precision

Without repeating the details of the findings of the previous chapters, I conclude that there are a variety of words used to explicitly formulate epistemic tensions in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, and that the words *doxa* and *epistēmē* are not used in combination for that purpose in those texts. To find a clear expression of the dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē* we are best served by going to book V of the *Republic* and the arguments about who should rule the city; less emphasised oppositions are also to be found in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. My readings in this first part of the book are not intended as a forensic examination of origin, but it nevertheless seems likely that the contemporary scholarly formulation of an opposition between *doxa* and *episteme* is built on terminology from the *Republic* and has then subsequently merged with ideas from other dialogues. One reason contemporary scholars have given precedence to the terminology from the *Republic* is to be found in a canonised tradition of Platonic interpretation that has stressed the importance of the *Republic* as well as its discussion of ontology. Robert G. Turnbull (1998) writes: "As everyone who has had an introductory Plato course knows, in *Republic* V, Plato links *doxa* (opinion) with *is* and *is not* and links *episteme* with *is*" (285).

Having acknowledged that the *doxa-epistēmē* dichotomy is not the only typology with which to discuss epistemic tensions in

Plato, and that its contemporary standing most likely depends on the wider influence and status of the *Republic*, I am able to summarise the results through either an onomasiological presentation of the different words used to formulate epistemic tensions in Plato, or through a semasiological presentation of different uses of the words *doxa* and *epistēmē* in Plato.[1] Both approaches were used in this first part of the book. They show that a variety of words are used to formulate epistemic tensions in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, and that a variety of meanings are attached to the words *doxa* and *epistēmē* in those two texts, as well as in the *Theaetetus*, *Meno*, *Republic*, *Sophist* and *Statesman*. This complexity is not acknowledged or used in the contemporary sources that I have studied. One possible exception is Robert Hariman's "Status, Marginality, and Rhetorical Theory" (1986) that both discusses different meanings of the word *doxa* and utilises different terms.

Hariman begins his article with a discussion of *doxa* and *episteme*, but at a certain point in the argumentation he changes perspective by introducing the alternative dichotomy of *doxa* and *aletheia*. Hariman's insightful move could be compared to Rosengren's statement that *doxa* strictly speaking cannot be understood outside of its relation to *episteme*. Rosengren's statement is of course true in the wide-reaching structuralist sense that no sign can be understood outside of its relation to other related signs, but our reading of Plato's texts, as well as Hariman's article, shows that even though no word and concept can be understood as separate from all other words and concepts, there are other semantically pregnant word-relations in Plato's texts beyond between *doxa* and *epistēmē*. When investigating these word-relations as well, we can provide a more complex and productive understanding of the meaning of *doxa*.

One such possibility already mentioned is to discuss *doxa* in relation to *alētheia* instead of *epistēmē*. In the writings we have studied, *alētheia* seems to be used to signify a quality or a status, whereas *epistēmē* – at least in some arguments – is used to signify

1. In an onomasiological approach to language, one studies different words for expressing the same concept, while the semasiological approach studies different meanings of the same word. See "Working with words and concepts" in the introduction.

a faculty or an active process. This difference in terminology gives us two different, corresponding views of *doxa;* firstly, as a result, that is as an opinion/view/reputation of a higher or lesser quality, or alternatively as a faculty, *a dynamis* or way of grasping the world. The latter meaning of the word *doxa*, where it is presented as fundamentally different from *epistēmē*, is most clearly expressed in the *Republic*.

Rosengren's means of giving primacy to the *doxa–episteme* dichotomy could be argued reasonable as a statement relating to an established framing of classical Greek antiquity within a scholarly tradition, but my readings has shown that the *doxa–epistēmē* dichotomy does not have such a dominant standing in the actual texts where Plato discusses rhetoric, at least if we consider the words *doxa* and *epistēmē* as specific words, with their own meanings and not as umbrella terms embracing all the meanings of on the one hand *pistis*, *eikos* and *doxa* and on the other *alētheia*, *gnosis* and *epistēmē*. This means that the statement that *doxa* cannot be understood outside of its relation to *epistēmē*, as well as the tradition of repeating the opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē*, becomes performative, locking the meaning of the word *doxa* specifically to that relation.

I would like to suggest that we, in future engagements with epistemic tensions in the classical discussions of rhetoric, should follow Hariman's lead and consider whether *doxa* and *epistēmē* is in fact the best terminology to use for a particular discussion. It is conceivable; perhaps that a dichotomy between *pistis-epistēmē* would be more valuable for a cognitively oriented approach, whereas *eikos* and *alētheia* could be useful for a more judicially oriented discussion, and *doxa-alētheia* might be fitting for research that focuses on the function of propositional language. Another option is, of course, to leave the academy of Plato altogether and study other classical authors.

Takis Poulakos (2001) has, for example, studied Isocrates's use of *doxa* and argued that Isocrates's uniqueness lies in his efforts to explore how rhetoric can constitute audiences as civic agents, rather than persuade them to act in a specific way in a particular

situation (65).[2] Poulakos describes Isocrates's view on political deliberation as "sizing up particular situations from the perspective of the community's accepted norms and beliefs, and of judging a particular case by bringing the community's values and commitments to bear on the case at hand" (69). Poulakos describes the orator's challenge as to put *doxa* in closer proximity to *kairos*. This interpretation of Isocrates puts *phronesis* at the heart of the art of *logos*. Whereas Plato establishes methods for distinguishing a true form of knowledge, separated from false *doxa*, Isocrates – according to this reading – dismisses these attempts as hypocrisy and emphasises the importance of traditions and the good examples from history on how to promote the public good (Poulakos 2001, 72). My intention here is neither to support Poulakos' specific reading, nor to inquire into its underpinnings, but only to exemplify that there are other possibilities available.[3]

The role of the public

My readings in the first part of this book show that the central axis of the epistemic tension between *doxa* and *epistēmē* is their relationship to the public. I have illustrated how, in the *Phaedrus*, the word *doxa* is used in both a positive and a negative framing, with the clear difference that in the positive use, *doxa* is related to the individual, whereas in its negative use *doxa* is related to the public. The same patterns can be found when looking at the other dialogues. In the *Theaetetus* and the *Meno*, *doxa* is discussed in a positive potential relation to *epistēmē* and there *doxa* is not at all related to public speaking. In contrast, the *Republic* presents a

2. This reading of Isocrates positions him as extremely relevant to the developments of the field of rhetorical studies since the mid-twentieth century, with its emphasis on ideology and identity. It is worth noting, however, that Isocrates's art is not a critique of ideology, but rather an art of how to use ideology constructively for reasoning. This, perhaps, makes him even more relevant to developments in the field during the beginning of the twenty-first century, where one can note a constructive turn in the relationship to *doxa* and ideology.
3. Another possibility would be to re-invent the notion of *doxa* in light of Gorgias's works. See e.g. Ekaterina V. Haskins (2004b, 15–16, 111–12).

strong opposition between *doxa* and *epistēmē*, and consequently describes *doxa* negatively as related to the masses, to the public sphere of the *polis.*

I argue that this dimension, which is not emphasised enough in the contemporary field of rhetorical studies, is of consequence when the word *doxa* is being used constructively in the development of an epistemology of rhetoric for today. When contemporary epistemological and philosophical discussions move beyond the political sphere and into the realm of individual reasoning or scientific endeavours, they clash with the Platonic formulation of the dichotomy. Contemporary scholars are of course free to appropriate the Platonic discourse, as they see fit, but we should remember Cassin's descriptions of how Plato, in the *Phaedrus*, turns rhetoric into philosophy and dialectics. One of the Platonic shifts that Cassin describes is the widening of rhetoric beyond public speaking to also include private conversation.

This remark is crucial, since it means that we cannot oppose Plato's framing of rhetoric by using the term *doxa* in a way that is unrelated to politics and the public. Such a constructive use of *doxa* is not counter to Plato but is rather in line with Plato's dialogues since the hierarchical dichotomy between *doxa* and *epistēmē* emerges in the arguments where *doxa* is affiliated to the public. Plato does not dismiss *doxa* in all forms, the derided *doxa* in the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic* is derided because of its connection with public speeches and politics.

To direct our attention toward future readings and future engagements with epistemic tensions in relation to rhetoric, I would like to argue for a constructive emphasis on rhetoric in relation to the public, the political and the social. We should work constructively with the possibilities of public *doxa* and the political art of *rhētorikē*, and consequently develop a rhetorical epistemology that captures the dynamics of the public domain.

The construction of Plato

Another dimension that could be deemed problematic in the contemporary engagement with and discussion of a conflict between *doxa* and *epistēmē* in Plato is the lack of clarity about what 'Plato' as a classificatory naming stands for, or more clearly what understanding of *epistēmē* contemporary scholars should contrast *doxa* to. This lack of clarity is a result of the varied understandings of *epistēmē* that can be found in Plato's dialogues, as well as of a lack of clarity regarding this variation in the research of contemporary scholars.

The need to explicate how opposing positions relate to Plato's views is also essential when contemporary scholars, such as McKerrow and Rosengren, present and define their views as being in opposition, not to Plato primarily, but to the *later forms of Platonism*. Are contemporary scholars opposed to a view of knowledge, *episteme*, as a recollection of what the soul already knows because of its previous experience of the eternal, divine world of form? If so, what contemporary philosophical positions might actually defend such a view? Or are they opposed to a rationalist understanding of *logos* and an overestimation of its capacity to support knowledge and guarantee its truthfulness? If so, that would merit an investigation of whether that view can be found in Plato, and if in evidence, is it a standpoint that his writings can be said to defend?[4]

When focusing on the construction of Plato, it becomes clear that the passages in contemporary research, handbooks and encyclopedias which describe a genesis to rhetoric born in epistemic tension often seem to fill a dramaturgical, rather than a heuristic function in their respective texts. Studying this dramaturgical function could provide indications of possible motives.[5] The use of a

4. I am sceptical toward describing Plato's philosophy, and ontology, as a philosophy of language where *epistēmē* as knowledge of the forms is the result of a linguistically oriented reflection, but there are scholars defending that very view. See e.g. Turnbull (1983).
5. With this wording I, of course, indicate a connection to the dramatic perspective of Kenneth Burke (1969a), and his focus on the rhetoric of motives.

polarised model between *doxa* and *episteme* does, for example, recall a supposed age-old conflict between two disciplines, allowing the contemporary rhetorical scholar to construct a position for herself in contrast to a constructed antagonist.

To provide a higher degree of clarity and establish a more complex corpus of material that reveals and explains rather than conceals and dramatises, I would demand more explicit and specified connections to antique texts in the contemporary reconstructions and re-inventions of classical antiquity within rhetorical studies. This could mean acknowledging differences as well as similarities. In my case, I have chosen to highlight the relationship between the *doxa-epistēmē* dichotomy and public politics on the basis of my readings of Plato. There are of course other avenues available, but I consider clarity about the understanding of *epistēmē* being opposed when referring to the *doxa–epistēmē* dichotomy to be a critical aspect when engaging with epistemic tensions in Plato from a contemporary rhetorical position.

This discussion brings us once again to the tension, described in the introduction, between the use of certain established argumentation theories and a rhetorical view of knowledge and persuasion. In chapter 1 I linked this tension to the commonly repeated notion of an epistemic conflict at the moment of rhetoric's genesis as a discipline. To render this link as visible as possible, we could describe the contemporary tension as a tension between contemporary versions of the *epistēmē* of the *Theaetetus* and the *doxa* of the *Republic*.

In the *Theaetetus* Plato defines *epistēmē* as *alēthēs doxa* with *logos*. Levett/Burnyeat and Fowler translate *epistēmē* in the same way in this passage, as knowledge, whereas *alēthēs doxa* with *logos* is translated respectively as "true judgement with an account" (Levett/Burnyeat) and "true opinion accompanied by reason" (Fowler) (*Theaetetus* 201c–d).[6] Both translations illustrate that the *Theaetetus* can be understood as related to a contemporary rationalistic view of knowledge as grounded by argumentation. It is also clear that within such a tradition of contemporary scholar-

6. "τὴν μὲν μετὰ λόγου ἀληθῆ δόξαν ἐπιστήμην εἶναι"

ship, the *Theaetetus* has been given an elevated status within the Platonic *oeuvre*.

If we move beyond the interests of that contemporary form of Platonism, however, and consider the entire dialogue of the *Theaetetus*, as well as its intertext, we can note that this view of *epistēmē* is refuted within the dialogue. We should also note that when Plato, in the *Meno*, takes the argument one step further he does not emphasise *logos* as the giving of a reasonable account, but instead emphasises recollection and the seeing of the world of forms. From this, and our previous investigation, we can conclude that there is a view of *epistēmē* tied to *logos* in Plato, but there is also – and perhaps more clearly – a view of *epistēmē* as seeing the truth in the eternal and divine world of forms, either through *theoria* or recollection (On *theoria*, see Nightingale 2004). This shows us that there is a tension within Plato's writings between *epistēmē* as direct knowledge (produced by the rationality of an inner eye), or as an indirect knowledge, mediated through a discursive *logos*. And then – of course – there is also the general understanding of *epistēmē* as science or as a skilful practice. The reading performed in this part of the book supports Plato giving precedence to direct knowledge, but the iteration of Plato that makes him constructively relevant for a contemporary field of rhetorical studies is the version that focuses on the role of a discursive *logos*. The core of a rhetorical view of knowledge is its dependency on symbol use, and by locating this perspective in Plato he becomes relevant to an epistemology of rhetoric. All this leads us back to the question that Socrates poses to Gorgias in the *Gorgias*, namely what *logos* is rhetoric about? Gorgias answers by specifying that it is the *logos* of the public assemblies about what is just and not just. This understanding of rhetoric leads us – at least if we follow Nichols' mapping of the intertextual links – to the *Republic*.

In the argument about the *dynamis* of *doxa* in the *Republic*, Socrates acknowledges *doxa* as something more than a mere steppingstone to *epistēmē*. This acknowledgement accepts that there is a dimension of the world – related to subjectivity and social knowledge – that we cannot have stable knowledge about. This realm of *doxa* is defined as the domain of uncertainty and ambi-

guity. Plato does indeed dismiss *doxa* in the *Republic*, but if this dismissal is read as a dismissal from a proponent of direct knowledge it renders itself invalid from a contemporary rhetorical perspective. If it, instead, is read as a dismissal from a proponent of another *logon techne*, then that is interesting enough to study further. It does not, however, challenge the status of rhetoric as I portray it, since the realm of the *polis* and public politics would be out of reach of that potential Platonic art of *logos*.

The dramaturgical positioning of the contemporary rhetorical scholar in opposition to a Platonic position is interesting considering the lack of clarity that we have noted regarding what is actually meant by the term *epistēmē*, as well as in relation to the aforementioned tendency whereby contemporary scholars in the process of revolting against Plato actually run the risk of accepting Platonic transformations, such as a separation between good rhetoric and the demands of the *polis'* public nature. This risk of being trapped in the perspectives that we oppose is also present in the very positioning of knowledge itself as an essential question for rhetoric; the dividing line between rhetoric and philosophy could just as well be described in relation to the public or to the art of practical decision-making.

A lesson for future engagements with the concepts of epistemic tensions in Plato, or generally for engagements with the terminology of Plato, could also be to avoid any sweeping pretension and, instead, choose one or two dialogues to focus on. There are – of course – patterns in the Platonic *oeuvre*, but various dialogues are also different, conveying alternative perspectives and thus they can easily be read as conceptual experiments. They provide not only pedagogical illustrations of processes, but conceptual spaces – spaces where specific meanings and specific word-relations emerge and thus provide a platform for thinking.

Processes and faculties

In my readings of the epistemological discussions in Plato's texts I conclude that they do not actually revolve around what we would

call opinions, beliefs or knowledge, but that they primarily discuss and compare human activities. The results of these activities are sometimes connected to falsities or truths, and through this the activities are evaluated, but the key conflict is still how the processes themselves should be understood. To frame Plato's epistemic tensions in relation to rhetoric as a conflict between opinion and true knowledge is therefore somewhat misleading. The interesting question is not how rhetoric is related to different forms of knowledge, it is how rhetoric is performing knowing. The question that a rhetorical scholar should pose in relation to Plato's epistemological discussion is therefore not the one that Ruth Amossy poses, namely how to do things with *doxa*, but rather how to understand *doxa* as a process, as *doxazō* or *dokeō*.[7]

Another aspect of the contemporary framing of the epistemic tension that we have noted is that it tends to discuss knowledge as a result, evaluating that result in relation to truth or falsehood. This strong connection to a clear evaluative framework might be useful for a dramaturgically driven storytelling, but an interest in understanding the complexities of the textual material, as well as a constructive ambition to reuse the tools provided in the material for contemporary purposes would be aided instead by focusing on the processes connected with *logos*, *doxa* and *epistēmē*.

There are, of course, also contemporary scholarly treatments of knowledge and rhetoric that more clearly focus on processes, and as already discussed, some discussions include a critique of Platonism on account of either an acceptance of a divine audience as the frame of reference, or due to an over-confidence in the usefulness of propositional logic. The problems, discussed above, with the lack of correspondence between these criticised views and Plato's texts do not mean that this criticism must be abandoned. The point is merely that the dramatic description of the birth of rhetoric in epistemic tension, and the emblematic use of the terms *doxa* and *episteme*, might be concealing rather than revealing.

A focus on processes and practices constitutes a sharp contrast with a tendency in the contemporary rhetorical discussion, which

7. For an introduction to Ruth Amossy's view on *doxa*, see chapter 11.

is to discuss Plato primarily on the basis of his views of knowledge and its varied qualities. To discuss rhetoric with a focus on knowledge as a result, rather than on processes, could in line with this tradition be seen as falling into a Platonic trap. I would, however, like to argue that the historical framing of the Platonic texts as situated in a historical conflict on higher education indicates that this alleged Platonism should be seen as an effect of the contemporary understanding of Plato, rather than as a direct effect of the arguments in the texts. A difference between the historical context in which the Platonic texts were written, and the position of the contemporary reader is that many of the teachers and writers that Plato explicitly and implicitly functions in relation to have been marginalised. This means that Plato's confrontative arguments, due to the mechanisms of tradition, have lost some of their material. The tendency of contemporary readers toward preunderstanding Plato as an epistemologist and a systematic philosopher, rather than as a practitioner, could be illustrated by the triumphant exclamations of students of rhetoric that, having read Plato, recognise his use of certain practical rhetorical techniques. They seem to be excited by having revealed the practitioner behind the philosopher. During Plato's own active life, the students did not, however, choose primarily between different philosophical systems, but chose between different practices and different pedagogies.[8]

It is somewhat fitting to end this chapter by revisiting the rivalry between Plato and Isocrates and doing so in relation to a focus on processes and practices. Edward Schiappa (1999, 180–84) has argued that there are similarities between Isocrates's teachings and American pragmatism, pointing to Isocrates's regard for informed opinion (*doxa*) and scepticism toward *epistēmē*, his stance that pedagogy should be moral and prepare students for civic affairs, and his preference for practical philosophy over theoretical. This reading illustrates how there are a variety of options available

8. It is important to note that this critique is directed toward a stereotypical way of reading Plato. There are of course many exceptions of this line of thinking in the broad literature on Plato. See e.g. Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (1995).

when revisiting and re-inventing the ancient notion of *doxa* within a contemporary field of rhetorical studies.

The case of Isocrates, when read as a form of pragmatism, also shows that a focus on *doxa* can be used to blur rather than reinstitute the opposition between philosophy and rhetoric as formulated by Plato. This would constitute a different dramaturgical framing than that which dominates in contemporary handbooks and encyclopedias.

7.

Aristotle as a way out?

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has been formative in the various attempts to re-invent rhetoric during the twentieth century. In a European context, Aristotle was the central influence in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *New Rhetoric* (2006, 1958), and Aristotle has also had a paradigmatic influence in an American context. In fact, the very dominance of the so-called Neo-Aristotelian approach to rhetoric has led to an intense debate.[1] Hence, when Laurent Pernot (2005; 2000) describes Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as the "crowning achievement of rhetorical theory in Classical Greece" he expresses a view that is widely shared in the field of rhetorical studies today. Consequently, an in-depth treatment of the epistemology of rhetoric focusing on the contemporary use of classical Greek discussions of rhetoric must, in one way or another, consider the insights and ramifications of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

In light of Plato's harsh criticism of rhetoric, there seem to be three main options available for contemporary scholars who wish to read Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.[2] One option is to describe Aristotle

1. The dominance of Neo-Aristotelianism in modern rhetoric has, famously, been criticised by Edwin Black. For his criticism, originally published in 1956, see Black (1978, 91–131). There are also scholars that look for alternatives to Aristotle, in the Classical Greek tradition, e.g. Ekaterina V. Haskins (2006) article: "Choosing between Isocrates and Aristotle: Disciplinary Assumptions and Pedagogical Implications." The recurring scholarly critique against Aristotelianism in modern day rhetoric should be understood as a critique of the dominant paradigm.
2. The very existence of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has by some philosophically oriented scholars been treated as, what Sprute (1994) calls "a source of embarrassment" (117), leading to various strategies to legitimise the work. From the point of view of modern-day rhetorical studies, the reaction has been the opposite. The very fact that Aristotle wrote on rhetoric contributes to the legitimacy of the field.

as fulfilling Plato's call for a true rhetoric presented in the *Phaedrus* (See e.g. Thompson 1868, xx; Gomperz 1922, 355, 367–68; Fuhrman 1987, 31–32). By this first narrative, Aristotle is the obedient student, but the other *option* is to view Aristotle as a defender of rhetoric countering Plato's unjust critique (See e.g. Vickers 1988). Within this alternate narrative, Aristotle becomes more of a rebel. The third alternative is to emphasise the nuances of the situation, and to describe Aristotle as neither a full-hearted Platonist, nor an intellectual comrade of Gorgias or Isocrates (See e.g. Ijsseling 1976, 33; Vickers 2001, 588–90; Mary P. Nichols 1987, 657–77). Aristotle would, through such a reading of the situation, be described as providing a middle way; he could be understood as – in a very Aristotelian fashion – negotiating between extremes.

In this chapter, I challenge the common reading of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as providing a solution for the epistemic tension that Plato arguably imposed upon rhetoric as a discipline. Throughout this chapter, I try to present a strong case for Aristotle as a way out of or transcendent of the epistemic tension created by Plato, at the same time as I question that same proposition. I begin by presenting Barbara Cassin's (1990) interpretation of Aristotelian rhetoric as ethically neutral, after which I connect Cassin's reading to Glenn W. Most's (1994) analysis of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in relation to Aristotelian endoxology. I then discuss Ekaterina V. Haskins' (2004a) critical reading of the ramifications of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. After presenting these three readings, I dive into the text of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* to add some nuances to our understanding of Aristotle's view of rhetoric and epistemology.

There is an important difference between this chapter and my treatment of Plato in the previous chapters. In the analysis of Plato, I began my inquiry by studying Plato's texts and presented my reading through drawing from them. In this chapter my approach is more limited in scope; I begin by referencing three contributions to the scholarly discussion of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and draw certain conclusions relevant for this study from them. My subsequent reading of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is intended as a supplementary exercise, adjusting, supporting, or adding nuance to the views already presented.

Before continuing, I want first to express my reservations about a key issue in this study. Although I analyse the relation between Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and concepts of knowledge, in particular *doxa* and *endoxa*, this perspective does not mean that questions of knowledge or truth lie at the heart of Aristotle's work. On the contrary, I agree with Grimaldi (1998) that Aristotle's analysis of the enthymeme is the most central contribution of the *Rhetoric* (25–27, 66–114).[3] Nevertheless, it is relevant to ask how Aristotle's *Rhetoric* treats questions of knowledge in relation to the emphasis that is put on those questions in Plato and in modern-day scholarship. In doing so we must recognise the alternative meanings at play in discussions of an 'epistemology of rhetoric' and in connecting *doxa* and rhetoric. This difference relates to whether we talk about rhetoric as practice, or rhetoric as the theory and study of practice (cf. Burke 1969b, 36). Are we discussing the role of *doxa* in political persuasion or in scholarly reflection? Both perspectives are at play in Plato's works and in Aristotle's.

Cassin and rhetoric as a neutral *technē*

Barbara Cassin's reading of Aristotle in "Bonnes et mauvaises rhétoriques: de Platon à Perelman" (1990) treats the essence of rhetoric and the question of its ethics (26–29). She presents a reading of Aristotle that emphasises his decision to take a step back from direct persuasion and instead envision rhetoric as a reflective position dealing with the analysis of conditions for persuasion and, by extension, relations of causality.

The most clear-cut support for Cassin's interpretation is Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric*, 1355b; trans. by Kennedy, brackets in original).[4] Aristotle encourages the scholar to take a step back to a reflective position. This approach

3. Focusing on the *enthymeme* would also provide different access points to a discussion of knowledge. Grimaldi (1998, 115–44) does, for example, analyse the role of *eikos* and *semeia* in relation to the *ethymeme*.

4. "τὸ ἰδεῖν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα πιθανὰ περὶ ἕκαστον,"

allows for an academic rhetoric that distinguishes between the scholarly discipline and the grubby practice of deliberative, judicial or epideictic speech. In addition, Aristotle's academic rhetoric is not vulnerable to Plato's attacks on public oratory as *praxis*. His rhetoric is, instead, a process of reflection; Aristotle explains that rhetorical techniques are used by many people and that it, consequently, is possible to inquire into the systems of those techniques and their effects.

For Cassin, the reflective rhetoric of Aristotle is similar to Aristotelian dialectics, since both arts are universal and deal with the probable, but also separate as dialectics is normative and driven by a certain ambition to derive justifiable, true knowledge from the probable. In contrast, rhetoric has no such ambition. The technical knowledge that rhetoric produces can be used for good or bad, but as an art it, according to Cassin, precedes intention. In other words, Aristotelian rhetoric is not immoral, but amoral. Cassin does, however, argue for a specific form of morality structurally inherent in Aristotle's understanding of rhetoric. She argues that rhetoric is concerned with speeches in general and becomes corrupted if it concerns itself with the evaluation of the content of speech; in doing so rhetoric would stretch its grasp into areas beyond its original territory and thereby subsumes itself in politics (Cassin 1990, 28). When in the *Gorgias* Socrates asks whether Gorgias, as a teacher of rhetoric, also teaches his students what is true Aristotle's answer, according to Cassin, would be that such a task is by definition beyond the art of rhetoric.

Even though Cassin's reading of Aristotelian rhetoric is not focused on epistemology, but on ethics, her understanding of Aristotelian rhetoric as focused on causality has epistemological consequences. Cassin's rendering of Aristotle does, for example, place any question of truth outside of rhetoric and thereby sidesteps the accusation that rhetoric is an art of deception. There is, however, a passage in the beginning of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that challenges Cassin's description of the *Rhetoric* as neutral in relation to truth. Aristotle claims that "the true and the just are by nature stronger than their opposites," from which follows that if everyone has equal rhetorical skills the truth will be served (1355a ; trans. by

Kennedy).[5] With this argument, Aristotle on the one hand could be said to counter the criticism by Plato that rhetoric will make the rhetor more convincing than the doctor in cases concerning medicine (a rebel position). On the other hand, however, he could arguably be accused of reasserting the service of truth as an ethical criterion for rhetoric (the perspective of a faithful disciple). Another counterargument to the reading of Aristotle as an ethically neutral study of effects can be found in Jamie Dow's *Passions and Persuasion in Aristotle's Rhetoric* (2015). Dow argues that the *Rhetoric*'s concern with *pisteis* should not be understood as a concern with persuasion, but with "proofs" or "proper grounds for conviction." This reading presents a clearly normative foundation for Aristotle's rhetoric that contradicts Cassin's reading.

In general, I find Cassin's reading compelling, but it has two major weaknesses, where the rebellious position could, arguably, be understood as evolving into what I have labelled the "disciple" position in relation to Plato's epistemology. The first weakness is the introductory quote mentioned above, where he states that truth tends to prevail, which marries well with doubts about the neutrality of Aristotelian rhetoric sowed by Dow. The second is the lack of any thought-through epistemology for the art of rhetoric. Cassin's text lacks an inquiry into the methodology of the discipline of rhetoric. The neutral position might salvage rhetoric from Plato's criticism of public oratory, but the question then is what epistemological ground it leaves for rhetoric as a scholarly practice. When Cassin (1990) writes: "Rhetoric is beyond any possible doubt a *techne*, a *dynamis* – yes, even an *episteme* – since it is a causal knowing" (26),[6] she merely applies a label to the art itself. The quote is suggestive, but as a reflection on the *methodology* of the discipline of rhetoric it is unclear. The passage is certainly not an explicit anchoring of rhetoric in *doxa*, signalling a clear break from the teachings of the *Phaedrus*. Both of these weaknesses are discussed in more detail below, where I engage with the idea of

5. "τὸ φύσει εἶναι κρείττω τἀληθῆ καὶ τὰ δίκαια τῶν ἐναντίων"
6. Quote translated by Mats Rosengren.

endoxology, an Aristotelian epistemology for the ethico-political sciences anchored in *endoxa*.

Glenn W. Most, endoxology and rhetoric

Whereas Cassin provides us with a potential Aristotelian escape route from Plato's condemnation by presenting a scholarly study of rhetoric that takes an ethically neutral position, she does not explicitly explore the idea that Aristotle's framework provides a re-evaluation of *doxa* or *endoxa* as a constructive form of human knowledge. Her text is in other words not a re-evaluation that includes a positive rendering of the probable and received opinions, nor a positive rendering of the practice of arguing on many sides of an issue. Glenn W. Most, in contrast, performs exactly this type of reading of Aristotle in his article "The uses of endoxa: philosophy and rhetoric in the *Rhetoric*" (1994). To establish the intimate connection between rhetoric and *endoxa*, Most emphasises that oratory deals with that which could be otherwise such as decisions about individual actions of persons or cities.[7] On the meaning of *endoxa*, Most examines the connection between *endoxa* and *eikos*, underscoring that *eikos*, or probability, is not a quantifiable term as we tend to understand it today, but rather a question about what is deemed believable, which lies within the meaning of *endoxa*.[8]

Regarding the difference between practice and theory, Most clarifies that contingency as the foundation of oratory does not necessarily lead to contingency as the foundation of Aristotelian rhetoric. He does, however, claim that in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* practice and the study of practice share this same foundation. Even though Aristotle, according to Most, avoids making rhetoric into the study of how to persuade individual people, but rather

7. Most (1994) paraphrases Aristotle and claims that "no one deliberates about that which could not be otherwise" (172). See also Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1354b, 1357a, 1359a.
8. Most's comment on *eikos* and *doxa* could, easily, be linked to the semantic argument by Socrates at the end of the *Phaedrus*, where he argues that *eikos* must be understood as nothing other than *doxa*. I treat this passage in chapter 3, under the heading: "The relation between *doxa, alētheia* and *eikos.*"

describes rhetoric as concerned with certain types of people and thereby makes it more abstract, he still describes contingency as the necessary foundation of this endeavour. Most reasons that an art aimed at understanding the causes of individual actions by necessity becomes an art that deals with contingency.

As mentioned in the discussion of Cassin, Aristotelian dialectics and rhetoric are both dependent on what is deemed probable. Most adds that Aristotelian politics, ethics and poetics also share this foundation. Regarding the area of the probable, we must note that the explicit use of the term *endoxa* in the *Rhetoric* is scarce. Hence, scholars of rhetoric have been inclined to explain how Aristotle understands *endoxa* in the *Rhetoric* through other writings, such as the *Nichomachean ethics* or the *Topics*. The strengths of Most's and Haskins' articles (the latter presented below) are that they do not only complement their understanding of *endoxa* in the *Rhetoric*, by supporting it with perspectives from other works, they also investigate what is specific for the *Rhetoric*. In doing so, Most focuses on the relation between the *Rhetoric* and Aristotle's ethical and political writings.

The passage on *endoxa* in Aristotle's works that is most referred to in rhetorically oriented scholarship is from the *Nichomachean ethics*, where Aristotle uses the term *endoxa* when reflecting on the process of developing a better understanding of a subject:

> As in other cases, we must set out what appears true about our subjects, and, having first raised the problems, thus display, if we can, all the views [*endoxa*] people hold about these ways of being affected, and if not, the larger part of them, and the most authoritative; for if one can both resolve the difficult issues about a subject and leave people's views [*endoxa*] about it undisturbed, it will have been clarified well enough. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1145b; trans. by Rowe)[9]

9. "δεῖ δ', ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, τιθέντας τὰ φαινόμενα καὶ πρῶτον διαπορήσαντας οὕτω δεικνύναι μάλιστα μὲν πάντα τὰ ἔνδοξα περὶ ταῦτα τὰ πάθη, εἰ δὲ μή, τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ κυριώτατα· ἐὰν γὰρ λύηταί τε τὰ δυσχερῆ καὶ καταλείπηται τὰ ἔνδοξα, δεδειγμένον ἂν εἴη ἱκανῶς."

This process – which Ekaterina V. Haskins (2004a) refers to as *endoxology* – is laid out in Most's (1994, 175–77) article. He argues that in his ethico-political writings, Aristotle presents a model for working with *endoxa* in different disciplines. The process is described as consisting of four steps: one is supposed to a) collect and systematise everything that has been said about the subject at hand, b) select, out of this totality, the most reputable views, c) test those *endoxa* for contradictions, which entails transforming them into verified knowledge and then d) to test the doctrines that one has arrived at against the public *doxa*. Most compares the last of these stages to the philosopher going back to the cave in the famous metaphor of the *Republic*.

However, this process is not, according to Most, consistently adhered to in Aristotle's ethico-political writings. On the contrary, he claims that Aristotle often abandons the model in his practical arguments. Nevertheless, it is there as an ideal process, but – and this is a key point – not in the *Rhetoric*. The *Rhetoric* only includes steps a) and b). Nowhere in the text is there a step c) or d), where the consistency and coherence of the *endoxa* is tested (Most 1994, 178). In accordance with this change of process, the selection process of step b) also focuses entirely on what is widespread. Whereas dialectics take the opinions of the wise into account, rhetoric only does so when the opinions of the wise are also widespread.[10]

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's notion of the universal audience is an attempt to negotiate between the competing frames of reference of the many and the wise, but – as pointed out by Cassin – their approach expands rhetoric beyond Aristotelian limits, and makes it vulnerable once again to Plato's criticism as normative practice, but also to the lure of Plato's epistemology, since the salvation from such criticism is a divine audience (Cassin 1990, 32–35). Most (1994) argues instead that "[w]hat is at issue is not the truth or falsehood of these premises, but their serviceability for the arguments he wishes to construct"; he explains that "the

10. Most (1994) quotes Aristotle, saying that "dialectic does not construct its deductions out of any haphazard materials, such as the fancies of crazy people, but out of materials that call for discussions; and rhetoric draws upon the regular subjects for debate" (178).

only test these definitions have to pass is that of seeming plausible to oratorical audiences; whether or not the philosophers consider them true simply does not matter" (181).

The reading of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that Most presents thus falls neatly in line with Cassin's analysis of the difference between rhetoric and dialectics, where the goal of rhetoric is to persuade. What Most adds is a more detailed description of how the process of developing an argument differs between rhetoric and dialectics and, specifically, how these processes differ in their use of *endoxa*.

In relation to the dual meanings of rhetoric, as both practice and theory, the thrust of Most's article is to move the two closer to each other. Most's description of how *endoxa* is handled in rhetoric is largely a description of how *endoxa* should be handled in the process of developing persuasive arguments, and therefore it can be understood as a statement on effective rhetorical practice. Most, however, interprets the scholarly work of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as public oratory, which implies that the general process of arguing from *endoxa* described in the *Rhetoric* as a work on public argumentation would also be the process used for developing rhetorical theory.

Indeed, the idea that Aristotle's work on rhetorical theory should be read as public oratory is somewhat provocative, but Most shows that this interpretation has heuristic value. He uses it to explain the discrepancy between the introduction of the *Rhetoric*, where Aristotle argues that the truth tends to prevail, and the rest of the *Rhetoric* where rhetoric is described as concerned with contingency and that which is deemed probable. The question is whether the Aristotelian defence of rhetoric is anchored in the value of *aletheia* or in the acknowledgement of *doxa/endoxa* as an ever-present human condition? Most (1994, 187–88) describes how scholars have tried to explain this discrepancy *chronologically*, positing that the passages were written at different times; or *philosophically*, in which the introduction describes an ideal situation, whereas the rest of the work treats rhetoric in terms of practice. Most, however, solves this discrepancy in a third way, namely *rhetorically*, by interpreting the *Rhetoric* as a piece of public oratory. To support this interpretation he refers to the contextual infor-

mation that Aristotle's lectures on rhetoric are said to have been delivered in the afternoon and that there are indications that the afternoon lectures were open to a broader public (Most 1994, 182–83). According to Most, Aristotle's introductory remark that rhetoric based upon knowledge of the truth tends to prevail (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1355a) should not be understood systematically as concerned with the epistemological foundation of rhetoric, but as a comparative remark promoting Aristotle as a teacher of rhetoric in contrast with competing schools, such as Isocrates's. Even though Aristotle systematically portrays rhetoric as a neutral *technē*, he seeks to market his own strength as a logician and dialectician. This explanation adheres neatly to the interpretation of Aristotle promoted by Cassin but provides a more complex understanding of the context. For Aristotle, it is reasonable to promote a rhetoric that is restricted in relation to other subjects and thereby dependent on them since this restriction means that the students of rhetoric will require a teacher who is knowledgeable not only in rhetoric, but also in ethics, politics and every subject of oratory. They need Aristotle.

The interpretation of Aristotle's arguments about rhetoric and truth as audience adaptation could also be supported by another passage from the *Rhetoric*; where Aristotle makes clear that the public view at the time is that *aletheia* is preferred compared to *doxa*. In the passage, Aristotle presents commonplaces for argumentation, and particularly degrees of good: He writes: "and the things related to truth [are greater] than things related to opinion." (1365a–b; trans. by Kennedy)[11] Taken out of context, this quote could be misread as a programmatic statement that truth (*aletheia*) is better than opinion (*doxa*), but within context it is clear that Aristotle is merely listing different possible arguments relating to degrees of the good. Hence, the quote constitutes an example of a type of argument that Aristotle considers potentially effective. Moreover, "opinion" might not be the most adequate translation, *doxa* could just as well (and I tend to believe better) be translated

11. "καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν τῶν πρὸς δόξαν."

in a way that places focus on reputation.[12] The Aristotelian point of view seems to be that an audience tends to listen to someone who they believe speaks the truth, rather than to someone who is famous (or held in high repute) – and that a rhetor can use this opposition to position themself in an advantageous way and thereby strengthen the persuasiveness of their argument. The latter is arguably what Aristotle does in the introduction where he, according to Most, tries to strengthen his own ethos as a teacher of rhetoric by claiming that the best teacher of rhetoric is the one that has knowledge of the truth.

Ekaterina V. Haskins, endoxology and the challenge of rhetoric

Ekaterina V. Haskins shares Most's emphasis on the notion of *endoxa* and agrees that there is a consistency in Aristotle's understanding of *endoxa* throughout his texts. However, in Haskins article: "Endoxa, epistemological optimism, and Aristotle's rhetorical project" (2004a), she presents a critique of Aristotle that is valuable for my project (See also Haskins 2006). The heart of Haskins's criticism is the clash between Aristotle's "epistemological optimism" and rhetoric as *praxis* integrated in a cultural context. She argues that "Aristotle's manner of selecting and categorizing his linguistic resources allows him to transform what we would consider beliefs into natural, and hence, atemporal premises" (Haskins 2004a, 1).

What Haskins (2004a) labels "epistemological optimism" includes Aristotle's positive attitude towards *endoxa*, based on a

12. That the term *doxa*, in this quote, rather should be translated as "reputation" could be supported by the following sentence, where Aristotle, in Kennedy's translation writes: "The definition of related to opinion is what a person would not choose if he were going to escape notice." In Greek: "ὅρος δὲ τοῦ πρὸς δόξαν, ὃ λανθάνειν μέλλων οὐκ ἂν ἕλοιτο." Thereafter, Aristotle continues to discuss whether people choose to do good or not when they are in secrecy. As pointed out by Kennedy, this passage relates to the story of the ring of Gyges in Plato's *Republic*, 2.359—360. It is clear that the passage thematises the tension between secrecy or non-secrecy in relation to the public. In other words, the focus is on reputation. See note 151 on page 71 in Kennedy's translation.

belief in the human ability to correctly grasp the world through our senses (4). Rather than presuming that we are always being tricked by our senses or the world, Aristotle, according to Haskins, believes that our senses under good circumstances tend to get things right. In addition, Aristotle trusts the human capacity to describe perceptual states through linguistic expressions (4–5). As a consequence, Aristotle believes that the *endoxa* of the wise and the many tend to possess truth.

Haskins understands the Aristotelian approach, or scientific method, as a process of distilling truths – or verified knowledge – from *endoxa*. As discussed above, Most has derived a model for that process. Haskins, however, provides a more detailed analysis of the particular way in which Aristotle weighs up different *endoxa* to find an explanation that captures the truth of the different positions. The most significant contribution in Haskins article is her critical reading of the implications of Aristotle's way of dealing with *endoxa*.[13]

The core of Haskins's criticism is that Aristotle in his use of *endoxa* builds on highly culturally situated speech acts, but as a consequence of his method and *telos*, distances these speech acts from their cultural context and treats them as a-cultural ideas. She agrees with Martha Nussbaum that Aristotle's method is anthropocentric but adds that the anthropocentrism is not culturally oriented. Instead, she claims that Aristotle professes a universal anthropocentrism. As famously illustrated in Raphael's painting, *The School of Athens*, where Plato points to the heavens and Aristotle to the ground, there is a difference between Plato and Aristotle that could be explained by emphasising Aristotle's empiricist view; Haskins does not contradict this but shows that Aristotle – through his method – strives towards a system that is as a-cultural and eternal as Plato's famous world of forms. He may point to the ground, but the innate tendency of his methodology is to move away from the complexity of the world by reconstructing a system of ideas that exists beyond particular utterances.

13. Haskins's (2004a) argument on the truth-value of *pro et contra* reasoning in Aristotle relies on Denyer (1991, 209–10).

The universal anthropocentrism of Aristotle is, according to Haskins, driven by two assumptions. Firstly, there exists an optimism in relation to the human senses' tendency to get things right, which leads to the belief that there is one correct and true understanding of the phenomenal world, including that of politics, ethics, poetics, and rhetoric. Secondly, Aristotle exhibits a belief in the capacity of language to describe the phenomenal world, which leads to the acceptance of processes of generalisation and abstraction. This second assumption is reinforced by Aristotle's *praxis* to extract linguistic propositions from cultural contexts and treat them – not as acts – but as free-floating ideas unrelated to the original context in which they were uttered. Hence, we have three important Aristotelian processes: generalisation, abstraction and deculturalisation.

The processes of generalisation, abstraction and deculturalisation, described by Haskins not only have consequences for an epistemology of rhetoric by giving primacy to a universal perspective; they also lead to an objectification and commodification of knowledge. Aristotle treats earlier thinkers not as performers, but as "depositories of information" (Haskins 2004a, 8). The modern-day ramifications of that manoeuvre are significant. We can see that scholars today tend to consider *doxa* and *episteme* as different types of knowledge-objects. Such an approach is aligned with Aristotle's view, whereas Plato sought instead to bring these processes to the fore and, most clearly in book V of the *Republic* presents *doxa* and *epistēmē* as *dynameis*. Hence, the contemporary reading of Plato could be considered Aristotelian. Furthermore, the contemporary rendering of *episteme* as related to rationality, abstraction and linguistic premises corresponding to stable ideas is, arguably, more clearly anchored in the practice of Aristotle than in the practice of Plato.

For Haskins, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* constitutes a challenge to his entire epistemology or, with her own terminology, to his endoxology. This gives rhetoric a similar position in the writings of Aristotle as in Plato's. Rhetoric constitutes an example of a culturally anchored and lived *praxis* that does not only compete with Plato

and Aristotle in regard to status within the field of education, but also challenges the premises of their philosophical enterprises.

> I contend that Aristotle consistently assimilates culturally and historically specific opinions to a system of knowledge that is meant to reflect natural stability of the cosmos, social institutions, and human behaviour. In the case of the art of rhetoric, however, his approach to endoxa collides with contemporary rhetorical practices, whose own claims to social knowledge threaten Aristotle's hierarchical partitions between proper objects of inquiry. (Haskins 2004a, 7)

All this leads us back to Aristotle's introductory statement regarding the natural superiority of truth, where rhetoric is thought of as both separate from and inferior to scientific and ethical deliberation. Haskins' reading could be synthesised with Cassin's vision of a pragmatic rhetoric and would not then constitute a criticism of Aristotle's notion of rhetoric *per se*, but only of the method that Aristotle uses to develop his causal rhetoric. Haskins does herself, however, lean toward a critical account that includes not only Aristotle's methodology, but also critiques the very framework of his understanding of the practice of rhetoric as it deprives rhetorical practice of its epistemological value:

> Aristotle's immersion in cultural particularity is not so convincing once we consider how he qualifies the use of popular linguistic resources. Whereas Aristotle admits endoxa as materials of argumentative support (means of oratory), he does not allow them to figure as epistemologically legitimate articulations of social and ethical ends. The boundary Aristotle constructs between "mere words" and substantive politics and ethics does not dissolve after the first chapter of the *Rhetoric* – it is reinforced in the rest of the treatise thanks to the decontextualisation of *endoxa* and the separation of style from the discussion of proofs and genres. (Haskins 2004a, 14–15)

In conclusion, Haskins understands Aristotle's rhetoric as an attempt to manage the social and cultural institution of rhetoric, within the Aristotelian system, but argues that this process leads to a decapitating of rhetoric by separating it from the pragmatic and culturally embeddedness that is its lifeblood. *Endoxa* is not

viewed "within a living and breathing chunk of culture," but the readers of Aristotle find them "flattened out" (Haskins 2004a, 15). They become ideas without situations, thoughts without the intrinsic flavour of style. This leads to a rhetoric that is subservient to other disciplines, always a mere channel of communication and never actually contributing to the specific spheres of knowledge furnished by other arts. Put concretely, the Aristotelian perspective is that the young men of fourth century Athens should not listen to speeches in society to learn anything about the principles of ethics or politics but should instead attend *Lyceum* and listen to Aristotle's lectures on these same matters. Knowledge of rhetoric is not useful to acquire knowledge in other areas, but merely to communicate it.

Haskins' rendering of Aristotelian rhetoric adds more nuances to the difference, pointed out by Most, between the *Rhetoric* and Aristotle's other ethico-political writings. Whereas the other arts – including poetics – contribute to the distilling of truths from *endoxa*, rhetoric is non-fertile, a dead end, in the cultivation of wisdom. In relation to the two weaknesses in Cassin's reading of Aristotle pointed out above, Haskins shows that it is not only in the introduction that Aristotle shows distrust towards *endoxa* as culturally embedded knowledge. On the contrary, this view permeates the entire work. She also provides the detailed description of Aristotelian methodology, that Cassin's text lacks, and substantiates why Aristotle should be found wanting.

Epistemological ramifications of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: *doxa* and *endoxa* in the text

Thus far I have examined Aristotle's rhetoric, through the lens of other scholars. I now turn directly to the text of the *Rhetoric* itself, and, in line with my analyses of Plato, present a close reading of Aristotle's use of certain key terms. I look particularly at Aristotle's use of *doxa* and the derivative term *endoxa*, which has become a widespread technical term in modern scholarship on Aristotle.

Looking at the Greek text, the word *doxa* is used 29 times in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. The word is, however, at no point presented as a theoretical concept. Instead, it is commonly used in descriptions and explanation of different types of arguments. Furthermore, in 14 of these passages Kennedy chooses to either translate *doxa* as "reputation" or, through the translation, clearly signals that it refers to aspects thereof, such as fame and public attention.[14] It is worth noting that reputation and fame play a significant role in the Aristotelian understanding of rhetoric and *doxa*, but a more detailed investigation of this is beyond the focus of this chapter.[15]

Even though Aristotle's *Rhetoric* lacks the kind of potent discussion of *doxa* provided in book V of Plato's *Republic*, for example, some passages provide insights into the epistemological ramifications of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. My close reading of these passages below supports the view that Aristotle employed a pragmatic understanding of *doxa* as something that can be collected and used for the purpose of persuasion, separated between mental/ideal *doxa* and expressed propositions, and that he adopted a negative attitude towards public *doxa*, which also casts rhetoric in a negative light.

That Aristotle employed a pragmatic understanding of *doxa* and distinguishes between *doxa* and propositions can be supported by a passage in the beginning of book II, 1377b. There, Aristotle summarises book I and claims that these are "the kinds of opinions [*doxai*] and propositions [*protaseis*] useful for persuasive expression, as enthymemes are concerned with these matters and drawn from these sources" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric 1377b*; trans. by Kennedy, brackets added by me).[16] The pragmatic attitude towards *doxai* is

14. The second most common translation by Kennedy is: opinion. It is, however, noteworthy that in 1379a, Kennedy in two instances translates *doxa* as that which is "expected," a translation that calls attention to another related meaning of the term.
15. A passage that we discussed above in relation to Most's article and will not return to here is 1365a–b, from which we learned that the public opinion at the time of Aristotle was that *aletheia* was preferred to *doxa*, or in English that truth as a value, was held in higher esteem than fame.
16. "ποῖαι δόξαι καὶ προτάσεις χρήσιμοι πρὸς τὰς τούτων πίστεις, ταῦτ' ἐστίν· περὶ γὰρ τούτων καὶ ἐκ τούτων τὰ ἐνθυμήματα."

clear in the quotes. *Doxai* are described as useful and as fulfilling a clear function for argumentation. The formulation "opinions and propositions," *doxai* and *protaseis*, indicates that Aristotle renders a difference between conceptual *doxai* and the expressed *protaseis.*[17]

A similar distinction is provided in 1391b, where Aristotle once again reflects upon his own work and mentions that *doxai* and *protaseis* have been collected for the different genres, and clarifies that it is from these that "[speakers] derive pisteis" (Aristotle, Rhetoric 1391b; trans. by Kennedy, brackets in original.)[18] Once again, Aristotle separates between *doxa* and that which is expressed, as well as understanding *doxa* as something that is *used* in argumentation. Moreover, the plural form, *doxai*, is used consistently, in these passages, implying that these useful *doxai* can be collected, counted, and ordered. A particularly illustrative example of how Aristotle's separates between idea and expression, as well as the pragmatic framing of *doxa*, is provided in 1378b. There, Aristotle states that "belittling [*oligōria*] is an actualization [EB: *energeia*] of opinion [EB: *doxa*] about what seems worthless." (1378b. Translation by Kennedy. Added brackets marked with "EB:")[19] Whereas the two formerly mentioned quotes were general descriptions, this quote concerns a particular practice, where by speaking or doing something, force is given to a *doxa* that is understood as existing beyond the utterance. There are also two other quotes in book II that support the interpretation of Plato as distinguishing between verbal utterances and *doxai*. In 1403a, Aristotle describes "objection," *enstasis*, as the "stating of an opin-

17. Someone might react to Kennedy's translation of *protaseis*, here, as propositions and my choice to describe *protaseis* as "expressed" in light of the common translation of *protaseis* as "premises". True, the translation of *protaseis* as "premises" does not emphasise that *protaseis* is expressed, but when considering that *protaseis* is derived from the Greek *proteinomai*, which means "to put forward," then I consider the interpretation of it as "propositions" and "expressions" more accurate than the more passive-sounding "premises" (LSJ, A Greek-English Lexicon, s.v. 'Προτείνω').
18. In this passage Kennedy translates *protaseis* as premises, but, for clarity, I use the transliterated Greek term when referencing the passage.
19. "ἡ ὀλιγωρία ἐστὶν ἐνέργεια δόξης περὶ τὸ μηδενὸς ἄξιον φαινόμενον,".

ion" (1403a; trans. by Kennedy).[20] And in 1395b Aristotle claims that maxims "hit upon opinions" (1395b; trans. by Kennedy).[21] Both formulations separate between verbal utterance and *doxa* and strengthen the interpretation that *doxa* has a pragmatic function. The latter passage, however, brings forth a third important aspect in relation to the Aristotelian framework, namely its negative understanding of the audience:

> [Maxims] make one great contribution to speeches because of the uncultivated mind of the audience; for people are pleased if someone in a general observation hits upon opinions that they themselves have about a particular instance. (1395b; trans. by Kennedy; brackets added by me)[22]

This negative portrayal of the listening masses becomes clear when Aristotle describes the effects of hitting upon *doxa* as caused by the "uncultivated mind of the audience." There is also another passage where rhetoric's concern with *doxa* is related to the corruption of the audience:

> An Art concerned with delivery [the delivery of oratory] has not yet been composed, since even consideration of lexis was late in developing and delivery seems a vulgar matter when rightly understood. But since the whole business of rhetoric is with opinion, one should pay attention to delivery, not because it is right but because it is necessary, since true justice seeks nothing more in a speech than neither to offend nor to entertain; for to contend by means of facts themselves is just, with the result that everything except demonstration is incidental; but, nevertheless, [delivery] has great power, as has been

20. "τὸ εἰπεῖν δόξαν τινὰ ἐξ ἧς ἔσται δῆλον ὅτι οὐ συλλελόγισται ἢ ὅτι ψεῦδός τι εἴληφεν." Note that I, here, have included an extended quotation, where Aristotle specifies that objection is the stating of an opinion "from which it will be clear that the opponent's argument does not constitute a syllogism or that he has introduced something false."
21. "ἐπιτύχῃ τῶν δοξῶν."
22. "ἔχουσι δ' εἰς τοὺς λόγους βοήθειαν μεγάλην μίαν μὲν διὰ τὴν φορτικότητα τῶν ἀκροατῶν· χαίρουσι γὰρ ἐάν τις καθόλου λέγων ἐπιτύχῃ τῶν δοξῶν ἃς ἐκεῖνοι κατὰ μέρος ἔχουσιν"

> said, because of the corruption of the audience. (1403b–1404a; trans. by Kennedy, brackets in original)[23]

In this quote, Aristotle gives rational demonstration a revered position and connects rhetoric's concern with *doxa* to a negative rendering of the public audience. It is clear that this connection leads to a negative evaluation of rhetoric as a *technē*. Rhetoric may be necessary, but it is to be understood as a necessary evil, rather than a necessary good. It is noteworthy that in all the quotes above *doxa* is used in relation to the practice of rhetoric. Also, in this last quote, where the study of rhetoric is framed negatively, this negative framing is posed indirectly through a criticism of the practice. Hence, in Aristotle's rendering of public *doxa*, the contemporary scholar can trace the echo of Plato's Socrates and his disdain for public oratory.

Thus far, I have analysed Aristotle's use of the term *doxa* in the *Rhetoric*, but as noted above the term *endoxa* (plural of *endoxos*) is often used in scholarship on epistemological aspects of Aristotle's works. That *endoxa* has acquired the status of technical terminology in the literature on Aristotle is also underscored by the fact that Kennedy on several occasions chooses to inform readers of his translation that *endoxa* is used in the Greek original.

What then is the semantic difference between *doxa* and *endoxa*? The *Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon* (*LSJ*) describes *doxa* as "notion, opinion, judgement", including the negative meaning "mere opinion," but also the "opinions which others have of one, estimation, repute." Regarding the latter meaning, *LSJ* notes that it is mostly reputation in a positive sense, as good repute (LSJ, s.v. "Δόξα".). Regarding *endoxos (*plural: *endoxa*), *LSJ* notes that the term is derived from *doxa*, and describes the

23. "οὔπω δὲ σύγκειται τέχνη περὶ αὐτῶν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὴν λέξιν ὀψὲ προῆλθεν· καὶ δοκεῖ φορτικὸν εἶναι, καλῶς ὑπολαμβανόμενον. ἀλλ' ὅλης οὔσης πρὸς δόξαν τῆς πραγματείας τῆς περὶ τὴν ῥητορικήν, οὐχ ὡς ὀρθῶς ἔχοντος ἀλλ' ὡς ἀναγκαίου τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ποιητέον, ἐπεὶ τό γε δίκαιόν <ἐστι> μηδὲν πλέον ζητεῖν περὶ τὸν λόγον ἢ ὥστε μήτε λυπεῖν μήτ' εὐφραίνειν· δίκαιον γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀγωνίζεσθαι τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὥστε τἆλλα ἔξω τοῦ ἀποδεῖξαι περίεργα ἐστίν· ἀλλ' ὅμως μέγα δύναται, καθάπερ εἴρηται, διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ μοχθηρίαν."

concept as something held in esteem or honour, something generally approved. *Endoxos* is also opposed to what is necessarily true and, accordingly, described as resting on opinion, something probable and generally admitted (LSJ, s.v. "Ἔνδοξος"). There are clear semantic links between the terms *doxa* and *endoxa*, as described by *LSJ*, but a clear difference could be found in the very form of the derivation that forms *endoxa* from *doxa*; whereas *doxa* commonly means good reputation, endoxa means that which is held in high repute. Therefore, a scholarly focus on the notion of *endoxa*, rather than *doxa*, suggests a focus on opinions and reputations as knowledge-objects rather than as human processes.

The term *endoxos* is used – in different grammatical forms – in four different passages within the *Rhetoric*. In one passage the term is used, twice, to talk about famous people; this use is noteworthy but does not require further attention. The other three passages are more relevant since Aristotle, in them, shows how he understands and ranks rhetoric in relation to dialectics.

The first quote is found at the beginning of book II. There Aristotle presents an intricate argument concerning the relation between *pisteis* and demonstration, syllogisms, and enthymemes. In relation to our study, we can best understand it as a statement about the relationship between *endoxa* and truth as well as the arts related to them. Aristotle suggests that:

> he who is best able to see from what materials, and how, a syllogism arises would also be most enthymematic – if he grasps also what sort of things an enthymeme is concerned with and what differences it has from a logical syllogism; for 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; thus an ability to aim at commonly held opinions [*endoxa*] is a characteristic of one who also has a similar ability in regard to the truth. (1355a; trans. by Kennedy, brackets in original)[24]

24. "ὁ μάλιστα τοῦτο δυνάμενος θεωρεῖν, ἐκ τίνων καὶ πῶς γίνεται συλλογισμός, οὗτος καὶ ἐνθυμηματικὸς ἂν εἴη μάλιστα, προσλαβὼν περὶ ποῖά τέ ἐστι τὸ ἐνθύμημα καὶ τίνας ἔχει διαφορὰς πρὸς τοὺς λογικοὺς συλλογισμούς. τό τε γὰρ ἀληθὲς καὶ τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ἀληθεῖ τῆς αὐτῆς ἐστι δυνάμεως ἰδεῖν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὸ ἀληθὲς

In this quote Aristotle states two things. Firstly, he asserts that the one with the capacity to find truth is the one best fitted to be persuasive in relation to *endoxa*. Secondly, he writes that humans err towards truth and consequently that there is also such direction towards truth in people's *endoxa*. These two arguments position the dialectician and logician as superior to the rhetorician, which is beneficial for Aristotle, who is not only a teacher of oratory, but also of logic and dialectics. Furthermore, they provide a defence for Aristotle's engagement with the realm of *endoxa*. This line of argument establishes Aristotle's superiority within the realm of rhetoric at the same time as it counters any malicious critique regarding his engagement with false beliefs.

If we relate the passage above to the notion of rhetoric in epistemic tension, we see that Aristotle provides the terminological distinction between *endoxa* and *aletheia* for the two epistemic poles in that tension. We can, in support of the idea of an Aristotelian way out, mention that Aristotle defends the truth-value of *endoxa*. However, the narration of Aristotle as bowing to Platonic epistemology could be supported by his acknowledgement of the superiority of truth.

In another passage, Aristotle problematises the use of *endoxa*, by clarifying that *endoxa*, despite tending towards truth, are not coherent. On the contrary, Aristotle states that syllogisms that contradict an opponent's syllogism can be drawn from the same material; "for the syllogisms are derived from commonly held opinions [*endoxa*] and many opinions are opposed to each other" (Aristotle, 1402a. trans. by Kennedy, brackets in original).[25] The epistemological optimism of the first passage, combined with the acknowledgment of conflicting views in this second passage, constitutes the core of Aristotelian endoxology, as described by Most and Haskins. This core is such that the consideration of different perspectives contributes to a better understanding of the truth.[26] Once again, the duality of the Aristotelian position is present. Aristotle

πεφύκασιν ἱκανῶς καὶ τὰ πλείω τυγχάνουσι τῆς ἀληθείας· διὸ πρὸς τὰ ἔνδοξα στοχαστικῶς ἔχειν τοῦ ὁμοίως ἔχοντος καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειάν ἐστιν."

25. "οἱ μὲν γὰρ συλλογισμοὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐνδόξων, δοκοῦντα δὲ πολλὰ ἐναντία ἀλλήλοις ἐστίν."
26. Which we described, above, as the "third" argument.

acknowledges the value of aiming for truth, as well as the value of *endoxa*.

To see where this position leaves the discipline of rhetoric, we must look at a third passage in the text of the *Rhetoric*, 1356b. There Aristotle clarifies that rhetoric does not theorise about the *endoxa* of individuals, but rather the *endoxa* of different types of people. This focus on *endoxa* is something that rhetoric, according to Aristotle, has in common with dialectics, but there is a key difference. Whereas dialectics deals with questions that need argumentation, rhetoric deals with questions that are commonly debated. Aristotle also states that rhetoric concerns questions that have at least two possible answers. This is not in itself hugely provocative, but then Aristotle uses the term *endoxa* (twice) in a passage where he underscores the importance of drawing from that which is "commonly believed" to be persuasive before a judge who is assumed to be a simple person [*haplous*]. This use of *endoxa* echoes the use of *doxa*. It becomes clear that Aristotle connects the use, not only of *doxa*, but of *endoxa* with the incapacity of the audience; rhetoric is acknowledged as a *technē*, but through its focus on *doxa/endoxa* in relation to the mass audience, Aristotle positions rhetoric as having a lower purpose than dialectics.

To sum up my close reading, the terms *doxa* and *endoxa* in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are commonly linked to the notions of fame and reputation; meanings that are often bypassed in contemporary arguments on *doxa* within the field of rhetorical studies. Beyond that, my reading supports Cassin's claims for understanding Aristotle's rhetoric as pragmatic in its view on *doxa*, but rather than as Aristotle hailing the independence of rhetoric, the passages that I study indicate that he places knowledge in dialectics and logics as prerequisites for being a good rhetor. Regarding the notion of an Aristotelian method of endoxology, my selective reading does not provide a full picture, but it supports Most's claim that Aristotle promotes the heuristic value of an active perspectivism that combines and balances many perspectives on an issue, as well as Haskins's description of the Aristotelian method as built on a sharp distinction between ideas and expressions (Haskins 2004a, 2, 4–5, 8, 11, 17). An additional aspect that has become clear in my close

reading, and which is not emphasised in Cassin's, Most's or Haskins's articles, is the clear negative value that Aristotle tends to place in the terms *doxa* and *endoxa* when these notions are related to the public. I would thus argue that when it comes to appreciation or criticism of the art of rhetoric, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* revolves around the same axis as Plato, namely the relation between *doxa* and the *public*. *Endoxa* may fill an important function as part of scholarly intellectual reasoning, but the public *doxa* and rhetoric's adherence to it, is the primary cause for concern.

Plato and Aristotelian twists

Did Aristotle then liberate rhetoric from the epistemic criticism that Plato directed towards it? One could argue that to be the case, as if we follow Cassin's reading, Aristotle provides rhetoric with a valid position as a *technē* concerned with *doxa* by framing it as an ethically neutral art which is focused on understanding causality in relation to public persuasion. Cassin presents a compelling reading of Aristotle, but the understanding of Aristotelian rhetoric that Cassin describes is limited, and she does not study the scholarly practice for rhetoric as a discipline based on *endoxa*. When Most and Haskins argue that the rhetoric of Aristotle is merely a form for communication and audience adaptation, they highlight these limitations. Indeed, Aristotle's rhetoric is focused on *endoxa*, but, as clarified by Most and Haskins, it is also denied all heuristic value. Instead, other disciplines provide frameworks where *endoxa* fill a positive function in the search for greater knowledge. Consequently, any Aristotelian rehabilitation of rhetoric that wishes to argue for rhetoric's heuristic value in moral judgements or political development must extinguish Aristotle's division between the arts and thereby contradict Cassin's reading. To do so is not, necessarily, a mistake. It is what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do in the development of their new rhetoric by diminishing the difference between rhetoric and dialectics. It is also what contemporary scholars of rhetoric have done when they portray rhetoric as an art of phronetic judgement, by way of including Aristotelian

ethics under the rhetorical umbrella (See e.g. Garver 1994; Wolrath Söderberg 2017).[27] Such approaches might be very Aristotelian in a broad sense, but their rendering of rhetoric is, at least in the strictest sense, not so.

Moreover, Haskins's reading exposes another problem with Aristotle's alleged rescue and recovery operation. The rhetoric which Aristotle recovers is not only very limited in its scope – compared to Isocrates's teachings of oratory as a training in political citizenship – its method and universalistic anthropocentrism also strips rhetoric of its very heart and soul, culturally embedded speech acts in particular historical situations. Haskins describes how Aristotle transforms *endoxa* from culturally situated acts into compartmentalised fragments of information; pieces that can be used as functions in discourse. One can criticise Haskins for being overly critical and demanding too much, when she, as it seems, wishes for an Aristotle who acknowledges his own cultural prejudices and proclaims the culturally restricted values of his results. Nevertheless, Haskin's critique is correct and, what is more, she can point to Isocrates as providing an alternative paradigm for rhetoric. Isocrates is a contemporary of Aristotle and his writings show that other more culturally focused and practically oriented approaches are available (Haskins 2006; 2004b, 130–36). My close reading of Aristotle's use of the term *doxa* does also support the view that Aristotle distinguishes between ideas and expressions, and that he systematically gives primacy to the first; this prioritising of the ideal drains the life blood from rhetoric as the study of the practice of speech. Our analyses in part 2 will show that even today the ramifications of these Aristotelian shifts still affect contemporary scholarship.

Nevertheless, I do not deny the potential for Aristotle as "the way out," but such a move requires that one acts as *bricoleur*, working with the Aristotelian material, rather than as an exegete. It is clear that Aristotle's systematic cultural empiricism provides a different point of departure than a traditional reading of Plato

27. On the boundaries between ethics and rhetoric in Aristotle, see Haskins (2004b, 115–16).

does. While I have shown that Aristotle echoes Plato's criticism of the intellectual flaws of the masses, it would be possible to choose Aristotle as a starting point for theory development without proceeding further.

Many scholars have used Aristotle in that way, as an out, but as the remaining number of pages in this study suggest, its fieldwork component does not end with Aristotle. This is not only because I consider the criticism against Aristotle's framing of rhetoric valid, but moreover because of the starting point of my own study, namely the contemporary construction of rhetoric in relation to classical Greek discussions. My point is that when we consider the position that Plato's criticism of rhetoric is given in the contemporary field, it becomes more than clear that Plato still fulfils a function today; it is demonstrably not the case that Aristotle's reshaping of rhetoric has made Plato's critique obsolete.

Scott, Hariman and Rosengren all describe Plato as having paradigmatic influence on modern-day society and academia, and perhaps a Platonic heritage does indeed still very much influence our thinking on rhetoric, but equally perhaps it might be easy to overexaggerate this influence, the more truthful analysis being that contemporary storytellers of rhetoric – as with all good storytellers – need a villain and a hero. Regardless of which of these alternatives is accurate (I would say that both are), Plato and the story of epistemic tension is still active in the field today. It is for this reason that in the following chapters I do not abandon Plato in favour of pursuing a solution provided by Aristotle. Instead, I try to grasp how contemporary scholars have attempted to counteract the Platonic dichotomy of *doxa* and *episteme* by siding with *doxa*, in their development of varied forms of epistemologies of rhetoric. In that process, both Plato and Aristotle remain visible in the background, two Greek revenants who constantly return in the contemporary discussions of rhetoric.

II

8.

Re-inventing doxa for rhetoric

A constructive turn in *doxa* studies

In chapter 1, I showed how the birth of rhetorical theory in ancient Greece has been viewed as founded in a conflict between *doxa* and *episteme* that is to say between rhetorical knowledge (opinion) and philosophical knowledge (truth).

In part 2 of the book, I focus on *doxa,* exploring how the word and concept can be re-invented for the contemporary field of rhetorical studies in general, but particularly with a view to developing an epistemology of rhetoric. To do so, I study how *doxa* has been re-invented by scholars within the field of rhetorical studies from the 1950s to the present day.[1]

In this part of the book, as well as in the former, I utilise the specific signifier to direct my attention, meaning that, I limit my survey to scholars who themselves use the actual word *doxa*. In addition, I narrow the survey further by paying particular attention to scholars who are part of an explicit modern rhetorical tradition, namely the work of Roland Barthes, Robert Hariman, Ruth Amossy and Mats Rosengren.[2] Hariman is part of the contemporary American field of rhetorical studies. Amossy and Rosengren work within a European tradition that corresponds with the notion

1. In 2013, I presented a preliminary reading of the notion of *doxa* in the contemporary reinvention of rhetoric; it was later published, see Bengtson (2017).
2. This choice, of course, means the exclusion of many highly interesting thinkers, but a delimiting of perspectives is necessary to allow any kind of depth. The focus on the term *doxa* also highlights the explicit link to the rhetorical tradition and creates conditions for comparisons. It also allows us to continue using conceptual history as a tool for theoretical thinking as proposed in the introduction.

of a New Rhetoric developed by Chaïm Perelman. The inclusion of Barthes – the well-known French critic – might initially seem a more problematic choice as Barthes understood his own work as in conflict with the traditions of rhetoric. Conversely, the semiotic approach developed by Barthes could, as Michael Moriarty (1997) has noted, be described as a re-invention of the ancient art of rhetoric; a critical rhetoric for the age of mass communication (172). It is thus reasonable to treat Barthes separately and not merely as a source of inspiration to Amossy. All of the scholars mentioned above make explicit reference to the rhetorical tradition of antiquity, and therefore fit our working description of contemporary rhetorical studies as a study of the creation of meaning in dialogue with a multifaceted rhetorical tradition.

My ambition here is not primarily to deepen the understanding of any one of these highly individual scholars, but I use them to sketch out a few possible routes for a contemporary re-invention of *doxa*. Barthes represents the structuralist and poststructuralist route, Hariman represents the route of rhetorical ontology, Amossy the pragmatic study of *doxa*, and Rosengren the route of rhetorical-philosophical anthropology. The ambition is not to describe their individual scholarship in depth, but only to introduce important aspects of their works which accentuate the specific thrust of their different approaches. On a methodological note, I treat these scholars as engaged in a conceptual discussion with one another, even when that historically speaking was not literally the case. Through this process, I show how the concept of *doxa* can be re-invented in a variety of ways. In the process, I describe a contemporary conversation about rhetoric and knowledge, founded on a tradition of continental philosophy. This part of the book contributes to our knowledge about the international field of rhetorical studies, and, in doing so, to our goal of developing an epistemology of rhetoric for today.

In their initial encounter with the word *doxa*, some scholars might get frustrated by the lack of strict definitions. I offer no remedy to this problem, as to force strict definitions upon some of the corpus of scholarship that I study would be to do them an injustice. Instead, I try to remain true to their rich and often ambiguous uses

of the term *doxa* whilst comparing their approaches and key perspectives in a way that hopefully gives the reader an understanding of how these approaches differ and of the multiple possibilities in rendering the meaning of this term.

Before focusing on each of the four different ways of re-inventing *doxa*, let me provide a framework by presenting some remarks on the general results of the study. First, it is clear that the scholars in our study reach for the word *doxa* from different positions and with different purposes, but it is equally clear that we find common threads of meaning in their work. These threads are discussed further below, but they all include the idea of *doxa* as widespread belief, something repeated, as concealment, and as knowledge constituted by our positioning as social beings rather than by correspondence to a reality. These common threads exemplify one of the beauties of modern rhetorical studies, where disparate and highly creative thinkers can be united under one discipline simply by virtue of their all reformulating a pluralistic rhetorical legacy.

When looking at these scholars and some of their main influences we can also discern a general shift from a first generation to a second; from Martin Heidegger to Robert Hariman, from Roland Barthes to Ruth Amossy and from Pierre Bourdieu to Mats Rosengren. This shift constitutes a rhetorical turn in the sense that the later generation of scholars has a more positive view on *doxa* and put more emphasis on the possibilities of rhetorical agency than their forerunners do. The study undertaken in part 2 seems to confirm an idea that Amossy presents in her scholarship, namely that there is a constructive turn in the study of *doxa*. Amossy (2002c) states:

> Interestingly, contemporary thinkers reviving the notion of doxa (and in the original Greek term) all emphasize its constructive relation to rationality – it allows one to choose what seems probable and reasonable, hence to organize social life on a rational basis – and the consequent social function it fulfils. (372)

It is particularly interesting that this claim by Amossy is confirmed in this study, even though the scholars studied in this chapter, with

the exception of Barthes, are not included in hers.[3] Towards the end of part 2, in chapter 13, I use the results from my comparative study to pinpoint central questions for a rhetorical view of knowledge founded on a re-invention of *doxa*. In relation to these questions, I sketch some fundamental stances for an epistemology of rhetoric, inspired by the re-inventions of *doxa* within rhetorical studies.

3. Amossy's (2002c) study focuses on a French tradition of linguistics, literary studies and discourse analysis.

9.

A structuralist or poststructuralist account of doxa

In this chapter, I explore the possibility of re-inventing *doxa* along the lines of structuralism and poststructuralism. I do so by engaging with the scholarship of Roland Barthes (1915–1980), who is one of the key figures in the renewed interest in rhetoric within European thought during the latter half of the twentieth century. Barthes was well-informed on the history and systems of classical rhetoric and held a seminar on rhetoric in 1964–1965 at the l'École Pratique des Hautes Études. Due to the lack of writings in French on classical rhetoric, the transcript of this seminar was published in 1970, as *L'anicenne rhétorique Aide-mémoire (*Barthes *1970; 1980)*. His own development of a semiotic theory during the 1950s and '60s has been described by Michael Moriarty (1997) as a "modern form of the ancient art of rhetoric" (169). This description is reasonable, since both perspectives could be understood as a structural study of persuasive language. We must, however, acknowledge that Barthes presents his own work as in conflict with the tradition of rhetoric (France 1986). Hence, I would describe his approach as an attempted revolutionary replacement of Aristotelian rhetoric.

Barthes uses the word *doxa* in several writings, but there are also works, such as *Mythologies*, that are essential for his work on *doxa* without using the specific term.[1] To describe Barthes's use of *doxa* and explore the possibilities in a structuralist rendering of the concept, we must follow the progress of his writings and acknowledge

1. For a general introduction to the uses of the concept of *doxa* in Barthes's writing see Moriarty (1997), Herschberg-Pierrot (2002), and O'Donovan (1988).

the link between the term *doxa* and related terms such as *myth, ideology and stereotype*. It would be wrong to call these terms synonyms since they must all be defined within the contexts of the individual works where they are used. However, these terms do serve a similar purpose within each text. When these different works are combined and read as an *oeuvre*, we can see that *doxa* is established as a recurring theme in Barthes's work. Barthes himself tends to use the term *doxa* as a common denomination when reflecting on this theme in his own writings; I will follow that example (Barthes 1977a, 165–69; 2010, 70–71). In a later reflection on *Mythologies* Barthes (1977a) states:

> What is nothing but a product of class division and its moral, cultural and aesthetic consequences is presented (stated) as being a 'matter of course'; under the effect of mythical inversion, the quite contingent foundations of the utterance become Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, General Opinion, in short the *doxa* (which is the secular figure of the Origin). (165; trans. by Heath)[2]

The influence from Marxist theory becomes evident in the reference to class division and the emphasis on the naturalisation of that which is contingent. What Barthes does in his early semiotic writings is to develop a semiotic understanding of the mechanisms behind this naturalisation.[3] His understanding of these mechanisms is influenced by a critique of ideology and mass communication in the wake of Marx as well as the literary critique of bourgeois stupidity in the writings of Gustave Flaubert.[4]

2. "ce qui n'est qu'un produit de la division des classes et de ses séquelles morales, culturelles, esthétiques, est présenté (énoncé) comme 'allant de soi' ; les fondements tout contingents de l'énoncé deviennent, sous l'effet de l'inversion mythique, le Bon Sens, le Bon Droit, la Norme, l'Opinion courante, en un mot la doxa (figure laïque de l'Origine);" (Barthes 1971, 613).
3. As early semiotic writings I refer to *Mythologies*, *Elements of Semiology* and *Rhetoric of the Image*.
4. Most importantly his *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* and *Bouvard et Pecuchet*, often published together, as for example in the English translation by Mark Polizotti, see Flaubert (1936). On the link between Barthes and Flaubert, see Herschberg-Pierrot (2002, 433, 435-436, 439-441).

Central to Barthes's early semiotic works is the close connection between language and *doxa*. *Doxa* is portrayed as a parasite on language, a kind of viral being spread through the practice of symbolic communication. This meaning of *doxa* is perhaps best exemplified with his analyses of the petit-bourgeois assumptions of phenomena such as wine, Romans in movies, detergents and Greta Garbo (Barthes 2012). These specific analyses are found in *Mythologies* where he tends to describe *doxa* as an active power that enforces itself on to language and individuals. Later on in *Elements of Semiology* he instead tends to describe language as the active force producing *doxa*. In both texts, *doxa* is understood as signified at the level of connotation, where denotative language becomes the form that signifies.[5] The difference between the works is that the signified at the level of connotation is described as an effect in *Elements of semiology* and as an active force in *Mythologies (Barthes 2012*, 223–224, 242–249; 1977b, 56–57, 89–94*)*. It is, however, notable that neither work presents the signified (*doxa*) as an effect of the will of the writer/speaker.

In chapter 7, I focused on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and highlighted that Aristotle's way of discussing *doxa* positions it as separate from, but still dependent on, language. Barthes's semiotics of *doxa* echoes this Aristotelian, instrumentalised form and content-understanding of language and *doxa*. The connection between Barthes's semiotic writings and his understanding of traditional rhetoric is made explicitly in *The Old Rhetoric: An Aide-mémoire*, where we find a specified historical reference for Barthes's *doxa* in the word *endoxa* used by Aristotle:

> As for Aristotle, he acknowledges a psychological rhetoric, but since he continues to make it depend on a technè, it is a "projected" psychology: psychology as everyone imagines it: not "what is in the mind" of the public, but what the public believes others "have in mind": this is an endoxon, a "probable" psychology, as opposed

5. For Barthes's presentation of denotation and connation as two interrelated levels of signification, see Barthes (2012, 221–38; 1977b, 89–94; 1974, 6–11).

> to a "true" psychology as the enthymeme is opposed to the "true" (demonstrative) syllogism. (Barthes 1980, 73; trans. by Howard)[6]

Characteristic of Barthes's re-invention of *doxa* is his adaption of the Aristotelian word *endoxa*, with its specific meaning related to rhetoric as *techne*, by splicing it with Marx and Flaubert, and, under the heading of *doxa*, using it to understand contemporary mass culture.[7]

From classical rhetoric Barthes picks the idea of *doxa* as "public opinion," "the probable" and "ideas shared by the majority". *Doxa* is both the starting point of rhetorical argumentation and the judge of its effectiveness. "The probable" in Barthes's interpretation (as well as in Aristotle's) has nothing to do with statistical probability, but rather with widespread acceptability. Moriarty (1997) has noted that Barthes's description of *doxa* and his dichotomy between opinion and knowledge is closer to Plato's negative view than the more pragmatic view of Aristotle that constitute his explicit starting point (172). A Platonian understanding of *doxa* in relation to the public makes for an easier fit with the critique of modern mass culture that, according to Barthes, is mainly concerned with stereotypes and widespread beliefs. Barthes describes modern mass communication as a corrupt and diffuse version of ancient rhetoric. These two practices of language belong to different eras, but they are understood as being linked together by their focus on *doxa*:

> Next, this notion that there is a kind of stubborn agreement between Aristotle (from whom rhetoric proceeded) and our mass culture, as if Aristotelianism, dead since the Renaissance as a philosophy and as logic, dead as an esthetic since Romanticism, survived in a cor-

6. "Quant à Aristote, il reconnaît bien une rhétorique psychologique; mais comme il continue à la faire dépendre d'une *techné*, c'est une psychologie 'projetée': la psychologie, telle que tout le monde l'imagine: non pas 'ce qu'il y a dans la tête' du public, mais ce que le public croit que les autres ont dans la tête: c'est un *endoxon*, une psychologie 'vraisemblable', opposée à la psychologie 'vraie', comme l'enthymème est opposé au syllogism 'vraie' (démonstratif)." (Barthes 1970, 213)
7. As seen in chapter 7, Aristotle also uses the term *doxa*, but that term has received less attention in the tradition of scholarly readings of Aristotle.

> rupt, diffused, inarticulate state in the cultural practice of Western societies – a practice based, through democracy, on an ideology of the "greatest number", of the majority as norm, of current opinion: everything suggests that a kind of Aristotelian vulgate still defines a type of trans-historical Occident, a civilization (our own) which is that of the endoxa. (Barthes 1980, 92; trans. by Howard)[8]

That Plato lurks in the shadows behind Barthes' words could seem obvious, at least if we focus on the popularised form of Plato's position. For a more precise rendering of Barthes's position in relation to Plato and Aristotle, however, it is necessary to recall the analysis in chapter 7, showing that this negative assessment of public *doxa* is present also in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. It is thus necessary to nuance Moriarty's claim that Barthes's notion of *doxa* is in debt to Plato rather than Aristotle. Nevertheless, it is still clear that Barthes is presenting a method of critique, not an instruction for speechmaking, which is the underlying format of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

In *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (2010) it becomes clear that Barthes views the struggle with *doxa* as a personal struggle, an individual fight against both the stupidity that lurks within himself and the cultural myths that enforce themselves on him through mass culture. This unwinnable struggle is also described as the driving force behind his scholarly development*:*

> Reactive formations: a Doxa (a popular opinion) is posited, intolerable; to free myself of it, I postulate a paradox, then this paradox turns bad, becomes a new concretion, itself becomes a new Doxa, and I must seek further for a new paradox.
>
> Let us follow this trajectory once again. At the works source, the opacity of social relations, a false Nature; the first impulse, the first

8. "Ensuite cette idée qu'il y a une sorte d'accord obstiné entre Aristote (d'où est sortie la rhétorique) et la culture dite de masse, comme si l'aristotélisme, mort depuis la Renaissance comme philosophie et comme logique, mort comme esthétique depuis le romantisme, survivait à l'état dégradé, diffus, inarticulé, dans la pratique culturelle des sociétés occidentales – pratique fondée, à travers la démocratie, sur une idéologie du 'plus grand nombre' de la norme majoritaire, de l'opinion courante : tout indique qu'une sorte de vulgate aristotélicienne définit encore un type d'Occident trans-historique, une civilisation (la nôtre) qui est celle de l'*endoxa*", (Barthes 1970, 223)

> chock, then, is to demystify (Mythologies); then when the demystification is immobilized in repetition, it must be displaced: semiological *science* (then postulated) tries to stir, to vivify, to arm the mythological gesture, the pose, by endowing it with a method: this science is encumbered in its turn with a whole repertoire of images: the goal of a semiological science is replaced by the (often very grim) science of the semiologists; hence, one must sever oneself from that, must introduce into this rational image-repertoire the texture of desire, the claims of the body: this, then is the Text, the theory of the Text. But again the Text risks paralysis: it repeats itself, counterfeits itself in lusterless texts, testimonies to a demand for readers, not for a desire to please: the Text tends to degenerate into prattle (*Babil*). Where to go next? That is where I am now. (Barthes 2010, 71; trans. by Howard)[9]

In his later writings Barthes becomes more and more dissatisfied with the structural and dual understanding of the relationship between language and *doxa*. He fears that the semiotic approach and its understanding of the sign has become *doxa* in the sense of mindless repetition and naturalisation of culture. In this critique of structuralism, we can note similarities to the critique of Aristotle by Ekaterina V. Haskins. Barthes becomes more and more dissatisfied with an understanding of *doxa* as a fixed structure, a coherent ideology. While the structuralist Barthes focuses on dispelling rhetoric, the poststructuralist Barthes instead focuses on liberat-

9. "Formations réactives: une *doxa* (une opinion courante) est posée, insupportable; pour m'en dégager, je postule un paradoxe; puis ce paradoxe s'empoisse, déviant lui-même concrétion nouvelle, nouvelle *doxa*, et il me faut aller plus loin vers un nouveau paradoxe.Refaisons ce parcours. A l'origine de l'œuvre, l'opacité des rapports sociaux, la fausse Nature; la première secousse est donc de démystifier (Mythologies); puis la démystification s'immobilisant dans une répétition, c'est elle qu'il faut déplacer: la science sémiologique (postulée alors) tente d'ébranler, de vivifier, d'armer le geste, la pose mythologique, en lui donnant une méthode; cette science à son tour s'embarrasse de tout un imaginaire: au vœu d'une science sémiologique succède la science (souvent fort triste) des sémiologues; il faut donc s'en couper, introduire, dans cet imaginaire raisonnable, le grain du désir, la revendication du corps: c'est alors le Texte, la théorie du Texte. Mais de nouveau le Texte risque de se figer: il se répète, se monnaye en textes mats, témoins d'une demande de lecture, non d'un désir de plaire: le Texte tend à dégénérer en Babil. Où aller? J'en suis là." (Barthes 1975, 75).

ing the reader by making reading a play with meaning rather than a passive acceptance of the dominant rhetoric.[10] This is perhaps most famously done in *S/Z*, where he proposes to read Balzac's short story *Sarrasine* as fragments. In this process Barthes takes the step from a structuralist approach to *doxa* to a poststructuralist approach. The *doxa* that he fights is no longer the everyday bourgeois myths of society, but the very foundation of language and structure. His way to fight is no longer to describe the mechanisms of ideology formation, but to develop ways of finding other meanings in textual fragments than those prescribed by a dominant rhetoric. Barthes's unease with the widespread and accepted, i.e. with *doxa*, characterises his approach to theory as well as literature, and connects his writings to later scholars working with the critique of norms and stereotypes.

Barthes's creative autobiography *Roland Barthes* and his well-known article, "The Death of the Author", make it relevant to ask how his writings on *doxa* relate to the idea of a strategic rhetor, that in combination with the force of traditions and social norms constitutes part of the classical Greek and Roman rhetorical tradition. The answer is that none of Barthes's writings put focus on the author behind the rhetoric, except perhaps his writings about himself that in some ways thematise the position of the critic and the intellectual scholar.[11] The Barthesian link to a traditional rhetorical situation is rather to be found in his (increasing) emphasis on the reader/audience; that is on the *doxa* of the audience. There is a clear link between his own approach to the persuasive effects of mass communication and his description of the "projected" psychology of Aristotle's rhetoric, a psychology that Barthes claims is the result of rhetoric being understood as *techne* where the rhetor adapts to his own vision of the audience.

Barthes is fascinated by rhetoric, as both a practice of language and as a theoretical tradition, but he is in constant search of something new: a linguistic practice that could replace rhetorical lan-

10. For an introductory discussion of the relationship between structuralism and poststructuralism in Barthes, see Culler (2002, 65–75).

11. Instead, Barthes is well-known for his criticism of literary critique that focuses on the intentions of the author. See Barthes (1989).

guage and a theory that could replace rhetorical theory. He wants to replace the theory on how to use *doxa* to persuade, with a new theory on how to dispel and reveal the mechanisms of *doxa*, all this, perhaps, as a way to loosen the shackles of *doxa* in his own life as well as in society.

Challenges in appropriating Barthes

We will have reason to return to Barthes's approach in later chapters, but there are already a few questions that must be tackled when exploring the re-invention of *doxa* through the lens of structuralism or poststructuralism in line with Barthes' thinking. Firstly, we need to decide on what to do with the differences between the different early structuralist writings, that is between *Mythologies* on the one hand and *Elements of Semiology* and *Rhetoric of the image* on the other hand. Second, we need to handle Barthes's transformation from structuralism to poststructuralism. Third, we need to ask what the consequences of the linguistic, structuralist framing is in relation to, for example, questions of bodies, the material and the rhetoric of institutions.

The two first questions are best answered together. Regarding *Mythologies*, *Rhetoric of the Image* and *Elements of semiology*, I consider them to be best understood as representing two varieties of Barthesian structuralism. The terminology and execution of *Mythologies* is less strict and coherent, when compared to the combination of the two latter works, but I would not describe the central differences between them as a matter of quality. Instead, the choice in how to interpret Barthes's structuralism concerns the positioning of *doxa*. Is *doxa* a force that imposes itself on language (*Mythologies*) or, alternatively, an effect of language use (*Elements of semiology*)? To me, however, this opposition – implied by the existence of alternatives – represents a false choice. A reinvented structuralist account of *doxa* should, instead, be built on the premise that *doxa* is an ongoing process that, on the one hand, is an effect of language use, and on the other hand, acquires a force of its own that also affects language use.

There have been attempts to differentiate between *Mythologies* and *Elements of semiology* depending on whether the second level meaning that is evoked comes from the signifier on the first level, or from the signified. According to this interpretation, as is professed by Fiske (1990), second-level signification originating from the first-level content, evokes myths, while second-level signification originating from the first level form is called connotation and evokes ideology (85–91). To me this differentiation misrepresents fundamental aspects of Barthesian semiotics as an appropriation of Saussure. Firstly, we must note that the unity of the sign is a key element of Saussure's theory, which means that the idea that the signifier or the signified could have effects on a reader as a separate entity contradicts the foundation of the semiotic that it builds on. Furthermore, if Barthes, himself would have considered it reasonable to talk about two separate forms of secondary meaning, then it would have been reasonable to point in that direction in his later work. The best way to handle these two works is as presenting nuances of the same perspective; our task is not to choose, but to balance. While *Elements of semiology* presents us with several other terminological tools, not only denotation and connotation, the two-level structure of denotation and connotation is at the heart of all three of Barthes's early structuralist works on semiotics.

Another choice when trying to present a best case of Barthesian structuralist semiotics for contemporary rhetorical theory, is a terminological one. In *Mythologies,* Barthes (2012) describes how the united sign, from the denotative level becomes mythical form that evokes a mythical content (221–38). The mythical form and the content combined constitute a mythical message. In *Elements of Semiology*, Barthes (1977b) instead describes how the combined signs from the first denotative level form a rhetoric that evokes an ideology (89–94).

Before deciding between these different terminologies, it is beneficial to address the second question raised above, namely what to do with the poststructuralist writings of Barthes. The introduction of Barthes's *S/Z* (1974) – where he famously denounces structuralism – is an important contribution to semiotic theory, but it is also a critique of a scholarly standpoint, rather than an explana-

tion of how communication functions (3–30). The strength of the poststructuralist position is therefor dependent on the structuralist view. If one puts the structuralist viewpoint aside, the productivity of the deconstructionist framework of *S/Z* becomes less clear. This aspect is relevant for the question of what approach to *doxa* is most productive for a rhetorical understanding of argumentation that goes beyond what I (in the introduction) described as postmodern critique. The poststructuralist account cannot, in itself, provide a framework for a rhetorical understanding of argumentation; it is postmodern in the sense that it primarily is critical and individualistic, and not interested in establishing social knowledge. To be productive, for an epistemology of rhetoric, the poststructuralist perspectives must be infused into another theoretical approach. In chapter 11, I will provide an example of such a process by describing how Barthes's poststructuralist insights are incorporated into Amossy's pragmatic method. For now, however, we are left with another option, namely, to let the poststructuralist insights of the later works be anachronistically infused into the early semiotic works. One way of facilitating such a movement is to choose the right terminology.

I propose that an adaptation of Barthes' account of *doxa* in contemporary rhetorical studies would benefit if we chose to use myth rather than rhetoric-ideology, as the terminology for the level of connotation. If the central problem with the structuralist account is its focus on stable structures, then that problem would be reinforced if we choose to use a vocabulary that implies exactly this kind of stable structure. The terminology of 'rhetoric' and 'ideology' has this problem since the very term ideology indicates a structure of some coherence. The term myth on the other hand lends itself more easily to particular perspectives on particular issues. This makes it easier to talk about how one myth was replaced with another within an argumentation, or how a person can be committed to several mutually contradictory myths. With these typological distinctions, I assert a difference between *Mythologies* and *Elements of Semiology* that is not necessarily there – at least not intentionally – but which has a factual basis when we consider the terminology from the perspective of brico-

lage.[12] To conclude, the notion of myth is more similar to the fragments of the poststructuralist Barthes, without completely abandoning the strengths of the structuralist paradigm.

Above I have tried to sketch a best case Barthesian structuralism in relation to the aims of this study. There are, however, problematic implications within the entire Barthesian structuralist paradigm that we need to consider. These issues concern the material turn within rhetorical studies, potential alternatives to mythical language and how to understand the power inherent in institutional positions. All three of these aspects could be analysed as built-in tensions in the Marxist underpinnings of the semiotics of the early Barthes.

Regarding the material, we can note that Marx emphasises the material underpinning of ideology and the need to change material conditions, while Barthes remains in the world of ideas and signs (See e.g. Marx 2000, 68–69). Barthes's semiotics does not treat the relationship to the material world, as a world of physical bodies. When Barthes in the analysis of French wrestling in *Mythologies* describes for example the physical pain and the facial expressions of the wrestlers, the analysis still remains at the theoretical level of sign systems. Within *Elements of Semiology*, there are some formulations that indicate that the sensory has some role to play in signification, but none of these comments can be described as emphasised or developed. Barthes conforms to the Saussurean paradigm, where the signifier as well as the signified is a mental concept within an ideal sign system.

A second problem concerns the negative evaluation and the explicit criticism of *doxa* that we find in the writings of Barthes. This tendency is particularly interesting in the early writings where one can notice that Barthes often degrades *doxa* in a way that seems to support the idea of an alternative, better, form of using language. What this alternative form could look like is not

12. One could, for example, point to the focus of the *bourgeoisie* in *Mythologies*, to indicate that Barthes, in that particular work, does not leave the idea of a coherent ideological system, but rather adheres to it. This fact does not, however, change that there are other possibilities inherent in the terminology of myth than those that, arguably, structure that work.

explained by Barthes himself. But, if we look for clues in Marx it could perhaps be the utopia of a language of denotation freed from the mythologies of the *bourgeoisie* or a language of political action (cf. Marx 2000, 68). These moments of utopian dreaming become rarer in Barthes's later works and the impression given by his *oeuvre* read as a whole and his reflections on the fight against *doxa* in *Roland Barthes* supports the thought that *doxa* is unavoidable, but it is worth noting that this is not his starting point.

Besides the question of materiality and the question of potential alternatives to mythical language, there is also the question of how to explain positions of power. In this regard there is no need to be wordy, the structuralism of Barthes simply does not provide a framework for analysing this dimension of social life.

Despite the problems that I just pointed to; I am positive that developing Barthes' structuralism into a rhetorical theory of argumentation can be fruitful. However, for such a theory development to fully meet the requirements of an epistemology of rhetoric for the contemporary field of rhetorical studies, one would have to revisit the question of the material, as well as revisit the critique of a narrow-minded focus on language, that has been developed from a sociological perspective by, for example, Pierre Bourdieu. One would also have to perform some creative re-imagination to see how one can interpret the Barthesian model as a process of reasoning.

10.

Doxa and rhetorical ontology

To explore the possibility of re-inventing *doxa* in the form of a rhetorical ontology, I will begin by reviewing a contribution by the American rhetoric scholar Robert Hariman (1951–). In his research, he focuses on the role of style in human affairs with an emphasis on political judgment and visual culture (Hariman 1995, 2007).

Hariman introduces the term *doxa* in the article "Status, marginality, and rhetorical theory" (1986). There, he studies historical arguments concerning comparisons and delimitations between rhetoric and adjacent traditions (or discursive genres) such as dialectics, poetics and logic. The first ten pages treat this debate, while the discussion of the word *doxa* is limited to the last four pages. The study in the first part of the article does, however, contribute to the understanding of the notion of *doxa* that Hariman presents in the end.

Hariman's analysis of historical arguments regarding the place of rhetoric shows how these arguments include both attributions of status and definitions of substance and that status and substance cannot be separated from each other. The notion of substance is shown to be intertwined with the question of status. Hariman shows how attribution of status is related to power; to increase someone's status is to give that someone a place in the centre of society and through this a position of power. Similarly, a diminishing of someone's status is equal to placing that someone in the margin of society and at the same time to deny power. Hariman shows how these mechanisms fill an important function in theoretical arguments and describes how Plato's repudiation of rhetoric

can be seen as a socially motivated strategy to strengthen the position of his own perspective.

The understanding of society as a social arena of power is central to Hariman's argument.[1] In fact, an analysis of theoretical argumentation and society as concerned with status and power, understood through the concepts of centre and margin, works as a bridge to his use of the concept *doxa*, which is introduced in the following section:

> The division central to the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric has been that between *episteme* and *doxa*, knowledge and opinion. The relevant ontological question is, "What is the nature of *doxa*?" One answer suggested by the reciprocity of substance and status in theoretical discourse is that status is a constituent of *doxa*. More specifically *doxa* can be understood better by identifying how it is a complex of the relations of regard, ranking, and concealment.
>
> To the Greeks *doxa* meant not only opinion ("what seems to be the case to the person spoken of") but also reputation ("what seems to others to be the case with the person spoken of"), as well as expectation and fame. (Hariman 1986, 48)

Hariman uses his previous analysis of argumentation about disciplines to introduce *doxa* as a term and a theoretical concept.[2] For him status is an essential part of *doxa*, but he also goes into more detail, claiming that to understand *doxa* and its relation to status, we need to see how it is formed out of complex relations of *regard*, *rank* and *concealment*.

Hariman (1986) describes *regard* as "a description of one's being and one's worth" (49). *Regard* can be changed by, and differ in relation to, both the community and the individual. For Hariman *regard* is an effect of the act of *ranking*: one is what one is described to be. *Ranking* is described as a metonym of verbal reality, which means that it is an unescapable aspect of speech. To speak becomes to *rank* and therefore to establish *regard*. This perspective helps scholars of rhetoric to conceptualise argumenta-

1. Hariman references Emile Durkheim (2013, 67–75) for this understanding of society.
2. Of course he also uses the concept of *doxa* to discuss the result of the previous analysis, but the details of that analysis is not important for my project.

tion in a way that includes style, imagery and emotions, not just logical structures of definitions and propositions. From this perspective, to speak is not to denote but to value and devalue, and, through this, establish the appearance of something as a substance. Hariman does not understand ranking as ordering things in a strict linear hierarchy, nor is status an attribute of substance. Ranking should instead be understood as a mechanism for establishing the appearance of substance through the appointment of value in the construction of relations.

The terms *regard* and *rank* are not by themselves satisfactory, according to Hariman, since they seem to evoke the idea of a thing that exists prior to the *ranking* and the possibility of an ultimate *ranking*. Hariman tries to solve this by presenting *concealment* as the third mechanism of *doxa*:

> No one is known in one's entirety; *doxa* consist in the means by which one is known at all. Obviously, if one were known in one's exact identity – that is as a complex of particulars – then no ranking would be possible. Ranking occurs through a process of selecting and deflecting, revealing and concealing, our attention of the nature of a thing. Our opinion of another requires concealing as well as revealing some of what we know, and we are known through our own acts of concealment as well as disclosure. (Hariman 1986, 49)

Hariman has described the act of ranking as a process of language use, from this and the description of the mechanisms of *doxa*, above, it becomes clear that Hariman views *doxa* as an essential and unavoidable aspect of the human condition. In this regard Hariman's position is more clearly stated than that of Barthes, who especially in his early semiotic writings seems to indicate an alternative to *doxa*. For Hariman, however, the unavoidability is an important aspect in the very presentation of *doxa*. To escape from *doxa*, according to Hariman, is to erase our possibilities to know at all and consequently impossible. From this perspective it is natural that Hariman does not share Barthes's negative approach to *doxa* but chooses to approach it from a descriptive stance. They do both mention the negative positioning of rhetoric and *doxa*, but where Barthes seems to accept Plato's devaluation of *doxa* and rhetoric,

based on their relation to the masses, and make it into his own, Hariman instead proposes that we should revive rhetoric. This reinstallation should not be done, however, by defeating Plato, in a disciplinary struggle, and then restore rhetoric to a position of glory. Instead, we, according to Hariman, should use the marginalised and despised position of rhetoric and *doxa* as a resource to study the rhetorical mechanisms of centre and margin.

Hariman's understanding of the term *doxa* is neither directly imported from classical Greek antiquity nor an invention by Hariman himself. Instead, he is highly indebted to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and to his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (2000) which is the work referenced Hariman. So, to help us better understand the significance of Hariman's brief discussion of *doxa*, I will make a detour into Heidegger's metaphysical reflections.

Hariman's reliance on Heidegger

Since Hariman's article relies on Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) conception of *doxa*, a closer look at Heidegger's discussion of *doxa* in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (2000) can support our understanding of Hariman's position. To begin with, we must note that the discussion of *doxa* in the works of Heidegger is closely related to his search for the meaning of Being, and thereby given a central role in explaining the human position.

According to Heidegger, beings should not be understood as objects in themselves – instead Being lies in the aspects that are shown and apprehended. Truth (or *aletheia*) is not a correspondence between the spoken word and a reality. Instead, truth is the foundational happening when beings appear, when they come into Being by stepping out of concealment. Heidegger describes how language, as a process of gathering and ranking, has the power to produce the unconcealed. Language possesses this power since it works through the same mechanisms (gathering and ranking) that constitute the essence of Being.

The meanings of the word *doxa* for Heidegger are closely related to his understanding of Being. He describes the different meanings in the following manner:

> The term doxa names various things 1) aspect, or respect, as glory; 2) aspect as the sheer view that something offers; 3) aspect as merely looking-so, "seeming" as mere semblance; 4) a view that a person constructs for himself, opinion. (Heidegger 2000, 110:80; trans. by Fried and Polt)[3]

The first and the second meaning declare that *doxa*, for Heidegger, is both the respect in which someone stands in the view of others and the aspect that someone shows. It is both *Ansehen* and *Aussehen*. The third meaning is clearly related to more negatively connoted meanings, such as mere seeming or sheer opinion. This negative view is based on an idea about a false or distorted showing of aspects and a false apprehension of the shown aspects. Opinion, the fourth meaning, is the established sense of the word in contemporary scholarship and the one least emphasised in Heidegger's writing; but understood in relation to the others, it becomes something different than 'opinion' as opposed to epistemic truth. Taken together these explanations show that *doxa* for Heidegger does not emanate solely from either the being that shows itself or from those who apprehend this showing. It is neither pure naturalism nor pure constructivism.

Directly after listing the different meanings of *doxa*, Heidegger defends the value of the ambiguity of the term in a way that also reveals the exegetic aspect of his philosophy, where the Greek language functions as a scripture of divine insight, from which truths are derived:

> This multiple meaning of the word is not looseness of language but a play with deep foundations in the mature wisdom of a great language, a multiplicity that preserves the essential traits of Being in

3. "Mit dem Namen δόξα wird Vielfältiges genannt: 1. Ansehen als Ruhm, 2. Ansehen als schlichte Ansicht, die etwas bietet, 3. Ansehen als: nur so aussehen: der 'Schein' als bloßer Anschein. 4. Ansicht, die ein Mensch sich bildet, Meinung." (Heidegger 1953, 112:80).

> the word. In order to see correctly form the very start here, we must guard ourselves against cavalierly taking seeming as something just "imaginary", "subjective", and thereby falsifying it. Instead, just as appearing belongs to beings themselves, so does seeming. (Heidegger 2000, 110:80; trans. by Fried and Polt)[4]

In the quote above, Heidegger states clearly that seeming as well as appearing belongs to beings, which is a critique of the Platonic division between the insight of truth and mere seeming.[5] Yet this critique does not mean that he sees seeming and appearing as equally positive; this becomes clear when he later talks about the consequences of seeming in a highly critical manner:

> Being as seeming is no less powerful than Being as unconcealment. Seeming happens in and with beings themselves. But seeming not only lets beings appear as what they really are not, it not only distorts the beings whose seeming it is; in all this it also covers itself over as seeming, inasmuch as it shows itself as Being. Because seeming essentially distorts itself in covering-over and distortion, we rightly say that appearances can be deceiving. This deception is a part of seeming itself. Only because seeming itself deceives can it trick human beings and lead them into delusion. But self-deception is only one of many modes in which humans beings move in the interlocking triple world of Being, unconcealment and seeming. (Heidegger 2000, 14:83; trans. by Fried and Polt)[6]

4. "Diese Vieldeutigkeit des Wortes ist keine Nachlässigkeit der Sprache, sondern ein tiefgegründetes Spiel innerhalb der gewachsenen Weisheit einer großen Sprache, die wesentliche Züge des Seins im Wort bewahrt. Um hier von Anfang an recht zu sehen, müssen wir uns hüten, den Schein kurzerhand als etwas nur 'Eingebildetes', 'Subjektives' zu nehmen und zu verfälschen. Vielmehr gilt: Wie das Erscheinen zum Seienden selbst gehört, so zu ihm auch der Schein." (Heidegger 1953, 112:80).
5. Note that Heidegger, in the *Introduction to Metaphysics (2000)*, does not ally himself with the early propagators of rhetorical theory, but instead describes Plato and the sophists as equally to blame for the diminishing of *doxa* to mere opinion (111:80).
6. "Das Sein ist als Schein nicht minder mächtig denn das Sein als Unverborgenheit. Der Schein geschieht im Seienden selbst mit diesem selbst. Aber der Schein läßt nicht nur Seiendes als solches erscheinen, als welches es eigentlich nicht ist, der Schein verstellt nicht nur das Seiende, dessen Schein er ist, sondern er verdeckt sich dabei selbst als Schein, insofern er sich als Sein zeigt. Weil so der Schein sich selbst wesenhaft im Verdecken und Verstellen verstellt, deshalb sagen wir mit Recht: der Schein trügt.

Heidegger despises deception, both in the form of the blind fanaticism of epistemic truth (Plato's pitfall) and in the deception of the ignorant masses who like dogs just accept what is told to them.[7] Heidegger's setting presents *doxa* as a problem, but a problem that cannot be solved by the search for *episteme*. The ideal position for Heidegger is instead the faculty to make decisions regarding beings based on awareness of the processes of concealment and unconcealment. This ideal position requires that the judge can separate unconcealment from seeming, *aletheia* from *doxa*. But what is the actual difference?

Heidegger describes *doxa* and *aletheia* as different types of *logos*, where *logos* is not understood as rational thinking, but according to an older understanding of the meaning of the word as a combination of "discourse" and the process of "gathering" and "structuring."[8] In this framework *aletheia* is the process when the gathering and ranking powers of language meet something gathered and this meeting results in a revealing. *Doxa* on the other hand is the discourse that conceals and covers-up Being, its result is seeming. In short, *aletheia* reveals and *doxa* conceals. Hence, *doxa* and *aletheia* are each others' opposites; but still, is this really a clarifying distinction?

Making sense of the *doxa-aletheia* dichotomy

The separation between *doxa* and *aletheia* is far from clear in Heidegger's writings, and as a consequence it remains ambiguous in

Dieser Trug liegt am Schein selbst. Nur deshalb, weil der Schein selbst trügt, kann er den Menschen betrügen und ihn dadurch in eine Täuschung versetzen. Das Sichtäuschen aber ist nur eine unter anderen Weisen, gemäß denen der Mensch in der verschränkten Dreiwelt von Sein, Unverborgenheit und Schein sich bewegt." (Heidegger 1953, 116:83).

7. The epithet "dog", for this group, is used by Heidegger in a section where he discusses different approaches to Being in relation to some fragments from Heraclitus (Heidegger 2000, 141:101).
8. This understanding of *logos* is primarily drawn from Heraclitus, but Heidegger (2000) also makes references to Aristotle in an attempt to show that older understandings live on even when new understandings play the dominant role (131:95–140:101).

Hariman's article too. In one respect, they are defined as opposed to each other and therefore a mix-up seems unlikely, but when we try to understand the actual substance of this difference the dichotomy seems to dissolve. Hariman (1986, 48–50) calls attention to the need to study this dichotomy further, but he does not do so in his article. I however do undertake the task he identifies. Advancing our understanding of the word pair *doxa* and *aletheia*, will facilitate our analysis of the meaning of *doxa* in Heidegger and Hariman and, consequently, my investigation of the potential of re-inventing *doxa* within the framework of rhetorical ontology. Rather than determining exactly what Heidegger meant, my ambition will be to draw a distinction that can be useful in relating Heidegger to the other scholars studied in part 2.

Let me begin by going back to Heidegger's text, where we have the most elaborate account: How does he describe the difference between these two conceptualisations of *logos*?

Heidegger claims that the revealing discourse must turn away from all mere recitation. This implies that *doxa* is the mindless repetition of that which is already accepted while *aletheia* is a creative language that reveals the essence of Being. Here we can easily connect Heidegger to the perspective of Barthes when the latter criticises the mindless repetition of *doxa* in mass culture and indulges in the praise of the *avant-garde* literature.

In addition, Heidegger places *doxa* in opposition to the norm of revelation and describes it as false, since it hides its own mechanisms and presents itself as apparent. In relation to this definition we find a link to Barthes, who also criticises the hiddenness of the mechanisms of *doxa*.

Thus, we have found that *doxa* in Heidegger as well as in Barthes is defined by its use of cliché and by the hiddenness of its mechanisms; it is repetition and naturalisation.

Using the Heideggerian terms *aspect (Aussehen)* and *respect (Ansehen)*, we could say that the early Barthes laid emphasis on the *aspects* shown by the text while the later Barthes laid emphasis on the *respect* which is constituted by a reader of a text. This Heideggerian reading of Barthes's positions the text as the Being that is apprehended, as well as constructed. Language is, however, given

a double function, it is the text as a Being and the interpretive use of language to reveal or conceal aspects of that text. When we notice this dual nature of language it helps us to avoid a simplified understanding of *aletheia* and *doxa* where they are just understood as the discourse that function as tools for the revelation or concealment of Being where Being is something other than language. According to this co-reading of Heidegger and Barthes, it, instead, becomes clear that language can reveal Being, because the essence of Being *is* language. Being is where a text is showing its *aspects* and at the same time is having its *respect* constructed through processes of language.

These two dimensions (language as being and language as metadiscourse) could be used to describe an alternative difference between *doxa* and *aletheia* – where *doxa* is the everyday use of language while *aletheia* is the critical metadiscourse used to dispel the mechanisms of *doxa*. They do both function at the metalevel, mentioned above, as interpretive use of language, but *doxa* is concealing and naturalisation while *aletheia* is revealing and denaturalisation. All language use relates to previous language use, but this could either be done through iteration or through a conflict that results in language becoming a true metadiscourse that puts the other discourse in the position of a denaturalised object. *Aletheia* is this metalanguage. This does not mean that *doxa* and *aletheia* are essentially different, but the terms accentuate different uses of language and different aspects of language use. The critical discourse of a scholar of rhetoric may function as a discourse of *aletheia* in some respects, but it may also function as *doxa* in other respects – which means that it can be put as the object for a new discourse of *aletheia*. In the same way could the ramblings of a politician, which we would define as *doxa* at first sight (it is repetition), include aspects of *aletheia* when that discourse causes friction that reveals the mechanisms of other discourses.

The scholarly frustration of Barthes described earlier is founded on this insight that *aletheia* as criticism – though not meaningless – can never escape from being *doxa* as well. This conclusion by Barthes is not though in line with Heidegger's own expressed view. Even though Heidegger does underline the widespread use

of the road of *doxa*, he does also mention the possibility of escape from it, to go beyond *doxa* to truth (*aletheia*), here understood as something different and better. Nevertheless, reading *doxa* as unavoidable fits with how Heidegger's conceptualisations are used in Hariman. In addition, it makes it possible for us to connect his analysis to the critical work of Barthes.

On Hariman's rhetorical position

The starting point for Hariman's (1986) discussion of *doxa* is different from that of Heidegger. Hariman does not try to answer the question "What is Being?" but aims to understand rhetorical discourse and the mechanisms of theoretical discourse. Even though Hariman relies heavily on Heidegger, his article should not primarily be read as a piece of Heidegger scholarship, neither exegetic nor critical; instead, his article should be understood as part of the lively discussion in the American field of rhetorical studies known as the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate. What Hariman does in his article is to import some philosophical notions from Heidegger and adapt them to answer field-specific questions regarding rhetoric and knowledge. In this debate Hariman's article is a somewhat rare example since he uses the term *doxa* rather than *episteme*, which is the term used in the paradigmatic article by Robert L. Scott (1967), or an English terminology, such as 'social knowledge' which is used by Thomas Farrell (1976).

In the article Hariman imports – but also transforms – Heidegger's perspective on *doxa*. Hariman describes *doxa* as a complex of relations of regard, ranking and concealment. He states in accordance with Heidegger that *doxa* is characterised by the concealing of its own mechanisms and that *aletheia* is a discourse that reveals these mechanisms. There is, however, a sharp difference between the position of the revealing rhetorical critic – described by Hariman – and the questioning *Dasein* – described by Heidegger. The difference concerns what it means to place regard or the apprehended as a fundamental constituent of human knowledge; it is a difference in their interpretations of the social aspects

of *doxa*. Heidegger presents *Dasein* as a hermeneutic position in a tradition of phenomenology, which does not lay emphasis on the actual politics and the concrete realities of the social dimension of being. Hariman, in contrast, emphasises *doxa* as empirically social and as related to power structures. Where Heidegger describes how meaning is created through structuring, Hariman specifies that this structuring process works through attributions of status and more precisely through a normative structuring related to the positions of centre and margin, that according to Hariman exist in every human society. This social structuring is exemplified by the debates over rhetoric, which through theoretical definition has placed rhetorical discourse in the margin of society as unacceptable speech for certain periods (Hariman 1986, 43–45).

Hariman's progressive interpretation – of the Heideggerian idea that meaning is created through gathering and structuring – makes his approach an interesting platform for the practice of rhetorical criticism, but it also makes it differ from the philosophy of Heidegger. When Hariman describes *doxa* as "intersubjective" it is implied that the social arena is the constitutive field.[9] This might seem to fall neatly in line with the philosophy of Heidegger if we read him through later socially oriented developments such as that of Merleau-Ponty, but Heidegger's own perspective could as easily be interpreted as focused on the relationship between a *Dasein* and other beings that are not necessarily human or at all capable of apprehension. This difference in the interpretation of 'the social' in the writings of Heidegger and Hariman is also underscored by Heidegger's refusal to equate *Dasein* and Human as well as to describe his own philosophy as a philosophical anthropology. Heidegger's mentioning of collective identities such as Western *Dasein* or Greek *Dasein* implies an awareness of a social and cultural aspect of Being, but it is far from the emphasis on the social situation that characterise much of modern-day and classical Greek rhetorical theory. In this sense it is clear that Barthes and Hariman

9. Through the use of the term "intersubjective" Hariman makes a reference to the thinking of Barry Brummett (1976) and through this situates his approach in the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate.

in emphasising the power structures of discourse and society are more directly relevant for a contemporary rhetoric.

In short, Heidegger seems to search for general answers to general philosophical questions, while Hariman is focused on specific processes in specific areas of human discourse. In this respect Hariman is in line with a French tradition where the philosophy of Heidegger has provided significant inspiration, but often drawn in the direction of a more politically and socially oriented scholarship.

The end result of Heidegger's hermeneutics of the questioning of *Dasein* is not political activity, but authenticity in Being. Barthes and Hariman however, who follow Heidegger in the sense that they lay emphasis on hermeneutics as the interpretation of the world, differ from him in that they emphasise that this interpretive stance has a political dimension. If being a critical scholar means to be politically active, then this aspect of Barthes's and Hariman's work brings the idea of an interpreter closer to the idea of a *rhetor*. There is, however, a difference between Hariman and Barthes in that Hariman to a larger extent seems to derive the understanding of social structures from arguments in the text, while the early Barthes might be accused of following a pre-ordained Marxist vision of the social order of society.

Hariman's approach has been commended by Raymie McKerrow in his presentation of the notion of Critical Rhetoric which he proposes should be founded on an understanding of *doxa* rather than *episteme* (McKerrow 1989). Hariman himself, downplayed the proposed conflict between him and other interlocutors in the *Rhetoric as Epistemic* debate, presenting his own view based on *doxa* as an additional perspective to Robert L. Scott's and Tom Farrell's contributions to the debate (Hariman 1991). While Hariman's (1986) article is a great example of the theoretical force that lies in an inquiry into rhetorical knowledge based on a conceptual understanding of the meanings of classical terminology, it was not important for him to advocate for the use of any particular term, but rather to contribute to the field-specific conversation. From this perspective, Hariman's main contribution is to emphasise the function of status in knowledge-producing discourse and

to introduce an adapted version of Heidegger's deconstruction of beings into the scholarly discussion of rhetoric and knowledge. The emphasis on status and the process of ranking is indeed an important contribution.[10] Nevertheless, a key weakness remains in relation to our objective to develop an epistemology of rhetoric: Hariman's description of the function of status and ranking is only the highlighting of a certain aspect. It cannot, just as Hariman himself states in his reply to McKerrow, claim the status of an elaborate rhetorical ontology or epistemology.

Still, through my reinterpretation of the dichotomy between *doxa* and *aletheia* – performed by combining Heidegger with Barthes – I provided an explanation of what characterises revealing and concealing discourse respectively. This perspective can be used to analyse normative and qualitative aspects of critique and argumentation, but once again, these aspects only contribute with an explanation of metadiscourse; they do not provide a general framework for an epistemology of rhetoric.

I would also like to raise the question of whether there are other scholars who have provided reflections on ontology that could be used as a foundation for rhetoric. In particular, I would like to see further studies that investigate how the notion of *doxa* is understood in Hannah Arendt's scholarship and whether her more politically and socially oriented approach could be understood as a rhetorical ontology.[11]

In conclusion, Hariman's article can be linked to the idea of a political rhetorical scholarship and the tradition of Barthes. The possibility of a political scholarship is implied by Hariman's description of theoretical discourse as political discourse and his proposal that we should choose the power that lies in the marginalised position of rhetorical discourse and rhetorical theory to address the questions of centre, margin and beyond. This positioning of rhetoric is however a radical rethinking in relation to the condemnation of *doxa* in Barthes. The position of the critic

10. This is especially true, if we consider the way Hariman utilises the perspective of ranking in *Political style*, where he analyses Machiavelli. Hariman, *Political Style*, 13–49.
11. For the most elaborate discussion of *doxa* in Hannah Arendts oeuvre, see Arendt (1990). On Arendt and rhetoric, see Buhre (2019).

described by Hariman is not a passive position, it is a political position where we can engage with the problems of authority and marginality, concealing and revealing. This political activity cannot be done through critique alone: In the final words of his article Hariman points to the possibility of going beyond hermeneutic interpretation and doing real work on *doxa* through rhetoric as an art of reclassification.

11.

Doxa and the pragmatic study of argumentation in discourse

In this chapter, I examine what it could mean to re-invent *doxa* within discourse-oriented pragmatics, focusing on the work of Ruth Amossy (1946–). Her research – mainly concerned with the function of cliché and stereotype – integrates a rhetorical understanding of argumentation into the French tradition of linguistically oriented discourse studies. Though her research on cliché and stereotype deals with aspects that Barthes would have described as *doxa*, it is not until 2002 that the term *doxa* is central to Amossy's scholarship. To properly situate her later treatment of *doxa*, however, we need to start with her research on the literary function of cliché from the early 1980s (Amossy 1982, 1981, 1984).

Amossy (1982) criticises the romanticist condemnation of cliché as the very mark of triteness and argues that clichés are playing an important role in a great variety of textual strategies. She also mentions the historicity of the romanticist "dichotomy between Creation and Imitation, Originality and Banality, the Individual and the Collective" (35), and takes side with classical rhetoric for which these dichotomies did not structure thinking and the evaluation of discourse:

> Within a framework in which creation was imitation and the individual was in harmony with the collective in a "common place" where values held to be universal were exchanged, repetition was not judged in terms of difference. (Amossy 1982, 35–36)

Amossy describes clichés as stylistic devices that are constituted by repetition and frozen by usage; they are characterised by being

a fixed collection of units that, combined, function as a singular unit. Amossy argues that there are two contemporary attitudes toward stereotypes, either a "passive absorption and immediate appropriation" or a "critical awareness or evaluation" (1982, 36).

She describes different functions of cliché in these respective attitudes. In the passive attitude cliché has functions such as facilitating and speeding up reading, establishing identification and working as an argumentative device by grounding discourse in an understanding of truth. The cliché perceived critically instead has functions such as engaging the reader in intertextual operations and provoking criticism by exposing public opinion. Amossy denies that clichés should be understood as good or bad *per se*. Instead, she emphasises their fundamental importance for literary language. She inquires into the function of cliché and through this pragmatic focus she also answers the question of the value of clichés.

Another key term for Amossy is stereotype, which she understands as "a cultural model through which we perceive, interpret and describe reality" (Amossy 1984, 689–700). To delimit the meaning further, she describes stereotypes as exaggerated or hyperbolic versions of cultural models and as both recurrent and frozen.

Amossy describes stereotypes as different from clichés in the way that clichés are fixed discursive units while stereotypes go beyond the discursive and have the power to impose themselves on the most variable forms of language. If we were to relate this to the system of Barthes's *Elements of Semiology*, one could say that stereotypes belong to the field of ideology (content), while clichés belong to the field of rhetoric (form).

The repeatedness of cliché is more apparent since the likeness can be pointed to. The repeatedness of stereotype must, instead, be understood as something that is performed by the reader when the reader takes the variety of signs and reduces them to the same and to the previously known. The stereotype is, according to Amossy, a construction of the mind, but not the mind of the solipsistic individual; it is related to shared commonplaces of knowledge in society. Here Amossy draws connections to rhetorical tradition and

describes how stereotype is related to *doxa* as public opinion and functions as established truth in discourse. Her writings on stereotypes also include a critique of a romanticist tendency to dismiss the common and oft repeated. In these writings, from the 1980s and '90s, she does not however sever herself completely from such aspersion. This becomes obvious in her use of racial stereotypes as a recurring example; she expresses her own position, not as trying to defend or describe stereotypes, but as trying to understand how they function.

Amossy placed the word *doxa* at the centre of discussion in 2002 with a special issue of *Poetics today* entitled "Doxa and Discourse: How Common Knowledge Works." The issue was edited by Amossy and included three contributions by her: a bibliography of *doxa* and related notions in francophone research, an introduction to the term *doxa,* and a presentation of her own perspective on *doxa*. The issue was introduced in the following way, illustrating her interdisciplinary approach:

> Inherited from ancient Greek, the notion of doxa as common knowledge and shared opinions haunts all contemporary disciplines that put communication and social interaction at the centre of their concerns. To be sure, the specific term is not always used: doxa appears under various guises, such as public opinion, verisimilitude, common sense knowledge, commonplace, idée reçue, stereotype, cliché. Broadly speaking, however, all that is considered true, or at least probable, by a majority of people endowed with reason, or by a specific social group can be called doxic. Whether the Greek term is explicitly mentioned or not, the functions of doxa in social life and in verbal exchanges have been the subject of continuous inquiries, if not of sharp polemics, for the two last centuries. (Amossy 2002c, 369)

Her use of the term *doxa* in the special issue of *Poetics Today* does not constitute a sharp break with her earlier research. The focus on that term does not even seem that important to her, except as a new way of describing the focal point of her research and relating this focal point to a history. We could say that she uses the term similar to the way Barthes does, both as a general term that includes aspects that elsewhere have been described in other words and as

a link to the classical tradition of rhetoric, primarily Aristotle – but also Plato.

For Amossy the term *doxa* becomes a tool for addressing central issues in the intersection between the fields of argumentation, rhetoric and linguistics; an intersection that relates to her research on the literary function of cliché and stereotype. Despite the continuity a shift in emphasis can be seen in the writings of this period. Amossy is laying more emphasis on the constructive aspect of what she now describes as *doxa* and at the same time she gives more attention to the tradition of rhetoric.

In her article "Introduction to the Study of Doxa", Amossy describes two traditions of considering *doxa* within French thought, focusing on the traditions of linguistically oriented discourse analysis and literary studies (Amossy 2002c).[1] Her overview is not limited to those that use the term, but includes scholars that she interprets as within a tradition of doxic thinking.[2] The first tradition, where Barthes is a main figure, is a tradition of criticism that is inspired by the condemnation of rhetoric in Plato, the devaluation of ideology in Marx and the literary exposure of bourgeois stupidity performed by Flaubert.

The second tradition, where Perelman is a main figure, constitutes a constructive turn where *doxa* is not condemned as stupid or manipulative, but neutrally described as a fundamental part of human language. Amossy proposes that we should go back to the scholars of the first tradition and explore how we could make use of their theories in a constructive way. This position of taking a positive, constructive approach to *doxa* is more clearly stated in the special issue of *Poetics Today* than in the articles from the

1. A lacuna in her presentation of scholars working on *doxa* within the French tradition is the lack of reference to Pierre Bourdieu, who quite famously uses the term. This could be explained by Bourdieu not being active in a field of research directly related to the one of Amossy. Amossy does, however, relate to Bourdieu in her article "Ethos at the Crossroads of Disciplines: Rhetoric, Pragmatics, Sociology" (Amossy 2001), which will be discussed later. That article does not, however, focus on Bourdieu's understanding of *doxa*, but his understanding of the speaking subject.
2. Related notions, mentioned by Amossy, are, among others: cliché, stéréotype, poncif, lieu commun, idée reçue, topoi, myth. See Amossy 2002a.

1980s. It is clear that the early Amossy, though criticizing romanticist dichotomies, relied more heavily on the approach of Barthes, while the later Amossy put more emphasis on the neo-rhetorical approach of Perelman.

On how to do things with doxa

In "How to Do Things with Doxa", Amossy proposes a study of argumentation based on a combination of discourse analysis, pragmatics and rhetoric (Amossy 2002b). The article functions as the main reference point in my exploration of what it would mean to develop an epistemology of rhetoric with inspiration from her way of re-inventing *doxa*. Important inspirations in her development of this approach are the pragmatic works of J.L. Austin (2009) and Oswald Ducrot (1972; Anscombre and Ducrot 1988) as well as the new rhetoric developed by Chaïm Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (2006).

In relation to Barthes's approach, Amossy's (2002b) view on the meaning of *doxa* constitutes a significant change of perspective. Both understand *doxa* as common opinions and widespread beliefs, but in Amossy the valuation shifts from negative to neutral or even positive. *Doxa* is no longer related to manipulation and a position of power but constitutes a truly general aspect of language and rationality. It is a prerequisite for intersubjectivity and a source for communicative effectiveness. Amossy does not follow Heidegger and Barthes in criticising repetition or in saluting the unique and creative. She, instead, describes the constructive function of the repeated forms and the widespread beliefs.

This shift in valuation also changes the nature of academic work on *doxa*, from Barthes's – in many ways political – critique of the ideology of the bourgeoisie to a more scientifically and linguistically oriented analysis of discourse.

Barthes has a focus on 'the text' and the tight relationship between words and *doxa* that is kept by Amossy. However, in "Toward a Rhetoric of the Stage" (Amossy 1981) it becomes clear that she, just as Barthes does, writes in relation to a general semiol-

ogy that includes non-verbal sign systems, but understands linguistics as the model structure for this general semiology (cf. Barthes 1977b, 9–12). A difference between them is that where Barthes emphasises the function of verbal language in anchoring non-verbal messages, Amossy instead sees the potential of non-verbal messages to work subversively and demystify the accepted clichés of verbal language (1981, 62).

Amossy focuses on the text and not on the intention of the speaker, yet, when comparing the two critics we can note that the position of a speaker has a more defined role within Amossy's writings than in Barthes's. This is in line with her adaptation of pragmatic speech act theory; when *doxa* is understood as a tool that can be used pragmatically in discourse, this implies that it is used for a purpose, and that there are motives. The intentional is not the focus of her scholarship, but she studies function and consequently a connection between function and intention is often implied in her writings and is by no means eschewed entirely.

While Amossy's understanding of the speaker might include intentionality, it is certainly clear that Amossy does not reduce her to pure intention; Amossy's speaker is also a person within a social order. In "Ethos at the Crossroads of Disciplines: Rhetoric, Pragmatics, Sociology", she relates the sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu to the rhetorical notion of *ethos* (Amossy 2001). The article mediates between a pragmatic discourse-oriented perspective, where *ethos* is an effect of the text and a sociological perspective where the dimension of *ethos* is understood in relation to social structures, constituting a force so strong that it might be considered to completely eliminate the possibility of individuals *doing things.* This mediation shows two things: first that Amossy does consider the social position of an author/speaker relevant even though that perspective is not at the centre of her own theory. Second, that there is an underlying conflict between her perspective focused on the possibility of *doing things* with *doxa* and the focus on social structure emphasised by Bourdieu. We can conclude that the perspective of Amossy does include both the possibility of intentional political action and an awareness of the speaker as always related to a social structure. This standpoint is expressed more clearly

in "Argumentation in Discourse: A Socio-discursive Approach to Arguments" (Amossy 2009), where she explicitly addresses the question of agency:

> Despite constraints, or rather within these constraints, the individual speaker exerts her capacity to adopt a course of action and to act upon the audience. What is more, as the origin of the utterance, she necessarily takes responsibility for her saying, whether deliberately taking a stand or affecting neutrality. Thus, if the power of speech promoted by humanistic rhetoric should not blind us to the social and institutional forces constitutive of the speaker's identity, taking these constraints into consideration does not allow us to deprive speech of power and to dismiss agency altogether. What is more, it should not affect a capital issue often obscured by structuralist and poststructuralist theories: the responsibility of the speaker when using verbal means in a situated exchange. (259)

The structuralist understanding of ideology as a system is abandoned by Amossy. Instead, she allies herself with the Barthes of *S/Z*, where he finds *doxa* in fragments and refuses to put them into an integrated whole. For Amossy a general *doxa* is nothing more than a diffuse blend of doxic elements.

This abandoning of a structuralist perspective could also be described as a shift from the understanding of *doxa* as an object or a part of a system, to her understanding of *doxa* as an aspect of processes and practices. Amossy leaves structuralism but not to fully embrace poststructuralism; instead, she finds herself at home in the pragmatic perspective. She dismisses the ontological question of the essence of *doxa* and poses the pragmatic question of how to do things with *doxa* (Amossy 2002b). Her point is that to understand *doxa* we must study how it is used in language, because it exists through language as practice.

Compared to both Aristotle and Perelman, Amossy is a more clear-cut proponent of a social constructivist perspective on *doxa* encompassing the view that every notion of universality must be understood through the filter of social construction. Perelman could be interpreted in the same way, but his position is not as clear as the one Amossy takes (cf. Cassin 1990). The sociality of *doxa*

in Amossy is emphasised since the practice of language is understood as intersubjective and therefore social, but her recognition of the sociality of the language system is not as underlined or developed as Hariman's discussion of the social world in terms of status and positions of power. Amossy's references to Bourdieu are a way of including a perspective that is otherwise marginalised in her theoretical perspective. In doing so, she underscores that language use relates to social institutions, but this acknowledgement does not change the focus of her approach.

Thinking about *doxa* in the spirit of Amossy is to stay close to language as a communicative practice and describe that practice without being constrained by a predefined understanding of doxa as a coherent ideological system enforced by the elite. Amossy's way of avoiding the reaffirmation of presupposed ideologies makes her work even more interesting in relation to political activity. By asking questions about the function of racial stereotypes and the rhetoric of the far right, or the function of online commentary fields that harbour views despised by the culturally dominant elite, she has continued to stay relevant and followed her own appeal to stand on *the ultimate border* of the notion of stereotype, where the many questions it raises can be revealed and analysed. She has continued to straddle this border even though demythologizing is no longer the zeitgeist in the humanities.

The method of studying *doxa* that Amossy presents in the special issue of *Poetics Today* is the study of *topos* (plural: *topoi*), an ancient Greek term that is commonly translated as "place," but which within the rhetorical theory of *inventio* includes both aspects of form, cliché, and aspects of content, stereotype.

In many ways, the approach taken by Amossy seems to provide a promising perspective on *doxa* for scholars of rhetorical theory. A strength in Amossy's scholarship is her attempts to reconcile the various problematic aspects of her own tradition of pragmatics by entering into an explicit intellectual dialogue with the work of Bourdieu. In this regard, she clearly surpasses Barthes. Her pragmatic approach does not, however, push the boundaries of rhetoric toward a contemporary theory of symbolic action; theoretically and empirically her scholarship is fundamentally focused on ver-

bal language. Amossy's empirical studies prove that the somewhat eclectic method she develops in her own process of bricolage is indeed effective and fitting to her purpose, but when in search of an epistemology of rhetoric we also require more in depth philosophical-anthropological reflection. All in all, Amossy's main contribution is not found in philosophising, but in showing us the possibility of a pragmatic theory of argumentation infused with the poststructuralism of the later Barthes as well as the sociological insights of Bourdieu.

12.

Doxa and rhetorical-philosophical anthropology

In this chapter, I explore how the concept of *doxa* can be re-invented within a rhetorical-philosophical anthropology, and how a re-invention of *doxa* can foster a rhetorical-philosophical anthropology. I do so by engaging with the research of Mats Rosengren (1962–), a Swedish philosopher of rhetoric working in the tradition of continental philosophy. As an integrated part of my study of Rosengren's work, I address Bourdieu's notion of *doxa*. The work of Bourdieu has already been mentioned in relation to Barthes and Amossy, and as Rosengren points to Bourdieu as a direct influence, I take the opportunity to dwell on his work in this chapter.

In 2002 Rosengren published *Doxologi – en essä om kunskap* where he presented his research program, named doxology, with the goal of developing a theory of knowledge based on an understanding of knowledge as *doxa*, rather than *episteme*.[1] The framework of this research program is in some ways a continuation of Rosengren's prior research on the conflict between rhetoric and

1. Rosengren's work on *doxa* has in different forms been published in Swedish, French, English and Russian. The most central of his early writings, were originally published in Swedish, which on the one hand strengthened the position of his research within the Scandinavian field of rhetorical studies, but also made it less accessible beyond that region. Early keyworks on doxa include Rosengren (2002, 2006). The problem of international accessibility has to some extent been handled by the translation of his 2002 essay *Doxologi* into French (Rosengren 2011a), as well as the publication of an English language monograph on *doxa* and Cave art studies (Rosengren 2012a). For other English language publications on *doxa*, see e.g. Rosengren (2011b; 2017). Rosengren's work on *doxa* has also been translated into Russian, see e.g. Rosengren (2018).

philosophy in the works of Plato and Chaïm Perelman (Rosengren 1998).

The starting point for Rosengren's doxology is a deconstruction of the dichotomy between *doxa*, what we believe about the world, and *episteme*, or what the world is really like. His program is founded on the idea that all knowledge is doxic because all knowledge is formed by humans. Rosengren discusses the *homo mensura*-statement by Protagoras which states that human beings are the measure of all things. Rosengren criticises the suggestion, put forth by Plato in the *Theaetetus*, that "the human being" (*anthropos*) should be understood as every individual human being taken separately, as well as the somewhat Kantian idea that *anthropos* should be understood as the human being in a universal sense. Instead, Rosengren's interpretation of the fragment puts focus on the tool that humans use when measuring the world, that is on 'logos', specified by Rosengren as both language and thought. Through this change of perspective, Rosengren emphasises that humans are social beings and neither purely individual nor strictly collective; he also emphasises that our identities, worlds and practices as thinking and speaking beings are always overlapping and changing.

> This rhetorical *doxa* does not claim to show reality *as it is*, but rather how this reality appears *to us as humans* – this means among other things that the reality addressed by doxological knowledge and to which it relates exists in a state of constant transformation, and is neither always uniform nor free of contradiction, and is in many respects a product of our own making. A doxological, rhetorical view of the world and of knowledge tells us that we live in a, in a very real sense, human world, because we have by virtue of our human measure of *logos* created a *doxa* which produces the world for us just as it appears to us. (Rosengren 2002, 67; quote translated by Dominic Hinde)[2]

2. "Denna retoriska *doxa* tänks inte visa verkligheten sådan som den är *i sig*, utan sådan som den ter sig *för oss människor* – vilket bland annat innebär att den verklighet som den doxiska kunskapen handlar om och relaterar till är stadd i ständig förändring, inte alltid är enhetlig eller motsägelsefri och i mångt och mycket är en produkt av oss själva. En doxisk, retorisk syn på värld och kunskap säger oss att vi lever i en, i eminent

This emphasis on *logos* gives the notion of rhetoric a central position in Rosengren's research: He understands the theory of rhetoric as a tool that can be used to study *doxa*, but not just from the position of the observer; it is also a tool to actively work on *doxa* through displacements, adjustments and refigurations. The possibility to work on *doxa* is based on the idea that *doxa* is in constant change and constant migration as well as open to manipulation. Rosengren (2002, 80–93) presents *topos* as a rhetorical tool that can be used to study *doxa* (cf. Amossy 2002b). Rosengren's later research (2012a, 2012b, 2008, 2007), however, has instead come to use other concepts taken from certain philosophers, such as symbolic forms (from Ernst Cassirer) and the magma of social imaginary significations (Cornelius Castoriadis).

The term *doxa* in the writings of Rosengren is a wide-ranging term, including both conscious opinions which are expressed through language and nonverbal forms of knowledge which we take for granted. Rosengren emphasises the importance of language in structuring our sensations and perceptions and our very ability to perceive, talk and think; but he also states that *doxa* is not only discursive, but includes all our abilities. Beyond linguistically structured knowledge, it includes emotional values and predispositions to act in certain ways in relation to different forms of *ethos* and *pathos*-argumentation. *Doxa* is, according to Rosengren, intimately related to the individual, social, historical and discursive situation and cannot be understood separately from power structures. This understanding of *doxa* is clearly and explicitly inspired by Pierre Bourdieu.

To be able to understand the nature of the influence of Bourdieu on Rosengren, and in some ways also on Amossy, we need first to put the work of Bourdieu into sharper focus, asking what does Rosengren pick up from Bourdieu, and what does Bourdieu mean by *doxa*?

In the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), the term *doxa* seems to include both a certain kind of knowledge and the order

mening, mänsklig värld – ty vi har genom vårt mänskliga mått, *logos*, skapat en *doxa* som framställer världen just sådan som den framträder för oss."

that produces this knowledge. His most elaborate reflection on *doxa* is found in *Outline of a theory of practice* (Bourdieu 1977, 164–71). There he describes *doxa* as the experience when the natural and the social world appear as self-evident:

> This experience we shall call *doxa*, so as to distinguish it from an orthodox or heterodox belief implying awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs. Schemes of thought and perception can produce the objectivity that they do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible, thereby founding immediate adherence, in the doxic mode, to the world of tradition experienced as a "natural world" and taken for granted. (164)[3]

Doxa is – according to Bourdieu – a mechanism of concealment that tends to conserve the pre-existing power structure. *Doxa* is the universe of the truly undiscussed and undisputed; this is a realm that must be understood in contrast to the realm of argumentation, regardless of if it is orthodox or heterodox, since both forms imply awareness of the possibility of conflicting beliefs; an awareness that, according to Bourdieu is lacking in the experience of *doxa*.

Both Barthes and Amossy tend to see *doxa* as something that is not said explicitly, but Bourdieu goes further and questions the very representational symbiosis between language and *doxa* that constitutes the foundation of a semiotic understanding of *doxa*.

Doxa for Bourdieu should not be understood as representation (or false representation) at all; it is not a parasitic dimension of language. He is also critical toward the idea of *doxa* as a false consciousness, since *doxa* for him does not necessarily have to be a part of our conscious selves. The power of *doxa*, according to Bourdieu, lies within the accepted systems and mechanisms; it is the undiscussed which often is transferred directly through bodies like the practical knowledge of the worker. Bourdieu's description of *doxa* has emphasis on the negative as "bodily submission, unconscious submission, which may indicate a lot of internal-

3. Since the translation by Richard Nice is an edited publication, I do not provide an original quote.

ized tension, a lot of bodily suffering" (Bourdieu 1992, 121). This understanding of *doxa*, as unexpressed language, is sharply different from the understanding of it as public opinion or probable opinions, but the notion that Bourdieu uses does in many ways function along the same lines, as something that is founded on its widespread acceptability and use.

For Amossy, the study of *doxa* is a linguistically oriented study of discourse; for Bourdieu, it is a politically oriented study of hidden power in social relations. This power does not lie within language, but in the extra-linguistic mechanisms, structures and resources that empower the language spoken by certain people. This emphasis on social positions puts Bourdieu in a similar field of interest as Hariman, but the writings of Hariman lack the sharp critique of semiotics that is a central part of Bourdieu's perspective. The work of Hariman is still orienting itself in a field of language, which becomes evident by the facts that his own analysis focuses on the text and that he proposes reclassification as way of doing work on *doxa*.

In their view on language, both Bourdieu and Amossy might seem to ally themselves with J.L. Austin in focusing on speech as acts rather than on language as an object, but where Amossy seems to uphold the idea of an active rhetor *using* language to achieve certain goals, Bourdieu questions the individual subject and describes our dispositions to act in certain ways as constituted by a social tradition and order.[4]

To follow Bourdieu in thinking about language is to consider the extra-linguistic social conditions and power structures. To follow Bourdieu in thinking *doxa* is to direct our gaze towards all that which is taken for granted, that which goes without saying because it comes without saying. The connection between his ideas about language and his ideas about *doxa* is that the extra-linguistic social conditions and power structures often take the form of the undiscussed, which is the form of *doxa*. This means that language and *doxa* is linked in the work of Bourdieu but not through representation; it is not words that evoke *doxa;* rather it is *doxa* as the undis-

4. See Bourdieu (1991), for his explicit and well-known attack on Austin.

cussed that forms the field of the discussed. This view is in sharp contrast to the view of Heidegger who describes *doxa* as a form of language.

Bourdieu is critical of the distinction, which can be found in a Marxist tradition, between those who are aware and those who are not. The social world does not, according to Bourdieu, revolve around the conscious/unconscious axis, but instead work through practices and mechanisms. However, this shift – from a focus on consciousness to a focus on mechanism – collapses if we heed Heidegger (and at this particular point, I think we should), who makes clear that what is dubious in the workings of *doxa* is the hiddenness of its mechanisms.

Bourdieu's ideas are at the same time closely related to the other scholars of *doxa* in this study and completely different. Perhaps the most problematic aspect for this survey is that Bourdieu often uses the term *doxa* with a strict meaning, denoting the undiscussed.[5] That usage does not place his definition in the same frame as any of the other scholars. The works of Bourdieu could function as a dialogue partner in a conversation about the works of any of the other scholars that we have studied, but for a full comparison between any one of them and Bourdieu, other terms in the writings of Bourdieu, such as social capital, must be included. We must also recognise that the other scholars do not fully accept Bourdieu's denunciation of semiotic representation.

The perspective on *doxa* that Rosengren presents could be described as a negotiation or combination between the linguistically oriented and constructive approach of Amossy and the sociological and primarily extra-linguistic approach of Bourdieu.[6]

The term *doxa* in the writings of Rosengren includes conscious opinions that are expressed through language. Consciously expressed verbal opinions are also included in Amossy's description of *doxa* as a cultural common ground, but they are excluded

5. I am using the term undiscussed to refer to a realm that is not subject to verbalisation or explicit discussion. When discussion or controversy occurs, we instead have orthodoxy or heterodoxy.
6. Note that this description is my rendering of Rosengren's approach. Amossy is not referenced in Rosengren (2002).

by Bourdieu who posits the field of argumentation as the opposite of nonverbal *doxa*. We can thus discern a difference between Bourdieu and Rosengren that does not come out clearly in Rosengren's treatment of Bourdieu in *Doxologi*. There Rosengren claims that a *doxa*, according to Bourdieu "does not just consist of discursive knowledge – it comprises the whole of the human sphere of thoughts and actions; from facts to ideologies, from clothing style to ways of talking" (Rosengren 2002, 75). I consider this to be something of a misrepresentation of Bourdieu's perspective, since Bourdieu does not widen the meaning of 'doxa' to embrace more than discursive knowledge – instead he defines *doxa* in opposition to discursive knowledge. The fundamental idea of Bourdieu – that *doxa* is hidden and unexpressed – has in the work of Rosengren been moved from a central pillar of the definition of *doxa* to a marginal notation whereby *doxa* is often hard to see for those who live with and through it. When Rosengren (2006) describes the word *doxa* as "signifying the weave, or better the weaves of convictions, habits, practices, traditions, linguistic devices and figures of thought that encloses us and in which and through which we live" (16; my translation),[7] the influence of Bourdieu is obvious, but Rosengren's description still lacks the opposition to that which is made explicit.

Rosengren emphasises the importance of language in structuring our sensations and perceptions, and through this our very ability to perceive, talk and think, but he goes further than a purely linguistic understanding of *doxa*. He states that *doxa* is not only discursive, but includes all our abilities to act and think, as well as emotional values and predispositions to act in certain ways in relation to different forms of *ethos* and *pathos*-argumentation. *Doxa* also, according to Rosengren, includes the individual, social, historical and discursive situation and cannot be understood as separate from power structures. Rosengren combines a linguistic understanding of *doxa*, akin to Amossy's, with the extra-linguistic aspects described by Bourdieu.

7. "betecknar den väldiga väv, eller bättre de vävar av övertygelser, vanor, praktiker, traditioner, språkligheter och tankefigurer som innesluter oss och som vi lever i och genom"

The differences between Bourdieu and Rosengren highlighted here are perhaps not as significant as they might seem. The most obvious point where they differ is in the scope of the meaning of the word *doxa*. Whilst Bourdieu uses the term *doxa* in a stricter and more specialised sense, referring to the genuinely undiscussed, Rosengren uses it with a broader meaning including the undiscussed and unformulated as well as that which is expressed and debated. Nevertheless, some of Rosengren's broader discussions of *doxa* correspond with the views of Bourdieu, albeit views that Bourdieu deals with under different names, such as orthodoxy or heterodoxy.

In his later writings, Rosengren has developed his doxological approach with the aid of the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer and Cornelius Castoriadis. The association with Ernst Cassirer calls attention to the (critical) relationship between Rosengren's doxology and the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Rosengren has treated this relationship in an article, of which I am the co-author. There, his position as an ally of Cassirer (and not Heidegger) is clear. In the article, we state that both Heidegger and Cassirer understand the human position as characterised by its *thrownness* into a world that is already there; they both understand that receptiveness is an important dimension of being human (Bengtson and Rosengren 2017; see also 2019). The difference between them is that Heidegger situates most humans as passive and limits the power of spontaneity to the few leaders that through the call of fate succeed in rising above the rest. Cassirer instead describes man and mankind as having the innate capacity to create its own world and shape its own destiny, either collectively or individually, this through man's capacity to use and re-invent symbolic forms. In the article we direct criticism towards the description of the human position as passive as well as Heidegger's elitism. The criticism of Heidegger's elitist perspective could be understood as similar to Bourdieu's critique of the Marxist idea of the liberating critic who claims a position above the delusion of the masses; but with the significant difference that the alternative we present is more obviously constructive in the sense that we emphasise the human capacity to create change as a political subject.

With regard to the possibility for human strategic action, common to us all, Rosengren's approach could be described as occupying the middle ground between the idea of active rhetors, present in the work of Amossy, and the emphasis on the coercive force of tradition and social conditions emphasised by Bourdieu. He stresses social conditioning but describes the possibility of choice and the creation of alternative ways of acting from such a position formed by the past. In the work of Rosengren, the human capacity for creation must be understood as situated in a condition of *thrownness*, but this condition of *thrownness* must be understood as a result of the historical creative acts of people before us that have influenced the current position. In the words of Castoriadis, the other major influence of Rosengren's later thinking, we are always in a position downstream in history (Rosengren 2005).

In many ways the concept of *doxa* in Amossy and Rosengren are similar; their scholarships constitute a constructive turn in the understanding of *doxa* and a deconstruction of the dichotomy between *doxa* and *episteme*. They also emphasise the fundamental importance of *doxa*, even though Rosengren takes this a step further when concluding not only that *doxa* is necessary for intersubjective communication and decision making, but also that it shapes our very sensations and perceptions (Rosengren 2012a, 63–80).

The difference between the two scholars should perhaps not be described as a conflict but rather as a difference in approach and scope. To study *doxa* in the spirit of Rosengren is not just to study language but to study the human position as a social and physical being placed in a world of traditions and structures, and to recognise that humans can create meaning and act through other means than verbal language. Comparing their approaches as philosophical standpoints is, however, somewhat unfair to the scholarship of Ruth Amossy. The heart and major strength of Amossy's research is her thorough study of material discourse in her work as a critic. Rosengren, on the other hand, remains, first and foremost, a philosopher.

For the project of developing an epistemology of rhetoric that includes an understanding of public argumentation, it is not enough to stay in the field of philosophy. Our understanding of

epistemology as argumentation and reason-giving means that the approach we develop must include a grounded understanding of rhetorical practice. We can then use the philosophical anthropological ideas of Rosengren, but this framework alone is not enough. It is here therefore that Barthes and Amossy can indicate what we should be looking for; as conceptualisations of argumentation they provide a clear benchmark. A general note is that a certain form of philosophical reflection can be appealing and fulfil all the criteria for the contemporary field of rhetorical studies, but if the implied method for studying argumentation is wanting when compared to the semiotics of Barthes or Amossy's study of *topoi*, we must keep looking for an epistemology of rhetoric that goes beyond lofty principles on a theoretical level, and contributes directly to our understanding of the practice of political rhetoric in post-truth society.[8]

8. The question of how Rosengren's rhetorical project can be re-imagined and continued, in light of contemporary challenges, is treated in the anthology *Shadows in the Cave: Revisting Rosengren's Doxology* (Bengtson et. al. 2022).

13.

Concluding remarks on re-inventing Doxa

This section of the book has examined the scholarship of Barthes, Hariman, Amossy and Rosengren, as well as dwelling briefly on the contributions of Heidegger and Bourdieu, to understand the potential alternatives for a contemporary re-invention of *doxa* that might support the development of an epistemology of rhetoric. A preliminary conclusion is that the avenue of rhetorical-philosophical anthropology provides an interesting framework for such an epistemology, understood as the principles for knowledge formation within the scholarly field of rhetorical studies, but that the semiotic theory of early Barthes and the pragmatic approach of Amossy are closer to providing a model for argumentation that can be used to understand reason-giving in political rhetoric than others. The simultaneous readings of Hariman, Heidegger and Barthes have also contributed with a potentially fruitful analysis of metadiscourse. Hence, the *desideratum* provided by part 2 of this study is that we need to develop a theoretical approach that is inspired by the general direction of Rosengren's work, but which also brings us closer to the methodological sharpness of Barthes and Amossy. In addition, this approach needs to include an understanding of the function of metadiscourse. This desideratum is what the next part of the book responds to. To support the construction of such an epistemology of rhetoric, I now identify some critical choices and indicate some directions as to how we should understand knowledge as doxic.

A constructive approach

Ruth Amossy has described a constructive turn in the study of *doxa*, exemplified by my own study of the re-invention of *doxa* within contemporary rhetorical studies. In sketching an epistemology of rhetoric, inspired by the various re-inventions of *doxa*, my suggestion is to position a new epistemology within this constructive turn.

Consequently, I do not form an epistemology of rhetoric that considers *doxa* as faulty knowledge, i.e. knowledge that by definition must be criticised as Heidegger, Barthes and Bourdieu could be argued to do. Instead, I understand *doxa* as unavoidable, which is in line with Amossy's and Rosengren's theoretical approaches. According to this view a criticism of *doxa per se* is as unreasonable as a criticism of language *per se*. *Doxa*, as well as language, are understood as essential aspects of the human condition. This allegiance with a constructive take on *doxa* could also, in the light of our readings in part 1, be seen as favouring Isocrates over Plato.

Another question that needs to be addressed is whether all knowledge, including knowledge within the hard sciences and the result of logical operations, should be considered to be doxic; this is, clearly, the case in Rosengren's doxological project. Considering all knowledge as *doxa* is reasonable, if we take this statement to mean that all knowledge is dependent on the human perspective. However, the implications of such a general statement might also limit our ability to form a useful theory of knowledge for our more specific purpose pertaining to the discipline of rhetoric and to public argumentation. It therefore suffices – at this point – to state that from the perspective of our understanding of rhetorical studies all knowledge is doxic. In other words, our perspective does not acknowledge the possibility to escape from the domain of *doxa* into a fundamentally different form of knowing. This, of course, means that we leave the limits of Bourdieu's terminology behind and accept *doxa* as including expressed opinions as well as those which have never been and never will be expressed through language. That all is *doxa* does not, however, mean that the per-

spective of knowledge provided here is the most useful in understanding all forms of knowing. As stated in chapter 6, we do focus on *doxa* as related to the realm of politics, to the public negotiations of the *polis*. Hence, to study something as rhetorical, from the perspective developed here, also means to study it as public and as political.

This allegiance to a constructive rhetorical turn in the contemporary study of *doxa* also means that our understanding of *doxa* accommodates the human ability to act, and to create. This opening does, of course, not mean that a rhetorical view of *doxa* supports a liberal notion of the individual as completely free. A view of *doxa* based on a synthesis of these scholars emphasises the subject, and our fields of knowledge, as situated in a social world and as downstream in relation to a history of language use. To relate this position to the individual scholars of our study, we can discern a closer link to Hariman, Amossy and Rosengren than to Heidegger, Bourdieu and the early Barthes, who all position the common man as passively receptive of different forces, rather than as agents. The perspectives on conditioning described by Heidegger, Barthes and Bourdieu are still important, but they have to be modified to make room for political action; actions that are conditioned by external forces but not determined by them.

An inclusive approach

There are differences between the scholars studied in part 2 as to how their understandings of *doxa* relate to different forms of symbol use. Ruth Amossy has a clear linguistic and literary understanding of *doxa*, perhaps not formulated as a definition, but it permeates her entire approach. Robert Hariman's article on *doxa* is also clearly language oriented, but his later scholarship has moved toward visual culture, photography and performance theory. It is possible to draw lines from his article on *doxa* to his studies on political style and these later engagements, but as it stands, the article on *doxa* is clearly marked by being prior to Hariman's move toward performance theory (cf. 1991; 1995, 71–73, 103, 103n21,

127; Hariman and Lucaites 2007, 30–34, 93–136). The primarily language-oriented approach of Amossy and Hariman could be contrasted with Bourdieu's extra linguistic understanding of *doxa* as the undiscussed, as well as Barthes' semiotic perspective built on the model of language, but which engages with all kinds of symbolic cultural expressions.

To make sense of the clashes of perspectives in this study of contemporary re-inventors of *doxa* and to develop an approach characterised by possibility rather than limitation, I, in the following section, render the *doxa* as an inclusive term which describes knowledge as related to all different kinds of symbol use, all ways of creating meaning and as related to human capacities outside of the obvious spectra of symbolic communication. This means that, as a theoretical perspective, the epistemology of rhetoric that I sketch, inspired by the re-inventions of *doxa*, follows the synthetic approach of Rosengren rather closely. Amossy and Hariman do, however, contribute substantially. Amossy has the advantage of an approach grounded in an understanding of the praxis of argumentation, and such a perspective on *doxa* is relevant for the development of an epistemology of rhetoric that encapsulates an understanding of argumentation as practice. Hariman contributes for his part with an understanding of the position of the rhetorical scholar as a critic and a social actor in an academic field of struggle over *doxa*. He also complements Amossy's text- and argumentation-based approach by showing how social aspects of power, such as status, can be studied within text-based discourse, as well as in political practice and photography (Hariman 1995, 2007).

From a synthesis of Amossy's pragmatist approach and Rosengren's wider understanding of *doxa* we can conclude that a theory of knowledge as doxic cannot be understood only as a theory of text in the linguistic sense. It must be understood as including all varieties of human capacities to create meaning. It should also be understood as a theory of actions and processes, rather than as a theory of knowledge as an object. This is emphasised by Amossy's approach and Rosengren's programmatic definitions but is also brought to the fore by my study of Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Our approach to *doxa* as a theory of action and process

includes both the conditioning processes that situate a position and the actions that might be taken from that position.

A doxology (to follow Rosengren's vocabulary) is thus a theory of the creation of meaning through symbolic actions understood in relation to the mechanisms and structures of society; it is a theory of meaning beyond pure representationalism.

In Bourdieu and in later developments in Rosengren's work, we find the idea that *doxa* is also a form of bodily knowledge; this idea acknowledges that our bodies, senses and ways of perception are a necessary part of an understanding of knowledge from the perspective of the human position. In line with an inclusive approach to *doxa*, I accept this view, distancing ourselves from a narrow reading of Amossy's linguistic approach and claiming that a contemporary epistemology of rhetoric, inspired by the re-invention of *doxa*, should be all-encompassing. This inclusive perspective, connected as it is with a wide-ranging understanding of the human position, includes the perspective that knowledge is always embodied. Such an all-encompassing view leads to a conflict with theories of knowledge based on an ideal of propositional logic. In the vocabulary of traditional rhetoric, we can state that *doxa* does not just include *logos* (in the limited sense of verbal logic) but that it also includes *ethos* and *pathos*. This is explicitly stated by Rosengren, but perhaps best illustrated in the analyses of Hariman and Barthes; the former's focus on status is related to *ethos* and the latter's analyses of contemporary mythologies call attention to the emotional aspects of knowledge.

Highlighting the social

With explicit allegiance to a constructive and inclusive understanding of *doxa*, I have sketched the general framework of an epistemology of *doxa*, inspired by the re-invention of *doxa*. Let us at this point move our attention to the characteristics of knowledge accentuated by the term *doxa*. Barthes, Amossy and Rosengren all connect *doxa* to the core idea of widespread beliefs or public opinions, a description that is closely linked to the common description

of *doxa* as something oft-repeated. *Doxa* is understood as constituted in the social arena, since it is spread and reiterated. The relational foundation of knowledge is also underscored by Hariman's presentation of *doxa* as constituted in social ranking and regard. The terms "belief" and "opinion" also relate knowledge to a human perspective rather than to correspondence with an external world or to an alignment with natural laws of logic or religion understood as originating from beyond social life. Rosengren develops this argument further in relation to Cornelius Castoriadis and describes the human position as *autonomos;* a position in which we, as humans, can set our own rules.

I have already discussed how *doxa* is related to social power, and that our proposed understanding of knowledge as doxic must acknowledge that our beliefs and opinions are not self-standing entities but products of structures and mechanisms in society that tend to produce certain kind of results. This kind of analysis could emphasise either immaterial aspects, such as status, or material aspects, such as owning a piece of computer hardware, but the material and immaterial dimensions are of course intimately interrelated. What is important from a general perspective is that a theory of *doxa* as a theory of socially situated knowledge must include openness to these kinds of relationships of influence.

This approach might be described as a critique of the linguistic perspective of Amossy, since her theory, as presented in "How to do things with *doxa*", does not place emphasis on the social power dimensions of society. Elsewhere, however she does declare herself open to this line of thinking. Our approach is also in line with Amossy's reasoning when it comes to her counter-critique of the structuralist and one-dimensional critique of *doxa* in the Marxist tradition (exemplified in this study by the early Barthes). For Amossy, and for the epistemology of rhetoric I sketch here, *doxa* is not understood as owned by a certain (privileged) group in society, nor is it understood as a coherent system of ideology. In this way, our understanding of *doxa* follows a poststructuralist approach in considering *doxa* to be a constantly changing blend of doxic elements. Borrowing a metaphor from Cornelius Castoriadis, often used by Rosengren, *doxa* could be described as the magma of

socially constructed meaning. If we look more closely at Amossy's own approach, however, poststructuralism is not actually the tradition closest at hand. Her approach should rather be understood in relation to pragmatics, whereby the system is not the starting point at all (neither as a construction or deconstruction) but the situated practice of speech and action. My sketching of an epistemology of rhetoric, inspired by the various re-inventions of *doxa*, does not, however, have to include a choice between the traditions of poststructuralism and pragmatism; it suffices merely to recognise and establish the links to both.

The mechanism of concealment

The final key characteristic that I want to highlight in this chapter is concealment. The concept of concealment is relevant in two ways for our understanding of *doxa* and the sketching of an epistemology of rhetoric: Firstly, it functions as a general limit of human knowledge. To see something in one way is always to conceal other ways of seeing, and therefore all ways of knowing are characterised by concealment. The other way of thinking about concealment in relation to *doxa* is to consider the common concealment of the fact that knowledge is *doxa*. That knowledge is dependent on human perspective is concealed when *doxa* (under a different name) is presented as natural and unproblematic.

This critique of *doxa* as concealment can be found in Heidegger and Barthes. Consequently, both of their perspectives imply that there is an alternative knowledge to locate, that *doxa* in one way or another can be avoided or surpassed. In my view, this approach is not the best way forward. Instead, I follow Amossy and Rosengren in suggesting that all knowledge is doxic and that there is nothing wrong with it being so. Of course, the ideal that honesty should be upheld remains; we should not conceal that our knowledge is *doxa*, but this critique is not limited to certain forms of knowledge but to all knowledge, perhaps most of all to those forms claiming the status of *episteme*. Hence, a line of conflict is constructed in relation

to those who falsely talk of universal rules, acquired from without the human perspective (*heteronomy*).

Scholars of rhetoric can choose to direct their attention to different forms of concealment: either to the specific concealment of alternative approaches in particular rhetorical messages (the task of rhetorical criticism), or to the general concealment of the human position as functioning through *doxa* and as constituted by *autonomy* (the task of the philosophy of rhetoric). One must also however (and now we are back to the exigence of post-truth) try to move beyond unconcealing and concealing and discuss knowledge production constructively in a world of shadows.

Thus far we have navigated through the different approaches to *doxa* provided by Barthes, Hariman, Amossy and Rosengren, as well as touched upon the work of Heidegger and Bourdieu. The synthesis presented above as directions to an epistemology of rhetoric, inspired by the re-invention of *doxa*, is neither neutral nor the result of a strict mechanical process, but rather a way of linking things together to create a meaningful whole. This navigation has sought to create a meaningful picture of the situation as it currently exists, and foreground the content of part 3 of this book, where I, in chapter 14, present seven principles for a rhetorical theory of argumentation, and then, in chapter 15, formulate an understanding of argumentation that can form a bridge between the theoretical inquiry of academic rhetoric and the practical need to understand knowledge formation in post-truth society.

III

14.

Epistemology

Reconsidering rhetorical theory

In the introduction to this book, I established that contemporary society and its post-truth condition push scholars of rhetoric to reassess the foundations of their discipline. I drew attention to the unresolved problems of how one should understand rhetorical practice in relation to the notions of truth and opinion – and discussed the imperfections and shortcomings of postmodern theory in relation to scholarly engagement with post-truth rhetoric.

In this chapter, I propose seven principles for rhetorical theory, principles inferred from the discussion of rhetorical studies in the introduction as well as in parts 1 and 2 of this book. The relationship between the principles articulated below and the preceding chapters is complex; there are clear links between the principles and statements in part 2, but these principles are best understood as programmatic expressions of themes that were already apparent in the introduction. These themes have been present throughout this study and have evolved in the process. Some of them have been more dominant, such as social knowledge for example, whilst others are perhaps less expected, as typified for example by the discussion of embodiment. These differences depend, at least partly, on the emphasis that I place on the rhetorical tradition, and the fact that some of the aforementioned aspects have not been as explicitly theorised in the classical Greek canon as others.

The discussion in this chapter – as the rest of the book – is done in a spirit of *bricolage*. As a consequence, the results presented are very much built on the material carried on the current, yet – and this is important – the process of *bricolage* is also a creative process itself, in which my own position is conditioned by

the material, but not determined by it. There are thus wordings and proposals in this chapter that are not simply derivative of the material. While these inventions are certainly not created *ex nihilo*, they are inspired, and reflect, my position within the field, and therefore also my vision for the future of rhetorical scholarship.

In relation to the overall purpose of this study, this chapter provides a partial answer to the request for an epistemology of rhetoric by providing principles for rhetorical theory and knowledge production within rhetoric as an academic field. Though this chapter is focused on the discipline of rhetoric and the following chapter on public argumentation, they should be understood as mutually dependent. This chapter is then not only a presentation of results but also a foregrounding of the next chapter and may serve as a foundation for future studies.

My chosen presentation through a few condensed "principles" carries with it the risk of ambiguity, but it possesses the pedagogical strength of being able to construct an overview through such a typology. To balance between risk and potential, I combine the presentations of principles with descriptions of p*roblematiques*. These are the exigencies or ambiguities to which the principles are intended as answers. My comments are complementary to this, including conceptual clarifications and some comparisons between argumentation theory used within the field of rhetorical studies, such as the New Rhetoric developed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (2006), the theory of argumentation in discourse professed by Amossy (2009), the pragma dialectical school founded by van Eemeren (Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004), the Toulmin (1958) model for argumentation analysis, and the Scandinavian pro et contra model of Arne Naess (1953; 1966).

The decision to relate the principles outlined in this chapter to theoretical perspectives labelled as 'argumentation theory' is based on my understanding of epistemology as knowledge production through the provision of justification and reason. The argumentation theories treated have in common that their philosophical foundations partly differ from the principles being put forward here. I will not, however, present a systematic evaluation of these theories in relation to the presented principles. Instead, it should be

noted that no one theory coheres with all the principles I identify, and that a continuation of this study could well cover the further development of a theory of argumentation that does indeed combine these disparate points.

Knowledge and the human perspective

Problem

How should rhetorical theory relate to questions presupposing or searching for an ultimate point of reference for knowledge? Such questions are raised by the reading of Plato and his discussions of how knowledge, in the restricted sense, can be stabilised through recollection, *theoria* or through dialectical processes of rational argumentation. Similar processes that strive to anchor knowledge are also found in modern-day frameworks, for example, in the analytical philosophical norm of rational discourse or in the idealised scientific view on truth. A third variety can be found within the popularised views of truth as simple facts in correspondence with reality. These perspectives all include questions about the relationship between knowledge and some ultimate point of reference.

Principle 1

Rhetorical theory should include the understanding that all human knowledge stems from a human perspective. Thus, rhetorical theory supports the view that it is impossible to transcend the limitations of the human perspective and rejects the idea that such an escape would be something to aspire to.

Comment

Considered in isolation, this first principle might seem uncontroversial. If we, however, consider the *doxa-episteme* dichotomy and rephrase the principle as, "there is no *episteme*, only *doxa*," the conflict gets clearer. The concept of *doxa* is, however, ambiguous.

While this first principle specifies one essential part of the meaning of knowledge as *doxic*, other meanings will be brought to the fore by other principles. A clarification in relation to the articulation of this first principle is that the term 'knowledge' should not be read as an equivalent to Plato's *epistēmē*, but as an inclusive concept including beliefs, opinions and skills. Below, I also use terms such as 'public knowledge' and 'social knowledge'. These wordings emphasise two important perspectives of the understanding of knowledge within the rhetorical framework. This first principle thus contradicts any epistemology that divides the field of knowledge into ontologically separate realms, as Plato's analogy of the divided line depicts, for example.

Using modern-day terminology, we could describe this first principle as claiming that the denial of absolutes that characterise the post-truth condition is and always has been all-encompassing. However, to avoid polarisation between 'relativists' and 'truth-defenders' we should acknowledge that it is not necessary to deny the possibility of truth for this principle to stand. One can also accept that rhetoric is concerned with the public sphere and that the public sphere is conditioned by post-truth, meaning as a consequence that all knowledge, from the perspective of rhetoric, is conditioned by post-truth.[1]

Rhetorical anthropology

Problem

What kind of anthropology is the best match for rhetorical theory?[2] Contemporary scholars of rhetoric want to study a wide range of issues concerning persuasion. To do so from a reflected, well-thought, position they need to be able to combine methodological perspectives on how to understand and describe symbolic actions with an understanding of what it means to be human. Hence,

1. Cf. the beginning of chapter 15, where I describe two meanings of post-truth.
2. For an introduction to 'rhetorical anthropology', see Robling (2004).

rhetoric needs an anthropology whose foundation is relevant for the current field and coherent with the rhetorical tradition.

Principle 2

Rhetorical theory should be built on the premise that the best way to understand the human position is through the study of human works, i.e. the study of human symbol uses.

Comment

This second principle locates rhetorical theory within a tradition of rhetorical anthropology, where the study of rhetoric and human symbol use is taken as the best way to reach a better understanding of the human position.

This principle adheres to the approach of Mats Rosengren, which in turn relies on the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer.[3] The alternative approach, which is dismissed here, would be to start with a philosophical understanding of the human position, discovered in some other way, and inquire into its consequences for the understanding of the human position as rhetorical.

A potential conflict could also lie in the very premise that rhetoric needs an anthropology, a presupposition that might clash with the so-called posthuman turn in rhetorical studies which would argue for an understanding of rhetoric that goes beyond the human (cf. Boyle 2018; Muckelbauer and Hawhee 2000). I am sceptical of the idea of removing *anthropos* from the equation, implied by the notion of posthuman rhetoric, but share some of the empirical interests within this line of scholarship, including the rhetoric of technology. My position, however, is that these 'posthuman' practices are better understood through Ernst Cassirer's notion of symbolic forms, which explicitly includes technology as a symbolic form, than as posthuman (cf. Hoel and

3. The philosophical anthropology of Martin Heidegger has another line of inquiry starting with the fundamental question of being, which makes it different form this rendering of a rhetorical anthropology. On the difference between Cassirer and Heidegger as anthropologies, see Bengtson and Rosengren (2017, 2019) and Robling (2009).

Folkvord 2012). There is thus no need to abandon the tradition of rhetorical anthropology.

A strong point of rhetorical anthropology – in the sense of an anthropology based on the study of symbolic practices – is that it captures both general and highly situated aspects of being human. The approach allows for general reflections on the human position and the drawing of parallels between different times and cultures at the same time as it allows for the study of highly specific concerns and temporally situated practices.

Embodiment

Problem

How should rhetorical theory relate to the material turn in rhetorical studies, engaging with questions such as what the material body and material rhetoric are. Scholars working with these questions counter an idealist understanding of the human mind, as well as a structuralist, idealist understanding of language. The main ideas are that we cannot fully comprehend the human position without taking the physical body into account and that we cannot fully comprehend symbolic action without taking the material aspect of symbols into account.

Principle 3

Rhetorical theory should understand the human position and human action, including symbol use, knowing and argumentation, as embodied.

Comment

This principle could be described as in conflict with a certain structuralist perspective, where the language system is constituted as a system of logical relations, rather than as a human practice. The dual aspect of embodiment prescribed by this third principle,

means that we should always understand symbolic use and thereby argumentation as embodied in material. It is this material that provides the possibility for symbols to exist in time and space. There are no symbols or arguments that are not carried by something and exist through this quality of being embodied. This principle also means that the human position, the position of the subject, is neither just an intellectual spirit nor merely a point of reference defined by its relation to the structure that constitutes language. Instead, the human position as embodied means that our relations to symbols and our ways of grasping the world are also constituted by our bodies.

The question of embodiment is traditionally left out of argumentation theory. An exception is the discussions on how propositional arguments can be understood as embodied in, for example, images, which is a line of thought that is problematic for other reasons.[4] In part 2, I noted that the question of the human body was included in Bourdieu's and Rosengren's treatments of *doxa*. Rosengren too, once again, directs our attention to the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer and especially his adaptation of Jakob von Uexküll's notion of *Umwelt*, which constitutes a promising perspective for developing this line of thought.[5]

Empirically, there is a lot of research being done today on rhetoric performed, perceived and structured through various technological platforms. Some of these studies relate to the discourse on posthuman rhetoric, mentioned above, but these aspects would also fall within the scope of embodiment research as portrayed here, both in the sense that the rhetoric studied is embodied in complex material with their own way of functioning, and in the sense that the human interaction with these materially embodied rhetorics goes through the human body. I would, also, like to emphasise that symbolic embodiment in non-human material as well as the human body should be considered also in a more tra-

4. The primary problem is that this line of thought is built on the premise that language is not merely an important symbolic form, but the fundamental symbolic form that captures the essence of all symbolic processes.
5. On the relationship between Uexküll and Cassirer, see Stjernfelt (2011, 169–86).

ditional rhetorical setting, as well as in work on the history of rhetoric.[6]

Argumentation beyond propositional logic

Problem

If rhetoric is understood in terms of argumentation, what are the limits of the notion of argumentation? A discrepancy between different possible ways of understanding argumentation was apparent already in this study's introductory definition of argumentation; it concerned the question of whether the concept of argumentation should be limited to verbal language or include all symbol use, as well as the question of whether only rational discourse should be accepted as argumentation or if we might consider all reason-giving as argumentation and thus use persuasiveness, rather than rationality as the criteria of judgement.

Principle 4

Rhetorical theory should use a broad understanding of argumentation; it should include *ethos* and *pathos*, as well as *logos*, and it should be understood as something that can be performed through different kinds of symbol usage. In other words, we should not delimit the study of argumentation empirically or theoretically to the study of discursive language or syllogistic patterns, but study different ways of creating meaning and providing reasons.

Comment

This fourth principle is perhaps the one that most clearly breaks with many of the dominant theories of argumentation.

The first important factor of differentiation is that the rhetorical theory that I propose is not limited to reason, or to logical rea-

6. For a rhetorical study with a focus on contemporary technology, see e.g. Boyle 2015. For a rhetorical study of the bodily aspect of classical rhetoric, see Hawhee (2004).

soning. Emotions and appearances are just as constitutive of a rhetorical understanding of argumentation. Of course, a lot has been written about how to handle non-rational elements within argumentation theories that are built on a rational foundation, but applying this fourth principle in theory development requires that we put the broad understanding of argumentation at the very heart of the theory; such openness should be a part of its foundation.

The second important factor is that rhetorical theory should not limit itself to verbal or written discourse. We have already mentioned that such a limitation can be found in pragma-dialectics, but we can also note that the theoretical bias toward linguistics and an empirical bias toward written language weigh heavy on the tradition that Ruth Amossy works in, as well as in Naess, Perelman and Toulmin. Roland Barthes is famous for his extension of literary critique to non-written forms of popular culture, but on a theoretical plane his semiotics prescribes that we should see the theory of language as providing a generalisable theoretical system. This principle, however, states that a rhetorical theory of argumentation should neither limit the spectrum of symbols that are used, nor impose theories developed for certain symbolic domains onto others.

The dynamics of social knowledge

Problem

How should rhetorical theory understand rhetoric as both social (concerned with the interpersonal) and political (concerned with the order of society)? And how – in relation to the above – should the notion of ideology be understood and adapted?

Principle 5

Rhetorical theory should understand knowledge as socially constituted and influenced by status and power relations. This intertwines rhetorical argumentation with the domain of political

activity and relates it to publicity. Rhetorical theory should not, however, study public knowledge as a coherent system of ideology. The semiotic realm that is traditionally labelled ideology is better studied as ongoing processes and as constantly changing blends of mythical elements. A further consequence of this process-perspective is that rhetorical theory is aligned with a pragmatic perspective on communication, where the starting point is the situated practices of symbolic action (i.e. not texts).

Comment

This fifth principle focuses on the social dimension, which is an aspect that in the contemporary re-inventions of *doxa* is most clearly expressed in the work of Bourdieu and Hariman. The social theory of Bourdieu is also referenced by Rosengren and Amossy. Barthes's view is also political and socially oriented but, as expressed by this principle, we should not consider social knowledge merely as a phenomenon controlled by the elite. This stance clashes with Barthes's analysis of the *bourgeoisie* and in some ways also with Bourdieu's social theory.

The social dimension, as related to status and power structures, is traditionally absent from argumentation theories, as for example the works of Arne Naess and Stephen Toulmin. References to socially constituted and accepted knowledge are, however, something of a trademark of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of informal logic and the European tradition of argumentation theory. The inquiry into the different types of audiences in Perelman could also be read as a rudimentary social theory, but its focus is epistemological rather than sociological.

The pragma-dialectical theory, in contrast, includes several aspects related to the social dimension in its method of argumentation analysis. Firstly, the model for critical discussion itself is social (which is also true for Toulmin and all rhetorical theories since an audience is implied). Secondly, the social model of the critical discussion includes social rules for correct conduct. Third, the pragma-rhetorical model for criticism includes an analysis of the argumentation situation that includes higher-order conditions,

such as differences in power, status and other psychological factors.[7] An important difference, however, between the pragma-dialectical stance and rhetorical theory, as described here, is that the former is normative at its core. Rather than being focused on describing the actuality of argumentative discourse it has constructed an ideal, in relation to which real argumentation is criticised. The social dimension is clearly included in the list of fallacies in pragma-dialectics, but the framing of this social dimension is completely different from the rhetorical approach proposed here.

Regarding the question of ideology, this fifth principle associates rhetorical theory with the perspective on *doxa* presented in the later works of Barthes, particularly *S/Z*, as well as in the works of Amossy. This is done in contrast to the tendencies in earlier Barthes to present ideology as systematically coherent. The emphasis on procedures also connects this principle to an epistemology of *dynameis*, of faculties and processes, rather than knowledge as copy theory. Hence, this fifth principle underscores the pragmatic, speech act perspective, viewing argumentation as action in a societal context. In terms of classical rhetoric, this could also be described as leaving the Aristotelian paradigm aside to revisit the perspective of Isocrates.[8]

Being downstream

Problem

How should rhetorical theory relate to the human position as historically situated, and to temporality as a factor in persuasion?

7. Note that the higher-order conditions were not a part of the original pragma-dialectical model. The pragma-dialectical understanding of argumentation should be understood as a school that progressively adapts, rather than as a static theory established in a singular work.
8. Cf. Chapter 7. See also Bengtson and Mossberg (2023, 41–49) for a further discussion of rhetoric as an integral and constructive part of public life, drawing from Isocrates, Quintilian, and Cicero.

Principle 6

Rhetorical theory should understand the position of the subject and our knowledge as situated downstream of a complex of histories. To be downstream is to be situated within the ongoing multi-directional flow, a swamp of events and symbolic actions.

Comment

The sixth principle relates to what in Saussurean terminology could be called the synchronic-diachronic perspectives. These two perspectives are also present in many argumentation theories, where argumentation is both understood as a structure of arguments and as a process. In the pragma-dialectical theory these two perspectives are clearly marked out as the argumentation structure (*synchronie*) and the stages of the critical discussion (*diachronie*). Since rhetorical theory is focused on the pragmatic and rhetorical dimension the diachronic, process-oriented, perspective is in focus.

In addition to the study of a piece of argumentation, such as a political speech, as temporally structured, this principle highlights that all attempts at persuasion are intertwined with more long-term rhetorical processes. Among the re-inventors of *doxa*, we can especially note Rosengren's description of the role of *doxa* in historical processes. Rosengren modifies Cornelius Castoriadis's metaphor of being downstream to provide a more complex understanding of the flows of historicity. That metaphor of being downstream at the confluence of flows and wading in marshland has here been included in the articulation of this principle. Beyond describing the human position as historically situated the metaphor also implies an understanding of agency and affective persuasion; it suggests that there is a downstream to our being downstream.

Human agency

Problem

How should rhetorical theory relate to the question of human agency as regards the dual meaning of 'subject', either as the acting subject, the mediator of change, or as the passive subject, being subject to external forces. This question constitutes a combined focal point in relation to several of the principles above. Within the framing of classical rhetoric, the problem could be described as a conflict between the individual agency of the orator, and the culturally established demands of the *dēmos*. Within a contemporary debate about philosophical anthropology, it could be described as a conflict between the perspective of spontaneity and thrownness.

Principle 7

Rhetorical theory should include an opening for the human ability to act and to create, both individually and collectively, without ignoring the conditions imposed by what is already there.

Comment

This seventh principle cuts directly to a core issue in the scholarly discussions of *doxa*, as well as *myth*. The perspective of Barthes in *Mythologies*, as well as the general perspective of Bourdieu, can be read as emphasising the formative power of culture and ideology in a way that seems to erase the potential for a *rhetor* to enact change. A more constructive approach can be found in Ruth Amossy's speech act-oriented approach, perhaps best exemplified with her article title: "How to Do Things with Doxa" (Amossy 2002b). Rhetorical theory, as stipulated by this principle, acknowledges the constraints of society and the force of culturally established myths and stereotypes, as well as the capacity of individuals and groups to act rhetorically in a way that shifts the perspectives of tradition. Hence, the difficulty of political actions is accentuated, but the possibility is still recognised.

The *possibility* for human spontaneity has been described as a trademark of the philosophy of Cassirer, contrasted to Heidegger's notion of thrownness.[9] I would, however, question such a dichotomy, and like Rosengren claim that Cassirer provides a perspective that merges the aspect of being situated in a world that is already there with the potential for spontaneity, and for political action. In summary, we need a rhetorical understanding of historical process that connects the sixth and the seventh principle, an understanding that connects the notion of being downstream with the notion of agency.

9. See chapter 12 for an extended discussion of Cassirer and Heidegger. The spontaneity-thrownness dichotomy has been emphasised by Gordon (2012), but questioned by Mats Rosengren and myself (Bengtson and Rosengren 2017, 2019).

15.

Epistemology

Reconsidering rhetorical argumentation

As stated in the introduction, this study takes its starting point in the post-truth exigence that haunts contemporary rhetorical studies, that pushes us – as scholars of rhetoric – to reconsider the epistemological foundations of our discipline. In the preceding chapter, I explored how scholars of rhetoric can respond to this exigence by reconsidering our understanding of rhetorical theory. In doing so, I drew on classical Greek discussions of rhetoric, as well as from scholarly re-inventions of rhetoric and the notion of *doxa* from the 1950s and onward.

This chapter seeks to contribute to an understanding of epistemology as argumentation. I draw from the same sources, but instead of articulating principles for rhetorical theory, I outline a model for rhetorical reason-giving. The model is intended to answer the scholarly need to accurately describe modern-day practices of political persuasion, as well as the need to study and evaluate rhetorical argumentation as a constructive process in support of knowledge claims.

When using the concept of post-truth within rhetorical studies, there are two meanings of the word that we can choose to accentuate. The first – of post-truth as a description of a specific period – was popularised in 2016 and referred to what was understood as the present state of politics and public debate in Western society; this temporally situated understanding is linked to the discussion of a 'Trump-Era'. In theoretical discussions, a second meaning of the term 'post-truth' tends to surface; namely, post-truth, not as a period, but as an approach to the world characterised by a denial of truth. When understanding post-truth in this second way certain

connections between the post-truth concept and the rhetorical tradition come to the fore.

Just as post-truth can be understood as battling truth, there is also a tradition of portraying rhetoric as opposed to true knowledge. This dichotomy between rhetoric and truth has been expressed negatively, as an accusation of rhetoric's lesser value – or positively – as a claim that rhetoric, through the notion of *doxa*, provides a better understanding of the human position than a Platonic world view. In both formulations, rhetoric is opposed to truth and more specifically to Plato, as the proponent of *epistēmē*.

However, when applying the second, a-temporal, way of understanding the notion of post-truth, one could also interpret Plato – the traditional nemesis of rhetoric – as a post-truth thinker.[1] This would not be true for all his works, but in line with my reading in chapter 5, one can interpret the argument about *doxa* and *epistēmē* in the *Republic* as an attempt to manage the insight that truth has no function in public life. This understanding of the Platonic position includes the possibility for some to reach truth in certain areas but denies that truth is available to the public or that it is possible to reach in all areas.

In such a reading, the condition of post-truth becomes a challenge specific to the field of politics and public debate. This characterisation is somewhat similar to the well-known Aristotelian way of dividing between domains dealing with that which is necessary and domains dealing with that which is contingent.[2] Going beyond the temporal particularities of the Trump-era, I would say that we find ourselves in a post-truth state in the moment when we

1. To label Plato – the philosopher of eternal forms – as a post-truth thinker might seem counter-intuitive, to say the least, but I am not the first to do so. American professor of Social Epistemology Steve Fuller (2017) has made a similar point, claiming that both Plato and the sophists were post-truth thinkers, differing not in their understanding of philosophy's or rhetoric's relation to truth, but in whether access to these practices should be free or restricted. Of course, neither Fuller nor I claim that Plato denounces the possibility of truth *per se;* the focus is, instead, on Plato's way of circumscribing the role of truth in the public sphere. Truth becomes irrelevant for Plato not because it doesn't exist, but because it has no function in the public domain.
2. For a discussion of the domain of rhetorical argumentation in the rhetorical tradition and in modern-day rhetorical argumentation theory, see Christian Kock (2009).

cannot take what has formerly been seen as true for granted. Neither a temporal nor an a-temporal understanding of the post-truth condition, however, means that 'truth' as a trope disappears. Conversely, one could argue that a characteristic of post-truth society is an abundance of truths, which, on the one hand, contributes to the relativising of truth, but, on the other hand, testifies to the continued existence of a dream of The Truth.

Exploring the historically situated tension between post-truth and argumentation in contemporary Western society, we must recognise that the perceived crisis of political argumentation does not arise from a conflict between rational and irrational argumentation. On the contrary, emotional argumentation has always occupied a central position in public rhetoric. The primary concern of the post-truth discussion is, instead, epistemological. In terms of traditional argumentation theory, the post-truth problem concerns the premises and not the mode of inference used to derive conclusions from premises. In relation to post-truth as a historically situated era, the main challenge is to understand what happens when basic, easily controllable, facts and established scientific results no longer function as a common starting point for public debate. Such a discussion could be focused on particular debates within the United States under the Trump presidency or within the Brexit referendum campaign in the United Kingdom. However, the same lack of a common ground could also be argued to constitute the normal condition in all diverse societies, and not just today, but throughout history as well. Consequently, I make two important conclusions in the understanding of argumentation that I outline in this chapter. Firstly, that in the face of the post-truth exigence, it is not sufficient to understand argumentation as the supporting of propositions on the basis of the established *doxa*. Instead, we must consider argumentation about *doxa*. How are we negotiating, establishing, re-figuring and evaluating the starting points of argumentation in the public sphere? Secondly, that there are historical particularities in any society that should not be overlooked at the same time as we must not fall into the trap of exceptionalism, believing that our time and our society is ontologically different from all others.

The purpose of this final chapter is complex. The primary goal is to provide the outline of an understanding of argumentation that can help us not only to get a better understanding of actual political rhetoric in contemporary post-truth society, but also to provide new opportunities for political action in the face of post-truth challenges. A secondary goal is to show that the post-truth condition can be fruitfully understood as a stance that is not entirely new but rather with parallels in history. I address this secondary goal by presenting a model for argumentation in relation to classical Greek rhetoric. In doing so, I seek to illustrate that, though every post-truth situation or theoretical post-truth argument is highly situated, it is still possible to draw analogies and to think in relation to history.

In the remaining parts of this chapter, I draw on the preceding chapters, and particularly from part 2, to develop a model for understanding argumentation on *doxa* that can be useful for the contemporary field of rhetorical studies in light of the post-truth challenge. In addition, I use passages from Plato's *Republic* to support the development of a new theory of argumentation. This last chapter thus brings together the various themes of the book and functions as a concluding discussion.

Some remarks on general direction

The contemporary scholars studied in part 2 provide several clues as to how to develop a model of argumentation that meets the post-truth challenges described above. Here, I collect some of these clues so as to indicate directions for the theory development that follows.

Firstly, it is important to reiterate that an understanding of argumentation that fulfils the purposes of this chapter must focus on the understanding of epistemological starting points, rather than on the details of how conclusions are drawn from such starting points. In part 2, I discussed how both Amossy and Bourdieu understand *doxa* as, in a very fundamental sense, constituting a framework or starting point for the practice of rhetoric. Amossy's view

is language-oriented, while Bourdieu's understanding of *doxa* is non-linguistic. They do both, however, position *doxa* as filling a primary function in social interactions. There are also some descriptions, within their scholarship, of how *doxa* is established. It is noteworthy that Amossy and Barthes both emphasise repetition; the mechanism of repetition can also be found in Bourdieu, though his analysis pays more attention to the disciplining function of social order.

There is an important tension in the twentieth century discussion of *doxa* between the scholarly norm of de-mythologising and the constructive turn in *doxa*-studies. Should we – as Barthes and Heidegger do – take it upon ourselves to reveal the manipulative nature of *doxa*, or should we accept that *doxa* is what we have, and as such is neither good nor bad? Regarding this dichotomy, we have already – in the two previous chapters – established that the constructive turn constitutes the best way forward. Nevertheless, the tension seems to remain. Following the momentum of this study we could, therefore, question the very dichotomy and try to combine the two perspectives. How could the norm of de-mythologising to reach *aletheia*, which we discussed in relation to Hariman's scholarship, be combined with a belief in the human constructive capacity to form doxic knowledge for our time?

Another direction of the previous discussions has been the tendency toward pragmatics, or toward a study of actions and processes rather than texts. Such an approach – found for example in Amossy – could serve to facilitate the understanding of contemporary political practices, as well as the secondary purpose of providing alternative ways of performing politics. The decision to develop a performative, or pragmatic, understanding of argumentation should not, however, be read as an excuse to push semiotics to one side. On the contrary, it is possible to combine semiotic perspectives with a pragmatic framing. Doing so would facilitate an understanding of argumentation that goes beyond the verbal.

We have also, from the beginning and throughout this book, emphasised the necessity of going beyond rationality in our under-

standing of argumentation.[3] In this regard, my project is similar to Walter Fisher's (1984) critique of the rational paradigm. There has also been influential scholarship on metaphorical argumentation that attempts to go beyond a limited rationality (see e.g. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 2006, 398–410; Lakoff and Johnson 1985). To be sure, Fisher's works on narrative rationality and discussions of the analogical rationality of metaphors provide valuable perspectives, but neither narrative nor metaphor can, by themselves, replace the role of propositional rationality. Consequently, we need to go beyond the limits of a theory of metaphor and narratology. A less restricted understanding should allow for what Perelman might have called 'reasonableness' as expressed also in behavior and actions (Wintgens 1993; Tindale 2010).

Finally, I want to acknowledge two major forces that condition the understanding of rhetorical argumentation outlined in this chapter. The first of them is the condition of temporality, including the position of being downstream as well as the agency directed towards the future, and the second is the substantial force of public opinion; the threatening power of the *dēmos*. Combining the forces of history and public opinion – and adding the power of iteration and the non-rational nature of man – we arrive at a situation where the idea of a singular speech or singular argument that sways public views on fundamental issues reveals itself as a mere phantasm.

My proposal – and now I move from collecting clues to expressing constructive ideas – is to sketch an understanding of argumentation where temporality becomes a key element, and not just temporality as stages in a critical discussion, but temporality in a long term perspective. To develop such an understanding, I suggest that we view argumentation as processes of *sedimentation* and *erosion*, which I expand upon below.

To facilitate the development of a new understanding of argumentation, I revisit Plato's *Republic* and read it as a work on rhetoric. Doing so might seem provocative to scholars of rhetoric as well as to philosophers, but there is good reason for doing

3. Here I am talking about rationality in the narrow and often strictly logical sense that is intimately connected to propositions and propositional logic.

so. My reading is based on the basic idea that Plato was himself performing rhetoric, and that any rhetorical practice implies a rhetorical theory. In other words, I shift from studying Plato's performance and describing his rhetorical practice to acknowledging an implicit practice-constituted theory. This shift is the same change of perspective that has been used to rehabilitate the status of Isocrates in more recent scholarship. I consider this kind of re-reading just as fruitful for approaching Plato as it has been for other antique thinkers, and more so than a system-oriented approach might be.

The background to this reinterpretation is laid out in part 1, where I mentioned the potential for using Isocrates in rhetorical theory and drew inspiration from his method of placing practice and imitation at the centre of rhetorical pedagogy. Ekaterina V. Haskins's critique of Aristotle's construction of a seemingly a-cultural rhetorical system pushes us in the same direction, namely towards a focus on practice and towards Isocrates. I do believe that Plato, Aristotle and Isocrates can be read as constituting different paradigms for thinking rhetorical theory, at least if we consider the later traditions of interpretation as much as their actual texts. The tradition of interpreting Plato *within* rhetoric has, however, been somewhat limited. In light of this limitation, I suggest that we must not necessarily turn to Isocrates merely to get away from the problems of Aristotle. While I acknowledge the viability of Haskins' criticism of Aristotle as a model for rhetorical theory, and agree that Isocrates constitutes an interesting alternative, my proposal is that we could also read Plato as practising rhetoric, which opens up a new avenue of theory. My critique – in part 1 – of the notion of an epistemic tension in Plato constitutes a criticism of a tradition of reading Plato, rather than a criticism of Plato *per se*. The problems arising with Plato were connected to the practice of reading Plato as an Aristotelian, as if he were trying to present an ahistorical system. I on the other hand find that *doxa* in the writings of Plato is better understood in terms of practices and faculties than in terms of static knowledge objects. What I do here is to sketch the practical consequences of that insight and to take a focus on practices and faculties as the starting point for readings of Plato.

My position acknowledges that there is some worth in the instinctive and common claim among students of rhetoric that Plato, in practice, is a rhetorician. As a consequence, I also acknowledge that Plato's text can be read as providing models for rhetorical argumentation and that if there is a normative model for rhetoric in a text, then that that model also implies a theory. More specifically, I claim that this is the case with the *Republic*. The *Republic* is of particular interest to this study as it is Plato's central work for understanding both politics and the *doxa–epistēmē* conflict; as established in part 1, these two areas are constitutive to rhetorical theory. In addition, the *Republic* also constitutes a discussion of fundamental political issues, which is precisely the kind of rhetorical argumentation on *doxa* that we are trying to conceptualise in this book.

I am not, however, the first to read the *Republic* as a contribution to rhetorical theory. An important inspiration in this regard is James L. Kastely, who in his *The Rhetoric of Plato's Republic* (2015) presents a Platonic rhetorical theory derived from the *Republic*. Kastely claims that the teaching of rhetorical theory is a deliberate part of Plato's pedagogical project. For me, however, it is sufficient that the material of the dialogue can be used to develop the understanding of argumentation that I work with here. The actual intention of Plato – or the correct reading of his texts in relation to the original context – is not my concern. My work is more in the spirit of *bricolage* than historical exegesis, but Kastely's approach does offer new possibilities for appropriating the *Republic* within contemporary rhetorical studies. Some of these possibilities will be explored in this chapter.

Argumentation as sedimentation and erosion

To understand the transformation of established *doxa*, I argue that we need to reassess the temporal and spatial framework in which we study argumentation. We cannot understand argumentation as constituted by single artefacts or performed in single non-discursive actions, nor can we understand argumentation as singular

propositional streams with certain pre-determined stages, as for example in the pragma-dialectical ideal of a critical discussion. We must reconceptualise argumentation in relation to temporality as well as spatiality, and to do so requires both metaphorical imagination and reasoning.

In the terminology of earth science, we find the concepts of *sedimentation* and *erosion*; two interrelated, continuously ongoing and gradual geological processes. Erosion is a process where soil, sediments and rocks are removed from the earth's crust; it is the process where water flows, prevailing winds or moving glaciers separate particles and transport them to new locations. Sedimentation is a necessary counterpart; it is what happens when the water, the wind or the ice slows down, and eroded particles are deposited onto a new surface. These two processes contribute to a constant reshaping of the world.

In relation to argumentation, these geological metaphors can be used to conceptualise the ever-changing nature of *doxa*. They explain the transformation of public opinions and the slow reworking of the undiscussed aspects of our being in the world. Through the notions of sedimentation and erosion, we can conceptualise changes of the material fundaments for arguments as well as the undiscussed aspects that we take for granted but, still, constitute the starting points of rhetoric.

A premise that is implicitly acknowledged by this geological metaphor is the human need for (seemingly) motionless and substantial foundations. The metaphor is a metaphor of motion, but it still admits that there is a potential stability in the stagnated material, in solid ground. When we argue, we need to build on something; the question is how to understand what the nature of our foundation is.

At first glance the metaphor of sedimentation and erosion might appear to fit with a posthuman alignment of rhetoric, or at least with a conceptualisation of rhetoric without agency. Certainly, this metaphor captures such aspects of being in the world, describing processes that constantly act upon us and others, seemingly beyond human control. However, on second thought, we must remember the remarkable capacity of mankind for developing and

finding agency in a landscape. Humans have the capacity to create or steer the flows that cause erosion and to build barriers that enhance sedimentation. We can grow plants, or remove them, we can stabilise or undermine, we can direct or re-direct. The world that we imagine in using this metaphor is, in many ways, an anthropocenic world, a world were humans transform their own *Umwelt.* The word transform is, however, significant since we are not imagining creation *ex nihilo*.

An example from the *Republic* that illustrates the difficulty of transforming *doxa* is Socrates's interaction with Thrasymachus (Plato, *Republic* 328b, 336b–354c, 357a, 358a–358d, 367c, 450a–450b,498c–498d, 590d. See also Kastely 2015, 36–45.) Thrasymachus attempts, at one point, to leave the dialogue, which exemplifies the challenge of dissolving that which has become established *doxa*. Plato's work thus acknowledges the very real challenge in persuading someone who instead wishes to go on as before. Kastely in fact claims, in his reading of the *Republic*, that the entirety of Book I could be read as an illustration of how the *logos* of traditional dialectics fails in the persuasion of fundamental issues (Kastely 2015, 43–45). An answer to the difficulty of transforming *doxa* that could be derived from this dialogue is the acknowledgement that such persuasion must be a long-term project and include many steps rather than a singular event (cf. Bjork 2021). In the interaction with Thrasymachus we see that Socrates initially tries to refute Thrasymachus' own standpoint but fails. The persuasive process does not, however, fail in that same moment. Instead, Thrasymachus stays in the dialogue and remains a part of the persuasive process, but in another form (Kastely 2015, 44). I read this as an illustration of our need to transform our understanding of temporality and spatiality to understand argumentation on *doxa*. It is not necessarily in the midst of a single stream that the most poignant processes occur, sometimes we should instead look to the more placid areas, where the streams flow more slowly and particles from near and far alike build up.[4]

4. There is an affinity between this metaphor and Castoriadis's metaphor of downstream, as well as to Rosengren's (2005) development of that metaphor, describing the water

In the following section, I leave the details of the metaphor of erosion and sedimentation but attempt to explore the same ideas in a different way. What I present, by drawing on my analysis so far, is a three-dimensional understanding of argumentation on *doxa*. One could focus on one or two of these dimensions, but for an in-depth understanding of argumentation on *doxa*, one must take all three into account. Staying with the idea of flow, we can note that during the movement of argumentation specific dimensions can come to the fore at certain times, while they remain hidden at others, but they must all be present for transformation to occur. The first such dimension is affirmation of public opinion as reasonable. The second dimension is the process of presenting new visions that are appealing, whilst the final and third dimension is the calling into question of public opinion. The first dimension is connected to our initial remarks on the implicit premises of the erosion and sedimentation metaphor, namely that there is a potentiality and even a form of necessity in the stagnated materiality of the ground that cannot be ignored. To accept that stability is to understand argumentation pragmatically; we are interested in argumentation that speaks to actual people. The second dimension is the presenting of alternative visions, of alternative myths. This process is an active process of sedimentation and of forming new ground. The third dimension – that of calling public opinion into question – is the process of erosion, it can happen slowly or suddenly when large masses of land fall into the sea; erosion of *doxa* is necessary for transformation. The three following sections, focusing on these three separate dimensions together yield a unified three-dimensional image of argumentation in line with the reconsideration of the temporal and spatial conditions presented above. It must also be said that, somewhat understandably, the model presented here is only a first sketch, it is a *prolegomenon* to a more developed perspective.

flows of the marshes. I would also like to note the importance of McGee's (1990) notion of fragmentation for my way of conceptualizing rhetoric here.

Dimension 1: Acknowledging the reasonableness of everyday wisdom

In emphasising the importance of acknowledging the reasonableness of public opinion and everyday wisdom, I look to the constructive turn in *doxa* studies, following Amossy rather than Barthes. The starting point is not to deride the stupidity of the common man, but, on the contrary, to acknowledge the constructive role of common-sense knowledge. The inclusion of this first dimension in a theory of argumentation connects the project to a tradition of American Pragmatism and common-sense philosophy, associated with thinkers such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey (cf. McDermid 2015; Gava and Gronda 2017). An acceptance of everyday knowledge is not, however, only pragmatic in terms of being necessary to allow human reasoning, it is also a rhetorical necessity. If we wish to persuade someone, then we need common ground and to avoid dissociating ourselves from our audience. Hence, there is a pragmatic necessity in accepting everyday wisdom as a starting point for reasoning and a rhetorical necessity in accepting the prevailing views of the audience as a starting point for rhetorical argumentation.

Let me exemplify this dimension of argumentation with two passages from the *Republic*; one where Socrates acknowledges public opinion for rhetorical ends, and one where his argument collides with public opinion and fails.[5] On both occasions the rhetorical effect is explicitly mentioned in the dialogue.

The first passage, from the *Republic*, book V, is when Socrates makes the distinction between *epistēmē* (knowledge) and *agnoia* (ignorance), as well as allocating a position for *doxa* (opinion) as a third *dynamis* in-between the two others, working within the realm of ambiguity. When studying this passage in chapter 5, I noted that Socrates, in evoking *doxa*, acknowledges the existence of a domain that poses a serious challenge to his own philosophy by

5. Both arguments are described by Kastely (2015, 114–15) as examples of reflections on rhetoric.

being out of reach of *philosophia* and *epistēmē*. We can now revisit that same passage and study its role in the overall argumentation contained within but also represented by the *Republic*, interpreting it as an example of argumentation that acknowledges public opinion for rhetorical purposes. Socrates raises the question of the rhetorical effects of his *doxa–epistēmē* discussion, when he asks: "So, will we strike a false note in calling them lovers of opinion rather than lovers of wisdom? And will they be very angry with us if we speak this way?" (Plato, *Republic* 480a; trans. by Bloom).[6] Socrates answers his own question negatively, indicating that the description of *doxa* was intended to be close enough to the publicly accepted view to not cause anger. Socrates's formulation itself, however, indicates that there existed a potential conflict in the differentiation between these character types. In that context, his recognition of the realm of *doxa* functions as an argumentative move that acknowledges the public opinion that *doxa* is important, and by that move tries to shift the audience to a friendlier position. The interaction also makes clear that the realm of *doxa*, understood as opinions regarding specific issues, is related to social identities and that these identities are essential to persuasion.

The second passage, which comes in book VI, illustrates the rhetorical failure of an argument when Socrates does not acknowledge the reasonableness of public opinion. There Socrates starts listing a large number of positive qualities of the philosophers, or vices that they lack. The philosopher is described as, among other things, "a rememberer, a good learner, magnificent, charming, and a friend and a kinsman of truth, justice, courage, and moderation" (Plato, *Republic* 487a; see also Kastely 2015, 114–15).[7] When Socrates finishes his praise of the philosopher, Adeimantus replies that Socrates' presentation is unconvincing. Adeimantus compares the ideal presented by Socrates with the public's experience of actual men schooled in philosophy, men who as a contrast are quite strange and possibly even vicious or, at least, useless to the city.

6. "Μὴ οὖν τι πλημμελήσομεν φιλοδόξους καλοῦντες αὐτοὺς μᾶλλον ἢ φιλοσόφους; καὶ ἆρα ἡμῖν σφόδρα χαλεπανοῦσιν ἂν οὕτω λέγωμεν;"

7. "μνήμων, εὐμαθής, μεγαλοπρεπής, εὔχαρις, φίλος τε καὶ συγγενὴς ἀληθείας, δικαιοσύνης, ἀνδρείας, σωφροσύνης,"

Through this counterargument the dialogue once again thematises the importance of adhering to public opinion to be able to persuade. Similar events or argumentative moves are found throughout the dialogue clarifying that it is necessary for a persuasive rhetoric to speak to deeply grounded value systems, systems that derive from personal experience and possess authority (Kastely 2015, 48).

Dimension 2: Establishing alternative myths

The second dimension in my rendering of argumentation on *doxa* is the presentation of an alternative vision that is appealing. The inclusion of this process is necessary to fulfil the ambition of drafting a rhetorical theory of argumentation, since it is the dimension that works constructively to produce and shape knowledge.

I choose to use the word 'myth' as the term for both the new common-places that may be established by rhetoric and the traditional common-places that are always already there, reproduced by culture. I thus frame the rhetorical theory of argumentation, sketched here, as a theory of mythical argumentation, or perhaps more accurately, as a theory that focuses on myth to understand the persuasiveness of argumentation.

Regarding the meaning of myth, it is of course not possible to deal with contemporary discussions of myth in their entirety in this book, but part 2 has provided us with a roadmap featuring two stopping points, whose relevance to contemporary rhetorical studies have already been substantiated. The first such stop is the semiotic mythology of Roland Barthes.[8] The second stop is Ernst Cassirer's notion of myth as a symbolic form.[9] Part 2 concluded by noting that the mythology of Roland Barthes could be argued to distinguish itself in relation to the other perspectives when it comes to providing useful conceptual-methodological tools for

8. I have, in a previous work, argued that Barthes's theory of myth could be used to conceptualise the basis for argumentation (Bengtson 2012).
9. I have elsewhere described in more detail how Cassirer's notion of myth can help us better conceptualise rhetorical argumentation (Bengtson 2022).

rhetorical criticism, but that the contemporary field of rhetorical studies has surpassed the philosophical-anthropological limits of structuralism.[10] In this context, I conclude that one of the merits of using the concept of myth in the further development of a rhetorical theory of argumentation is that it would let us build a bridge from the rhetorical criticism of Barthes to the philosophy of Cassirer. This link is not developed further in this book, but the principles of chapter 14 and the three-dimensional understanding of argumentation presented here could be used as groundwork for such a project.

Interestingly, the term myth also constitutes a link to the conceptual framework of Plato's *Republic*. Luc Brisson, who has studied the uses of the concept of *mythos* in Plato's works, describes *mythos* as being used in a primary sense and a broader sense (Brisson 1998, 7–11). In the broad sense the term designates a discourse that is unfalsifiable and unjustifiable but used solely to persuade. This broad understanding is clearly relevant for argumentation, but the primary meaning is more dense and interesting. In the primary sense, *mythos* is described as a particular kind of discursive practice, in which poets reorganise and give a particular form to a message that a certain community wants to keep in memory. According to Brisson, Plato sees myth as an instrument, used by tradition, to convey values and inherited answers. Brisson (1998) notes that Plato is critical toward myth, claiming that *mythos* is not falsifiable, accumulates incoherencies when transmitted, cannot reach universality because of its close connection to the sensible world, tells stories instead of presenting arguments, and is not addressed to the intellect, but to the emotions (9–10). These aspects could be described as reasons for Plato's call to denaturalise the cultural myths, which I discuss below, but they do also support the constructive relevance of *mythos* for the rhetorical practice in the *Republic*. A rhetoric that is intended to transform *doxa* needs to orient itself in the realm of images and sensible objects, a realm that in Plato's own ontological framework

10. To be clear, I do recognise the need to move beyond what I propose in my article on Barthes from 2012.

lacks a direct relation to truth. Such rhetoric also needs to establish new images and narratives that can be emotionally appealing (cf. Kastely 2015, 192–93). Ramona Naddaff (2002) claims, in her reading of the *Republic* that "the failure of the philosophical logos produces the necessary return to the use of a poetic muthos as a mode to speak seriously about that which dialectic cannot represent adequately" (129). Hence, Naddaff emphasises *mythos* as a constructive concept, which marries well with a reading of the *Republic* as thematising rhetoric, and our decision to use the *Republic* to facilitate the development of a theory of argumentation on *doxa*.

To add more precision to Naddaff's claim about the productive potential in *mythos*, we might return to Brisson, who describes the content and function of myth. Regarding the content, he describes myth as being about the beyond, a realm that is ontologically superior and cannot be reached by our senses. With references to the *Republic*, Brisson (1998) lists five classes of entities that myths refer to: "gods, daimons, heroes, the inhabitants of Hades, and men of the past" (7–8). Regarding the function of myth, Brisson argues that humans tend to direct their attention to a beyond to find answers and guidance for the world they live in. The function of myth thus becomes to "rouse the public into identifying with the beings summoned before them" and to let the poet "mould the souls of his public" (Brisson 1998, 8). Hence, the intrinsic goal of mythical rhetoric is to ensure that the members of the community remain obedient to the ruling system of values. Myths modify behaviour by imposing values that are foreign to the addressee of the discourse; in doing so, it forms identities in relation to a culturally constructed heteronomous system (9).

Brisson's description of the understanding of myth in Plato's *oeuvre* corresponds well with a traditional account of the rhetoric of poets, as described in the *Republic*. It is worth noting, however, that Kastely, through his study of the rhetorical practice performed in the *Republic*, adds another understanding of mythical argumentation to that of the poets; Kastely sketches a Platonic rhetoric that can provide new myths, myths that perhaps counter established values and thereby support autonomous decisions about the val-

ues that we as citizens adhere to, and about the identities that we form. This last note on autonomy will be developed further below, but for now it is enough to note that while Brisson focuses on the heteronomous myths of the poets, Kastely also mentions the myth-making of the philosophical rhetor as a route to autonomy.

I now turn to how we can describe the pragmatic rhetoric that establishes the common-places that we here call myths. When Kastely discusses how this mode of persuasion is portrayed in the *Republic*, the analysis becomes somewhat ambiguous and difficult to piece together. He does, for example, utilise different and sometimes disparate concepts such as image,[11] narrative,[12] dream,[13] fantasy,[14] and myth[15] to talk about the common-places that are established by traditional poetry, as well as by the ideal rhetorical practice that he considers to be promoted by the *Republic*.

I would like, however, to propose that we understand these as varied conceptualisations of different phases in a persuasive process. Kastely states that "the rhetorical development of images is progressive, leading to a more complex appreciation" (2015, 138). I claim that this idea of a progressive process can be generalised into a model for mythical persuasion, and that terms such as "image", "narrative" and "poetic myth" should not be understood as competing methods of explaining the mythical dimension, but as stages in a persuasive process and pieces in the progressive development of a mythical puzzle.

Kastely describes such a progress in Socrates's progressive use of the simile of the sun, the analogy of the divided line and the allegory of the cave.[16] We must here refrain from probing into the complexities in the epistemological and ontological ramifications of these well-known images, but content ourselves with not-

11. See Kastely (2015, 131–32, 137–41, 145, 190–92).
12. See Kastely (2015, 20, 37, 85, 160, 166, 212–14, 217, 220–22).
13. See Kastely (2015, 6, 40–41, 51, 215).
14. See Kastely (2015, 6, 51, 56, 175, 214–16, 219, 223–25).
15. See Kastely (2015, 20f, 84–86, 204–05, 215–17, 220–22).
16. For the simile of the sun, see Plato, *Republic* 508b—509c. For the divided line, see 509d—511e. For the allegory of the cave, see 514a—520a. See also 531d—534e. For Kastely's argument, see Kastely (2015, 136–46).

ing that there is an increased complexity to them when seen as mythical arguments, from the simile of the sun that uses a well-known and emotionally charged phenomenon, the sun, to establish a striking image, through the divided line, that constructs a systematic analogy of different ontological realms and finally, to the allegory of the cave that combines the metaphorical strength of the simile of the sun with the structural complexity of the divided line and merges these into an emotionally charged narrative, with ethical implications inherent in the dramatic setting. In short, the allegory of the cave is an epic story with heroes, challenges as well as deceived captives.

At the Nordic conference for research on rhetoric, in 2017, visual rhetoric and argumentation scholar Jens Kjeldsen held a presentation where he argued that the peoples of the Scandinavian countries were using certain widely spread images from press photography to "work through" ethical problems related to how these welfare societies should handle large numbers of immigrants and asylum seekers.[17] Kjeldsen's claim presents a similar kind of argument as the reasoning through images present in the *Republic*. I would, however, claim that a developed theory of rhetoric's role in the intellectual development of societies cannot stop with specific, concrete, photographic images. We must see how mythical argumentation uses, constructs and transforms emotionally charged metaphors, narrative patterns, and poetic stereotypes to instil fundamental changes or repeat existing value systems.

In *Mythologies* Barthes (2012, 236–38) falls back on the notion of analogy when he tentatively describes the relationship between myth as form and myth as content. The same goes for Kastely, who repeatedly turns to the notion of analogy when discussing the rhetoric of the *Republic* (See e.g. Kastely 2015, 70–71). However, when describing myth as built on analogy, they fall into the trap of understanding rhetoric within the framework of a copy-theory

17. The photos studied by Kjeldsen were from the second half of 2015 and related to the significantly increased number of asylum seekers in Europe that year. The most well-known image is that of Alan Kurdi, a three-year old Syrian boy, who was found drowned on the beach of the Mediterranean sea in Turkey in September 2015. On Kjeldsen's notion of rhetorical working through, see Kjeldsen (2019, 2022).

understanding of knowledge.[18] From an analytical philosophical standpoint, it might be interesting to study myths as analogies in relation to some form of reality, but that is not the most poignant dimension of their pragmatic and rhetorical function. Instead, I suggest re-reading Plato with a focus on the poetic, not as *mimesis*, but as a form that is emotionally charged. Rhetorical argumentation is to connote, to find a form that is pregnant with meaning and employ it to cause effects. We can here find inspiration in Luc Brisson's (1998, 7–11) descriptions of myths as a divine world acting upon us, or from W. J. T Mitchell's (2005) argument in *What Do Pictures Want?*, where he discusses pictures not as mere similes, but as coming to life and as having a performative force.

To further develop contemporary rhetorical theory along the lines presented in chapter 14 and at the same time develop our understanding of the processes of post-truth rhetoric, I would – once again – suggest a deeper engagement with Roland Barthes's practice of rhetorical criticism and Ernst Cassirer's theory of myth (cf. Bengtson 2012; 2022). In this work however, I will have to settle for providing this preliminary three-dimensional model as my answer to the question of how to rework our understanding of argumentation in light of Plato, *doxa* and post-truth.

Dimension 3: Denaturalising prevalent beliefs, desires and identities

While the first dimension of my model is about taking the established value systems seriously and affirming their status as a legitimate force in persuasion, and the second about establishing new

18. It is, however, worth noting that when Barthes draws analogies in his readings of particular myths, this is not as clearly within the framework of mimesis. In his theoretical reflection Barthes might fall back on mimesis and discussions of defective analogy, but in his actual work of criticism Barthes discusses analogy as a way to establish relations between rhetorical messages and culturally well-known patterns of ideology and myth. As for example, when the flooding in Paris is compared to Noah's ark or when the mythical message in the defeat within French wrestling is explained through an analogy with the "oldest myths of public Suffering and Humiliation: the cross and the pillory." (Barthes 2012, 10, 65).

myths, the third dimension is about calling existing beliefs, desires and identities into question. In other words, the third dimension concerns processes of denaturalisation.

To clarify, the use of the term denaturalisation is not intended to imply that the beliefs, desires and identities dealt with have ever been 'natural' in a biological or dogmatic sense. The process of denaturalisation is the process whereby the every-day feeling that something is natural is deconstructed. Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* is an example of this kind of work; his collection of short essays emphasises the constructedness of bourgeois beliefs, desires and identities. Barthes shows that what is deemed natural – due to the strength of the ideological rhetoric of the bourgeoisie – are in fact just fantasies of culture. Similar reflections, but with a more personal focus, can be found in *Roland Barthes*, where Barthes reflects upon his own fight with *doxa*, and how scholarly paradigms, such as structuralist criticism for example, can become naturalised and taken for granted as the norm. The very process of naturalisation, which de-naturalisation fights, has perhaps in this book been best described in the chapter on rhetorical ontology. When Hariman explains that you are what you are described as, he points to an underlying mechanism in the process of making culture feel natural. A merit of both Barthes's and Hariman's work is their critical practice, their way of denaturalising particular rhetorics. The scholarly work of denaturalisation is not, however, limited to the critical study of artefacts. It can also be performed through more general reflections on the human position, and the role of culture within that position. Rosengren's scholarship is an example of this kind of scholarly work.

It is important to note that denaturalization or a critique of knowledge claims can be understood in two ways: either as a neutral rhetorical strategy – motivated solely by its capacity to support persuasion in the form of the transformation of doxa – or as something normatively good – a practice that fights illusions and deceptions, and leads to a better understanding of the world.

Within rhetorical studies from the 1950s and onward there has been a clear emphasis on denaturalisation or critique as a positive norm. This norm is not applied to the practice of public rhetoric

but constitutes the normative framework that justifies the scholarly field of rhetorical studies. It is not the politician who is supposed to denaturalise, but the academic. Academic rhetoric becomes rhetorical criticism, and the critical gaze becomes the value that the discipline provides.

Interestingly, there is a connection between what McIntyre calls postmodern theory and the practice of contemporary post-truth rhetoric. McIntyre (2018, 123–5) identifies the postmodern tradition of critique, previously associated with a left-wing liberal or socialist position, as one of the roots of the political post-truth rhetoric of right-wing conservatives and nationalists, which aim to transform society. It is important, however, to acknowledge that the process of critique and denaturalisation has always (even in the left or liberal version) been related to constructive argumentation and to the process of establishing views and identities. This relationship between rhetorical criticism and pragmatic, constructive knowledge formation is at the heart of the three-dimensional understanding proposed here.

Returning to Plato's *Republic,* I choose to read it as supporting denaturalisation, based on the understanding that human beliefs, desires and identities are the product of culture.[19] Some might consider this portrait of Plato's view to be counter-intuitive in relation to the standard framing of Plato within rhetorical studies. Rather than being a philosopher of culture, Plato is foremost considered as the philosopher of non-changing forms. We must, however, note two things. Firstly, Plato's works includes conceptualisations of the cultural and changing social world, as well as conceptualisations of the eternal world of forms. This is clear in, for example, the analogy of the divided line (*Republic* 509d—511e) and the allegory of the cave (514a–520a). Even though Plato could arguably be said to support the view that beliefs, desires and identities should be founded on the eternal world of forms, his work does not indicate that this is the reality in most people's everyday

19. Kastely (2015) discusses the *Republic*'s recurring questionings of public opinions on many occasions (66, 77, 79–80, 87, 89, 101, 210–12).

life. Therefore, a rhetoric that strives to transform *doxa* must begin in a world that is formed by culture.

Leaving the question of principles aside, let us look at the method of denaturalisation. Rosengren, Hariman and Plato could all be described as promoting denaturalisation through theoretical work. The idea of theoretical work as denaturalisation is based on the premise that the scholar, in describing the human position as characterised by culture, automatically positions all specific cultural views within the realm of that which can be questioned. This form of denaturalisation can be found in Plato's *Republic*, where there are several general descriptions of man as trapped in a world of shadows and uncertain beliefs, which implies logically that specific beliefs, desires and identities are also situated within such a world.[20] From my reading of Hariman, Heidegger and Barthes, I also derived a method of denaturalisation based on the causing of friction. Going back to the *Republic*, we can find two ways of causing friction within an existing worldview. The first way is to indicate discrepancies in the prevalent views. The second way is to present alternative views that by their very nature of being alternative contribute to the denaturalisation of the dominant perspective. Plato's text could also be argued to include another method,

20. I have emphasised the similarities between Plato and contemporary rhetorical studies in the emphasis on the influence of culture and the importance placed on denaturalisation, but there are also differences, particularly in the realm of ontology. For example, in the analogy of the divided line (*Republic* 509d–511e; cf. Kastely 2015, 138–39), Plato describes reality as constituted by different realms or layers of reality reachable through different human faculties with different distances to truth (cf. 595a–603c; cf. Kastely 2015, 188). No such ontological system can be found in Barthes, Hariman or Rosengren. In Barthes we can sometimes sense that the existence of alternative realms to the doxic or mythical is implied, but no truer system is explicated. Hariman does not treat the subject but stays in the realm of rhetoric and social knowledge. Rosengren explicitly denies the different realms and claims that everything must be understood as *doxa*. Plato and Rosengren both support the norm of denaturalisation, and object that culturally imposed opinions are treated as natural laws to the world of images and shadows, but their philosophies differ in their understanding of whether any alternative might be possible. Their position is, however, arguably, the same if we limit the scope of the question to politics and the public sphere since they both treat that domain as a domain of post-truth (in the a-temporal, theoretical sense).

namely a rhetorical practice of highlighting the rhetoricity of new alternatives. These three methods can all be included in political speech as well as in academic critical discourse.

We can thus achieve denaturalisation through *general reflection on the human condition, indications of discrepancies in existing views, presentation of alternative views,* and the *highlighting of the rhetoricity of new myths*. By combining these methods rhetorical argumentation could contribute to transforming the listener from a position of unreflective acceptance of public opinion to a reflective weighing of options. Hence, the combination of these moves can, arguably, give rise to citizens who do not merely follow *doxa*, but are aware that the norms of society are constituted by the citizens and can be changed by them. The question, implied by this perspective, is not whether human rhetoric should be allowed to form society and norms or not, it is whether this process of constitution should be unreflective, as is the case in the poetry described by Plato, or reflective as in the normative rhetoric that Plato's text provides.[21]

This is exemplified by turning to the actual discourse of the *Republic*. On denaturalisation, through theoretical reflection, we find Plato's general descriptions of man as trapped in a world of shadows and appearances, of which perhaps the clearest example is the allegory of the cave. This level of denaturalisation is something of a meta-level, it is a natural part of an educational programme for active citizens, but difficult to include in most argumentation on specific matters. Indicating discrepancies in existing views, is, however, a well-known aspect of Socrates's dialectical practice; it includes following the consequence of different positions and comparing these consequences with other views agreed upon. Regarding the presentation of alternatives, Socrates does this throughout the dialogue but the most prominent example is the construction of the *Kallipolis.*[22] By showing an

21. In this interpretation, I follow Kastely (2015, 77) who argues that the promotion of reflection is characteristic for the rhetoric that Plato presents in the *Republic*.

22. The *Kallipolis* is the supposedly utopian city that Socrates and his interlocutors construct as a thought experiment after having dismissed their first attempt, since that imagined city lacked wealth. The explicit role of the city in the argument is to provide

alternative to the contemporary society, the tendency to conceive of the prevalent order as natural is countered. The same mechanism is used when Socrates discusses five kinds of government in book VIII, where alternatives imply options. The construction of the *Kallipolis* is, however, special since it in a very explicit way underscores the constructedness or rhetoricity of society. The presentation of five kinds of government is an example of rhetoric that points to discrepancies and problems of existing systems, while the construction of the *Kallipolis* is the presentation of an alternative that calls attention to its own rhetoricity and in that process denaturalises the existing order (cf. Kastely 2015, 180–84). All in all, these examples of rhetorical practice from the *Republic* could be used to develop a model for denaturalising processes that includes promoting general awareness of rhetoricity, the pointing to problems and discrepancies in existing views, the presenting of alternatives, as well as the highlighting of the rhetoricity in the novel views that are being presented as alternatives.

There is a connection between the academic and intellectual tradition of criticising ideology and a certain form of contemporary political speech that puts emphasis on the critique of the ideological blindfolds of others. An important distinction does, however, emerge when we consider the normative ideal that we drew from Plato above. The difference is that in a normative understanding of denaturalisation in political argumentation, we should call attention to the rhetoricity in our own standpoints as well as in our opponents. The standard political argument would, in contrast, be that the opposite side uses rhetoric built on mistaken ideology, while "we" speak the truth. When considering denaturalisation as an ethical norm, not just as a mode of argumentation, this implies that we should never deny that our rhetoric is *also* just that. Kastely (2015, 210–11) argues that the rhetorical theory that can be drawn from the *Republic* takes this normative position. An emphasis on autonomy as a norm builds a bridge between contemporary movements in rhetorical theory and Plato's text. This normative dimen-

an image for justice, so that the interlocutors by identifying justice in society can also identify justice in the soul.

sion, and how this bridge is built, will be further explored in the next section.

Post-truth and champions of autonomy

This book began with reference to McComiskey's emotionally laden criticism of post-truth rhetoric and his passionate call to action. Though my own reflections have been more distanced, the project still has a clear ethical dimension. A striking feature of the ethical challenge of post-truth is its narrative qualities. There are post-truth villains in the form of Donald Trump and his ilk; there are victims in the form of the susceptible masses, who, like the children in the fairy-tale follow the pied piper into the sea. In fact, the overarching plot implied by the post-truth debate seems to follow the paths of Tzvetan Todorov's (1981, 50–52; 1977, 108–19) narrative theory: there are transformations from equilibrium to disruption, then to recognition of that disruption, to repair and finally to a new equilibrium. Tellings of this story tend to focus particularly on the disruption that post-truth rhetoric constitutes in history and on the importance that we recognise that disruption. A mythical past – a time of balance and equilibrium – is, however, implied in the very notion of disruption, which is evident in the very term *post*-truth. The interpretation of post-truth as coming after something is problematic for post-truth as a theoretical concept, but due to its vagueness also for post-truth as a narrative of historical changes.

The ethical dimensions and implications of the post-truth story are emphasised by the fact that no hero has yet emerged and no solution has been accepted. This void constitutes a normative potential directed towards the future, towards a new equilibrium. Literary theorist Adam Zachary Newton (2010) has described how all narratives are haunted by ethics, at the same time as ethics is always haunted by narrative.[23] In the case of the post-truth rhetoric

23. For a more general introduction to the field of narrative ethics, see Phelan (2014). Phelan separates between the ethics of the told, the ethics of the telling and the ethics of the reading. Our discussion here is focused on the ethical dimension of the told.

debate, there is a close affinity between narrative and ethics. We have a villain, a crisis and a basic plot, but to bring positive change, we need a hero ready to act. The ethical potential of the situation thus depends on how we imagine the actions of repair and the hero capable of those actions. There is a need for narrative and ethical imagination, options for which I now explore.

McComiskey provides a possible hero by putting the teachers of rhetoric centre stage, emphasising their importance in teaching certain good values and practices. I have questioned McComiskey's analysis of the post-truth challenge for rhetorical studies and thereby, also, his plan to repair the disruption. My criticism centred on his lack of an answer to the epistemological issues of the post-truth debate.

Beyond McComiskey's suggestion, there are also other possible heroes that we might choose to identify with, or pin our hopes on, and other possible story-lines that we could choose to make use of. There exists, for example, the dream of a hypothetical left-wing populist leader who would use the same tools of demagoguery, but better (i.e. more justly) and thereby contribute to the development of society through a political program that helps the poor and exploited people of the world. In short, a narrative of successful left-wing populism.[24] However, from the point of view of an epistemology of rhetoric, the left-wing populist would not offer a true alternative to the rhetoric of the villain.

Yet another hero, and storyline, is that of the prophet of authentic truth roaming in the streets, trying to awaken the soporific people. This narrative (with biblical roots) does, however, have the dramaturgical setback that the hero – despite being correct – tends

24. During the Trump presidency, a wide-spread example of the dream of a left-wing populist leader was the imagining of an alternative history where Bernie Sanders became the democratic presidential candidate and defeated Trump. In contrast to the European far right, one could also look at Latin America and the rhetorically successful left-wing populism by Hugo Chavez and others. I do not intend to imply that there is no essential difference between Sanders and Chavez, but merely that they both constitute examples of left-wing rhetorical campaigns that could be described both as populist and successful. On the populism of Chavez, see e.g. Gill (2018). On populism as an answer to the post-truth condition, see e.g. York (2018).

to fail in his rhetoric.[25] A derivative version of this narrative could be that of the scientist who becomes aware of a natural disaster to come (for example that of global warming, a volcano about to erupt or a comet hitting earth), but fails to convince the populace or their leaders to take action.[26] Another very specific and historically significant narrative, within this general category, would be the heroic philosopher in Plato's allegory of the cave, who – after seeing the light – goes back to the cave to free the other captives. Both kinds of heroes fail, however. But more importantly, from the point of view of an epistemology of rhetoric, the prophet of truth offers a problematic contrast to the post-truth villain. Whereas the post-truth villain denies truth and disqualifies reasoning, which is problematic – the prophet puts truth on a pedestal, and thereby abandons the critical tradition of rhetorical studies, which is also problematic, at least, if we are looking for an ideal beyond specific scientific yes-or-no question of the type: Is a comet about to hit earth or not?

In line with the perspective of narrative ethics, one way to answer the normative challenge of post-truth rhetoric would be to provide a different image of the hero. As demonstrated above, our hero must offer a contrast to the post-truth villain, also in relation to epistemology, without deserting to fundamentalism, as the dogmatic belief in a stable fundament or a neutral objective Truth. In addition, we should note that this study has repeatedly switched focus between the field of rhetorical studies and the practice of public rhetoric. Hence, it would be fitting to find an image of heroism that has relevance both in the sphere of academic rhetorical scholarship and in the sphere of public political rhetoric. Examin-

25. Going to the Hebrew Bible, we find Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who forms an archetypical example of this form of heroism.

26. My favorite example would be Pierce Brosnan's character in *Dante's Peak* (1997), a volcanologist who understands that the volcano, next to the idyllic countryside town, is about to erupt, but has a hard time convincing others. For a general argument on the affinity between prophet rhetoric, and the public communication of scientists, see Lynda Walsh (2013). In relation to the debate on science denialism, scholars have also made connections between the form of the jeremiad and contemporary environmental rhetoric. See e.g. Rosteck and Frentz (2009), or Salvador and Norton (2011).

ing the material that has been discussed thus far, there is one possible image of heroism lurking in the background, an image that could possibly fill these requirements. I call this hero *the champion of autonomy*.

As is probably apparent upon reading, in its final pages this discussion enters into something of an intellectual mine-field. We are dealing with politics, with normative scholarship and with heavy theoretical concepts such as truth and argumentation. What is more, the concept of autonomy that I have just asserted as a potential means of salvation is famously enigmatic and problematic.

Rather than painting an image of this champion of autonomy by defining autonomy in relation to certain philosophers, I invoke instead my presentation of rhetorical argumentation above in order to consider how the three-dimensional understanding of argumentation on *doxa* could help us to articulate a rhetorical norm of autonomy.

A striking aspect of the three dimensions of rhetorical argumentation is how closely they correspond to the rhetorical structure of post-truth rhetoric, as deployed by the Trump administration or by the anti EU movement in the UK. It is clear that also the commonly vilified post-truth rhetoric affirms widespread opinions as reasonable, presents new knowledge and questions existing opinions. Hence, the existence of these three dimensions in argumentation does not infer that this argumentation is of a higher standard or that the rhetor has heroic qualities. Instead, the three dimensions merely form the battleground of post-truth rhetoric.

What, then, is to be said about autonomy? Autonomy, as an ethical norm, is common in the contemporary field of rhetorical studies. One could argue that autonomy, as relief from the unreflective acceptance of ideology, is at the core of Barthes's as well as Hariman's critical enterprises. The question of autonomy is also central, and explicitly so, in the rhetorical-philosophical anthropology of Mats Rosengren.

When applying the norm of autonomy to the three dimensions, one thing becomes clear: it is not enough to question and denaturalise some aspects of *doxa* and then acknowledge the reason-

ableness of other aspects to constitute a normative rhetoric that supports autonomy. Instead, to question some aspects of *doxa* and acknowledge others is a trade-mark of the criticised form of post-truth rhetoric. Furthermore, when it comes to the dimension of establishing new myths, it is not enough to establish new myths that support autonomy. Instead, the central characteristic of rhetoric that supports autonomy is that it directs the 'postmodern' critical gaze towards its own mechanisms and starting points as well as towards those of others. To support autonomy as the capacity to make initiated choices between different *nomoi* and *doxai* – between different laws, customs, traditions and world-views – the rhetor must neither present the new opinions as obvious truths, nor as as-good-a-lie-as-anybody's. Instead, the rhetor, to support autonomy, must emphasise the rhetoricity of all positions, but still underscore our need to choose – to reason.

This rhetorical notion of autonomy coheres with the ideal of critical friction that we drew from Hariman and is included in the dimension of denaturalisation, presented above. What I elaborate here is a normative ideal of self-friction, of avoiding arguments that are tailor-made to people's blind-spots to instead promote arguments that clarify their own weaknesses and try to turn them into strengths.

In some ways, this normative model is the reverse of populism. Rather than always telling the public what one believes that the public wants to hear, the ideal is to avoid deception and strategic concealment. This might seem like a road to certain failure – and – perhaps it is. But just as Plato seems to have understood in his argument about *doxa* and *epistēmē* – a crucial dimension for persuasion is that of identity formation and the possibility of identification. To make the champion of autonomy a successful hero, the identity of the champion of autonomy must be given status within culture. Just as Trump has been described as a result of the American political spectacle and as an American anti-hero prefigured in popular culture, other fundamentally different heroic images could well become relevant in other contexts.[27]

27. On Donald Trump as an anti-hero, see Ernst (2017).

Turning to Plato's *Republic*, we can see that Plato acknowledges the relationship between cultural myths and images of heroism in the thought-experiment of the *Kallipolis.* There, Plato discusses how to best indoctrinate the guardians of the *Kallipolis* by inventing political myths about the origin of the citizens and about the way society should be structured. Steve Fuller (2017) describes Plato as providing an answer to a post-truth condition through this very discussion, implying that Plato's answer to the post-truth condition is a system of propagandistic indoctrination.

When reading the dialogue as a drama, however, where the different participants engage in a discussion, intertwined with attempts at persuasion, the *Republic* provides a different image of heroism and thereby a different answer to the post-truth condition. In the drama of the *Republic*, we find an interactive demonstration of rhetoric that fits with the ideal of autonomy and the normative understanding of argumentation presented above.[28] As modern-day readers, we can appreciate the text as a whole and consider what the different rhetorical practices portrayed in it communicate at a meta-level. If we focus on the rhetoric of the *Kallipolis*, then that rhetoric, admittedly, leaves no room for critical reflection on the constitution of society, since this capacity is deliberately diminished in the very constitution of the city. If the *Kallipolis* constitutes a utopia, then that comes with a theory of rhetoric that idealises non-reflection and ideological indoctrination. Such a rhetoric would answer the exigence of post-truth by advocating the skilfully crafted lying of the leaders. However, if we, instead, focus on the participants in the dialogue and acknowledge the dramatic possibility that the participants as characters may be critical toward their own construction, speak ironically or draw other conclusions than what is explicitly stated in the conversation, then the non-critical understanding of the *Kallipolis* as a norm becomes difficult to accept. When reading the dialogue from the perspective of

28. The core of this dialogue is Socrates' attempts to persuade Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus of the value of justice. When the participants explicitly comment on the persuasiveness or non-persuasiveness of certain arguments, or the manipulative aspects of others, the dialogue explicitly thematises rhetoric. For a general introduction to the perspective of interpreting the Platonic dialogues as works of drama, see Arieti (1991).

a modern-day scholar of rhetoric, we can recognise that the very positioning and actions of the participants are staged and illustrate different forms of rhetoric, and different norms related to rhetoric – and that these illustrations communicate meaning to the readers of the dialogue. Because of the clash of perspectives in the text, we can reflect upon the explicit models of political rhetoric, discussed *in* the text, upon the rhetoric *performed by the characters* of the text and upon the dialogue *as a whole* and the interrelations between its different layers of meaning. Reading the text this way pushes the possibility for critical reflection further. From such a position, we can use the cracks in the *Kallipolis* or the failures of Socrates as active contributions to a theoretical discussion. When reading the *Republic* in this way we find that the possibility of critical reflection becomes a central theme; the text is not providing a rhetorical system, as Aristotle does, but it can be understood as promoting the heroic image of a new type of rhetorician, our *champion of autonomy*.[29]

There remains, however, an important nuance to the concept of autonomy that must be accentuated when we consider autonomy as a norm. In Rosengren's doxology for example, statements about autonomy are meant as descriptions of the human situation, not as a norm that one should strive for or acquire. From such a perspective the nemesis to face down is not heteronomy but the concealing of autonomy, and the deceptive illusion of heteronomy. This relates to my argument in part 2 about revealing and concealing, as well as to the understanding of the role of a philosophy of rhetoric, as a way to debunk the illusion of heteronomy. Of course, one could argue that a society where the citizens are aware of their autonomy is the only society with true or effective autonomy; this position would be the viable one if we demand that autonomy is a

29. On the central role of autonomy for philosophical rhetoric, see also Kastely (2015, 4–5, 9, 38, 57–58, 183). Note that Kastely tends to push Plato toward an inclusive democratic ideal, but his main point about the norm of autonomy does not, necessarily, contradict Fuller's statement that the difference between Plato and the sophists lies in who is granted access. The readers of the *Republic* are not the masses; they would be an elite, though perhaps a democratic elite. For us, however, it is not important to understand the historical intentions of Plato, it is enough to note that this reading makes sense today.

self-aware characteristic. Moreover, one could argue that no individual (regardless of their degree of self-awareness) can institute his or her own laws, and one would be correct. Hence, the concept of autonomy that we work with here is a philosophical-anthropological notion, focused on mankind in an ontological sense and groups in a social and cultural sense; it is not the autonomy of liberal individuals. Nor, however, is it simply a descriptive notion – it includes the norm of revelation of our essential autonomy as well as of the argumentative autonomy that is produced through rhetoric and can be enjoyed together.

Beyond the norm of autonomy, which can be argued to be essential to the approach of Barthes, Hariman and Rosengren, our summary of part 2 also emphasised that the contemporary re-inventions of *doxa* present perspectives that includes beliefs, desires and their relations to the construction and reconstruction of identities. These aspects are – as indicated above – also treated in the rhetoric of the *Republic*. Hence, we have closed the circle, from Plato to *doxa* to Plato. Rosengren states that it is impossible to escape the Platonic framing, when using the concept of *doxa*. Our journey thus far has perhaps proven him right, but we must, at the same time, consider whether we still need to escape Plato, when the Plato we read is in fact no longer the Plato we thought we were reading.

Concluding remarks

To conclude this chapter and this book, I want to reflect upon the problematic dichotomy between academic reasoning and political reasoning that has provided structure to both the introduction of this book and this third and final part of its tripartite construction. We have established a division between epistemology of rhetoric in the form of principles for how knowledge is established within the field of rhetorical studies, and epistemology of rhetoric in the form of an understanding of how political argumentation functions in the post-truth era, including a normative reflection on how argumentation should function based on autonomy.

In this final section, I would like to abandon that dichotomy. This is not to argue that every politician or influencer should pledge allegiance to the constructive turn in *doxa*-studies or the principle of embodiment, but I do, however, propose that the understanding of political argumentation in the post-truth era sketched in this final chapter works equally well as a description of argument on fundamental issues within the field of rhetorical studies.

To illustrate this point, I would point to this study itself as an example. This seems fitting, as it has just been read and because it deals with the fundamental issues, or if you will with the *doxa*, of the field. To begin with, it is possible to observe that there are important temporal dimensions to the actual form of the monograph. The temporality of reading a monograph is different from that of reading a scholarly article. Hence, to present this work in monograph form is an acknowledgement that the issue at hand requires long-term commitment – a procedural working-through of different aspects – and that persuasion of the reader requires long-term exposure and a degree of depth and repetition. In this project, some layers of scholarly *doxa* had to be eroded and transported beyond our reach, whilst other particles needed to be introduced and, through a gradual process of sedimentation, contribute to forming new scholarly ground. Within this book, part 1 and part 2 could be understood as such a slow and repetitive process of erosion and sedimentation. Using the more developed terminology of the three interrelated dimensions, we can describe part 1 and 2 as a scholarly attempt to acknowledge established opinion, as well as to question some aspects of what has previously been taken for granted. In part 1, I build on a canonical classical Greek discussion and engage with the most canonical of Greek authors, Plato and Aristotle. I also take the conventional reading of them seriously at the same as I enter into critical dialogue with more contemporary readings and thereby initiate a process of erosion which yields material for sedimentation. In chapter 6, I summarise my study of Plato, in chapter 13 I do the same from my study of the re-invention of *doxa*, and in chapter 14 I assemble material from the entire book to that point. These three chapters are all examples of ini-

tial and intensified sedimentation. In these chapters, I place barriers in the flowing streams to quicken the process of building new ground. It is however in this final chapter – chapter 15 – that I have most clearly tried to establish an alternative vision of rhetoric and argumentation. Here, the processes of explicit denaturalisation of the established *doxa* are moved to the background and constructive reasoning takes their place at the fore.

One could, in fact, argue that chapter 15 constitutes a process of working-through a problem through images of increasing complexity, along the lines of what I proposed above. First of all, we have the geological idiom of erosion and sedimentation that establishes a striking image, a picture whose analogical clarity is perhaps wanting, but which hopefully captures the readers with its strong imagery and moves them in the right direction. This image is my equivalent of Plato's simile of the sun. Secondly, we have the extended conceptualisation of the three-dimensional process of argumentation, including acknowledging the reasonableness of everyday wisdom, establishing alternative myths and denaturalising prevalent beliefs, desires and identities. There, some of the strengths of the first metaphor are lost, but a more precise and clearer image is constructed. This image is my equivalent of the analogy of the divided line. Thirdly and finally, I provide an epic story, built on the two first images. In this epic the champion of autonomy works to defeat the Trumpish post-truth villains and deliver the people from the deceptions of fake-news and blind belief.

You may well have got lost somewhere in this process, or you may think that my narrative thread was cut short somewhere in part 3. If so, bear in mind that what I have done is to constantly remind you that the alternative vision I propose is not the truth, it is just an alternative myth. My idea has never been to deduce a new theory, my goal has merely been to promote autonomy in rhetorical scholarship by acknowledging the reasonableness of the *doxa* of the field, while questioning certain aspects of it, and to present an alternative, making it very clear that this alternative is just as constructed as the one it replaces in the process.

It is now up to you to decide what to do with the arguments presented, and what to choose. It is your turn to reason.

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