

/ RHETORIC, LOGIC, AND LANGUAGE IN EARLY GREEK THOUGHT /

by

B. Dennis McCutchen

B.A., Hardin-Simmons University, 1976

---

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

---

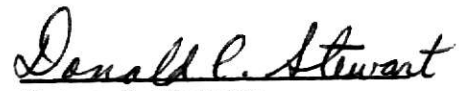
Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas, 1984

(c) B. Dennis McCutchen, 1984

Approved by:

  
Major Professor

LD  
2668  
-R4  
1984  
M32  
C. 2

A11202 662320

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exploration would not have been possible except for the support of a few very significant people. I am deeply grateful to Professor Stewart for his Socratic direction in shedding light on the ancient and shared paths of rhetoric and philosophy. To Professor Agosta, whose conscientious and articulate response as a reader made me aware of my responsibility to my audience, I will always be indebted. Next, I would like to thank Professor McGraw, who broadened my sense of linguistic possibility by introducing me to French deconstruction. And were it not for guidance provided by Professor Smith on Aristotle and modern logic, much too much would still be obscure. Finally, I must add a note of special thanks to my dear friend Kathy, whose loyal friendship and affection has given me human sustenance these many years.



## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	11
----------------------------	----

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. THE RHETORIC-LOGIC PROBLEM . . . . .	1
History of the Rhetoric-Logic Relation . . . . .	1
The Nature of the Rhetoric-Logic Problem . . . . .	4
Definitions of Logic and Rhetoric . . . . .	9
A Note on Terminology . . . . .	12
Organization of Report . . . . .	12
II. THE ORIGIN OF RHETORIC AND LOGIC . . . . .	17
Rhetoric . . . . .	17
Logic . . . . .	22
Summary . . . . .	23
III. GORGIAS . . . . .	28
Overview of Gorgias' Rhetoric and Logic . . . . .	28
Logic . . . . .	30
First Thesis, Dialectic and Ontology . . . . .	32
Doctrine of Logos, Ontology and Theory of Language . . . . .	35
Second Thesis, Epistemology . . . . .	39
Third Thesis, Theory of Communication and Rhetoric . . . . .	40
IV. PLATO . . . . .	48
Overview of Plato's Rhetoric and Logic . . . . .	48
Rhetoric . . . . .	49
Logic . . . . .	51
Ontology and Epistemology . . . . .	54
Theory of Language . . . . .	62
V. ARISTOTLE . . . . .	78
Overview of Aristotle's Rhetoric and Logic . . . . .	78
Rhetoric . . . . .	80
Rhetoric as a Techne . . . . .	80
Logical Proof and Rhetoric . . . . .	84
The Enthymeme and the Dialectical Syllogism . . . . .	85
Induction and Example . . . . .	87
Non-logical Proof and Rhetoric . . . . .	91
Ethical Ambivalence in the Rhetoric . . . . .	92

	Ambivalence, Language, and Power . . . . .	96
VI.	LOGIC AND ONTOLOGY IN ARISTOTLE . . . . .	107
	The Logic-Ontology Relation in Aristotle . . . . .	107
	The Link between Logic and Metaphysics . . . . .	110
	The Possibility of the Categories . . . . .	113
	Qualifications . . . . .	114
	The Language-Reality Relation in the <u>Categories</u> . . . . .	116
	Non-linguistic Predication in the <u>Categories</u> . . . . .	119
	Linguistic Predication . . . . .	123
	Linguistic Predication in the <u>Categories</u> . . . . .	124
	Linguistic Predication and <u>On Interpretation</u> . . . . .	125
	Linguistic Predication and the Predicables . . . . .	128
	Linguistic Predication in the <u>Analytica</u> . . . . .	129
	Summary of Aristotle's Concept of Predication . . . . .	131
	Metaphysical Being and Predication in the <u>Metaphysics</u> . . . . .	133
	Being and Substance . . . . .	134
	Substance, Essence and Definition . . . . .	136
	Summary . . . . .	143
	The Rationale for a Metaphysics of Substance . . . . .	144
	The Principle of Non-Contradiction (PNC) . . . . .	144
	Substance and Meaningful Discourse . . . . .	147
VII.	ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF LANGUAGE . . . . .	155
	The Sign . . . . .	156
	Signification and Meaning . . . . .	162
	Semantics Versus Semiotics . . . . .	163
	The Asymmetry of the Sentence and of Predication . . . . .	166
	Thesis and Organization . . . . .	169
VIII.	THEORY OF SIGNIFICATION AND MEANING . . . . .	182
	Pragmatic Meaning/Signification . . . . .	182
	Syntactic Meaning . . . . .	183
	Semantic Meaning . . . . .	185
	Theories of Signification and Meaning . . . . .	189
	Referential Theory of Meaning . . . . .	189
	Ideational Theory of Signification . . . . .	193
IX.	THEORY OF PREDICATION . . . . .	204
	Predication in the <u>Posterior Analytics</u> . . . . .	205
	Natural-Essential Predication . . . . .	207
	Signification, Predication, and Ontology . . . . .	210
	Review of Theory of Meaning . . . . .	211
	The Problem of Predication . . . . .	214
	Aristotle and the Problem of Predication in Early Works . . . . .	215
	Summary and Analysis . . . . .	217
	The Problem of Predication in the <u>Posterior Analytics</u> . . . . .	220

X.	A DESTRUCTIVE GLANCE AT SUBSTANCES AND NAMES . . . . .	226
	Summary of the Logical-Representational View of Language . . .	227
	The Covert Nature of Substance . . . . .	228
	Substance and Transformatinal Grammar . . . . .	234
	The Name as the Basis of Linguistic Meaning . . . . .	235
	Conclusion . . . . .	240

## Chapter I

### THE RHETORIC-LOGIC PROBLEM

#### 1.1 HISTORY OF THE RHETORIC-LOGIC RELATION

One history of rhetoric is the history of its struggle against logic. Ever since Parmenides composed his poem On Nature, setting truth against opinion, the intellectual traditions associated with rhetoric and logic have developed in opposition to one another. Even in his most conciliatory tone in the Phaedrus, Plato has little use for rhetoric except as a supplement to dialectic to help convince men of the truth. In a slightly different fashion Aristotle also situates rhetoric in antistrophic contrast to dialectic; he goes even further to bring both of these argumentative arts under the surveillance of his syllogistic theory. Thus, at the birth of formal logic, rhetoric and its probabilistic form of reasoning are coerced into an uneasy alliance with formal logic, which Aristotle refers to as analytics[1].

Aristotle's assimilation of rhetoric into his more comprehensive logical system does not, however, resolve the discord between rhetoric and logic. In Roman antiquity, Cicero pleads for the wedding of rhetoric to philosophy, and this specifically includes logic for Cicero. Later, Quintillian also deplors the separation of rhetoric from philosophy; but, Quintillian also has some very contemptuous criticisms of philosophers of that time[2]. The union of rhetoric to philosophy is not successfully consummated. Cicero, although an adept rhetorician, is not an astute logician. Exhibited in his Topica, Cicero's idea of logic is little more than a rehashing of the Aristotelian

rhetorical (not logical) topics. Even more damaging to the logic envisioned by Cicero is his dismissal in the Topica of certain rules of inference which he considers unnecessary and his failure to see that other rules he accepts are muddled or plainly defective[3]. Logic or dialectic (as it is often referred to in antiquity), is not important to the Romans because it lacks a practical usefulness; for the same reason, rhetoric is prominent in the educational and civic institutions of Roman society[4].

However, by the time of the medieval university in the twelfth century and the recovery of most of Aristotle's Organon, logic and grammar have pushed rhetoric to the trivium's periphery[5]. Logic develops to a high degree of sophistication during this time, surpassing the Aristotelian and Stoic logics and anticipating discoveries not fully realized until the twentieth century[6]. By contrast, rhetoric enters its Diaspora during the Middle Ages, scattered among several sub-rhetorical traditions[7]. As McKeon has observed, "...if rhetoric is defined in terms of a single subject matter--such as style, or literature, or discourse--it has no history during the middle ages...."

The Renaissance shifts the onus within the trivium once again to rhetoric. As a result of both the Humanist revulsion against scholastic logic and the recovery during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of classical texts on rhetoric, rhetorical studies flourish again. Logic, however, "enters into a period of unchecked regression" shortly before the end of the fifteenth and does not regain its status until the Port Royal Logic in the seventeenth century[8]. Peter Ramus, unfortunately, exerts a profound influence on both rhetoric and logic during and after the Renaissance. Upon rhetoric, at least, his is the lasting word for almost four centuries. In his effort to eliminate the overlap between rhetoric and logic, Ramus divides the traditional five

parts of discourse (invention, disposition, memory, style, and delivery) in half by using his dichotomous "method." He allocates invention and disposition to the domain of logic or dialectic, while he similarly restricts rhetoric to style and delivery. Memory escapes the the scalpel of Ramistic method and is thus forgotten[9]. As much as the Renaissance is esteemed as a time of fecund intellectual and artistic achievement, it should also be known as a period of aberration in the histories of both logic and rhetoric.

As might be expected in the modern period, logic regains its authority over rhetoric. Ushered in by Descartes, the modern period lays a foundation for logic upon the geometrical method introduced in Descartes' Discourse on Method. A generation later, Arnauld and the Port Royalists claim that only logic, which is grounded upon the geometrical method, is capable of discovering and communicating the truth. The Port Royal Logic thus constitutes an attempt to completely replace rhetoric[10].

From the seventeenth century until recent times the success of logic and of the natural sciences (culminating in twentieth century positivism) has gradually overshadowed and furthered the erosion of rhetoric within the Western trivium. Among four prominent thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who considered the rhetoric-logic relation (Campbell, Whately, Bain, and Mill), only Campbell believed logic ancillary to rhetoric[11]. Revolutionized by its mathematical progenitors, logic reduced itself during the twentieth century to formal logic, which is more akin to mathematics than to natural language or human discourse. Also emerging from the same mathematical origins in the twentieth century, grammar has become highly mathematicized as the result of Chomsky's and others' innovations. But rhetoric still suffers from its Ramistic truncation, from its still later

reduction in the nineteenth and twentieth century to written composition and public address, and from fragmentations between and within English and Speech departments in this country[12].

In recent years, however, rhetoric has begun to experience a rebirth. In opposition to the narrow logistic and positivistic mentalities dominating the early and middle part of the twentieth century, rhetoric is being rehabilitated as a legitimate field of study with a venerable intellectual tradition. Beyond its current rejuvenation in English and Speech departments, rhetoric is providing a broad and rich basis for diverse inquiries in areas such as philosophy of language, hermeneutics, philosophy of science, technical and scientific communication, and literary-critical theory. It appears that rhetoric once again faces its proper challenge to integrate the intellectual and practical life of our culture.

## 1.2 THE NATURE OF THE RHETORIC-LOGIC PROBLEM

That very brief and general sketch of the rhetoric-logic relation over the course of Western civilization intends to show that their history together is the story of frustrated attempts at combination, separation, and even eradication. It is obvious that both traditions are intact today, albeit pursuing largely separate interests. Perhaps these traditions embody at the intellectual or academic level a schizophrenia that seems necessary for the survival of the modern individual. It is not my purpose here to pass judgment on the schism between two prominent members of the linguistic triumvirate. At this point it seems more useful to grapple with possibilities, possibilities which could explain the nature of the conflict between these interrelated traditions. We might discover there is a basic incompatibility between this

aged and separated couple; or, perhaps it will become clear that the rhetoric-logic relation is no longer an intelligible problem.

However, before rhetoricians and logicians too quickly agree to an irrevocable split, there remains an obvious reason why rhetoric and logic should be considered in relation to one another. Quite simply, both are the progeny of natural language and human discourse. Although the symbolic garb of formal logic makes it difficult to see how logic is connected to the language people speak, logic would have little more than a mathematical interest if it did not intend to offer insight into the structure and meaning of language and discourse. Obversely, although rhetoric is more conspicuously tied to discourse production, it is obscure how this pragmatic use of language is related to its structure and meaning. From one perspective, then, it might appear that rhetoric and logic emphasize unrelated aspects of language and discourse. However, I take it as fundamental here that the structure and meaning of language cannot be separated from its use. To use the popular classification of Charles Morris, syntax and semantics cannot ultimately be separated from pragmatics[13]. One of the merits of the later Wittgenstein was to show that the meaning of language is a function of its use, that is, that the meaning of a word or sentence in discourse is dependent upon the context in which it is used--from the level of the sentence to human action[14].

Buttressed at one end by structure (or syntax) and by use (or pragmatics) at the other, the rhetoric-logic relation finds its critical juncture in the meaning of language (semantics). The meaning of language, somewhat tautologically, is determined by the nature and function of language. This seems a truism which can lend itself to utter vacuity or to rich possibility.



I assume that the nature and function of language is not some real, Platonic entity awaiting discovery somewhere. It seems more likely that the nature and function of language is given in the language itself and in those largely tacit assumptions of an age which form a conceptual space that makes possible the apprehension of the world in general and language in particular. This idea of a conceptual scheme is expressed differently by several modern writers; it is roughly equivalent to Heidegger's concept of the "forestructure of understanding," Foucault's and Derrida's notion of "episteme," Gadamer's "pre-understanding," and Kuhn's "paradigm." Achieving an understanding of the nature and function of language and its philosophical implications will necessarily be an imperfect undertaking to the degree that it is impossible to extricate oneself from one's own situation. An understanding of the nature and function of language of an age (if it is at all possible) becomes accessible only in retrospect and from within another conceptual framework. Limited by the language itself and by predetermined possibilities afforded from another perspective, such an understanding can only be partial. But again, isn't the hope of perfect understanding an illusion fostered by the language itself? It seems that we must always see through the glass darkly, never face to face.

From this retrospective and other position, we can still profitably approach the rhetoric-logic problem. It should go without saying that I don't consider the rhetoric-logic problem, as a historical phenomenon, intrinsically worthy of investigation. This problem is useful to the extent that it causes us to reflect upon that which, if anything, is the essence of being a man or woman; that something is language and discourse (the use of language). Until the brute reality of language forces itself within our reflections, we remain

ignorant of our world and of ourselves. The humanistic ideal of self-knowledge is impossible. At the more practical and academic level, all communication and composition are of course dependent upon language. But use of language does not guarantee that language itself and its possibilities are confronted. Only with greater awareness of language and its possibilities can such practical endeavors develop with understanding.

The tension between rhetoric and logic appears to be the result of different conceptions of the nature and function of language. In the preface to Derrida's Speech and Phenomena Newton Garver has offered the stimulating suggestion that rhetoric and logic provide different or, perhaps, completely independent foundations for language and linguistic meaning[15]. By using Garver's suggestion as a heuristic device and by slightly altering it, I would like to offer the hypothesis (1) that different, yet largely tacit conceptions of the nature of language override rhetoric and logic, and (2) that the historic conflict between rhetoric and logic is essentially a disagreement over these differing views of language.

As a result of achievements in modern linguistics and philosophy of language, it is possible to articulate different conceptions of language. In referring to different conceptions of language in early Greek thought (before the Stoics), we should bear in mind that language is not yet a philosophical topic. The Greeks, as many have observed, did not even have a word for "language." Hence, our use of "language" is an anachronism, and the different conceptions or theories of language we will observe are constructions based on inference. In this paper, we will refer to the view of language which overrides logic as the the "logical-representational" conception; it has its origin in the early Greek traditions of logic and metaphysics. According to

this view of language, language is a re-presentation of reality in such a way that language and logic reflect the nature of reality. As such, its function is to designate and describe features of that world. Such a view of language becomes firmly embedded in the Western intellectual tradition through Plato and Aristotle. By contrast, rhetoric is based upon a view of language we will call "rhetorical-semiotic." Originating in the early rhetorical and Sophistic traditions of ancient Greece, this conception of language recognizes the semiotic nature of language (that is, its arbitrary and differential or even differential character). Its function as a semiotic or communicative system is to influence people. It opposes or is simply indifferent to the idea that language is inherently logical or re-presentational. Whereas the logical-representational view of language is characteristic of Plato and Aristotle, the rhetorical-semiotic alternative is evident in the reputed founders of rhetoric and in Gorgias.

Garver also observes that Western philosophy has traditionally followed the paths of logic and metaphysics. Thus, the logical-representational view of language has been the silent linguistic authority for the greatest part of Western civilization. The inferior position of rhetoric during this time can be partially blamed on its own unwitting endorsement of this conception of language which is more appropriate to logic and metaphysics. Since Plato's and Aristotle's unquestioned defeat of the sophists and rhetoricians of that time, rhetoric (by accepting that alien concept of language foisted upon it) has unknowingly caused its own slow death over the centuries. Rhetoric is experiencing a revival in the second half of the twentieth century because linguistic possibilities have multiplied. Thanks to the efforts of scholars such as Saussure, Wittgenstein, Derrida and others, the

logical-representational view is no longer the unquestioned authority of language and linguistic meaning. More is possible now. Moreover, if the rhetorical tradition is to sustain its current rehabilitation, it must increase its awareness of linguistic foundations.

I do not wish to prove the last few paragraphs. As I indicated, I am offering an hypothesis which could help explain the historical conflict between rhetoric and logic. Along the same line of thought, this hypothesis could also help account for what James Kinneavy refers to as "the progressive alienation of rhetoric from the humanities"[16]. The hypothesis requires more evidence, however, than is contained in this investigation. With this in mind, I would like to examine the origin and early development of rhetoric and logic in ancient Greece, the place where the problem began. In a moment, I will outline more explicitly how this task breaks down. For now, it seems necessary to offer a couple of definitions and qualifications.

### 1.3 DEFINITIONS OF LOGIC AND RHETORIC

Thus far, the words "logic" and "rhetoric" have been used without an attempt at careful definition. With a context now sketched, it is possible to provide more precise descriptions of these historically ambiguous terms. By appealing in each instance to ancient and modern descriptions, we can indicate certain conceptual boundaries that distinguish these concepts. Of course, such boundaries become blurred upon close inspection, especially when we look for purities like "the essence of logic" or "the essence of rhetoric." Plato's logic, his dialectic, begins logic on a road which culminates in the twentieth century in the early Wittgenstein's concept of logic. Plato's dialectic is basically a method of discovering truths about reality (his Formal world). In

its highest form as a method of definition, his dialectic displays or reflects the structure of reality through successive divisions of more general categories. When properly derived, the structure of a definition corresponds to the structure of reality--which, again is Plato's Formal, transcendent world.

Jumping forward some twenty-five centuries, we come to Wittgenstein's description of logic given in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein suggests there (5.4ff.) and in his commentary in the Investigations (sec. 91ff.) that the whole of logic lies implicit within the concept of the general form of the proposition[17]. That is, logic is derived by excogitation upon the "general propositional form." The general propositional form he tells us elsewhere is this: "This is how things are" (Tractatus, 4.5). Wittgenstein goes on to say that "the general propositional form is the essence of a proposition," and that "to give the essence of a proposition means to give the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world" (Tractatus, 5.471, 5.4711). Logic, according to both Plato and the early Wittgenstein and as it is meant here, goes beyond the field of formal logic concerned more narrowly with "certain relations of deducibility or implication which hold among propositions"[18]. In the broader, philosophical sense, the aim of logic is truth, a view that is also endorsed by Frege and Quine[19]. As Wittgenstein's statements reveal, logic is ultimately a metaphysical inquiry because it seeks to provide descriptions of or exhibit in its structure how things really are. "Logic" in this sense always directs attention to the language-ontology relation.

Rhetoric is described in ancient Greece by Gorgias as "the artificer of persuasion," (Gorgias, 453, 455). Gorgias' unpretentious description of

rhetoric causes Socrates and Plato much consternation because it values persuasion above the lofty aim of dialectic, truth. In the twentieth century rhetoric has as many definitions as there are rhetoricians. But two of rhetoric's most eloquent spokesmen are Chaim Perelman and Richard McKeon, both of whom exert significant influence on both sides of the Atlantic. Rather close to Gorgias' definition, Perelman defines rhetoric as the "theory of persuasive communication." At another time, he describes it more generally as constituting "the common structure for all discursive action from one mind to another"[20]. McKeon goes somewhat beyond Perelman and describes rhetoric as an "architectonic art" which "relates all things by means of sciences and the experiences of men;" it has the potential to "reorganize the subject matter and arts of education and life." Replacing a metaphysics based on the "supposed natures of things or perceived forms of thought, " rhetoric bases its "organization and application of the arts and sciences upon what men say and do"[21].

The contrast between rhetoric and logic is clear. Rhetoric believes that metaphysical descriptions of reality or thought are unintelligible; instead, it embraces the human context in which language is used to engage people. Rhetoric emerges from language used and embedded in the context of human action. By contrast, logic is the tool of metaphysical philosophy seeking true knowledge. Whereas rhetoric projects a relation between language and people, logic projects a relation between language and some external reality. One emphasizes the social dimension of language while the other emphasizes the referential.

### 1.3.1 A Note on Terminology

The word "logic," used as a noun with its many modern connotations, does not appear until around the second century A.D. There it is introduced by Alexander of Aphrodisias in his commentaries on Aristotle. From that point on, "logic" and "dialectic" are used almost interchangeably up through Ramus' logic and on into the seventeenth century[22]. The practice here, then, of referring to "logic" is an anachronism. Still, "logic" is the most convenient term to cover a variety of interrelated logics during ancient Greece; the dialectic of Zeno, Plato's dialectic, Aristotle's analytics, the Socratic elenchus, and other possibilities are all part of the logic of early Greek philosophy. So long as we understand that "logic" is an anachronism for this time, little harm is done.

### 1.4 ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

As previously mentioned, I am assuming the hypothesis that rhetoric and logic are based upon different conceptions of the nature and function of language. Using this hypothesis, we will examine the origin and early development of rhetoric and logic in early Greek thought. Divided among several chapters, this will take us through four stages in the the rhetoric-logic relation, in: (1) The origin of rhetoric and logic, (2) Gorgias, (3) Plato, and (4) Aristotle. At each stage I attempt to construct an understanding or theory of language in relation to appropriate philosophic and rhetorical contexts. Since the logic of Plato and Aristotle (and hence their concept of language) pre-empted the intellectual field in ancient Greece and for the greatest part of the Western philosophical tradition, most of the inquiry is devoted to their respective philosophies and theories of language. Although my eventual

aim is to reveal the logical-representational view of language as incoherent, it is more important to first articulate just what it is that turns out to be problematic. Finally, since I consider Aristotle the most influential figure in the logical and metaphysical tradition, I will offer a brief deconstruction of two crucial and related concepts in his theory of language and ontology. The survival of rhetoric as a legitimate intellectual tradition, as I see it, depends upon the possibility of dismantling this view of language that has been historically hostile to rhetoric.

#### Notes

- [1] W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, VI (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 135.
- [2] Elizabeth Asmis, "Rhetoric and Reason in Lucretius," American Journal of Philology, 104 (1983), pp. 43-50. Samuel Ijsseling, Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 33-35. James J. Murphy, Rhetoric in the Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 9-28.
- [3] George Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times (Chapel, Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 83, 90-102. William Kneale and Martha Kneale, The Development of Logic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 178-80.
- [4] Kennedy, pp. 82-85.
- [5] Kneale and Kneale, p. 225. Kennedy, pp. 189-190, 195.
- [6] I.M. Bochenski, A History of Formal Logic, trans. Ivo Thomas from 2nd French edition (1969; rpt. New York: Chelsea Publishing, 1970), pp. 148-152, 251. Kneale and Kneale, pp. 224-246.
- [7] James J. Murphy, pp. 135-355. Richard McKeon, "Rhetoric During the Middle Ages," Speculum, 17 (1942), pp. 1-32.



- [8] E.J. Ashworth, Language and Logic in the Post-Medieval Period (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 1-22.
- [9] Walter Ong, Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 83. Walter Ong, Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 270-292. Catherine Dunn, "Introduction," to The Logike of the Moste Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus Martyr, trans. by Roland MacIlmaine, (1574, rpt. Northridge, California: San Fernando Valley State College, 1969), pp. xi-xxii.
- [10] Hugh M. Davidson, pp. Audience, Words, and Art (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1965), pp. 57-108. Kneale and Kneale, p. 315-20. Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca The New Rhetoric (1969; rpt. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1971), pp. 1-5.
- [11] George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, ed. Lloyd Bitzer (1776; rpt. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), pp. 32-35. Richard Whately, Elements of Logic, 2nd. edition (1827; rpt. Delmar, New York: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1975), pp. 245-258. Richard Whately, Elements of Rhetoric, ed. Douglas Ehninger, 7th ed. (1846; rpt. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963), pp. 4-6. John Stuart Mill, A System of Logic, 8th edition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1884), p. 2-25. Alexander Bain, Logic (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886), pp. 1-42, 545, 575. Alexander Bain, English Composition and Rhetoric (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1884), p. 19.
- [12] For recent discussions on nineteenth and twentieth rhetoric, see the collection of essays in The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing, ed. James J. Murphy (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1982).
- [13] Charles Morris, "Foundation of the Theory of Signs," International

Encyclopedia of Unified Science, (1938; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 91-116.

- [14] Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), sections, 30, 43, 120, 138, 197, 247, 454, 532, 556, 557; pp. 147, 175-176, 190. (Note: the first part of this work is, by convention, referred to by section, while the second half is referred to by page number.)
- [15] Newton Garver, "Preface," to Jacque Derrida's Speech and Phenomena, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. ix-xxi.
- [16] James Kinneavy, "Restoring the Humanities: the Return of Rhetoric from Exile," The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing, ed. James J. Murphy (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1982), p. 23.
- [17] Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (1922; rpt. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974). P. F. Strawson, "Introduction," Philosophical Logic, ed. P.F. Strawson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 1-8. P.F. Strawson, "Logical Form and Logical Constants," in Logical Form, Predication, and Ontology, ed. K.K. Banerjee (Dehli: Macmillan India Limited, 1983), pp. 1-4.
- [18] Strawson, Philosophical Logic, p. 1.
- [19] Gottlob Frege, "The Thought," trans. by A.M. and Marcelle Quinton, reprinted in Strawson's Philosophical Logic above, pp. 17-38. Willard Van Orman Quine, "Truth and Logic," in Logic as Philosophy, ed. Peter T. Manicas (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1971), pp. 92.
- [20] Chaim Perelman, The Realm of Rhetoric, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Press, 1983), p. 162. Chaim Perelman, "The New Rhetoric," in The

Prospect of Rhetoric, eds. Lloyd Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), p. 121.

- [21] Richard McKeon, "The Uses of Rhetoric in a Technological Age: Architectonic Productive Arts," The Prospect of Rhetoric, eds. Lloyd Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971), pp. 45, 53, 57-58.
- [22] Roland Hall, "Dialectic," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967. Ong, Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, pp. 42, 101, 176-182. Kneale and Kneale, p. 23. Guthrie, VI, p. 135. Ashworth, p. 22.

## Chapter II

### THE ORIGIN OF RHETORIC AND LOGIC

#### 2.1 RHETORIC

The origin of rhetoric as a techne, an art governed by a system of principles[1], cannot be precisely attributed to any single individual. It has been variously credited to Corax, Tisias, Empedocles, and even Pythagoras[2]. What is less arguable, however, is that it first appeared on the island of Sicily in the fifth century B.C. Why it was a uniquely Sicilian undertaking is a more interesting question because the answer will begin to tell us something about the historically indeterminate nature of rhetoric. But even at that, an inquiry into fifth century B.C. Sicily is not a matter of simple archaeological excavation; not only are we removed in time from that civilization, the records which have come down to us are a mixture of mythical-historical narrative[3]. So the answer to our question above will not presume to be a definitive labelling of people or events. More significant here is the characterization of the milieu in which rhetoric established itself in the Western intellectual tradition[4]. By tracing out a rough topology of rhetoric's historic origin, we hope to bring some of its nascent character and concerns into relief. Specifically, we want to see:

- (1) what the milieu of the fifth century contributed to the birth of rhetoric;
- (2) within that context, what we can further discern about the linguistic consciousness of that milieu, and;
- (3) finally, what the essential principles of that early rhetoric are which qualify it as a techne.

(1) One of the earliest accounts of rhetoric's origin comes from an anonymous commentator of the fourth or fifth century A.D. According to this narrative, the time is 467 B.C., the place is Syracuse, and the central figure is Corax. Our anonymous narrator tells us[5]:

We must look into the following matters with regard to the third major point which needs investigating: how rhetoric came to men. After the already mentioned divine heroes, we are justified in demonstrating its in-born rational nature. The Syracusans were accordingly the first men to display it (epideiksanto). Sicily...was ruled as a tyranny by Gelon and Heiron, very savage tyrants, who strengthened the force of their tyranny against the Syracusans to the point where the Syracusans rejected them and escaped from this cruel slavery. It is said that the tyrants indulged their savagery to the extent of forbidding the Syracusans to utter any sound at all, but to signify what was appropriate by means of their feet, hands, and eyes whenever one of them was in need. It was in this way, they say, that dance-pantomime (orchestike) had its beginnings. Because the Syracusans had been cut off from speech (or language: logou), they contrived to explain their business with gestures (or dance-figures: schemansi). Because, then, the Syracusans were so harshly and savagely treated and because they prayed to Zeus the deliverer to free them from this cruel slavery, Zeus, acting as both savior and deliverer, liberated the Syracusans from tyranny by destroying the tyrants. Then, since the citizenry (demos) among the Syracusans feared that they might in some way fall upon a similar tyrant, they no longer entrusted their government to a tyrant. The people (demos) themselves wanted to have absolute control over all things.

And thereupon, democracy came once again to the Syracusans. And this man Corax came to persuade the crowd and to be heard, just as he was listened to while in Hieron's service. He observed how the people had produced an unsteady and disorderly state of affairs, and he thought that it was speech by which the course of human events was brought to order. He then contemplated turning the people toward and away from the proper course of action through speech. Coming into the assembly, where all the people had gathered together, he began first to appease the troublesome and turbulent element among them with obsequious and flattering words, and he called such things "introductions." After this, he began to soothe and silence the people and to speak as though telling a story, and after these things to summarize and call to mind concisely what had gone before and to bring before their eyes at a glance what had previously been said. These things he called "introduction," "narration," "argument," "digression," and "epilogue." By means of them he contrived to persuade the people just as he used to persuade one man (i.e., the tyrant).

Rhetoric emerges in this account in the hiatus between the crises of tyranny and democracy. By forcing political and linguistic slavery upon the Syracusans, the tyrant deprives them not only of their land and self-rule but of their spoken language as well, an attempt to rob them of their identity, their self-presence. The only allowed means of communication, through gesture or dance (i.e. signification by human action), is a substitute for their forbidden phonetic language. At this moment, human action becomes the signifier of that which has been displaced, the phonetic language; in short, it becomes the signifier of a signifier[6].

Rhetoric is not yet born, even though a pre-condition has been met. The overthrow of the tyrant confronts the people with still another crisis, that of democracy. Since tyranny had separated the people from their land and language, democracy faces the double task of redistributing power and land and of reuniting the people with their language, which is no longer chained to the sign-vehicle of human action. In both cases, the recovery of democracy and the reacquisition of language cannot be a return to business as usual. Democracy and the spoken language must accomodate the despotic interruption. Politically and linguistically, the effects of tyranny and the non-phonetic language will be assimilated into the new democracy and the new language.

It is the new language, rhetoric, which interests us. Rhetoric is born in the wake of linguistic displacement, substitution, and re-formation[7]. It is the offspring of a political and linguistic Janus, looking back towards and deriving from tyranny, while looking forward to and re-forming democracy.

(2) Within this milieu surrounding rhetoric's birth, we must still explore the nature of this re-formed linguistic consciousness, and (3) see what it contributed to this early rhetoric. Essentially, the non-phonetic

language of gesture (schemata) has to be incorporated into the reacquired phonetic language. The resulting effects of this incorporation give rise to the principles of this earliest rhetoric so as to make it a techne. In particular, Corax's early rhetoric is made up of figures of speech or parts of discourse and arguments from probability.

The figures or parts of discourse that Corax uses to appease and persuade the Syracusan people are the result of the incorporation of the non-phonetic, gestural language into its phonetic form. Both gesture and the figures of Corax's speech are described as schemata.

More precisely, the schemata of human action, which was the sign-vehicle of communication under the tyrant, moves under cover in the restored language in the form of figures of speech (meant in a broad sense of the term). Non-phonetic schemata, transformed into figures of speech, silently show what is not spoken. Rhetoric becomes a trace of what is not said but silently shown; it is choreographic discourse[8]. Plato even refers to rhetoric in the Phaedrus (261a) as an "acting through words"[9]. The message and force of rhetorical discourse emerges, then, from the binary opposition of what is and is not said. By emphasizing the notion of schemata, Corax's rhetoric reveals a linguistic consciousness, which, although it conceals schemata immaterially within the phonetic language, is rooted in the materiality of human action.

(3) Finally, from this awareness of form in the language develops a particular type of rhetorical argument, argument from probability. Also referred to as the doctrine of eikos, this form of argument has endured as the principal means of rhetorical persuasion[10]. In the rhetorics ascribed to Corax and his student Tisias, argument from probability forms the main part of their techne. In his Rhetoric (1402a15-25), Aristotle credits Corax with this

type of argument and gives the stock example of the court case in which a smaller man is accused of assaulting a larger man. His defence rests upon the probability that a smaller man would not have been successful in such an attack. Similarly, the larger man would have to argue that there were more than one because of the improbability of a smaller man's successful assault. Or, if the larger man were accused of assaulting a smaller man, he would argue that he didn't do it because people would think it likely that he would assault a smaller man; therefore, he wouldn't and didn't do it[11].

At any rate, it is significant to note here that, according to Aristotle, argument from probability is described as one form of enthymeme (Rhetoric, 1357a30-40). Moreover, an enthymeme is itself a kind of syllogism, and syllogisms are described as schemata, similar to the way in which figures of speech are[12]. At one point in his Rhetoric Aristotle even makes a comparison between one kind of rhetorical figure of speech, antithesis, and the syllogism: antithesis has the form of a logical argument but draws opposing conclusions (1410a20-23); Untersteiner describes it as a "deduction of opposites"[13]. Plato abhorred this form of argument because it valued the probable over the true (Phaedrus, 267a). For now, the point I wish to stress is the importance of the formal or schematic nature of language and its close tie to rhetoric and human action.

To summarize briefly, rhetoric originates in a milieu of political and linguistic suppressions and liberations. In the transition from tyranny to democracy, the incorporation of choreographic signification from tyranny into the phonetic language and the confrontation of democracy with the practical task of redistributing land and political power gives birth to the first systems of rhetoric. Rhetoric is born as a form of human action and persuades men to concrete courses of action to bring human society into order.



## 2.2 LOGIC

Although logic also crops up in fifth century B.C. in the same general geographic area as rhetoric, in Elea (located in southern Italy), it has a much less mysterious origin. Zeno of Elea is credited by both Plato and Aristotle as the inventor of logic[14]. The logic Zeno introduces is a method of reasoning known as "dialectic;" a derivation from the verb dialegesthai, it means to discuss something in a dialogue[15]. Diogenes Laertius offers a concise description of dialectic in his Lives of Eminent Philosophers:

A dialogue is a discourse consisting of question and answer on some philosophical or political subject, with due regard to the persons introduced and the choice of diction. Dialectic is the art of discourse by which we either refute or establish some proposition by means of question and answer on the part of the interlocutors (Bk. 3, sec. 46-48).

What is characteristic of Zeno's dialectic in the beginning is not the writing of dialogues (which is credited first to Alexamenus)[16], but rather the drawing of premises in an argument from an opponent. Such premises then serve as the points of departure in a refutation, a form of argument we will examine more closely. Let us turn now, however, for a look at the philosophical-rhetorical context in which dialectic emerges.

Zeno was a contemporary of the inventors of rhetoric; yet he was not concerned with practical matters of land and power distribution as a motivation to develop his logical method. Zeno's dialectic emerges distinctly within the early metaphysical tradition of Presocratic Greece, whose ambitious philosophical aim was to ascertain the true nature of reality. Within this diverse framework, Zeno endorses the Eleatic doctrine of Being set forth by Parmenides. The fundamental theses of this doctrine are:

1. There is one principle, Being; it is material and motionless.

2. True Being is found not by sense perception, which yields illusion, but by thought.
3. Thought reveals that there can be no plurality, movement, and change[17].

From Plato's Parmenides (127,128) we learn that Zeno introduces his dialectical method in order to support Parmenides conception of Being, over against its opponents (primarily, the Heraclitans)[18]. Zeno's dialectic is a negative method which refutes an opponent's position by deducing absurd or impossible conclusions from its basic suppositions. Using this form of argument, Zeno constructs some forty arguments and paradoxes which directly undercut an opponent's position and indirectly support his own. Commonly called a reductio ad absurdum or reductio ad impossibile, its general logical form is this: if P, then Q; but, not Q; therefore, not P. Very similar to the Socratic elenchus, Socrates and Plato frequently used this form of argument to expose the foolishness of their dialectical antagonists[19].

## 2.3 SUMMARY

In the origin and early development of logic and rhetoric, we can make some obvious but important comparisons. Both are dialogical in structure, although one is carried out in the philosopher's arena and the other more likely in a judicial setting. The argumentative nature of each requires that both derive initial and acceptable suppositions from an audience or interlocutor. With dialectic, initial premises come from an opposing philosophical opponent; with rhetoric, initial suppositions come from an audience which will accept what seems probable or reasonably true as the basis for argument. Whereas dialectic works toward a directly negative end by reducing an opposing view to

absurdity, rhetoric directly pursues a persuasive end by using choreographic discourse (figures of speech) and arguments from probability. Dialectic demands absolute certainty, however. Logic originates in the metaphysics of Being and seeks to establish knowledge thereof. Its concerns are otherworldly, and it opposes common sense perceptions by relegating ordinary experience to illusion. Rhetoric, quite differently, originates out of the schemata of human action in the practical affairs of a society, and seeks to bring order to a culture, becoming itself a schemata of human action.

#### Notes

- [1] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, comp., Greek-English Lexicon, rev. and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, 9th ed. (1843; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 1785.
- [2] D.A.G. Hinks, "Tisias and Corax and the Invention of Rhetoric," Classical Quarterly, 34 (1940), 61-62; Jacqueline de Romilly, Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 14-15.
- [3] Stanley Wilcox, "Corax and the Prolegomena," American Journal of Philology, 64 (1943), 1-23. Hinks, pp. 61-69. Two main traditions surround the origin of Sicilian rhetoric with Corax. One derives from Aristotle's Synagoge Technon and is best presented by Cicero in Brutus 46. The other competing tradition stems from various prolegomena and prefaces to commentaries on Hermogenes, some written as early as the third century A.D. These latter accounts are collected in Hugo Rabe's Prolegomenon Sylloge (Leipzig: Teubner, 1931), which is a selection and re-editing of Christian Walz's Rhetores Graeci. The traditions differ essentially over the setting in which Corax's rhetorical theory developed. The former places it within the judicial arena, while the latter positions it within a deliberative context.

- [4] Vincent Farenga, "Periphrasis on the Origin of Rhetoric," Modern Language Notes, 94 (1979), 1034.
- [5] Rabe, no. 4, 17, pp. 24-25, 240. These accounts are translated by Farenga, pp. 1035-1036.
- [6] Farenga, pp. 1035-1039.
- [7] Farenga, pp. 1042, 1050.
- [8] Farenga, pp. 1042-1043.
- [9] Romilly, p. 15; Plato, The Dialogues of Plato, 2 vols., trans. B. Jowett (1892; rpt. New York: Random House, 1937). Subsequent references will be made within the text. The translation here is not by Jowett, however; it is Romilly's and comes from the Greek word psuchagogia.
- [10] Hinks, p. 63. Paul Ricoeur, "Between Rhetoric and Poetics: Aristotle," in The Rule of Metaphor, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp.11-12, 328; W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 178-179.
- [11] Rhetorica, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, The Works of Aristotle, ed. W.D. Ross, XI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). Subsequent references will be cited in the text.
- [12] Ernst Kapp, Greek Foundations of Traditional Logic (New York: AMS Press, 1967), p. 5.
- [13] Mario Untersteiner, The Sophists, trans. Kathleen Freeman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 200.
- [14] Parmenides (127, 128). In Aristotle's Sophist (a lost dialogue), he credits Zeno as the inventor of dialectic and Empedocles as the inventor of rhetoric. This is recorded in Diogenes Laertius' Lives of Eminent Philosophers trans. R.D. Hicks, 2 vols.(1921; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard

University Press, 1950), Bk. 8, sec. 57 and Bk. 9, sec. 25; subsequent references to this work will appear in the text. But Aristotle also credits Socrates (Metaphysics, 1078b25), Plato (Metaphysics, 978b32), and himself (Sophistical Refutations, 183b34-184b8) as the inventors of dialectic. The claim is controversial and dependent largely upon what one chooses to mean by "inventor." According to Richard Robinson in Plato's Earlier Dialectic, 2 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 88-92, Zeno does not use the word "dialectic" (dialektike or dialegesthai) to describe his logical method. That remains for Socrates and Plato to develop. What is agreed upon, however, is that the Socratic elenchus, the early Platonic dialectic, and Zeno's argumentative method exhibit the same logical character, i.e., argument by refutation. Although a mutual question and answer examination of philosophical interlocutors is not essential to Zeno's method, clearly two opposing viewpoints are treated in this earliest version of dialectic or logic. For further investigation, see Emile Janssens, "The Concept of Dialectic in the Ancient World," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 1 (1968), 174-181, and; Ronald B. McKinney, "The Origin of Modern Dialectics," Journal of the History of Ideas, 44 (1983), 179-190.

- [15] William Kneale and Martha Kneale, The Development of Logic. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 7-10.
- [16] Diogenes Laertius, Bk. 3, sec 46-48.
- [17] Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vol. 1, pt. 1 (1946; rpt. Garden City: Image Books, 1962), pp. 65, 72.
- [18] Kathleen Freeman, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), pp. 153-164. W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Philosophy, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 87-88.

[19] Kneale and Kneale, pp. 7-8; Robinson, pp. 7-32.

## Chapter III

### GORGIAS

#### 3.1 OVERVIEW OF GORGIAS' RHETORIC AND LOGIC

The next major step in the early development of rhetoric and logic brings us to Gorgias of Leontini, one who stands in both intellectual traditions. Also a Sicilian, Gorgias was a contemporary of Tisias and is reported to have travelled around 427 B.C. with Tisias on a diplomatic mission to Athens. Along with Corax, Gorgias was a student of Empedocles; and he was a teacher of Isocrates[1]. Still, Gorgias is probably known to most, not by his association with the reputed founders of rhetoric nor by his skill in dialectic, but rather through Plato's depiction of Gorgias in the dialogue bearing his name. The Gorgias Plato presents, however, is hardly the Gorgias that emerges from his own three major works[2]: Encomium on Helen, Defence of Palamades, and his best-known On Not Being or On Nature. Plato, of course, offers a redacted Gorgias, set within the context of his own philosophical and rhetorical concerns. In so doing, though, Plato distorts (even if unintentionally) Gorgias' view of rhetoric by severing it from Gorgias' own philosophical perspective. But since we are not here directly concerned with just how Plato short shrifts Gorgias, suffice it to say that Gorgias, upon hearing Plato's dialogue about him, remarked, "How well Plato knows how to satirize"[3].

Since Gorgias was a student of Empedocles, he was no doubt acquainted with the logic and rhetoric of his day[4]. We are therefore interested in the

Gorgias who emerges directly from those traditions, not Plato's redacted version. In our examination of Gorgias' logic and rhetoric, we will look for their ground in his conception of language and reality; as we will see, these are ultimately encompassed in his doctrine of logos. We should, I think, be indebted to Gorgias for his early grasp of the inherent conflict between rhetoric and logic. Unfortunately, after Gorgias' initial efforts to bring the problem and its cause into plain view, Plato and Aristotle subsequently obscure this genuine aporia (an insurmountable difficulty) within their philosophical systems--presumably to insure their own philosophical visions. Hence, if we do not begin the study of rhetoric and logic before Plato, we have little hope of understanding the nature of the problem between these parallel traditions.

Gorgias' rhetoric and logic find their common ground in his ontology and epistemology, which are tied to his doctrine of logos. Because his doctrine of logos is more than a theory of language, involving also his view of the perceptible world, it has both a perceptual and a linguistic dimension from which his ontology and epistemology derive[5]. Although we need to sketch these suggested vectors of Gorgias' philosophy, a direct and deductive exposition will not be as fruitful as a more circuituous and inductive approach. This is because in Gorgias (unlike Aristotle, for instance) we do not find a systematically developed philosophy which straightforwardly underpins the antistrophic arts of rhetoric and dialectic. Instead, Gorgias' success in these arts comes across as the ironic achievement of a sceptical ontology and epistemology. As such, we need a starting point which will allow us to approach Gorgias somewhat obliquely. Hopefully, when our inductive circumlocution is complete, we will have observed Gorgias' logic and rhetoric upon their shared ontological-epistemological ground in his doctrine of logos.



### 3.2 LOGIC

Since Gorgias is relatively unknown as a skilled dialectician and since we are acquainted with that early form of logic, Gorgias' use of dialectic provides a convenient and interesting point of entry into his thought. Using Zeno's dialectical method, Gorgias similarly refutes philosophical opponents by deducing absurd or impossible conclusions from initial premises. Of course, such a direct refutation is an indirect way of substantiating one's own philosophical claims. In the three principal works of Gorgias noted above, Gorgias uses this dialectical or apagogic method as his principal method of reasoning[6]. He achieves, however, unexpected results. Even though Gorgias makes use of Zeno's logic, his eventual aim is radically opposed to Zeno's, simply because he targets all ontological systems and dialectical reasoning itself. In a sense, Gorgias projects dialectic into the dimension of self-reference. His use of dialectic against ontology in On Not-Being or On Nature attempts to refute all the philosophic conceptions of Being of his time, including Zeno's own Eleatic ontology and its competitors. Gorgias' refutation of these early metaphysical systems really aims at the legitimacy and intelligibility of their common pursuit, namely, the attempt to isolate a permanent reality behind the shifting phenomena of nature; it makes little difference to Gorgias whether it is conceived as the One or Many. Turning Zeno's dialectic upon his own Eleatic preference is especially ironic since it is Zeno's own invention[7].

However, perhaps more important than Gorgias' dialectical refutation of Presocratic ontologies is his treatment of the dialectical method itself. By targeting dialectic upon itself, Gorgias thus demonstrates that the method is flawed insofar as it presumes to guarantee the absolute truth of any

philosophical thesis, such as the ones put forth in Parmenides' doctrine of Being[8]. Gorgias' assault on Presocratic ontology and dialectic is demonstrated in his treatise On Not-Being or On Nature. Though we cannot offer a complete commentary on this work, it is important that we sketch the main lines of his three-part thesis. Only by viewing Gorgias' attack on metaphysics and dialectic can we begin to locate the underpinnings of his own thought, grounded as it is in his doctrine of logos. Gorgias achieves both positive and negative results, negative in that his refutations are such, but positive in that his own philosophy comes into view. Ironically, however, both are sceptical achievements[9].

Gorgias' three-part thesis, contained in his treatise On Not-Being or On Nature, states[10],

First and foremost,...nothing exists; second, that even if it exists, it is inapprehensible to man; third, that even if it is apprehensible, still it is without a doubt incapable of being expressed or explained to the next man.

Contained within these three statements are, respectively, an ontology, an epistemology, and a theory of communication. Reality, thought, and language. Yet we must be cautious in reading these pronouncements. They have an overtly nihilistic sense (if they are not patently absurd), but we misunderstand Gorgias if we take them at face value. Beyond his refutative intentions, wrapped within these theses, lies the essence of his own philosophic perspective. By starting with his deployment of dialectic against Presocratic metaphysics, we can begin to unwrap these obscure utterances and locate that perspective. In what follows, we will explore, in turn, each of these statements and their relation to his dialectic, rhetoric, and doctrine of logos. This will require, additionally, glimpses into Gorgias' Helen, and the intellectual milieu of that time.

### 3.3 FIRST THESIS, DIALECTIC AND ONTOLOGY

Gorgias dialectically develops the first thesis that "nothing exists" by alternately supposing the truth of opposing doctrines of Being, essentially the Parmenidean and Heraclitan conceptions. First, by recapitulating Zeno's refutation of his Eleatic antagonists, Gorgias supposes that Not-Being exists (i.e., the world of change, motion, and plurality); like Zeno, he deduces absurd or impossible conclusions from its basic premises. However, Gorgias then turns the tables on Zeno. Assuming the truth of Zeno's claims about Being (i.e., its immutability, permanence, materiality, and immovability), Gorgias again deduces absurd conclusions. As a result, the absurd conclusions in either case refute both initial suppositions that Not-Being or Being exists. From these intermediate conclusions, Gorgias correctly deduces, according to dialectic, that since neither Being nor Not-Being exists, nothing exists--his first thesis. It is in this dialectical fashion that Gorgias refutes the competing ontologies of that time. This is, of course, only the gist not the gristle of the argument. More elaborate treatments are available elsewhere[11].

From a modern perspective, we are tempted to object that all this apparent silliness of nothing existing is simply the result of confusion over the "is" of existence with other semantic partitionings of "is," the "is" of predication for example. Or, more fundamentally, we might want to accuse these early ontologies of confusing nature with language because they try to read off an ontology of reality from the grammar of a language. These confusions are largely the result of the uncritical presupposition that reality conforms to language or thought (between which no clear distinction is drawn)[12]. It is a confusion, though, which still abides; and it is this

confusion which sparks and sustains the tension between rhetoric and logic. Gorgias is perceptive in this respect. Evidenced in his skeptical use of dialectic, Gorgias realizes in some sense the antithesis between language and reality and within language itself.

If we look beyond the patent absurdity of the first thesis, we will discover that Gorgias targets ontology and dialectic because he perceives a fault inherent in the foundations of dialectic. Moreover, it is the fault which provides the conceptual space in which Gorgias' own skeptical, ontological-epistemological foundations develop--the result of his immersion in the Pythagorean-Empedoclean milieu of fifth century Sicily[13]. For an inspection of these foundations, which also provide the key to understanding Gorgias' ironic use of dialectic, we must look into his Helen. There it becomes apparent how his doctrine of logos guides his skeptical vision of reality and knowledge. In the next section we will see more explicitly how Gorgias' conception of logos accepts a fundamental duplicity and ambivalence in the order of things--nature, human experience, language, and so forth[14]. However, before fully confronting that Gorgian doctrine, let us continue to trace out its destructive intention toward Presocratic ontology and dialectic.

In the dialectical development of the first thesis described above, some implications follow. Gorgias demonstrates that neither side of a dialectical argument may be rationally asserted to the exclusion of the other. A dialectical argument results, therefore, in contradictory conclusions. This provides sufficient evidence for Gorgias of a fundamental bifurcation of reason and reality. The rational logos of dialectic simply unveils the basic antitheses, ambivalences, and duplicities that are wired-in, so to speak, into the nature of things. Gorgias' double-edged dialectic is called a dissoi

logoi, a two-fold argument, of which he is sometimes credited as the inventor[15].

Thus employed, Gorgias' dialectic cuts a double swath and attempts to refute Presocratic philosophies which were one-sided, absolutist, and reductionist in their attempts to get behind the phenomena of nature and lay hold of the true reality and knowledge. Such absolutist philosophies (especially the Eleatic variety), entrenched by dialectic, entailed their own demise, for in the hands of a skilled and irreverent dialectician such as Gorgias, dialectical reasoning yields equally valid, yet contradictory results and thereby cancels out antithetical perspectives[16].

Even more obvious, though, than the simultaneous destruction of competing ontologies is the conclusion that dialectic effects its own immolation in the process. Dialectic proves itself impotent as a method of reason sufficient to ascertain pure and simple truths about reality, which, although eluding sensory perception, are assumed apprehendable by thought. When Gorgias arrives at the conclusion that "nothing exists," he declares, "If nothing exists, then proofs deceive"[17]. Because a dialectical argument refutes itself by alternately controverting antithetical suppositions, dialectic cannot secure the aims envisioned by Zeno or by anyone hoping to guarantee the truth of a philosophical claim[18].

Finally, the meaning of Gorgias' obscure utterance becomes clear. It is not a literal expression of Gorgias' philosophic perspective at all; instead, it is the ironic implication of rigorously applied dialectic. The statement turns out to be a clever parody of Presocratic ontology and logic; Gorgias doubts their legitimacy and intelligibility. As Untersteiner sums up, Gorgias sees that[19],

Man cannot escape the antitheses. His thought discovers only the opposite poles in all propositions which try to explain reality philosophically. The reality reached by dialectic expresses only aporiai.

Presocratic ontology and dialectic go wrong, according to Gorgias, because they fail to understand the impenetrable ambivalence of logos.

### 3.3.1 Doctrine of Logos, Ontology and Theory of Language

Of course, simply attributing such importance to Gorgias' doctrine of logos does not explain the Greek conception of logos or Gorgias' particular view of it. However, to request Platonically a definition of logos itself misses the mark, perhaps, since it presupposes a theory of language that is being questioned in the larger context of our investigation into the relations among rhetoric, logic, and language. The concept of Greek logos has few well-defined boundaries because we must somehow construct its meaning over a span of twenty-five centuries and because it had a notoriously polysemic character during that time[20]. This might lead us to see that it is, after all, a word—a word just like other words. So, the ancient conception of logos might prove to be as inscrutable as the nature of language has proven to be to the modern eye. We can, however, inquire as to how Gorgias uses logos to ground his skeptical philosophy and provide a philosophic context for his dialectic and rhetoric.

For an understanding of Gorgias' doctrine of logos we must turn to his Encomium on Helen, a work which is often referred to as an "essay on the nature and power of logos"[21]. In the Helen Gorgias reveals the basis for his ontology and epistemology, which, as we've observed, surface rather ironically in his treatise On Not-Being or On Nature. By the time the Helen

is written, Gorgias' doctrine of logos is part of an assumed scaffolding upon which his three-part treatise stands[22]. The doctrine of logos is developed in the Helen as one of four arguments which defend Helen of Troy's adultery with Paris and her desertion from her home. Each of the four arguments sketches relationships between forces of reality and human action, but the longest and most thorough argument is the one based upon logos. It explains her conduct, of course, as the result of the influence of logos. She is therefore exonerated from any blame[23]. What follows is a description of the nature and power of Gorgias' doctrine of logos.

As we briefly noted in the last section, logos possesses an ambivalent character, maintaining an antithetical tension between opposites that cannot be reduced into simpler components. In accordance with this duplicity, logos exerts a magical or drug-like power on its audience[24].

The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies. For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to diseases and others to life, so also in the case of speeches, some distress, others delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion.

According to Romilly, Gorgias is a "theoretician of the magic spell of words," but he did not try to perform magic; rather, he attempted to articulate the nature and power of speech[25]. Logos is both rational and irrational, but the force it exerts is predominantly irrational, working a kind of violence upon its hearers[26]. Logos, of course, works rationally also, as in the rationalistic dialectic of Zeno, but the end of that line of reasoning is a kind of logical irrationality. For Gorgias, this is the inevitable result of the antithetical, ambivalent nature of logos.

How does logos achieve its irrational domination over men? The answer will bring us nearer the core of his ontology and epistemology. Gorgias' Helen reveals that the spoken logos is empowered through two constituent processes[27]: persuasion (peitho) and deception (apate). Persuasion and deception are themselves ambivalent concepts. Constituted by both intellectual force and demonic power, persuasion imports its division into logos. Deception is similarly ambivalent, working in logos by falsifying an objective aspect of reality as it subjectively transforms something into something else. Deception, for Gorgias, does not fabricate simple falsehoods; it is a creative activity that intends to deceive an audience by creating a point of view, or its opposite, within a given context. However, such deception can be justified because it may bring an audience closer to a truth of human experience. Greek drama, for example, although a falsification of objective fact, might just bring a person closer to the truth than a straight reporting of events[28].

In addition to the persuasive and deceptive aspects of logos, logos is guided by another principle, kairos. Gleaned from Pythagorean philosophy, this concept translates as "according to circumstances"[29]. Kairos encompasses the circumstances of a situation and determines the power of logos according to those constraints. In accordance with this principle, human knowledge and human action depend upon a situation; no truth or action is simple in itself. Only in the context of the situation do actions or utterances obtain truth and meaning. As such, kairos is also an ambivalent concept, since, in order for speech (logos) to induce a point of view through deception and persuasion, kairos must consider the indeterminate, relational character of a situation; and this will always admit various possibilities for



interpretation and argumentation[30]. In sum, Gorgias' doctrine of logos is a complex concept, empowered and determined by kairos (according to circumstances), peitho (persuasion), and apate (deception).

Although these principles are essential to the spoken or linguistic logos, they are not simply linguistic in nature; they originate in the phenomenal character of the world. This observation directs us toward the core of Gorgias' Pythagorean-derived philosophy. Concisely formulated, this philosophy taught that[31],

Nothing is simple and pure, but earth has a portion of fire, and fire of water and wind...and thus also the beautiful a portion of the ugly, and the just of the unjust, and other things likewise.

Everything is a mixture of differences. Even though a harmony exists, such as between magnetic poles, reality is not reducible to a simple and pure material or principle that operates behind the changing panorama of nature. Gorgias, like other Sophists (Protagoras, for instance), opts for an extreme phenomenism, arguing in these words that "Existence is unknown unless it acquire appearance, and appearance is feeble unless it acquire existence"[32].

This is all to say that Gorgias' ontology also presents a duplicitous logos in the world that men experience, not only in the world in which men speak. Men do not govern the logos of the ambivalent, phenomenal world; the logos of that constantly changing and contradictory world rules men. The logos of this world is not an immaterial logos. It is a perceptual one. What sense perception reveals, moreover, is the fundamental ambivalence inherent in any situation. Knowledge, truth, and action are relative to the situations that men and women experience. In this way, too, Gorgias reveals in the fourth argument that Helen is deceived by the beauty of Paris when she deserts her home[33].

Hence, from Gorgias' Pythagorean perspective, that reality is essentially antithetical and indeterminate, emerges the ambivalent linguistic concepts of kairos, persuasion, and deception. Man experiences the duplicity of logos in both his perceptual and discursive worlds. These worlds are joined, according to the principle of kairos, in the circumstances of a situation--always in the context of human action and experience.

Since we have now uncovered a good portion of Gorgias' ontology which lies implicit within his first thesis, we can look more briefly at his epistemology and theory of communication and rhetoric; these also stem from his view of an indeterminate and ambivalent reality.

### 3.4 SECOND THESIS, EPISTEMOLOGY

Gorgias' second thesis, "if anything exists, we can not know it," maintains that knowledge (of a pure and simple, Parmenidean type) is an impossible goal. In the Helen first and then in On Not-Being or On Nature, Gorgias claims that "our perceptions seize not the essence which we seek, but that which is proper to each"[34]. In other words, if there is Being behind the sensory world that men experience, he cannot have knowledge of it. The rationalistic logos of dialectic, which seeks to gain knowledge of such essences by means of thought alone, results only in aporiai and contradictions. Gorgias argues additionally in his philosophical treatise that if it is possible to think things which do not exist (such as flying chariots), it is conversely possible there are things which cannot be thought, but which nonetheless exist. It is possible that much of reality eludes man's perceptive faculties and, therefore, that it is unknowable in the absolute sense sought by Presocratic philosophy. Knowledge becomes an irrelevant concept as a result of these

difficulties; man is continually confounded by the ambivalence of the perceptual and linguistic logos in which he is immersed. Point of view becomes, then, a more appropriate concept. In any case, Gorgias envisions an epistemological prison from which there is no escape.

### 3.5 THIRD THESIS, THEORY OF COMMUNICATION AND RHETORIC

Gorgias' third thesis, that "even if anything is knowable, it is not communicable," builds onto the two previous ontological and epistemological theses. It has its basis in the division between the perceptual and conceptual logos. Gorgias' stress upon this heterogeneous relationship is a development from the Empedoclean doctrine that speech is obviously different from that which speech is about. Therefore, speech does not really reveal those things it is about; we do not communicate with things but with words. For example, our perceptual experience of a certain color (red, for instance), is obviously different from the word ("red") that indicates the color[35]. Gorgias' idea is roughly the same as the Saussurian concept of the arbitrariness of language. Gorgias clearest statement on the problem is this[36]:

For that by which we reveal is logos, but logos is not substances and existing things. Therefore, we do not reveal existing things to our neighbors, but logos, which is something other than substances. Thus, just as the visible would not become audible, and vice versa, similarly, when external reality is involved, it would not become our logos.

In addition to the chasm between speech and experience, there is the difference between speakers[37]. This refers to the fact that speaker and hearer are not alike in their subjective psychological states (a version of solipsism), and to the fact that the same idea cannot, logically speaking, be

in two speakers at the same time. By viewing Gorgias' skeptical theory of communication in context with his skeptical ontology and epistemology, we see that true communication is just as impossible as true knowledge of reality. Communication is impossible not only because knowledge of reality is impossible, but because of unreconcilable difference among speech, experience, and speakers.

Having now unwrapped Gorgias' three theses, what is the philosophic perspective which lies implicit within these? Basically, his doctrine of logos posits a fundamental duplicity and ambivalence in man's perceptual and discursive worlds. Perceptually, his sensory capacities attest to an ever-changing, contradictory world. Intellectually, dialectic reveals contradictory conclusions. Therefore, it is impossible to attain undiluted knowledge or communication of reality. Were logos not ambivalent, its power to persuade and deceive would not be possible because pure and simple truths would be accessible. As it is, however, logos works irrationally according to the circumstances of human situations. Although logos does not secure knowledge, it can persuade men to certain points of view within the relative contexts of human experience.

From such a philosophic perspective, Gorgias' rejection of philosophy for rhetoric is easily understood. Rhetoric is simply a sceptical and ironic achievement. Whereas rationalistic dialectic in the hands of Presocratic metaphysicians sought to reduce reality and knowledge thereof to pure and simple truths, Gorgias' rhetoric accepts, even capitalizes upon, the fundamental antitheses of knowledge and reality. Instead of producing equivocal, contradictory results (like dialectic), which stultify argument and human action, rhetoric avoids the aporiai by seeking to induce points of view

appropriate to the situations in which problems arise. Knowledge in an absolute sense becomes irrelevant and is replaced by what men can be persuaded to believe. Rhetoric is for Gorgias "the artificer of persuasion," a definition of rhetoric given by Plato which Gorgias evidently endorses (Gorgias 453a, 455a).

There is yet another facet of Gorgias' rhetoric which requires attention; it continues the tradition of rhetoric as the techne begun in Corax's and Tisias' rhetorics. This aspect of Gorgias' rhetoric, although associated with Gorgias' philosophic perspective, emphasizes the purely linguistic dimension of rhetoric[38]. This strictly verbal element is, again, based upon arguments of probability and rhetorical figures of speech; Gorgias is sometimes credited as the inventor of the latter[39]. Together, these make Gorgias' rhetoric a techne. As we observed with the earliest founders of rhetoric, these linguistic features reveal the schemata at work in language and thus exert a more than rational influence upon the audience. Gorgias' argument from probability is not one which intends to approximate objective fact; it creates what seems likely and appropriate in accordance with the situational character of human reality.

Gorgias' use and development of the rhetorical figures of speech were largely adapted from the poetic tradition. They included, for example, antithesis, isokolia, parisoseis, and other more obscure figures[40]. Gorgias' development of the rhetorical figures contributed to his elevated style. Rhetorical figures could, according to Gorgias, exert a magical influence, an enchantment upon the listener[41]. Similar to Corax's rhetoric, Gorgias' stresses the materiality of language as a means to influence an audience. The rhetorical figures provide that materiality in their various

schemata, and could thus help achieve the rhetor's persuasive aim. It is Gorgias' emphasis upon the elevated style that both Plato and Aristotle found repugnant. The third book of Aristotle's Rhetoric is largely an attack upon Gorgias' elevated style[42]. In sum, the technical aspects of Gorgias' rhetoric (figures of speech, argument from probability) have a philosophical basis in so far as they secure persuasion in accordance with the ambivalence of experience and argument; but, they have linguistic base in so far as they induce persuasion through the movement and form of speech (language) itself.

#### Notes

- [1] Pausanias, in "Gorgias," trans. George Kennedy, collected in The Older Sophists, ed. Rosamond Kent Sprague (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972) 1972), 82 A7, p. 34; this work provides a complete translation of the fragments collected in the Diels-Kranz Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker (Vaduz, Leichtenstein: Weidmann Verlag, 1903). Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, trans. R.D. Hicks, 2 vols. (1921; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), Bk. 8, sec. 57, 58. Subsequent references cited in text. Samuel Ijsseling, Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 26-27.
- [2] Sprague, pp. 42-63; complete translations of each of these works are provided. Mario Untersteiner, The Older Sophists, trans. Kathleen Freeman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954). This work provides an in-depth commentary on Gorgias' three principal works.
- [3] Athanaeus, in Sprague, 82 A15a, p. 77.
- [4] Richard Leo Enos, "The Epistemology of Gorgias' Rhetoric: a Re-Examination," The Southern Speech Communication Journal, 42 (Fall 1976), p. 40. Though some have questioned the influence of Empedocles

upon Gorgias (George Kennedy, for instance, in The Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece, p. 26), Enos, following Untersteiner, argues for the undoubtable influence of Empedocles upon Gorgias. Similarly, Jacqueline de Romilly in Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 4, 14, and p. 94, n2, attributes much significance to the Gorgias-Empedocles association.

- [5] Untersteiner, pp. 140-175.
- [6] Untersteiner, pp. 123-124, 161-162. Although Untersteiner refers to Gorgias' logic as the "apagogic" method, it is to be identified with Zeno's dialectic.
- [7] Kathleen Freeman, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, 2 ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), pp. 361-362. W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) p. 194.
- [8] Guthrie, III, p. 194.
- [9] Untersteiner, pp. 140-163. Guthrie, pp. 192-200.
- [10] Sextus Empiricus, Against the Schoolmasters, Bk. VII, 65, trans. Kennedy, cited in Sprague, 82 B3, p. 42.
- [11] In addition to Sprague, Guthrie, Untersteiner, Freeman, and Enos noted above, see Richard Engell, "Implications for Communication of the Rhetorical Epistemology of Gorgias of Leontini," Western Speech, (1973), 175-184. Also, Sharon Crowley, "Gorgias and Grammatology," College Composition and Communication 30 (1979), 279-284. And G.B. Kerferd, "Gorgias on Nature or That Which is Not," Phronesis, 1 (1955), 3-25. Finally, for an account which seriously doubts whether Gorgias and his works offer any significant philosophical content, see John M. Robinson, "On Gorgias," in Exegesis and Argument, eds. E.N. Lee, A.P.D. Mourelatos, and R.M. Rorty (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1973), pp. 49-60.

- [12] Untersteiner, p. 194-195. Andreas Graeser, "On Language, Thought, and Reality in Ancient Greek Thought," Dialectica, 31 (1977), 359-388.
- [13] George Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 29-31. Untersteiner, pp. 93, 119, 145, 196. Freeman, p. 354. Romilly, pp. 3-22.
- [14] Untersteiner, pp. 101-139.
- [15] Untersteiner, pp. 179, 304-310. But, as Untersteiner points out, Gorgias is apparently not the author of the Dissoi Logoi fragment, written probably as a polemic against Gorgias' own double-edged reasoning. A translation of that fragment is available in Sprague, pp. 279-293.
- [16] Guthrie, III, pp. 197. Freeman, pp. 360-361. Untersteiner, pp. 142, 147.
- [17] Untersteiner, pp. 150, 170. This statement is located in an appendix to the treatise and is preserved in work entitled, De Melisso Xenophane Gorgia, attributed to Aristotle. It does not appear, however, in Sextus' version of the treatise.
- [18] Untersteiner, pp. 148, 150, 153.
- [19] Untersteiner, pp. 159-160.
- [20] Guthrie, I, pp. 420-424, provides a convenient summary of its commonly accepted meanings during the fourth and fifth century B.C.: (1) anything said or written, e.g., a story, a narrative, a treaty, a history, etc.; (2) a mention of worth, having to do with esteem or reputation; (3) the notion of a cause, a reason, or an argument; (4) the real meaning or truth, in contrast to empty words; (5) a full or due measure; (6) a correspondence, relation or proportion--mathematical and concrete; (7) a general principle or rule; (8) the faculty of reason in man; (9) a



definition which expresses the essential nature of something. The last two are rarely found in the fifth century, but do occur frequently in the fourth--predominantly in Plato and Aristotle. Also, because it is one of the most commonly used words in Greek, there are numerous idiomatic, untranslatable usages.

- [21] Laszlo Versenyi, Socratic Humanism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 44, cited by Guthrie, III, pp. 192-193. Also, John Poulakos, "Gorgias' Encomium to Helen and the Defense of Rhetoric," Rhetorica, vol. 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1983), p. 1. See Poulakos, additionally, for his analogical interpretation of Gorgias' Helen as a pretext and defense for rhetoric during a rather dangerous era in Athens.
- [22] Untersteiner, p. 145.
- [23] Untersteiner, pp. 103-106.
- [24] Untersteiner, pp. 106, 118-119. Sprague, 82 B11 (14), p. 53.
- [25] Romilly, pp. 6, 16.
- [26] In addition to Untersteiner, see Charles Segal's "Gorgias and the Psychology of logos," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 66 (1962), p. 100, for a thorough discussion of the effect of logos upon the human psyche.
- [27] Sprague, 82 B11 (8-14), pp. 52-53. Untersteiner, p. 109.
- [28] Untersteiner, pp. 113-114.
- [29] Untersteiner, p. 120.
- [30] Untersteiner, pp. 110-120.
- [31] Untersteiner, pp. 119-120.
- [32] Guthrie, p. 199. Untersteiner, p. 121. Sprague, 82 B26, p. 66.
- [33] Untersteiner, pp. 120-122. Sprague, 82 B11 (15-19), pp. 53-54.
- [34] Untersteiner, pp. 113-114. Sprague, 82 B11 (15), p. 53 and 82 B3 (81),

p. 43.

[35] Untersteiner, pp. 156-158. Guthrie, pp. 198-199.

[36] Sprague, 82 B4 (84), p. 44.

[37] As Guthrie observes, III, pp. 198-199, this argument is preserved only in the work On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias. It is not found in Sextus' version, which I am using in Sprague's edition.

[38] Untersteiner, p. 199.

[39] Untersteiner, p. 195-200.

[40] Untersteiner, p. 199.

[41] Romilly, pp. 15-16.

[42] Romilly, pp. 72-73.

## Chapter IV

### PLATO

#### 4.1 OVERVIEW OF PLATO'S RHETORIC AND LOGIC

Our next step brings us to Plato, who, quite obviously, has exerted a profound influence upon the traditions of both rhetoric and logic. Curiously, though, Plato cannot be considered a rhetorician or a logician per se. We can, of course, discern numerous logical and rhetorical principles within his dialogues, and from that construct a number of his views. But he did not compose strictly logical or rhetorical treatises, say, as did his student Aristotle. Although Plato was not a rhetorician, his rhetoric about rhetoric has proven itself very persuasive over the centuries. Largely because of Plato, philosophy has traditionally ignored rhetoric[1]. By the same token, however, Plato's philosophy has spurred the development of logic. To reiterate the hypothesis along which this paper is developing, the failure of rhetoric and the success of logic (in this instance with Plato) are due to the implicit, yet predominant logical-representational view of language. Even though Plato does not invent this view of the nature and function of language (tacitly assuming it as his Presocratic predecessors had) he consolidates its power through his success over the sophists[2]. Thus, after Plato and even more after Aristotle, this unquestioned view of language becomes tacitly ingrained within the conceptual framework of Western philosophical thinking.

Similar to our treatment of Gorgias in the last chapter, this chapter will examine various features and relations in Plato's philosophy. In

accordance with the principal aim of the larger work, the development of individual sections on rhetoric, logic, and ontology-epistemology is directed towards the eventual construction in the last section of a theory of language for Plato.

#### 4.2 RHETORIC

Plato's views on rhetoric are contained mostly in the Gorgias and Phaedrus. His Menexenus also provides a parody on rhetoric[3]. Plato's treatment of rhetoric in both of these works is decidedly negative[4]. His severest objection to rhetoric in the Gorgias is ethical. Using Gorgias' definition of rhetoric as "the artificer of persuasion," Plato argues that rhetoric achieves its persuasion through flattery (453a-456a). According to Plato, rhetoric panders to the baser tastes of ignorant audiences and cannot, therefore, aim or will at what is good, honorable, or just. Moreover, Plato's analogy between cooking and rhetoric attempts to demonstrate that rhetoric is not an art (techne), as claimed by its practitioners and teachers. Rhetoric, unlike dialectic, is not based on universal principles; instead, it is a knack like cooking. Rhetoric stands to justice in the same way that cooking stands to health culture. While medicine and exercise lead to true health, cooking merely panders to the taste (462a-466a, 501a). The implication is that dialectic, not rhetoric, leads to justice (527a, 504a-505a).

Plato criticizes rhetoric on different grounds in the Phaedrus. Whereas his main objection to rhetoric is ethical in the Gorgias, it is epistemological in the Phaedrus. The Phaedrus provides its additional criticism of rhetoric apparently in response to Isocrates' Against the Sophists, a vindication of the ethical aims of rhetoric which Plato had (in

the Gorgias) previously criticized. In keeping with his later philosophy, Plato's charge against rhetoric is that it is not grounded upon real knowledge. Instead, the rhetorics of that time (Tisias' and Gorgias' specifically), were grounded, he correctly claims, upon probability--what seems likely but may not be so at all[5]. Persuasive goals, the aim of arguments from probability and opinion, were valued more than goals of knowledge and truth (Phaedrus, 261-263, 267, 273).

For rhetoric to become a true art, which Plato seems to admit is possible, he requires that the rhetorician first know the truth in regard to subject matter and to men's souls (Phaedrus, 277). But the process of arriving at truth and knowledge is through dialectic. In the Phaedrus (267-277), dialectic is Plato's "method of division and collection," sometimes referred to as diarexis, a method of definition. Hence, the true rhetorician must first be a dialectician. At the end of the dialogue Plato gives the name "philosopher" to one who can both ascertain truth (a dialectical skill) and defend and prove it to others, a rhetorical skill (278). To sum up, although Plato admits the possibility of a philosophical rhetoric grounded first in dialectic, his qualifications divorce rhetoric from its philosophical basis as set forth by its founders and by Gorgias. Plato's philosophical rhetoric is really a censure of rhetoric as it stood in his day. Given Plato's qualifications, rhetoric would not be rhetoric; it would simply be dialectic in disguise.

### 4.3 LOGIC

As we pass from Plato's perception of rhetoric to his perception of dialectic, we find a great contrast. Dialectic assumes an exalted status in Plato, providing the foundation of and means to knowledge. Its exalted state, however, is only recognized by Plato and his faithful followers; Aristotle is not, for instance, among those who esteem Platonic dialectic[6]. Plato inherits his dialectic of question and answer from Socrates. Also described as the Socratic elenchus, Socrates' dialogical dialectic is credited with raising common deliberation to a philosophical level[7]. Along this line, Aristotle credits Socrates in the Metaphysics (1078b 26-29) for introducing inductive argumentation and universal definition into philosophic discussion[8]. The Socratic-Platonic dialectic makes two principal advances upon the Eleatic dialectic of Zeno. First, it introduces flesh-and-blood interlocutors into dialectic. Second, and more importantly, it develops into a method of positive proof, thus surpassing the negative Eleatic logic and even the early Socratic elenchus as means of refutation. To be sure, however, dialectic retains its refutative function, but Plato does much more to establish it as a method for constructing positive proofs for whatever philosophic issue is under scrutiny. In Plato's Theaetetus, for example, Socrates first refutes inadequate definitions of knowledge; but then he proceeds to attempt a positive construction of what knowledge itself is. What the Eleatic dialectic and the Socratic-Platonic dialectic have in common is the critical spirit in which a philosophical adversary could be shown the unsoundness of his supposed knowledge and led, ideally, to true knowledge[9].

But dialectic itself, to phrase it Platonically, proves as elusive a concept as the definitions it seeks to pin down. Dialectic is, quite

naturally, an evolving concept within Plato's philosophy and means, therefore, different things at different points in his development. That doesn't give us, however, a sense that there is a Platonic essence for dialectic. As Robinson observes, Plato's dialectic "has the strong tendency to mean 'the ideal method,' whatever that may be"[10]. It is possible, of course, to discern various senses over the range of Plato's dialogues. To give some precision to this Platonic logic, three general senses are identified below.

The first, already noted above, is dialectic as dialogue, the asking and answering of questions in flesh-and-blood encounters. It is described, for example, in the Cratylus (390c), Republic (531d-e), and Gorgias (461e-462a); and, once inscribed (as in the Platonic dialogues), it even constitutes a genre. A second version of dialectic is identified as a "dialectic of ideas," a sense upon which Hegelian dialectic is grounded. Exemplified in Plato's Philebus, Parmenides, and Sophist, this kind of dialectic, according to Hegel, involves reason purified of its human and rhetorical context[11]. Finally, dialectic is presented in the Sophist (218d-221c), Philebus (16d), and Phaedrus (265d-266b) as a "method of division and collection"[12]. Also referred to as diarexis, a Greek transliteration meaning "division," this form of dialectic is Plato's classificatory method of definition[13].

Regardless of how the senses or forms of Plato's dialectic are classified and more important than any particular version is what they have in common[14]. Platonic dialectic, as part of Plato's Socratic legacy, is a search for the essence (ousia) of things. According to Robinson, "The great theory of dialectic is the theory of the method of discovering essence"[15]. Plato continues Socrates' line of ethical inquiry concerning virtue and so forth, but he expands the search to look for metaphysical essences of both

abstract and concrete objects. That is, Plato moves from the Socratic search for a normal conceptual understanding of objects and ideas, linked always to particular instances, to a transcendent realm of subsistent Ideas or Forms (eidos). These provide, for Plato, the essences of both abstract and concrete entities. For example, in the Meno (an earlier dialogue), Plato searches for definitions for temperance, courage, color, and bees; and these are requests for normal Socratic definitions which explain the object or idea to be defined. However, in contrast to this normal request for definition, Plato's search for a definition of Beauty in the Symposium and even his attempts at definition for iron and silver in the Phaedrus are quests for metaphysical essences[16]. Unfortunately, the more these essences elude Plato, as he fails to formulate adequate definitions, the more he is convinced of their existence[17]. At any rate, the end result of dialectic (in whatever sense it is construed), intends to unequivocally circumscribe the essence of objects in this world or in another, transcendent one. A definition of the kind sought by both Plato and Socrates is not simply a verbal description of a verbal concept; it intends to reveal the fundamental reality of the object, which, for Plato, is an Idea[18]. Simply stated, a definition would forge an unbreakable link between language and reality.

For Plato, dialectic is undoubtedly the way to attain true knowledge of reality. But dialectic is not only a means to secure true knowledge; as we will see, it is itself grounded in true reality[19]. This is of course in contrast to rhetoric, built as it is upon probabilistic knowledge and likenesses of reality. Just how Plato's dialectic is grounded upon and leads to true knowledge of what is, is problematic. For this, we need a closer look at Plato's ontology and epistemology.



#### 4.4 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Plato's ontology emerges clearly from the Presocratic quest to determine the nature of reality, an endeavor briefly addressed in the last chapter.

However, Plato makes a considerable advance upon earlier ontologies because he achieves a comprehensive synthesis by reconciling opposing schools of thought, primarily, the Parmenidean, Heraclitan, and Sophistic. Following a Heraclitan line of thought, Plato believes that objects in the world, according to their nature, are in a state of flux. Similarly, he agrees with the Sophists that man's perception of the material world is relative to the corresponding changes of its sensible and transitory objects. Plato does not relegate the sensible world and man's perception of it to illusion; he is unlike Parmenides in this respect[20]. Like Parmenides, however, he believes that the changing aspects of the material world and man's corresponding impressions are not the highest or truest reality. In contrast, then, to both Heraclitan and Sophistic perspectives, Plato envisions a reality which is immutable, absolute, and universal; yet, it is knowable. For Plato, the world of concrete objects, the phenomenal world, towards which man's sensory faculties are directed, are simply lower in the ontological and, hence, epistemological hierarchy. Unlike all of these earlier philosophies, Plato progresses from an immanent, materialist conception of reality to the conception of a transcendent and immaterial world possessing subsistent, objective essences. It is this transcendent reality, the world of Forms or Ideas (eidos), which is apprehendable by dialectical reasoning[21].

The above is a little misleading. Plato's theory of Ideas does not describe a reality that is completely other from the phenomenal world that men experience. Rather, the changing reality of perceptual and mental experience

has an objective referent in a corresponding reality that is of a higher order[22].

Plato's ontology cannot be overestimated as the key to his entire philosophical program. Only from the viewpoint of his Formal world do his other views on dialectic, rhetoric, knowledge, truth, discourse, and language find their significance. His ontology makes everything else possible and accessible because everything is grounded (quite literally for Plato) in relation to the world of Forms. The phenomenal world and man's perceptual and mental experience are viewed as derivatives of that ideal reality.

A moment ago, I referred to Plato's conception of the hierarchical structure of reality, established clearly in the Republic (509d-511e) as beginning in the phenomenal world and culminating in the noumenal world of Ideas. But even within the world of Forms, the hierarchy continues with lower and higher Forms, all of which proceed from the Form of the Good or One. The phenomenal world is an imitation (mimesis) of the Formal, and is described in the Timeaus as fashioned by Plato's Demiurge according to the world of Forms[23].

Given that outline of Plato's ontology, it is easy to see that his theory of knowledge is hierarchically structured as well, patterning itself upon an ontology which provides the objects of knowledge for his epistemology. This hierarchical correspondence is sketched in the same passage in the Republic (noted above). Beginning with a lower grade knowledge attained by sensory perception, the highest knowledge culminates in the apprehension of the Forms and their various relations with one another. Simply stated, levels of knowledge correspond to levels of reality. The highest level of knowledge is noesis and its ontological objects are the archai, the Formal archetypes[24].

Again, I would like to stress that only with Plato's ontology in mind, as a kind of original reality which engenders copies of itself, can we fully begin to understand the import of Plato's views on dialectic, rhetoric, discourse, and language. They, too, are derivatives of the Formal world, similar to the way in which the phenomenal world is derivative. Both are imitations, however imperfect they measure against the ideal of Ideas. What we are asked to do by Plato is, admittedly, out of keeping with ordinary experience. Instead of focusing attention upon the relationship between everyday discourse and its ostensive reference to objects, people and situations, Plato asks us to shift our focus to the relationship between language and a world of transcendent Ideas. This establishes the word-meaning relationship for Plato.

The philosopher apprehends the world of Forms and their combinations through dialectic, which can transcend the corresponding imitative world of sensory phenomena. Although dialectic begins for Plato as an epistemic heuristic, a method of discovering truth and knowledge, it soon becomes coextensive with philosophy itself; and, if not identical with Plato's ontology, dialectic is at least parallel to it. In a sense, Plato's epistemology collapses into his ontology. In the Sophist and Statesman, for example, the dialectician, "without the help of any sensible object," begins and ends his inquiry in the realm of the Forms[25]. The dialectical method itself proceeds according to diareisis; as such, we have a clear combination of the second and third senses of dialectic introduced at the beginning of this section.

Of course, modern philosophers and linguists such as Wittgenstein or Benveniste would be very critical of the equation between method and object.

They would object, correctly I think, that the revelation of the essential form of the object reveals nothing more than the structure of the medium or method. Plato believes, however, that dialectic is ontologically grounded in the Formal realm and its function, therefore, is to trace out connections among the Forms[26].

The nature and function of dialectic corresponds nicely to its three senses. It is both an analytical method and a reflection of the Formal objects the method seeks. According to the three senses of dialectic (dialogue, dialectic of ideas, and diarexis), the first and third senses constitute the mirroring process, while the second is the ontological object and ground of dialectic.

The idea of the medium of language, exhibited in dialectic, as a reflection or imitation of the Formal world is also expressed in Plato's notion of discourse. Of course, I am being somewhat vague when I refer to the medium of language here, since we have not yet discussed Plato's theory of language. I must temporarily beg your intuitions. At any rate, in the Sophist (259e) Plato asserts that meaningful discourse is only possible through a certain combination (sumploke) of Forms[27]. Forms which are compatibly combined are true, and those which are not combined or incompatibly combined are either false or altogether meaningless. For example, the statement "motion is rest" is false because the Forms of Motion and Rest are incompatible (Sophist, 249-269). However, the assertion that "man is an animal" is true because the Forms are compatibly blended. Additionally, a simple conjunction of words such as "lion, stag, horse" is meaningless because there is no combination of Forms. For the same reason, neither is the sequence "walks, sleeps, runs" (Sophist, 262b)[28]. Plato goes on to point

out that, as a minimum requirement for meaningful sentences, the combination (sumploke) requires a name (onoma) and a verb (rhema) (Sophist, 262b)[29].

Plato arrives also in the Sophist, more clearly at an answer to the question he had posed and explored in the Theaetetus, "what is knowledge?" Though Plato does not commit himself to a specific definition, such as true opinion, he describes it as the apprehension of the Forms and their interconnections; this apprehension is achieved by his method of division and collection. Interpreted for a modern, we would say that knowledge is the comprehension of a class concept as established by a definition in the traditional "species = genus + differentia" formula. For Plato, this form of dialectic actually reflects the hierarchical nature of the world of Ideas[30].

From a general perspective, then, Plato's conceptions of dialectic, discourse, truth, and knowledge are founded upon a relation between the immanent world of human experience and the transcendent realm of the Forms. But we can be more precise than that. Plato's ontology consists of at least two worlds (and perhaps three) which stand in an original-derivative relationship; the derived imitates the original as an imperfect reproduction. To divide the world of phenomena from the world of language remains a problem at this point. Both have an immanent existence, yet they are not easily reconciled to another. We will return to this problem in the next section on Plato's theory of language. In any case, truth and knowledge for Plato emerge from the binary correspondence of dialectic and discourse with the world of Ideas. That probably sounds a little strange to us since we are accustomed to thinking of our discourse in reference to this world, not some transcendent reality.

Especially when considering Plato's philosophy, we should not lose sight of that fact because some important consequences follow for Plato's views on language . Essentially, discourse seems to reside at a higher level in the ontological hierarchy than does the phenomenal realm. It stands somewhere between the noumenal world of the Forms and the phenomenal world of sensory experience. This means that language is really a better imitation of the Formal reality than the material world is; thus, we are duped by our senses more than by words. Therefore, we may have more than two worlds to confront in Plato' ontology. For the moment, however, let us return to the notion of correspondence introduced above.

Concerning the correspondence of discourse and dialectic with the world of Ideas, there is a minor problem; its solution will help us understand Plato's theory of language. From the correspondence relation emerges, according to Plato, meaning, truth, and knowledge. We are tempted to ask wherein lies the correspondence--between thought (some kind of mental event) and the world of Forms, or instead, between spoken and written discourse and the Formal realm? A reasonable response would be to imagine a hierarchy that begins in the Formal world, descends through thought, and finally reaches discourse. This model provides two levels of correspondence, one immediate and one intermediate. From the Formal world to thought, there is an immediate correspondence. And from thought to discourse, the relationship is immediate. However, the relationship is intermediate between discourse and the world of Forms; thought, naturally, mediates between the two. This description of the correspondence relation certainly appears Platonic: the original, a reflection, and a reflection of a reflection. However, it is more the result of an anachronistic conception of Plato's ontological, epistemological, and linguistic hierarchy. Here's why.

This erroneous hierarchical conception rests upon a distinction between thinking and speaking, a distinction that Plato does not make. From the Theaetetus (189e-190a) we learn that, for Plato, thinking is nothing more than internalized speech. There is no essential difference between the two[31]. But that should not really surprise us, if we bear in mind Plato's concept of dialectic as dialogue, whose requirement for interlocutors emphasizes the exterior, spoken exchange[32]. The conversational component cannot be divorced from dialectic and thought. For Plato, both of these are grounded in the spoken. Therefore, we cannot have a hierarchy of the type suggested above, a common misconception of Plato's levels of reality.

Part of the problem arises, I think, because we are used to thinking of things called "concepts" or "ideas" which are believed to be mental entities different from both language and the phenomenal world. An "idea" (the term I prefer to use here) is typically described as a mental image of sensory impressions of the phenomenal world. The notion of a mental image in this sense is introduced early in the philosophical tradition in Aristotle's On Interpretation. And, continuing this tradition in the seventeenth century, John Locke describes the idea as a mental image in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. A "concept" or "idea" in this more modern sense is not clearly articulated until after Aristotle in the Latin commentaries on Aristotle's On Interpretation. This is all to say that Plato does not consider such psychological events to be of much importance[33]. But even though Plato does not go in for ideas in the way that some moderns are apt to is not to say that he denies the reality of mental events. He simply equates them with internalized speech. Why isn't Plato interested in such psychological realities? Because he was continuing the tradition of Socrates who started

asking, "What is X?"; and Socrates' search for definitions is motivated by his desire to know the thing, not some mental event. Both Plato and Socrates are interested in the actual, real referent (whatever that might be); they are not concerned with the mental event, or for that matter, the word--both of which they presume to be transparent to the referent[34].

According to Aristotle, Socrates sought universal definitions which would reveal the essence of the thing under scrutiny. Even though nowadays some might want to say that a definition defines a word and its use, or even that it denotes an idea (mental image), for Socrates and Plato a definition reveals the actual thing. For Socrates, the definition always remains linked to specific instances of the thing being defined. Plato, however, divorces the definition from its ostensive reference to an object or situation, and he gives the definition another primary referent, an Idea in the world of Ideas (not to be confused with "idea," the mental image). Plato "separates universals," according to Aristotle, and creates a realm of imaginary, eternal things. In other words, Plato hypostatized ideas or words so as to become Ideas[35]. Simplistically, Plato makes this move because he sees that objects in the world constantly change but that definitions don't; hence, definitions must really refer to something besides what their ostensive reference is about in the ordinary world. In Plato's ontological scheme, then, definitions refer to Ideas; and definitions and Ideas don't change. The point of this brief digression about psychological events in relation to Plato's ontology is twofold. First, it helps to overcome an obstacle that must be confronted in Plato's ontological hierarchy, namely, what to do about mental events. Second, and more importantly for the task at hand, it will allow a more insightful discussion of Plato's ontology in relation to his theory of language, to which we should now turn.



#### 4.5 THEORY OF LANGUAGE

Many of Plato's views on language have already been touched upon in the preceding section. Still, we need a more explicit sketch of his conception of the nature and function of language. In general, Plato's theory of language lies embedded within two concentric conceptual frameworks of early Greek thought. The larger framework involves two competing views of reality and knowledge; these polarize into the two antithetical concepts, nomos and physis. The nomos conception, supported by appeals to sense perception, human custom, and law, presents reality and knowledge as mutable and relative; in short, it stresses the notion of convention. At the other extreme lies physis, which construes reality and knowledge as immutable and absolute; in short, it emphasizes nature or the natural[36].

This nomos-physis duality expresses itself in the smaller conceptual framework as a paradigm which grounds the nature and uses of language. I am using the word "language" here rather loosely, of course, because the concept of language qua language is not yet a philosophical topic. The ancient Greeks do not even have a word for "language"[37]. In any case, within the linguistic paradigm of that time, providing a tacit conceptual structure, words maintain either a conventional or natural relationship with their referents. Before we look at this difference, let us first see what these divergent linguistic views have in common within the paradigm they share. Essentially, either conception of language assumes that words are names of things; this is true at the level of the individual word and at the level of the sentence. All words get their meanings from the sorts of things they name. Words are viewed as labels which stick to pieces of reality. Figuratively, they are perceived to pin down the world in much the same way

that nails might pin down pieces of wood. This supposed naming connection which words maintain with the world reveals a certain view or description of reality. This view of language is the result of the Greek perception that the world is a collection of objects or things presumed to be knowable by a kind of raw and immediate acquaintance. This view of the world stands in contrast to a more modern perspective which interprets the world as a totality of facts or states of affairs (articulated by Wittgenstein), the result of viewing knowledge of reality relationally as an effect of the mediating character of language[38].

As a result of this naming preconception, Parmenides rejects language as a reliable guide to apprehend reality. Because he believes that what reason apprehends is immutable and permanent and because the sensible world is just the opposite, Parmenides rejects both sensory perception and language. Of course, he does not inquire into language itself; this would have been foreign to him, and perhaps it is not even a possibility for him. In the end, language becomes for Parmenides, as it does for the early Wittgenstein, a ladder to be crawled up and then tossed aside[39].

Heraclitus also thinks that language is misleading, although he is not so radical as Parmenides. Words are misleading for Heraclitus because he sees that what a word means is often not what the thing means. For example, the word for bow, bia, means life; but the use or the meaning of the bow is death. Additionally, since a thing may have more than one name, he does not believe that a word completely discloses the meaning of its referent. However, Heraclitus does believe in the possibility of "significant language use" because he thinks there is a way in language of using the words correctly so that the full meaning of the referent is evident. Both Heraclitus and

Parmenides agree that language is deceptive and does not adequately represent the meaning of its referents. For Parmenides, language creates a fictitious ontology. For Heraclitus, language only paints a partial picture of reality, that is, unless it is carefully used[40].

The thinking changes again with Plato, although it still remains within the linguistic paradigm of naming. Similar to Heraclitus, Plato sees that things in the world have several names and that what words can mean is often different from what things mean. But unlike Heraclitus, it isn't the name which deceives so much as the kinds of things which words supposedly name, objects in the phenomenal world. Plato believes that the phenomenal world of sensory experience does not fully answer to what meaningful discourse is about. But instead of doing away with words or phenomenal experience (as Parmenides had), Plato creates the realm of ideas--what is sometimes construed as a Third World[41]. According to this ontology and theory of language, language would have its primary reference to the Formal world, and would only secondarily and imperfectly have reference to the world of phenomenal experience. In a moment I will sketch a diagram of Plato's ontology and epistemology in relation to his theory of language and signification; it will, hopefully, shed some light on the various relations among elements of Plato's philosophy.

Plato's Cratylus, the oldest surviving treatise on language, yields additional insight into Plato's conception of the nature and function of language[42]. The general subject of the work centers around "the correctness of names." The question is whether names have a natural or inherent fitness to their referents, or, whether names are merely conventional signs for their referents[43]. It is the controversy between physis and nomos at the linguistic level--the "natural" versus the "conventional" view of language.

In the dialogue, one of the interlocutors, Cratylus, presents the natural view. He argues that to each thing belongs an inherently proper and natural name, for foreigners and Greeks alike; or else, words mean nothing. In contrast, Hermogenes claims that the correctness of a name is determined by traditional agreement among people; hence, the relation between name and thing is conventional. In terms of the kind of signification involved, the question is whether a name is an image (eiko) of its referent, grounded in a natural, real correspondence--or--whether a name is an arbitrary sign (semeion) with only a conventional correspondence to its object[44].

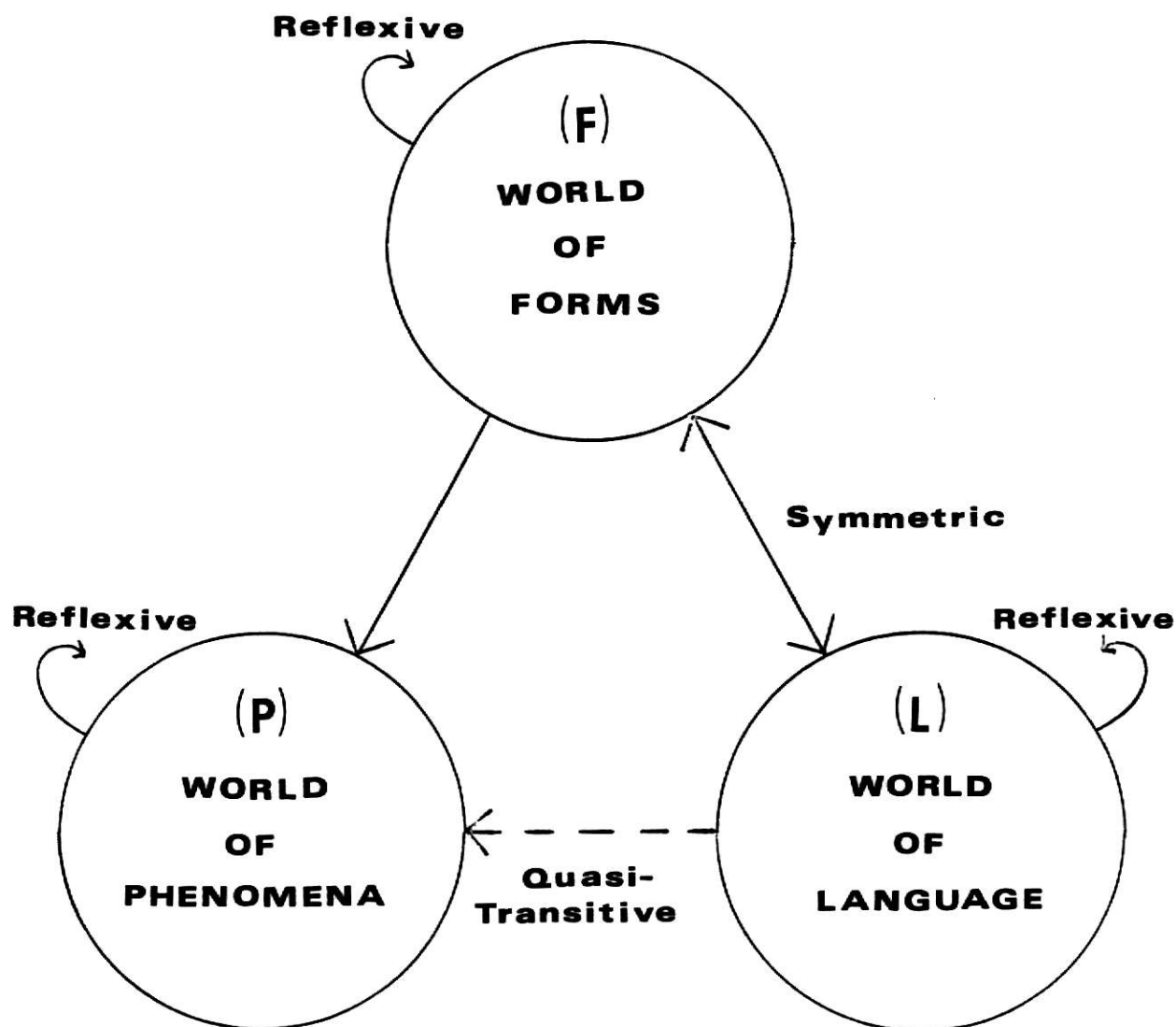
Presented by Socrates, Plato adopts a mediating position in the controversy, but he inclines more toward the natural conception of language. Difficulties beset the arguments of both Cratylus and Hermogenes, but Socrates cannot accept the arbitrary and conventional view of language because it would lead ultimately to sophistic relativism. Reasoning that the function of a name is to distinguish the nature of the thing it refers to, Socrates believes that the word must somehow be naturally and necessarily connected to it[45]. The novel part of Plato's mediating position is to shift the focus away from names as images of the phenomenal world to names as images, however imperfect, of the true things which reside in the Formal world (Cratylus, 422-423, 428, 432, 439). Although ultimately an unsatisfactory response to the problem, it overcomes obvious objections to the crude natural view held by Cratylus. Variouslly characterized as an eikon, homoion, and mimema, "language has the function <for Plato> of separating out the essential natures of things"[46]. By limiting the natural fitness of names to immutable essences in the world of Forms[47], Plato skirts the controversy and places it in another dimension.

In addition to the imagistic nature of names, Plato assumes that the function of names is to distinguish and teach the essence of real things Cratylus (387b-388b). Along this line of thought, he describes words as instruments (organon) which have the function of describing reality, i.e., the world of Ideas. Even though names are themselves imperfect images of the true things in that world, they can be used to lead men to knowledge of that reality--presumably through dialectic[48]. Thus, two important metaphors emerge, in the Cratylus: language as an image (an iconic representation of reality) and language as a tool which can be used to describe and give man access to an objective realm[49].

Having now finished the sketch of Plato's theory of language with his general philosophic program in mind, I think it would be helpful to simply draw some pictures of my interpretation of Plato's theory of language and signification in relation to his ontology and epistemology. In order to portray these concepts I will use two different models. The first draws its conceptual inspiration from modal statement logic, Saul Kripke's concept of accessibility, and Popper's notion of three worlds[50]. The second model, strictly a model of linguistic signification, draws upon the well-known Ogden and Richard's model of signification. Although I do not presume that either of these models strictly follow Kripke, Popper, or Richards, they do provide different and useful conceptualizations of Plato's philosophic and linguistic concepts.

Using the Kripkean model for which I have constructed a Popperian three-world ontology, we can read off Plato's epistemology and theory of language. From modal statement logic I have borrowed the concept of a possible world; it allows for the conception of other worlds different, but

imaginable from some original or actual world. Kripke's concept of accessibility, which we have adapted for our purposes here, describes three types of relations or properties that may exist between these worlds. These properties are: reflexivity, symmetry, and transitivity. Each relation holds between any dyad of worlds, but the number of worlds possible in a given configuration can range, theoretically, from one to infinity. Three worlds are given in the configuration below.

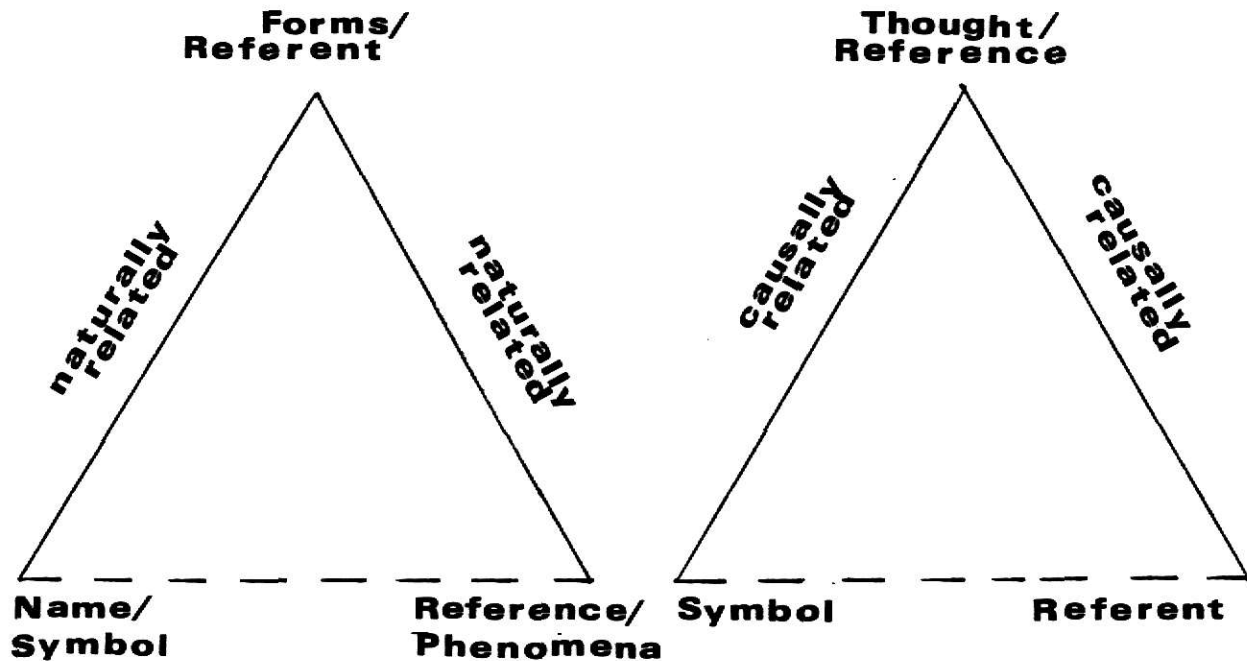


Using a mixed discourse drawn from Plato and our other philosophic benefactors, here's how I read the diagram for Plato's ontology, epistemology, and theory of language. From the original world (F), it is possible to imagine two worlds, the world of phenomena (P) and the world of language (L); both of these are manufactured as imitations of (F). (F) has access to both (P) and (L). And, of course, (F) has access to itself by virtue of reflexivity. Now, the world of phenomena (P) only has access to itself by reflexivity. Neither (F) nor (L) is accessible from (P); that is to say, in Plato's words, that man does not comprehend the Forms or language through phenomenal experience.

However, the world of language (L) does have access into the Forms through the function of dialectic and names. Roughly speaking, therefore, (L) and (F) are symmetric. The symmetry possible between language and the Forms is what gives language a higher ontological status (than phenomena) in Plato's philosophic hierarchy. The phenomenal world (P), we have seen, does not have access to (F). And, as does every possible world, (L) has access to itself by reflexivity. Finally, (L) not only has access to itself and to (F), it has access to (P) by virtue of its access to (F). That is, (L) is related to (P) by transitivity; however, it is not a strict, mathematical type of transitivity, and the dotted line is an indication of its quasi nature. At this time I don't know of a better way to describe the relation; it does not seem, however, that the concept is blurred beyond recognition. What it intends to show, in accord with my understanding of Plato's theory of language, is that language only has an indirect connection to the phenomenal realm. In this way, Plato can explain both the apparent reference of language to the phenomenal world, and, at the same time, its difference from that

world. To sum up briefly, the three circles and two solid arrows portray Plato's basic ontology, while the solid and slashed arrows from (L) to (F) and (P) indicate his epistemology and theory of language.

Although the above model seems conceptually rich in harnessing the many currents in Plato's philosophy, it may appear too opaque or usufructuarian to some. Therefore, what follows is a more traditional linguistic model of signification. The following is a construction of Plato's theory of signification in comparison with the Ogden and Richard's model of linguistic signification[51]. Plato's theory is on the left, Ogden and Richards' is on the right.





With Plato, the word or name refers primarily to the Forms (the referent) by a natural and necessary connection. With Richards, the word or symbol refers primarily to thought, what he calls "reference"; the symbol and reference are causally related. For Plato, the word refers secondarily to the phenomenal world, what I am calling "reference," by virtue of its indirect relation back through the Forms. For Richards, the symbol refers secondarily to the referent by virtue of its indirect relation back through thought (reference). Richards describes this as an "imputed" relation. In both of these depictions Plato and Richards are correctly asserting the obvious distinction between language and phenomena. Also, for both Plato and Richards, the primary reference (the top point of the triangles) has a direct, natural or causal relation both to the word or symbol and to the indirect reference (the right points of the triangles) of the word or symbol. The difference between the two theories of signification is the change in the actual referent, the ontological object signified. Richards, of course, is not committed to transcendent referents, and if Plato could be convinced that he has hypostatized ideas or language so as to become Forms, Richards and Plato would forget their differences in this model.

We have now finished a somewhat labyrinthine discussion of Plato's rhetoric, dialectic, and theory of language in the context of his larger philosophic system. We should pause for a moment and reflect upon its significance for the original rhetoric, logic, and language problem. To reiterate, the basic tension between rhetoric and logic is that they interpret man and his world according to different conceptual frameworks which derive from differing assumptions about the nature and function of language. Such assumptions may be tacitly or consciously held, but it is impossible not to

have them. To have a language means that one has assumptions about its nature and use. And such assumptions about language yield preconceptions through which man approaches his world and his language; perhaps his language is his world.

At any rate, in Plato we can see a good part of the intellectual foundation laid for the previously described logical-representational view of language. While it has been an impetus for the development of logic, it has been an obstacle for rhetoric. Plato's theory of language, in accord with his ontology and epistemology, describes language as a mimetic medium which gets its meaning from the kind of objects it imitates and labels. Hence, the metaphor of language as an iconic representation (eiko) with its correlative referential view of meaning. That sums up the "representational" part of this view of language. The other half, the "logical" part, reveals the function that language has. The metaphor of language as an instrument or tool (organon) gets at this idea. As an extension of the iconic nature of language, the function of language for Plato (whether in definitional dialectic, in ordinary discourse, or in individual names) is to ascertain true knowledge, to describe the highest reality. Plato's theory of language and his lofty goal for dialectic presuppose that language is naturally and essentially linked to its transcendent referent.

Thus far, the essence of the logical-representational view of language appears to be twofold. First, it assumes there are definite ontological objects which can be clearly represented and described in language; second, and conversely, it assumes that linguistic structures can of themselves unambiguously reveal definite ontological objects. Both aspects assume that language and ontology run parallel in some sort of mimetic or isomorphic

correspondence[52]. The cause or motivation for this view of language I don't really know. I would suggest that it derives in some way from the Indo-European root of the verb "to be"[53]. Or, it may be that Plato and other early Greek metaphysicians naively manufactured worlds by forcing out the implications from the predominant naming paradigm; that is, if words are names of things, there must be things to be named. Since language doesn't very well pin down the phenomenal world, Plato imagines another world it could pin down; hence, his ontology. Add dialectic and we have his epistemology too.

My purpose now and for the greater part of this inquiry into early Greek thought is not to make a cavalier attempt to undermine this conception of language; instead, it is to set up its conceptual scaffolding, however unsturdy it might prove in the end. Before we can launch an assault upon a commonly accepted premise of the intellectual tradition in power, we are obliged to understand and render a clear perception of the problem. For criticisms of Plato, suffice it to say that Plato's reflections on language are not on language as language itself; they are on language in its relation to something else. That is, he focuses on language's referential capacity. As such, Plato lacks a degree of rigor in his explorations. The being of language has not yet forced itself into Plato's perceptions. Language remains transparent. He does not see language when he reflects upon language; he sees through or beyond language. Additionally, by describing language as an image of reality and a tool of description, he obscures a cluster of questions concerning other possibilities for language use, e.g., language as communication. There is more to language than its pretense to label and describe realities outside of language. Language means in many ways that have

nothing to do with pinning down pieces of reality, if it can do that very well.

#### Notes

- [1] Samuel Ijsseling, Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 15.
- [2] Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," an appendix to Foucault's Archeology of Knowledge, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1972), pp. 218-219.
- [3] Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vol. I, pt. 1 (1946; rpt. Garden City: Image Books, 1962), p. 164.
- [4] Ijsseling, p. 13.
- [5] Jacqueline de Romilly, Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 50. p. 50.
- [6] Emile Janssens, "The Concept of Dialectic in the Ancient World," trans. Henry W. Johnstone, Philosophy and Rhetoric, 1 (1968), 177.
- [7] Richard Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 7-32. Robinson probably provides the most thorough discussion available of the early Socratic-Platonic dialectic. Also, see Janssens, pp. 174-175.
- [8] Hippocrates G. Apostle, Aristotle's Metaphysics, trans. and commentary by Apostle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966). Subsequent references will be made in the text.
- [9] Chaim Perelman, "Dialogue and Dialectic," in The New Rhetoric and the Humanities (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1979), p. 73.
- [10] Robinson, p. 70.
- [11] Charles Griswold, "Reflections on 'Dialectic' in Plato and Hegel," International Philosophical Quarterly, 22 (1982), 116-118.

- [12] Ronald H. McKinney, "The Origin of Modern Dialectics," The Journal of the History of Ideas, 44 (1983), 184-185. Also see Nicola Abbagnano, "Four Kinds of Dialectic," Philosophy Today, vol. 2 (1958), 144-145.
- [13] I.M. Bochenski, A History of Formal Logic, trans. Ivo Thomas (1956; rpt. New York: Chelsea Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 35-39.
- [14] Robinson, for instance, classifies Plato's second version of dialectic as an operation performed on hypotheses, pp. 93-113.
- [15] Robinson, p. 53.
- [16] Ernst Kapp, Greek Foundations of Traditional Logic (1942; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967), pp. 30-36.
- [17] Robinson, p. 53.
- [18] Frederick Solmsen, "Dialectic without the Forms," in Aristotle on Dialectic, ed. G.E.L. Owen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1968, pp. 50-52.
- [19] Eduard Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, trans. L.R. Palmer, revised by Wilhelm Nestle, 13th ed. (1931; rpt. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp.129-133.
- [20] Andreas Graeser, "On Language, Thought, and Reality in Ancient Greek Thought," Dialectica, 33 (1977), 376-380.
- [21] Copleston, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 226-227.
- [22] Copleston, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 175.
- [23] Copleston, vol 1, pt. 1, pp. 176, 192, 202.
- [24] Copleston, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 176.
- [25] Solmsen, p. 51.
- [26] Copleston, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 213.
- [27] Graeser, p. 369.
- [28] Kapp, pp. 55-56.

- [29] J.L. Ackrill, Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione, trans. and commentary by Ackrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 73. Peter Geach, Logic Matters (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 45.
- [30] Copleston, vol. 1, pt. 1. p. 210.
- [31] William Kneale and Martha Kneale, The Development of Logic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). p. 17.
- [32] Kapp, pp. 14-18. It might be objected that Plato's highest level of knowledge, noesis, in which the Forms are apprehended by intelligence alone, contradicts this dialogical requirement. Perhaps so, but Copleston points out that the notion of undiluted reason or mystical intuition as a means to knowledge is not developed very clearly. It is clearly revealed, however, that apprehension of the Forms by intelligence is tantamount to apprehension by dialectic Republic, (532a-532c). Copleston, vol. 1 pt. 1., p. 204.
- [33] Kapp, p. 30.
- [34] Kapp, pp. 30-36.
- [35] Kapp, p. 31.
- [36] W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 60-134, 201-202.
- [37] Elizabeth Stroker, "Introduction," to Karl Buhler, ed. Robert Innis (New York: Plenum Press, 1982), p. 79.
- [38] Graeser, 360-367, 384-387.
- [39] Graeser, p. 363-365.
- [40] Graeser, pp. 364-366.
- [41] Graeser, p. 367, 369. Karl R. Popper and John Eccles, The Self and Its Brain (New York: Springer International, 1977), p. 38. Popper's concept of three worlds is concisely described in this work as follows:

First, there is the physical world--the universe of physical entities<;> this I will call "World 1". Second, there is the world of mental states, including states of consciousness and psychological dispositions and unconscious states; this I will call "World 2". But there is also a third such world, the world of the contents of thought, and, indeed, of the products of the human mind; this I will call "World 3".

Popper goes on to credit Plato as the first with a comparable three-world ontology, pp. 43-45, 449-450, 461-463.

- [42] Norman Kretzmann, "Semantics," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, 1967.
- [43] Guthrie, III, p. 205.
- [44] Stroker, p. 79.
- [45] Miriam Therese Larkin, Language in the Philosophy of Aristotle (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), p. 14.
- [46] E.C. White, "On Essences in the Cratylus," 16 (1978), pp. 259-274.
- [47] Larkin, p. 17.
- [48] Bernard Williams, "Cratylus' Theory of Names and its Refutation," in Language and Logos, eds. Malcolm Schofield and Martha Craven Nussbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 83-93.
- [49] Stroker, p. 79
- [50] Michael P. O'Neil, A Brief Introduction to Modal Statement Logic (Manhattan, Kansas: Department of Philosophy, Kansas State University, 1977), pp. 3-22. Michael J. Loux, "Modality and Metaphysics," an introduction to The Possible and the Actual, ed. Michael J. Loux (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 15-64.
- [51] C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Company, 1936), p. 11.
- [52] Franz Kutzchera, Philosophy of Language (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1975), pp. 20-24.
- [53] Emile Benveniste, "Categories of Thought and Language," Problems in

General Linguistics, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Florida:  
University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 61-64.



## Chapter V

### ARISTOTLE

#### 5.1 OVERVIEW OF ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC AND LOGIC

Even though Plato was neither a logician nor a rhetorician, his student Aristotle was both, systematizing both rhetoric and logic in philosophical treatises[1]. Aristotle evidently composed four rhetorical works, but the only survivor is his Rhetoric, a relatively late composition[2]. In comparison to an earlier rhetorical work, the Gryllus, whose treatment of rhetoric was negative, the Rhetoric is positive and constructive. Aristotle's earlier judgments presumably echo Platonic criticisms of rhetoric[3].

Receiving a much fuller development, however, and occupying a special status among his writings, Aristotle's logic is located primarily in the collection of writings known as the Organon, a first century compilation by Andronicus of Rhodes; additionally, portions of the Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Poetics offer some points of logical interest[4]. Aristotle makes his major logical discoveries in the Organon. The On Interpretation presents the four forms of general statement, which, in turn prepare the way for the Prior Analytics and the doctrine of the syllogism[5]. We are not so much interested here with Aristotle's formal logic; that has been extensively dealt with in the twentieth century along two principal lines of interpretation--first as an axiomatic science and, most recently, as a natural deduction system[6]. Our interest in Aristotle's logic lies, instead, in its relation to his more general philosophic program, specifically its connections with his rhetoric,

metaphysics, and theory of language. This can all be heaped under the general label of "philosophical logic."

In spite of certain discontinuities, Aristotle's works on rhetoric and logic have guided the development of each tradition since their composition[7]. Despite interruptions, Aristotle's rhetoric has been credited as the "fountainhead of all later rhetorical theory," subsuming even the rhetorics of Cicero and Quintillian[8]. Even less disputable is Aristotle's influence upon logical theory. His almost faultless creation of formal logic set the stage so that "the whole history of logic has developed along lines traced out in advance by Aristotle's thought"[9]. Not until the twentieth century development of mathematical logic by Frege, Russell, Whitehead, and others was Aristotle's logic surpassed in scope and rigor. Kant proclaims in the eighteenth century, for instance, that logic had not progressed in 2,000 years one step beyond Aristotle and thus appeared to be complete[10].

If we acknowledge Aristotle's influence upon the development of rhetoric and logic as such, we are continually obliged as a culture to review, understand, and interpret the nature of that influence. In the investigation here of Aristotle's rhetoric, logic, and theory of language, we will review many of his contributions. Following separate chapters which address Aristotle's rhetoric and logic, we will construct a substantial portion of his theory of language so as to reveal his logical-representational view of language. Although the final objective will be a deconstruction of this concept of language and its metaphysical correlate, we must first gain a perspective on what still holds our linguistic outlook captive; hence, a good deal of construction before deconstruction.

## 5.2 RHETORIC

### 5.2.1 Rhetoric as a Techne

Rhetoric obviously existed before Aristotle, but he claims that earlier rhetoricians and his own contemporaries misunderstood the nature of rhetoric—a claim, ironically, we are lodging against Aristotle. At any rate, he states emphatically in the Rhetoric,

The current framers of the current treatises on rhetoric have constructed but a small portion of that art. The modes of persuasion are the only true constituents of the art; everything else is accessory. These writers...deal mainly with non-essentials. The arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing with essential facts,...The only question with which these writers here deal is how to put the judge into a given frame of mind. About the proper modes of persuasion they have nothing to tell us. (1354a1-b25)

While comparing the established art of rhetoric with his new logic, Aristotle objects to Gorgias' and his predecessors' rhetorics on the grounds that they teach products without the corresponding art (Sophistical Refutations, 183b16-184a10). He compares their rhetorical pedagogy to giving a man a pair of shoes to relieve the pain in his feet without teaching him the art of making shoes. In other words, rhetorics before Aristotle were of a handbook variety which offered practical advice for winning arguments but lacked philosophical grounding. The history of rhetoric has with Aristotle's Rhetoric its first "methodological examination of the nature of rhetorical discourse"[11].

Aristotle's criticisms of other rhetorics and his own system of rhetoric are no doubt responses to Platonic objections made against rhetoric in the Gorgias and Phaedrus. By presenting rhetoric as a techne, Aristotle attempts to counter Plato's earlier ethical and epistemological criticisms[12].

Aristotle's systematization of rhetoric into three modes of persuasion (logos, pathos, and ethos) qualifies rhetoric as an art that approaches Platonic standards. Aristotle makes it plain in the first book of the Rhetoric that rhetoric is connected to both dialectic and ethics (1354a1, 1356a25). Aristotle is not only responding to Plato's specific complaints against rhetoric; he appears to have incorporated Plato's requirement that a philosophical rhetoric be grounded in dialectic. This is not the case, however. The superficial resemblance vanishes once the wide divergence between Aristotelian and Platonic dialectic emerges. While Plato's dialectic presumes to attain certain knowledge, Aristotle's dialectic deals only with probable and contingent matters (Topics, Book I, chapters, 1, 10-11; Rhetoric, Book 2, chapter 2). Rhetoric is, nonetheless, an art for Aristotle because,

The subject can be handled systematically;...it is possible to inquire into the reason why some speakers succeed through practice and others spontaneously; and every one will at once agree that such an inquiry is the function of an art. (Rhetoric, 1354a8, 1356 9-11)

Before proceeding to Aristotle's main contributions to rhetoric, I would like to detour a moment and ask whether it matters that Aristotle was honest about his interest in rhetoric. Rhetoric was, after all, a secondary pursuit of Aristotle's; other sources indicate that Aristotle's interest in rhetoric was motivated by his jealousy and resentment toward the success of Isocrates and his school[13]. Some might agree that it is true but also say that it is not relevant to an understanding of the Rhetoric itself. I don't know. But if the dark unsaid side of discourse and language is essential to linguistic meaning, it should matter. The stuff that isn't there but that is there, the differences within the language and the difference of the text, makes a lot of difference in interpreting Aristotle's Rhetoric. It renders his text (and all

others as well) problematic from the outset. If we follow suggestions from Nietzsche and Foucault, philosophical discourses which overtly exude a will to truth and knowledge are really disguises for a more basic will to power[14].

Whatever Aristotle's motivations, he no doubt attempts to give a philosophical basis to rhetoric and make it a respectable techné. In the fourth chapter of the first book, he repeats his earlier characterization of rhetoric as a "combination of the science of logic and of the ethical branch of politics" (Rhetoric, 1359b10). He is careful, however, to distinguish rhetoric (and dialectic) from the sciences--physics and mathematics for instance. Continuing in the same passage, Aristotle adds in his description that,

It is partly like dialectic and partly like sophistical reasoning. But the more we try to make either dialectic or rhetoric not what they really are, practical faculties, but sciences, the more we shall inadvertently be destroying their true nature. (1359b10-15)

Whereas sciences concern "definite subjects," rhetoric and dialectic, as "faculties of providing arguments," concern matters that "call for discussion," as "regular subjects of debate," which, because of their contingent nature, "present us with alternative possibilities" (1356a30-35, 1356b-1357a5). Aristotle is careful, thus, to limit rhetoric to its proper domain.

The main part of Aristotle's rhetoric is the system of proofs he classifies under the headings of logos, pathos, and ethos. As we have indicated, each of these modes of persuasion exerts a different force upon an audience[15]. Evident in this system of proofs, Aristotle recognizes logical and non-logical aspects of discourse so as to define the nature of rhetorical discourse. Of these three types of proof, Aristotle's elaboration of logos,

rational and logical argumentation, endures as his most original contribution to rhetorical theory[16]. It is the greatest contribution because rhetoric is for the first time in its history grounded in logical theory. Aristotle's logical theory not only provides the kernel of his rhetoric, but also of his dialectic and scientific method. His logical theory, in fact, provides the means whereby rhetoric, dialectic, and the sciences may be properly differentiated from one another. Based on Aristotle's explicit descriptions of the various kinds of logical proof and their corresponding degrees of knowledge, rhetoric, dialectic, and the sciences operate in separate but interrelated domains[17]. Such a conceptualization of rhetoric (and of dialectic and science) was not possible until Aristotle because logic existed in a rudimentary form, restricted to the refutative and dialogical forms examined earlier. There is no doubt that Aristotle initiated an intellectual revolution with his logical theory. He is well aware of this fact himself, and writes with a hint of pride at the conclusion of his first logical work on the syllogism,

Moreover on the subject of Rhetoric there exists much that has been said long ago, whereas on the subject of reasoning we had nothing else of an earlier date to speak of at all, but were kept at work for a long time in experimental researches. If, then, it seems to you after inspection that, such being the situation as it existed at the start, our investigation is in a satisfactory condition compared with the other inquiries that have been developed by tradition, there must remain for all of you, or for our students, the task of extending us your pardon for the shortcomings of the inquiry, and for the discoveries thereof your warm thanks. (Sophistical Refutations, 184a9-184b8, an epilogue to the Topics)

### 5.2.2 Logical Proof and Rhetoric

What about the relation of Aristotle's logical theory to his rhetoric? In its most general sense, Aristotle's logic consists of two contrasting kinds of proof: deduction (syllogismos) and induction (epagoge). Both logics are present in various stages of development throughout the Topics, Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, and Rhetoric. Although this dual classification is necessary to distinguish different forms of reasoning and argumentation, it is not sufficient to succinctly differentiate rhetorical, dialectical, and scientific reasoning from one another. Within this broad classification, then, Aristotle further subdivides deduction and induction. However, since we would become needlessly trapped within a quandary of commentary by attempting to precisely delimit each deductive and inductive variation, we will only give an outline of rhetorical deduction and induction within the larger logical framework.

Concerning rhetorical deduction, Aristotle presents one variety of syllogism, the "enthymeme." Introduced in the very first chapter of the Rhetoric, Aristotle describes it as the "substance of rhetorical persuasion" (1354a13-15). Next, he introduces Rhetorical induction, which is identified with the "example" (1356b3-5). Claiming in the second chapter that these two completely constitute persuasion by logical proof, Aristotle states,

Everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or example; there is no other way. And since every one who proves anything at all is bound to use either syllogism or inductions (and this is clear to us from the Analytics), it must follow that enthymemes are syllogisms and examples are inductions. (1356b5-10)

### 5.2.2.1 The Enthymeme and the Dialectical Syllogism

A closer inspection of the enthymeme discloses that it is really a subdivision of the dialectical syllogism. The dialectical syllogism is a form of reasoning which contains premises derived from "opinions that are generally accepted" and which concern contingent matters, those of ethics and politics for instance (Topics, 100a30-31). Painstakingly explored in the Topics, the construction of a dialectical syllogism is the goal towards which individual topics or commonplaces are directed. That is, the topics provide a heuristic means through which credible and convincing arguments can be articulated so as to secure assent from one's dialectical antagonist during argument[18]. This function of the topics is prior to and more important than the traditional conception of topics as ways of amplifying or inventing additional information on a subject. Unlike Plato's dialectic which presumes to ascertain certain knowledge, Aristotle's dialectic is based upon opinion and probability, and it pursues a much more modest goal. Aristotle reserves the goal of true knowledge for another, more rigorous form of reasoning—for demonstration (apodeixis), the apodictical syllogism[19]. Demonstration treats definite subjects, and has premises which are "true" and "primary" (Topics, 100a25-30). Aristotle devotes the Posterior Analytics to a full elaboration of demonstrative reasoning. Describing the kind of premises used in demonstration and the kind of knowledge derived from it, Aristotle explains,

We suppose ourselves to possess unqualified scientific knowledge of a thing, as opposed to knowing it in the accidental way in which the sophist knows, when we think that we know the cause on which the fact depends....By demonstration I mean a syllogism productive of scientific knowledge, a syllogism, that is, the grasp of which is eo ipso such knowledge. Assuming then that my thesis as to the nature of scientific knowing is correct, the premises of demonstrated knowledge must be true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as effect to cause. (Posterior Analytics, 71b8-23)



Encompassing both the dialectical and the apodictical syllogism is Aristotle's more general and abstract theory of the syllogism, set forth in his Prior Analytics. Although there is a controversy over whether the Prior Analytics is historically prior to the Posterior Analytics, the latter does presuppose the former in the abstract, logical sense[20]. In this respect, Aristotle notes in the Prior Analytics that "Syllogism should be discussed before demonstration, because syllogism is more general: the demonstration is a sort of syllogism, but not every syllogism is a demonstration" (25b28-31). The same is true of the dialectical syllogism and the enthymeme as well. Defined similarly in the Topics (100a25-27) and Prior Analytics (24b18-20) as a "discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so," the concept of the syllogism makes the concepts of demonstrative, dialectical, and rhetorical reasoning possible.

Before moving on to Aristotle's logic of induction, it should be apparent no attempt has been made to distinguish the enthymeme from the dialectical syllogism. I do not mean to imply they are identical, however. In the introductory chapters of the Rhetoric and the Posterior Analytics, Aristotle indicates there is some sort of difference. What exactly it is, is difficult to say. The difference is of some interest, but not here; it has already been treated in detail elsewhere[21]. I doubt, however, whether too much should be made of the differences between dialectical and enthymemic reasoning. Chaim Perelman's "New Rhetoric," for instance, which bases itself upon the Aristotelian distinction between rhetorical and analytical (demonstrative) reasoning, makes no distinction between the two. Perelman appeals indifferently to the Rhetoric, Topics, and Sophistical Refutations in order to

explain his Aristotelian notion of practical reasoning. The crucial difference between rhetoric and dialectic, for Perelman, is audience[22].

#### 5.2.2.2 Induction and Example

Aristotle's second form of logical proof, induction, divides into two intertwining strands as it is described in the Topics, Analytics, and Rhetoric. The strand of induction to which Aristotle attaches more importance has its forerunner in Plato's Statesman (277e)[23]. It is a method through which universal truths and non-demonstrable premises are obtained. Fundamental to scientific demonstration are its primary premises. Beyond demonstration themselves, these premises must carry their own conviction of truth; they must be self-evidently true. Aristotle describes these premises as "true, primary, and immediate" and "non-demonstrable" (Posterior Analytics, 71b20-30; Topics, 100a25-100b21, 158b1-5). Without such primary premises demonstration could never get off the ground, as it would involve either circular or infinitely regressive reasoning (Posterior Analytics, 72b5-35). In general, Aristotle describes such non-demonstrable truths as the archai of knowledge; these include not only specific premises of demonstration but more general principles upon which reasoning itself rests--for example, the law of non-contradiction[24]. These foundational premises and principles are logically prime, so to speak; without these, demonstration and deduction would be impossible (Posterior Analytics, 76a30-35, 99b20-22)[25].

The clear indication is that such logically prime premises and principles derive ultimately from induction, described as the apprehension of the universal in the particular (Topics, 105a10-20; Posterior Analytics, 81a40-b10, 100b3-5). Aristotle's well-known account of how these

non-demonstrably true premises and principles, the archai, are apprehended is set forth in the concluding chapter of the Posterior Analytics, 99b-100b15). He describes the passage from the particular to the universal as a four-stage psychological process[26]. Essentially, it is an abstraction cycle which originates in immediate sense perception, passes on to the construction of memory, gives rise to more general concepts of experience, and finally culminates in the conscious apprehension of the universal--which remains, nonetheless still rooted in particular sense experience. The apprehension is achieved specifically by intuition, nous, man's highest intellectual and inductive faculty[27]. In sum, such a process provides the axiomatic foundations of demonstration and knowledge. It also becomes clear that this form of induction is allied both with Aristotle's logic and epistemology. In the field of logic, it explains that not all statements in a system can be proved; in other words, there must be axioms in every system. In the epistemological realm, it holds that scientific knowledge ultimately rests on premises that are self-evident, necessary, and apprehendable by a psychological faculty[28].

The second form of induction, the one of lesser importance to Aristotle but of greater importance to modern logicians, is a method of verification for general assertions; that is, induction is an enumeration of particular instances that reveal no exceptions to a general claim[29]. Aristotle similarly defines induction in the Posterior Analytics as "the evidence of groups of particulars which offer no exception," to the "universal" (92a37-39). In its earliest and most primitive form, induction is described in the Topics as one way to secure or to refute assertions under discussion[30]:

It is by means of an induction of individuals that are alike that one claims to bring the universal in evidence" (108b10-11);...on the other hand, against the universal one should try to bring negative instances;...if, then, a man refuses to grant the universal when supported by many instances...he obviously shows ill temper

Aristotle makes a creative attempt in the Prior Analytics to bring this form of induction under the authority of the syllogism[31]. Describing this variation of the syllogism as "syllogism by induction" Aristotle elaborates upon the inductive syllogism by stating, "the syllogism which springs out of induction, consists in establishing syllogistically a relation between one extreme and the middle by means of the other, e.g., if B is the middle term between A and C, it consists in proving through C that A belongs to B" (68b15-18). That is, the major term belongs to the middle by means of the third. In the particular example given (68b18-37), Aristotle attempts to find a connection between long life (the major term) and bilelessness (the middle term) by means of particular instances of bileless animals (the third term). By an enumeration of animals that have long lives and no bile (supposedly, men, horses, and mules), Aristotle would like to establish the middle, "bileless animals have long lives." Such is the second, syllogistic sense of induction treated in the Prior Analytics.

Induction is, therefore, a bifurcated concept[32]. There are not really two distinct methods of induction; both strands display a form of reasoning that moves from the particular to the universal Posterior Analytics, 71a6-8, 81b3; Topics, 105a10-15, 156a4-6). Although intertwined, one strand of induction is a method of verification, and is therefore subordinate to the syllogism itself because it is used to either support or refute one of its premisses. The other kind of induction occupies a prestigious position because it provides the ground for Aristotle's psychological epistemology. It

is responsible for discovering the axiomatic foundations for demonstration and reasoning in general.

As we might expect, both strands of induction find expression in Aristotle's treatments of "example" in the first two books of the Rhetoric. The prestigious sense of induction appears in the first book and is coordinate in status with the enthymeme in securing rhetorical persuasion (1356b1-14). The other form of induction surfaces in the second book, and is one way among others that lend support to enthymemic reasoning (1402b13-16). Although Aristotle makes no explicit distinction in the Rhetoric between these two forms of induction, he is apparently building onto logical paradigms described elsewhere[33].

To sum up the preceding discussions on deduction and induction in relation to rhetoric, we find that Aristotle presents induction and deduction as contrasting movements of reason: "Thus demonstration proceeds from universals and induction from particulars" Posterior Analytics, b1a40-b1; Topics, 100a25 and 105a10-15). Despite their contrasts, he links them in two ways. In the Prior Analytics he attempts to assimilate the weaker sense of induction to the syllogism. Secondly, the stronger kind of induction becomes the ultimate psychological-epistemological ground for demonstration and deduction. Hence, as contrasting and complementary movements of reason, deduction and induction in their various forms circumscribe the entire region of Aristotle's logical theory. Finally, though we have not traced out the precise nature of the enthymeme or example, it should be clear that the main part of Aristotle's rhetorical theory is generated from logical theory.

### 5.2.3 Non-logical Proof and Rhetoric

In addition to Aristotle's transformation of rhetoric through his logic, his techne contains two other forms of proof, pathos and ethos. Though it is arguable whether or how ethical and emotional persuasive appeals can be integrated into the logical forms of the enthymeme and example[34], more importantly, they focus attention upon the non-logical features of discourse. With Gorgias, for instance, we have already observed how language itself is perceived to exert non-rational, non-logical forces upon people, not unlike the influence of drugs or magic. Under these categories of non-logical proof Aristotle has to some extent incorporated the residual elements of rhetorics before his. As was noted earlier, his major complaint against other rhetorics focuses on their exclusive emphasis upon emotional appeals (Rhetoric, 1356a13-14, 1354a15-19). Concerning the status of ethos before Aristotle, there is unfortunately little information available except that given by Aristotle in his Rhetoric (1356a10-12)[35]. From one perspective, then, Aristotle's rhetoric makes its greatest contribution by bringing opposed logical and non-logical movements of proof into equilibrium. Aristotle's merit is due both to his logical transformation of rhetoric and his synthesis of widely divergent concepts. At their extremes, one conceptual movement inclines toward reason, truth, and knowledge, while the other leans toward appearances, violence, and power[36]. Rhetoric is a pirouette between. Ultimately, Aristotle gives logic the upper hand. This is especially evident in the way that he arranges his treatments of logos and pathos. By sandwiching them in between his elaborations of logos (which open and close his tripartite techne in the first two books), he keeps the non-logical modes of proof under the surveillance of logic[37].

### 5.3 ETHICAL AMBIVALENCE IN THE RHETORIC

In spite of Aristotle's brilliant logical transformation, elegant classification, and synthesis of divergent concepts, his Rhetoric manifests a disturbing ambivalence[38]. It becomes apparent in the uncertain intersection of the concepts of truth, appearance, and persuasion from which Aristotle attempts to draw conceptual lines that would define a coherent plane for rhetoric. The ambivalence in Aristotle's rhetoric is a problem he inherits from his philosophical and rhetorical predecessors. In Plato, for instance, the conflict is between the means and ends of rhetoric and those of dialectic--the conflict between truth and appearance. Aristotle's rhetoric masks the opposition but does not resolve it. The problem with which Aristotle is faced and from which his ambivalence results can be stated in the form of a dilemma: is the end of rhetoric to secure adherence to truth, or, is rhetoric to simply secure persuasion? Those are the two horns of the dilemma. Aristotle answers yes and no to both questions, thus providing evidence of a certain ambivalence. Here is what we find in the Rhetoric.

In the opening chapter Aristotle claims that rhetoric is useful primarily to convince men of the truth because true and just things naturally prevail over their opposites and because men have a natural instinct for the truth (1355a15-40). Rhetoric is especially useful to convince uninstructed audiences, but he adds that "we must not make people believe what is wrong." As Aristotle begins the second chapter, however, persuasion begins to displace the truth-securing function of rhetoric. Aristotle's definition of rhetoric in the second chapter as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion," is not essentially different from Gorgias' definition, "the artificer of persuasion"[39]. Undiluted by truth, the

persuasive goal remains the same. As we saw with Gorgias, this definition earns Plato's harsh rebuke because of its unethical and epistemological implications, valuing appearance over truth.

As the gap between persuasion and appearance continues to narrow, rhetoric's distance from truth continues to increase. Aristotle elaborates upon his definition of rhetoric with his three-part artistic system of proofs, ethos, pathos, and logos. Describing persuasion based on the personal character of the speaker first, we learn that,

Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible...This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak. (Rhetoric, 1356a4-10).

In the specific context of political oratory in the second book, Aristotle reiterates similarly that "he must make his own character look right..." (1377b22-28). Simply with words, the orator must fashion an ethical character for himself because "we believe good men more fully and more readily than others" (1356a6-7). The implication is that the true character of the orator and politician is inconsequential to persuasion itself and, hence, to rhetoric.

Next, Aristotle explains persuasion based on emotional appeal. From the second chapter of the first book, again, Aristotle states, "Secondly persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions" (1356a12-15). This requires that the speaker understand human emotions, knowing not simply their names and descriptions but also their causes and ways in which they are excited (1356a20-25). With this knowledge the orator can "put his hearers who are to decide, into the right frame of mind"



(1377b22-28). Aristotle also advocates, for instance, that the orator "declare a thing to be universally true when it is not" in order to work up "feelings of horror and indignation in our hearers" when it is most appropriate (1395a7-8). Continuing in the same passage, he adds that "even hackneyed and commonplace maxims are to be used, if they suit one's purpose: just because they are commonplace, every one seems to agree with them, and therefore they are taken for the truth" (1395a9-12).

Finally, Aristotle introduces logical appeal as a basis for achieving persuasion: "Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent truth by means of the persuasive arguments suitable to the case in question" (1356a8-21). We have already considered the major portion logical proof and its connection to rhetorical discourse through the enthymeme and example. What we didn't note in that discussion are the deceptive ends, the persuasive goals which the logical appeal can secure. Along this line, we find Aristotle in the latter part of the second book of the Rhetoric offering some logical, yet rather unethical prescriptions. He explains in the section on the "spurious enthymeme" (1401a1-1402a30) that it is possible to secure one's persuasive aim by merely giving "the impression of establishing some fresh conclusion" from antecedent premises (1401a27). Of course, the enthymeme is, in its normal state, a syllogism based on probabilities, and is often deficient in logical form. That is not quite the point here. Aristotle is suggesting that the mere appearance of a syllogistic argument can of itself be persuasive. Aristotle qualifies this advice by appending the caveat that this form of apparent reasoning "has a place in no art except rhetoric and eristic" (1402a27). Thus, with all the emphasis upon fashioning deception from each facet of his

techné, Aristotle is well on his way toward an amoral, if not immoral rhetoric[40].

The passage which most explicitly displays the Rhetoric's ethical ambivalence comes in the fourth chapter of the first book. We have commented on this passage once already, but it suggests another possibility here. In Aristotle's efforts to delimit the proper domain of rhetoric by comparing it with its practical and speculative neighbors, he describes a rhetoric whose main characteristics are its ambivalence and duplicity:

For it does not belong to the art of rhetoric, but to a more instructive art and a more real branch of knowledge; and as it is, rhetoric has been given a far wider subject-matter than strictly belongs to it. The truth is, as indeed we have said already, that rhetoric is a combination of the science of logic and of the ethical branch of politics; and it is partly like dialectic, partly like sophistical reasoning. But the more we try to make either dialectic or rhetoric not, what they really are, practical faculties, but sciences, the more we shall be passing into the region of the sciences dealing with definite subjects rather than simply with words and forms of reasoning. (1359b5-17)

In other words, while creating an alliance with logic and politics, he simultaneously undercuts rhetoric by reducing it to a sophistical play of words and deceptive forms of reasoning. From a Platonic and the normal Aristotelian viewpoint, Aristotle does not describe a responsible and ethical rhetoric. Its association with sophistry is damaging because truth is an indifferent concern of the sophist, whose art Aristotle describes as "the semblance of wisdom without the reality...the sophist is one who makes money from an apparent but unreal wisdom...." (Sophistical Refutations, 165a20-25). Aristotle impales himself, in this manner, on both horns of our originally stated dilemma.

### 5.3.1 Ambivalence, Language, and Power

One plausible explanation for Aristotle's ambivalent response has been offered from the realm of ethics. This explanation treats the noted ambivalence of the Rhetoric as the result of an unsystematically developed and inconsistently maintained theory of value[41]. That a certain ambivalence and duplicity is present is hardly disputable. That it is the result of an insufficiently developed theory of value is not so obvious, however. Among other things, neither was Aristotle especially inept at ethical theory, being the author of both the Eudemian Ethics and Nicomachean Ethics. Without further dispute over this ethical hypothesis, I would like to suggest a very different possibility that could account for the noted ambivalence.

In keeping with the hypothesis guiding the overall investigation, it seems that the visible ethical ambivalence is really the result of a more profound ambivalence, one which arises from an incongruity between differing conceptual schemas that are formed by tacit assumptions held about the nature and function of language. This claim is not obvious either, and demands more explanation in connection with the specific problem at hand. Up to this point, we have caught Aristotle articulating a duplicitious, ambivalent response to the dilemma confronting rhetoric and its relation to truth and persuasion. Aristotle says rhetoric's aim should be to convince men of the truth, and he says that it is rhetoric's aim to pursue persuasion at all costs. In simple terms, that captures the detectable ambivalence and places Aristotle's rhetoric in the company of other amoral or immoral varieties (alongside Gorgias' for example). Since these are ethical judgments obtained by a close reading of Aristotle's text, it may well be that the problem is generated from an inadequate ethical theory. However, it may be (and I think

it is) that the dilemma so-stated and the ethical hypothesis target only a superficial ambivalence. There is a more profound or fundamental ambivalence, and we are deflected from it by this surface irregularity. We have to change our way of looking at things.

Another way to solve the problem, to escape the dilemma, is not by alternately swinging from one horn to another as Aristotle does; instead, it is possible to go through the horns and thereby reject the grounds upon which the dilemma is formed. This option is not open for Aristotle, for he would forfeit his rhetoric in doing so. That is not our concern; we have other possibilities. Most importantly, we should not let the apparent axiological blemish distract us. The easily noted ethical ambivalence is legitimate only within a certain conceptual framework. Within another schema, the problem would not arise or would be irrelevant (or unintelligible) because it would lack the requisite conceptual space in which to develop. This observable ambivalence deceptively deflects (even if unintentionally) our attention away from a more profound problem. The deflection is a highly strategic move in a very old and revered "language game," one which continues to hold our linguistic consciousness captive[42].

This profounder ambivalence originates not so much within a completely other conceptual schema as it does at the boundary in a gap between juxtaposed, yet incongruous conceptual frameworks. The ambivalence begins to crop up when one framework tries to analyze and translate the other into its own grammar, falsely presuming that the other is compatible with such a transformation; but, if not compatible, it forces the transaction. The problems we first detect stem from the method of analysis, the intrusion of the one's conceptual tools into the other's conceptual space. The more

profound problem is their simple difference. Even though the one may achieve its transformation and domination of the other, the difference remains, albeit suppressed. To get at the more fundamental problem requires that we press deeper into those superficial gaps.

Aristotle's transformation of rhetoric by means of his logic is the case in question here. These are the two, incongruous and juxtaposed conceptual schemas. Aristotle has quite obviously reconceptualized rhetoric as a form of his logic. In so doing, and this is the key, the persuasive aim of rhetoric is constrained by a combination of possible logical forms with possible degrees of truth. The marriage of logic to truth is implicit in the full concept of Aristotle's logical theory, and is evident in his description of both the enthymeme of rhetoric and the apodictical syllogism of science. While their logical forms are given by syllogistic variations, the premises of each are characterized by degrees of truth. The premises of an enthymeme are based upon probable or apparent truths, whereas those of demonstration require necessary truths (Rhetoric, 1355a10-15, 1357a14-57b). A similar line of reasoning would hold for induction as well. Hence, the logical form and truth value of a discourse exert the principal forces in rhetorical persuasion. Aristotle makes the boundaries of rhetorical discourse conform to the carefully bounded field of logic. Within that field of logic, we should imagine further a polarized axis drawn between truth and falsity. The persuasiveness of a discourse is determined within this well-defined, sphere-like region by the position of the discourse relative to the true-false axis. In other words, rhetorical discourse effects its persuasive aim solely within the realm provided by the full notion of logic (logical form and degree of truth).

Moreover, discourse within this logical field is assumed to have an ethical character; as we have seen with Aristotle, a rhetoric may be moral, immoral, or even amoral. Such ethical judgments are meted out, however, on the basis of the truth value of the discourse. If the discourse is true to the facts, then moral; if false, then immoral; if both, ambivalent and perhaps amoral. Such is the case with Aristotle's apparent ethical ambivalence. Where he advocates truth, his rhetoric is moral; where he advocates appearances over facts, immoral. Saying both at the same time gives his rhetoric an overall sense of ambivalence and amorality. The point to see here is to what extent the concepts of logic and truth pervade Aristotle's rhetoric; more than that, they continue to invade our judgments about his rhetoric.

The transformation sketched above, by which rhetoric is coerced into an alliance with logic, falls in line with Michel Foucault's characterization of Western thought (from Plato onwards) as a "will to truth"[43]. In his "Discourse on Language" Foucault advances the thesis that the production of discourse in every society is controlled by exterior and interior constraints. Exterior constraints are imposed from without by various societal and institutional mechanisms of support and prohibition. Interior constraints work from within discourse itself, as it provides its own control by various rules of classification, ordering, and distribution. Construed as such, discourse emerges from a complex of power relations which form and certify acceptable discourses and also necessarily exclude others. The most characteristic symptom of this power-incited will to truth (which underlies a more visible "will to knowledge") is its preoccupation with the concept of "true discourse," the notion that what is said takes precedence over what

discourse is and what it does. That is, true discourse, intent upon dividing discourses into the true or the false, restricts the significance of language to its propositional content; it supercedes or usurps both the fact of discourse (its brute materiality) and the performance. In short, the content of discourse overshadows the event of discourse[44].

Foucault identifies in the rift between Hesiod and Plato a moment when discourse shifted from a forthright discourse of power to a deceptive discourse of truth. The former reveled in the event of discourse as practiced by the poets and sophists, while the latter isolated the content of what was said, "its meaning, its form, its object and its relation to what it referred to". The "highest truths" of discourse ceased to be "linked to the exercise of power" as a result of the separation of discourse into the true and false. The visible, but deceptive will to knowledge and will to truth displaced the open exercise of a sophistic discourse of power[45]. The sophistic discourse with its stress upon the simple materiality and performance of language and discourse, as we all know, lost out to Plato's discourse of truth; it lost out largely because it wouldn't conceal its motivation in power. The discourse of truth won, but not without creating a predicament for itself. As Foucault observes[46],

True discourse, liberated by the nature of its form from desire and power, is incapable of recognizing the will to truth which pervades it; and the will to truth, having imposed itself upon us for so long, is such that the truth it seeks to reveal cannot fail to mask it.

This is to say that the will to truth must cloud its motivation in a more basic will to power. True discourse must, by its very nature, disavow its source in a lust for power, for it would forfeit its authority to govern the

production of acceptable forms of discourse, if exposed. It creates and maintains its authority by deception. The commitment of true discourse to truth and knowledge is a mask which deflects our attention, distracts us from its problematic origin in a desire for power. Still, discrepancies begin to crop up; incongruities and ambivalences leak from the lines of sacred texts. And maybe we begin to see that the discourse of logic and truth is not an adequate mask to cloak the fundamentally rhetorical nature of all discourse and language.

Aristotle's transformation of rhetoric into a version of logic continues the takeover, the usurpation, begun even before Plato in the metaphysics and logics of Parmenides and Zeno. The refashioning of rhetorical discourse into acceptable logical forms with well-defined truth values is a dissumulative move made against an alien discourse by the discourse in power (or coming into power). Aristotle's logic effectively disarms his rhetoric. Even the emotional and ethical aspects of Aristotle's rhetorical techne are integrated into the logical forms provided by the enthymeme and the example. And, as non-logical modes of persuasion, they are kept under surveillance by the opening and closing logical discourses that establish the perimeter of Aristotle's rhetoric[47].

Whether or not power is the irreducible factor into which discourse resolves itself is not the most important issue here. What it helps to bring out, however, is the reality of other discourses that happen to be outside of the region circumscribed by logic and truth. Somewhat ironically, even in the above description I am forced to talk about other discourses in reference to logical and true discourse. Aristotle was aware of other kinds of discourse, but he consciously excludes them from careful consideration. To exemplify how



Aristotle systematically excludes other forms of discourse, I have borrowed a passage from James Hutton's commentary on Aristotle's Poetics which indicates how Aristotle dismisses the study of different "forms of expression" (prayers, commands, questions, e.g.). Hutton states[48],

The forms of expression or types of sentences (first distinguished by Protagoras in the fifth century) are dismissed by Aristotle in On Interpretation (4, 17a5-8), a logical work, as belonging to poetics or rhetoric; here in the Poetics they are handed on to the art of elocution or dramatic delivery, since they involve intonation. In the Rhetoric (3.1. 1403b25), we are told that the art of dramatic delivery had been systematized by Glaucon of Telos and others.

Although Aristotle tends to elide and confuse the uses of language with voice management, it becomes clear that he does not consider other forms of discourse worthy of much attention; and he begrudgingly writes the third book of the Rhetoric concerned, as it is, with style.

#### Notes

- [1] The following editions of Aristotle's works are used in this and subsequent chapters. W.D. Ross, The Works of Aristotle, trans. by several hands under the editorship of W.D. Ross, I (1928; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1950). W.D. Ross, The Works of Aristotle, trans. by several hands under Ross' editorship, XI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). Hippocrates G. Apostle, Aristotle's Metaphysics, trans. and commentary by Hippocrates Apostle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966). J.L. Ackrill, Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione, trans. J.L. Ackrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). For the sake of convenience I will refer to the De Interpretatione as On Interpretation, an appropriate English translation of the Latin. Jonathan Barnes, Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, trans. and notes by Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Subsequent references to these works will be cited in the text.

- [2] Keith V. Erickson, "Aristotle's Rhetoric, 1354a1-11: Art, Dialectic, and Philosophical Rhetoric," Rhetorical Society Quarterly, 12 (1982), 9-10.
- [3] Anton-Herman Chroust, "Aristotle's First Literary Effort: the Gryllus, a Lost Dialogue on the Nature of Rhetoric," ed. Keith V. Erickson (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1974), p. 44.
- [4] I.M. Bochenski, A History of Formal Logic, (1961; rpt. New York: Chelsea Publishing Company, 1970), p. 40.
- [5] William and Martha Kneale, The Development of Logic, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 35, 54-81.
- [6] See Jan Lukasiewicz, Aristotle's Syllogistic From the Standpoint of Modern Formal Logic, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) for a treatment of Aristotle's logic as an axiomatic science. But for an interpretation of it as a natural deduction system see John Corcoran, "Aristotle's Natural Deduction System," in Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, ed. John Corcoran (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1974), pp. 85-132. For a brief comparison of these differing interpretations, see Mary Mulhern, "Corcoran on Aristotle's Logical Theory," in Corcoran above.
- [7] The discontinuities I am referring to are, primarily, the Second Sophistic in Greece and Asia during the first and second centuries and the Ramistic movement during the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. See Jacqueline de Romilly, Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 75-85. Also, Walter J. Ong, Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 295-318.
- [8] Edward P.J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 539.
- [9] Bochenski, p. 99.

- [10] Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, 2nd German ed. (1934; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 11.
- [11] Theresa Crem, "The Definition of Rhetoric according to Aristotle," in Erickson above, pp. 52-53.
- [12] Romilly, pp. 59-60.
- [13] Anton-Herman Chroust, "Course of Lectrures on Rhetoric," in Erickson above, pp. 22-36.
- [14] Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: 1972), pp. 215-237.
- [15] Frederich Solmsen, "The Aristotelian Tradition in Ancient Rhetoric," in Erickson above, pp. 280-281.
- [16] Romilly, pp. 70-71, 59-60.
- [17] James McBurney, "The Place of the Enthymeme in Rhetorical Theory," in Erickson above, pp. 119-123.
- [18] Ernst Kapp, Greek Foundations of Traditional logic (1942; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967), p. 4-18. Also McBurney, pp. 126-129. See William M. Grimaldi, "The Aristotelian Topics," in Erickson, pp. 178-186.
- [19] McBurney, pp. 118. Kapp, p. 4.
- [20] Jonathan Barnes, "Introduction," to Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, trans. and notes by Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. xiii-xv. Also, Corcoran, pp. 87, 90-91.
- [21] Lloyd Bitzer, "Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," in Erickson above, pp. 141-145. Also, see McBurney, pp. 117-140. Both of these articles provide brief histories and intricate interpretations of the enthymeme.
- [22] Chaim Perelman, The Realm of Rhetoric (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), pp. 1-8, 155. Also, see Perelman's The New Rhetoric and the Humanities (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1979), pp. 26-27, and

- his "Logic and Rhetoric," in Modern Logic: A Survey, ed. Evandro Agazzi (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1981), pp. 457-463.
- [23] Kapp, pp. 75-76.
- [24] W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, VI (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 457-463.
- [25] Guthrie, VI, p. 195.
- [26] Barnes, pp. 86, 251-252.
- [27] Guthrie, VI, pp. 183-194.
- [28] Bochenski. p. 75. Guthrie, VI, p. 179-184. Barnes, pp. 248-257.
- [29] Gerard Hauser, "The Example in Aristotle's Rhetoric: Bifurcation or Contradiction," in Erickson above, pp. 159, 162. Also, Kapp. pp. 77-79.
- [30] Also, see Topics 157a33-38, 156a1-10, 155b20-25, 123b1-10; Posterior Analytics, 91b34-35; Prior Analytics, 68b3-37).
- [31] Hauser, pp. 159-163. Kapp, 77-79.
- [32] Hauser, p. 162; Kapp, pp. 77-79.
- [33] Hauser, pp. 157, 159, 162, 163, 165.
- [34] McBurney, pp. 127-230. Joseph Lienhard, "A Note on the Meaning of Pistis," in Erickson above, pp. 170-172.
- [35] Solmsen, p. 282.
- [36] Paul Ricoeur, " The Rule of Metaphor," trans. Robert Czerny and others (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 11-12, 28.
- [37] Romilly, p. 71.
- [38] Whitney J. Oates, "Aristotle and the Problem of Value," in Erickson above, p. 102.
- [39] Gorgias, 453a2. Oates, p. 102.
- [40] Oates, p. 111.
- [41] Oates, pp. 108-111.

- [42] Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), secs. 1-7, 41-49.
- [43] Foucault, pp. 215-237.
- [44] Foucault, p. 216.
- [45] Foucault, p. 216.
- [46] Foucault, p. 218.
- [47] McBurney, pp. 127-130. Romilly, p. 71.
- [48] James Hutton, "Notes," to Aristotle's Poetics, trans. and notes by James Hutton (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982), p. 103.

Chapter VI  
LOGIC AND ONTOLOGY IN ARISTOTLE

6.1 THE LOGIC-ONTOLOGY RELATION IN ARISTOTLE

When we refer to Aristotle's "logic" today, we are using a word which covers a variety of related philosophical topics in Aristotle. The term 'logic' as with 'rhetoric' represents a blurred concept and tradition with which many meanings are associated. Aristotle himself did not use the noun 'logic,' but his 'analytics,' 'syllogism,' and 'dialectic' indicate what we normally mean by 'logic'[1]. <note: when referring specifically to a word in this chapter, I will adopt the convention of placing the word in single quote marks. Normal quotation marks will be used for emphasis and for quotes.> Aristotle's logic is concerned not only with formal consistency but also with the truth of its arguments and the kind of knowledge attained by the different forms of reasoning. And questions of truth and knowledge immediately catapult broader philosophical issues before us. Thus, despite the fact that the use of 'logic' rarely meets everyone's expectations, its many meanings are usually all traceable to the Organon or another of Aristotle's related works[2].

In general, Aristotelian logic ranges from weighty metaphysical and epistemological issues to the abstract concerns of deductive inference and formal systems. Aristotle's logic can no doubt be purified of its more philosophic elements (after the example he sets himself in the Prior Analytics) and located as one part of predicate logic on the heterogeneous grid of modern formal logic. Aristotle's deductive logic may or may not

presuppose a more fundamental propositional logic, depending on what line of interpretation one follows[3]. Since strictly formalistic interpretations, such as Lukasiewicz', can reproduce the same logical results as Aristotle's, one might argue that Aristotle's own approach to logic be ignored. Another might argue, then, that we run the risk of misunderstanding the distinctive Aristotelian quality of his work. Does it matter beyond these strictly logical or historical concerns?

There is more to it, I think, than the question suggests, more than achieving good logic and more than protecting Aristotle's good name and philosophy. If we sever Aristotle's logic from its larger philosophic context, we run the greatest risk of obscuring significant assumptions which frame the conceptual space that allows his logic and philosophy to develop and exert the profound influence they have. These assumptions are part of Aristotle's Platonic legacy, and they account for the clear success over the centuries of Plato and Aristotle over the Sophists and Stoics[4]. Since we are still in the grip of those assumptions, those preconceptions by which we approach the world, it will be useful to examine Aristotle's logic in relation to a broader philosophic perspective. Whether we can or should release ourselves from this conceptual hold, I don't presume to know; however, we should investigate that conceptual space which makes his logic and metaphysics possible. We should bear in mind that the strategy we are using, namely, the examination of that which makes something possible, is one tool of deconstructive analysis--that which makes something possible is also that which makes something else possible. It is also a philosophical tool used by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason, where he attempts in the section on the "Transcendental Analytic" to determine the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience[5].

However, to gain access to that conceptual space and discover those assumptions about language which form this space and make Aristotle's logic and philosophy possible requires that we have an appropriate starting point and plan of investigation. Therefore, in this and the following chapters, there will be altogether four main stages to this inquiry:

1. In the first stage, we choose our starting point in the critical link joining Aristotle's logic and metaphysics; this is his doctrine of categories.
2. With the categories providing access to that conceptual space, we will examine the development of this doctrine and its influence upon his logic and metaphysics; this will carry us through a painstaking consideration of the correlative concept of linguistic and non-linguistic predication. This task is accomplished in the present chapter.
3. In the next four chapters, after an overview of our philosophical and linguistic, critical apparatus, we will examine Aristotle's theory of language as the basis for the development of his logic and metaphysics. Specically, this will include an exposition and analysis of the interrelation of his views on linguistic signification, linguistic predication, and ontology. This discussion intends to show how Aristotle's understanding of linguistic signification influences his perception of predication and metaphysics.
4. At the same time that we construct this overt line of development among Aristotle's views on signification, predication, and ontology, it will become apparent there is also a covert progression affecting these same concepts. The covert progression, naturally, tells a different story.



Thus, in the final stage and chapter in our deconstruction of Aristotle's theory of language and correlative metaphysics, we will see that his failure to fully comprehend linguistic predication yields an incoherent theory of language and metaphysics of substance.

## 6.2 THE LINK BETWEEN LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS

Within the larger philosophic frame of Aristotle's logic, one of the interesting issues concerns the relation between his logic and ontology (or metaphysics). As with Plato, the relation between logic and ontology is undeniably important for Aristotle[6]. But whereas Plato's dialectic is in its highest form coextensive with the realm of Ideas, Aristotle's logic is not so absorbed by his ontology. His logic appears at first glance to stand at some distance from his metaphysics. Aristotle is not always sure how logic and metaphysics are related. For instance, in one of the earlier books of the Metaphysics, Aristotle observes that one of the aporiai confronting the possibility of a science of substances is the relation between that science and "demonstrative principles" (logic). He ponders, "If the science of substances is distinct from that dealing with demonstrative principles, which of them is by nature more authoritative and prior?" Book 3, 996b25-30). He is perplexed by the logic-ontology relation, an ontology that is not, at this point, fully formed[7].

His confident response to the problem in the fourth book, a later composition, is threefold: (1) that one should have had "training in analytics" before inquiring into the science of being, because (2) the principles of a general science of being are beyond demonstration (1006a5-10); moreover, (3) the principles of this science provide the philosopher the means

to "examine the principles of the syllogism" (1005b5-10). Having laid in the fourth book the foundations for his science of being qua being, Aristotle decides that although logic is preparatory to the study of ontology, ontology provides the ultimate critique of logic. Metaphysics is thus prior to and more authoritative than logic. And logic, for Aristotle, is by no means coextensive with metaphysics, as it was with Plato.

Although Aristotle distinguishes logic and ontology from one another, they are significantly linked; both are grounded in his doctrine of categories. This doctrine is a cornerstone of Aristotle's philosophy, appearing most prominently in the first work of the Organon under the title of Categories and surfacing throughout the Aristotelian corpus as either a developing or an assumed doctrine[8]. In brief, the doctrine of the categories provides a conceptual framework that intends to exhaustively classify an extra-linguistic, extra-mental reality.

Of the four kinds of ontological and linguistic being <rendered from here on as being and 'being', respectively> presented in the sixth book of the Metaphysics (accidental, true, categorial, and actual/potential), Aristotle selects categorial being in the seventh book as the type of being his metaphysical science is concerned with. Previewed in the sixth book, the ambitious purpose of his inquiry is to "investigate the science of being as being, both what being is and what belongs to it qua being" (1026a30-35). Aristotle informs us that the answer to the question "What is being?" is the same as the question, "What is substance?" (1028b1-5). From the list of categories, then, Aristotle selects the first category of substance as the prestigious focus of his metaphysics. The remaining nine categories remain subordinate and dependent upon this first category; at least this much remains

intact from his earlier version of the categories[9]. Of course, little has been said about substance and its relation to the other categories, but we must now link the categories to Aristotle's logic.

Of the three interlocking elements of traditional logic--the term; the proposition or premiss, composed of terms; and the syllogism, composed of premises--the term is most fully treated in the Categories. However, it is not referred to as a horos, that is, as a 'term'[10]. The equivalent of 'term' in the Categories is "things said without any combination"; we are told, moreover, that each of these signify one or another of the ten categories (substance, quantity, quality, whereness, whenness, position, affecting, being-affected, having, and doing--1b25ff.) In other words, certain linguistic units designate certain categories. Aristotle has at least certain nouns and verbs in mind in his description, for some of his examples are "man," "white," "runs," and "wins." Although certain words are used to designate the various categories, the classification itself is not of language but of reality; it is an ontological classification. Aristotle makes the correlation between terms and categories complete in the Prior Analytics when he explains,

That the first term belongs to the middle, and the middle to the extreme, must not be understood in the sense that they can always be predicated of one another or that the first term will be predicated of the middle in the same way as the middle is predicated of the last term...The expressions "this belongs to that" and "this holds true of that" must be understood in as many ways as there are different categories. (48a40-48b2 and 49a6-8)

Additionally, Corcoran's interpretation of Aristotle's syllogistic as a natural deduction system describes the "set of non-logical constants" as equivalent to Aristotle's "categorical terms" which represent designata in all

ten categories[11]. Thus, the terms of a proposition or premiss are derived from those linguistic units which signify one or another of the categories; as such, the terms of Aristotle's logic are given an ontological basis. Furthermore, the relation between the terms of a proposition (and within the syllogism itself) is a function of their prior relation in the categorial, ontological scheme of things--however arguable the nature of and relations among the categories may be. Finally, in at least two passages in the Metaphysics, Aristotle claims that "what a thing is" or "substance" is the starting point of syllogisms (1078b20-25 and 103430-35). In the second passage he also makes a definite connection between logic and ontology, claiming, "Thus, as in syllogisms, the beginning of all is substance. For syllogisms proceed from the whatness of things and so do these generations" (1034a30-35). We take it as fundametal, then, that Aristotle's doctrine of categories plays an essential role in both his logic and metaphysics; and it is this categorial bond which requires further examination.

### 6.3 THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CATEGORIES

With Aristotle's theory of the categories now established as the critical link joining his logic and metaphysics, we can take the next step and look into that conceptual space shared by his logic and metaphysics. The purpose of our exploration is to determine those conditions (specifically in a theory of language) which make Aristotle's scheme of categories possible, and, hence, his versions of logic and metaphysics.

There have been efforts in the past to explain and re-derive the categories by using various linguistic arguments. Trendelenburg in the nineteenth century claimed that the categories were derived from grammatical

relations. In the twentieth century Benveniste has made the case that the categories of Aristotle simply "reflect the class structure of a particular language"; hence, all statements about thought and reality express only "naivetes and tautologies"[12]. The approach here is also linguistic, but it is not an attempt to reduce or reproduce Aristotle's categories into linguistic categories. Linguistic observations are of course necessary, as they were for Aristotle's own construction, but only so far as they help explain the possibility of the categories.

We want to see whether Aristotle's concept of signification, which brings with it a cluster of assumptions about language and reality, frames that conceptual space and makes possible his doctrine of categories, logic and metaphysics. It seems that this obscured framework, which supports the development of his categories, crops up first in Aristotle's concept of predication and ultimately in his theory of signification. Therefore, we must in this and the following chapters derive Aristotle's concepts of predication and of signification so as to construct a theory of language which forms the possibility of it all.

### 6.3.1 Qualifications

That we have to derive and construct such linguistic concepts for Aristotle may seem unusual. This is what I mean. We are somewhat accustomed nowadays, at least since the advent of modern linguistics with Saussure, to viewing language as an object appropriate for structural and scientific analysis. Since Nietzsche and Heidegger in philosophy, we have also learned that the being of language encloses our own existence and cannot, therefore, be taken for granted. In Aristotelian terms, language is an appropriate genus for a

science in our times, in much the same way that physics, mathematics, and metaphysics were for Aristotle. He does not approach language as we might wish him to in the way, for example, that he considers the problem of being qua being. There is no language qua language for Aristotle, which would have to be in his language, I suppose, logos qua logos.

He does, of course, direct his attention to language and discourse. Aristotle's works are full of linguistic observations because he uses language as a tool for philosophical analysis in such a way that he resolves philosophical problems by introducing linguistic distinctions. For example, he draws attention to the ambiguity of words (a word such as 'being,' for example) both to detect fallacies in argument and to bring support to his own philosophical doctrines. In the specific example here of 'being,' Aristotle is trying to shed light on the diverse nature of being or reality[13] (Topics, 106a1-5, 107a3-8, 169a22-169b3, 170b20-25, 103b20-40, and 166b37-167a3). Still, language does not become a philosophical topic for Aristotle as it did first with the Stoics and has inescapably become for us[14]. Aristotle's linguistic reflections are always in relation to something else, shifting from logic to rhetoric to metaphysics to poetics. Each of these endeavors pursues different ends, and although language analysis supports his aims, it remains subordinate. Like Plato before him, Aristotle's views on language lack a degree of rigor and in that he has not reflected upon his analytical tool[15]. In view of this caveat we can proceed.

### 6.3.2 The Language-Reality Relation in the Categories

The Categories is a book about language and reality. Its purpose is to clarify problems concerning language and ontology, separately and in relation to one another. The net effect of making linguistic observations is still to disclose what is at stake ontologically. Following the introductory chapter's discussion of homonymy, synonymy, and paronymy, chapter two sets up a language-reality duality. Linguistically, "of things that are said," some are "without combination" ("man," "runs," e.g.), while others "involve combination" ("man runs", e.g.). Roughly speaking, the distinction is between individual words and complete sentences[16]. By contrast, non-linguistically, "of things there are," Aristotle lists: (1) things "said of" a subject; (2) things "present in" a subject; (3) things both "said of" and/or "present in" a subject; (4) and things neither "said of" nor "present in" a subject, namely, the subject.

Although Aristotle's terminology here signals the linguistic direction we are heading, it is misleading for the English speaker. Aristotle's use of "things" and "subjects" is meant to designate ontological entities, and he is describing an ontological relation in the phrases "said of" and "present in." He is not, as some have suggested, contrasting ontological with linguistic relations in the phrases "present in" and "said of"; both signify ontological relations[17].

The significance of this ontological breakdown is that it allows each of the ten categories, introduced in chapter four and following, to be apportioned into one of the subdivisions "of things there are." For example, the definition of "primary substance" in chapter five as "that which is neither said of a subject nor present in a subject" clearly places it in the

fourth subdivision. Similarly, secondary substance fits the first subdivision. The exact nature of these ontological subdivisions becomes problematic upon closer inspection, however. For instance, what does it mean to say that "man," a secondary substance, can be predicated of the individual, Socrates, but that it is not present in him? But this is what Aristotle suggests is what Aristotle suggests (3a7ff)[18]. Still, the classification in the second chapter sheds light on the list of categories.

Be that as it may, the link-up of "things said" with "things there are" comes in chapter four when Aristotle asserts, "of things said without any combination each signifies either a substance or quantity or a qualification or <another of the categories>." He points out also that combinations of uncombined linguistic units produce affirmations that are either true or false. An affirmation is not true or false of itself, however, but by its correspondence to fact. He explains in chapter five, "For it is because the actual thing exists or does not that the statement is said to be true or false" (4a22ff.).

Concerning the character of the categories themselves, developed in chapters five through fifteen, I will simply summarize the main-stream interpretation[19]. As we noted previously, the scheme of categories provides an ontological classification of an extra-linguistic, extra-mental reality. More specifically, the categories as envisaged by Aristotle were to provide a complete and exhaustive classification of what is given in sense experience; that is, the categories "constitute those classes of items to each of which any sensible particular--substantial or otherwise--must be related"[20]. Although sense experience provides the ground upon which the categories are constituted, the rule of classification which would distinguish individual categories from one another is not so apparent.



In addition to the stratification of reality into categories, Aristotle is also interested in relating these real strata to language. He is clear about the language-ontology relation in one important respect: certain linguistic units, "things said without any combination," signify one or another of the categories. That is, they designate items in the categories which are referable to particular sense experience. Some parts of language play a vital, designative role for Aristotle[21]. Aristotle thus forges a clear link between language and reality at this, as he sees it, fundamental level of language.

For linguistic units beyond the simple designative level, "things said in combination" (the affirmation), Aristotle gives us another perspective on the intersection between language and reality. In his description of the concepts of truth and falsity, Aristotle declares that a combination of categorially-designative, linguistic units is required along with the affirmation's correspondence to reality. Chapter twelve clearly presents correspondence as the criterion for truth and falsity:

For there being a man reciprocates as to implication of existence with the true statement about it: if there is a man, the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, and reciprocally,--since if the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, there is a man. And whereas the true statement is in no way the cause of the actual thing's existence, the actual thing does seem in some way the cause of the statement's being true; it is because the actual thing exists or does not that the statement is called true or false. (14b9ff)

Thus, if true statements correspond with reality, and true statements are combinations of categorially-designative linguistic units, then there are combinations in reality in the interrelation of real, categorial elements[22].

### 6.3.3 Non-linguistic Predication in the Categories

Having now finished the introductory discussion of Aristotle's theory of categories and their general significance to the language-reality relation, we can begin to construct a concept of non-linguistic predication for Aristotle. To forecast, the claim is that intercategory relations are predicative; this is especially true of the relation between substance and each of the other categories. Primary substance in the first category, as "that which is neither said of nor present in a subject," is described as separable and independent from the other categories; this is because it is the primary ontological subject. The other nine categories, either "said of" or "present in" a subject, are described as inseparable and dependent upon primary substance for their real expression. We should continue to bear in mind, however, that although there are independent and dependent categories joined in some kind of relation, the ten categories are exclusive of one another since each is constituted by a different kind of sense experience. A particular person (Socrates, for instance) is a primary substance and is the primary ontological subject of which the other dependent categories are either "said of" (e.g., man or animal as the species and genera, which are secondary substances) or "present in" (e.g., white, six-feet tall, which are quality and quantity, respectively). Thus, we have two broad classes of items in the categories, independent and dependent individuals, the latter made possible by the former. A physical object is a combination or congeries of these two classes of individuals, comprised of an individual primary substance and individuals from the other categories[23].

Such configurations among the categories, clearly between primary substance and the others, are predicative. Here we can begin to exploit the

linguistic associations of predication in order to explain the ontological relation envisioned by Aristotle. The ontological connection between "thing" and "subject" in the descriptions in chapter two of the Categories of things which are either said of or present in a subject has its counterpart in Aristotle's description of "statement-making sentences" in the On Interpretation. Such sentences are said to either affirm or deny "something of something" (chapters 4-6, On Interpretation). This description, as such, describes predication in the linguistic sense. Its ontological counterpart in the Categories is given in both the "said of" and "present in" relations, and holds between "things which are" and their "subjects." Dependent categories correspond to the first "something" (in the phrase "something of something"), while primary substance as the only independent category corresponds to the second "something." Although dependent categories may occupy the subject position in statements (we say, for example, that "white is a color"), the ultimate and only ontological subject is primary substance.

Therefore, not only Aristotle's terminology ("said of") but his description of the relations among categories reveal his commitment to a predicative view of reality. The variety of combinations which may obtain among the categories, according to what is given in sense experience, is reflected in the subject-predicate structure of sentences. And linguistic structure is the way it is because of ontological, categorial structure. Finally, the meaning and truth of a statement is determined by its designation of and correspondence with ontological structure, categorial reality.

One aspect of predication that is conspicuously absent from Aristotle's list and discussion of categories, and thus of our account of non-linguistic predication, is an explicit treatment of either ontological or linguistic

'being.' Ontological being would count as something like the absolute category--the whole pie and pan, not just a piece of it. Linguistic 'being' is simply the copulative 'is'; it obviously joins the subject and predicate. We should expect some discussion about these two kinds of "being," if Aristotle were simply reading off an ontology and a grammar from a naive analysis of statements having the form of subject-copula-predicate, a construction that is as common in Greek as it is in English[24].

In other works in the Organon Aristotle does offer some insight into his views on ontological and linguistic 'being,' and these are instructive. During the time Aristotle composed most of the Organon, he evidently did not accept any kind of ontological being distinct from the many kinds of being given in the categories. He did recognize, however, two kinds of ontological being; in the Posterior Analytics Aristotle refers to one sense of being as "unqualified being," while he refers to another as "qualified being" (90a1-13). The first kind of being is simply the fact that something exists, the moon for instance. In modern parlance we would call this existential being. The second kind of being, qualified being, refers to whether a thing is this or that; something has an attribute or does not have an attribute, an eclipsed moon for example. We would call this type of being attributive or predicative being. These are not consistent distinctions with Aristotle, however[25]. In either sense of ontological being, though, it has no existence over and above that given in the categories. In other words, the categories provide, for Aristotle, the highest ontological genera of reality[26]. Aristotle emphasizes this in the Posterior Analytics saying that "being is not a genus" (92b12-14) and that "the kinds of being are different, and some attributes attach to quanta and some to qualia only" (88b1-3). In

fact, the diversity of being as given in the categories underlies Aristotle's rejection of a single genus of things and his endorsement of separate and different sciences[27].

Of course, Aristotle was aware of the philosophic notion of an absolute, existential kind of being since he inherits a long history of speculation about the nature of reality. Both the Parmenidean and Platonic traditions were of this type, the One of Parmenides and the Form of the Good of Plato; from either of these, the whole of reality is supposed to somehow emanate from or participate in it. Aristotle believed, however, that such conceptions were misguided and caused, to a large extent, from confusions over language. Such confusions arising from an inadequate understanding of language resulted in ludicrous claims about the nature of reality. As a result, much of Aristotle's early work sought to allay the linguistic-ontological muddleheadedness of his day. Many of the confusions which arose from the language were the result of univocal interpretations imposed on equivocal or ambiguous expressions. Aristotle describes one such fallacy in his epilogue to the Topics:

Those that depend on whether an expression is used absolutely or in a certain respect and not strictly, occur whenever an expression used in a particular sense is taken as though it were used absolutely, e.g., in the argument "If what is not is the object of an opinion, then what is not is:" for it is not the same thing "to be x" and "to be" absolutely. (Sophistical Refutations, 166b37-167a3)

As such, Aristotle is making the point that much early speculation about reality was futile because it was handicapped by gross misunderstandings of the meanings of words.

We can understand now why discussions of ontological and linguistic being are absent from the Categories. The categories are ontological being, and because of these mutually exclusive varieties of being, linguistic 'being' has no central meaning of its own. Ontological being has no existence of its own apart from the categories; they provide the highest ontological partitioning of the world. Owen emphasizes that, for Aristotle's early conception of ontological being, "to be" means "to be something or other"; this is the limited, predicative kind of being, not the absolute, existential variety[28]. Patterning itself after ontological being, linguistic 'being' is thus fundamentally equivocal. Aristotle, it seems, maintains this position on the diverse nature of ontological being and the equivocal nature of linguistic 'being' up through the third book of the Metaphysics, before he founds his general science of being in the fourth[29].

#### 6.3.4 Linguistic Predication

Aristotle's concept of Linguistic predication is formed around his non-linguistic, categorial scheme. Aristotle does, however, offer some strictly linguistic observations in the course of the development of his categories; we have already noted some of these. In deriving a concept of linguistic predication for Aristotle, it is necessary at this time to circumscribe a general region so that it includes any element relevant to sentences in the form of subject-copula-predicate. This will include a variety of observations that cover both strict and not-so-strict linguistic properties of the sentence. Such comments will range, say, from the strictly linguistic function of the copula to the truth value of the sentence, a linguistic/extra-linguistic collaboration.

#### 6.3.4.1 Linguistic Predication in the Categories

The Categories discloses the following linguistic perceptions of Aristotle:

1. Aristotle's description of "homonymous" and "synonymous" things (not words) in the first chapter allows us to infer a distinction between equivocal and unequivocal names[30].
2. In chapters two and four Aristotle distinguishes between words in combination and individual, uncombined words;
3. Certain uncombined words signify one or another of the categories (chapter 4) and, as such, link language and reality in fulfilling a designative role[31].
4. Aristotle assumes that meaningful sentences, as affirmations, are in the subject-predicate form[32].
5. In general, uncombined words may appear in either subject or predicate position, although in some cases, uncombined words are restricted to one position only. This depends upon the category signified[33].
6. Affirmations are true as the result of their correspondence with extra-linguistic facts (4a22ff. and 14b9ff.).

Although we might reasonably expect a discussion of the copula, Aristotle only treats those linguistic units which directly signify one or another of the categories. As noted in the last section, Aristotle omits discussions on a general, encompassing kind of ontological being (Being) and on linguistic 'being.' There is, then, a direct correlation between Aristotle's description of the relations which obtain between primary substance and the other categories and his description of the relations and properties of uncombined and combined linguistic units. Such an overlaying of language on ontology is evident in following passage from the Categories:

It is clear from what has been said that if something is said of a subject both its name and its definition <ontological definition> are necessarily predicated of the subject. For example, man is said of a subject, the individual man, and the name is of course predicated...and also the definition of man will be predicated of the individual...Thus both the name and the definition will be predicated of the subject. (2a19ff.)

But this is not sufficient. The Categories, mainly a work about the categories of reality, does not give us enough information on Aristotle's linguistic views[34].

#### 6.3.4.2 Linguistic Predication and On Interpretation

Aristotle's On Interpretation is noted primarily in the history of logic for its presentation of the "four forms of general statement"; these statements form the four corners of the traditional square of opposition and underwrite Aristotle's treatment in the Prior Analytics of syllogistic premises[35]. But the first several chapters of this little work provide not only the apparent basis for his discussion of logical relations among statements, it also gives us a greater understanding of Aristotle's linguistic views. In this respect it is complementary to the Categories.

Aristotle again distinguishes between combined and uncombined "names," which are described as "significant spoken sounds." He then divides the general class of "names," which encompasses all uncombined words, into "names" (or nouns) and "verbs." Each of these kinds of words has meaning in isolation in that "the speaker arrests his thought and the hearer pauses" (16b19ff.). By themselves, neither names nor verbs signify truth or falsity; only names and verbs in combination do this (chapters 2, 3).

Combinations yield "sentences," which are defined as "significant spoken sounds some part of which is significant in separation--as an expression, not



as an affirmation" (16b27ff.). Unlike the Categories, Aristotle now recognizes that not all sentences can be characterized as either true or false, even though all sentences signify something by arresting the thought of the speaker and hearer (16b19ff.). Aristotle mentions prayer as an example of a sentence that is significant but that is neither true nor false (16b33ff.). However, Aristotle is interested in those sentences which do have a truth value; Aristotle calls these "statement-making" sentences, and these include "affirmations" and "negations." He defines a statement-making sentence as a sentence which affirms or denies "something of something" (17a8-17a37).

But more than a linguistic description is at stake. When Aristotle clarifies what he means by "opposite statements," he explains that they "affirm and deny the same thing of the same thing--not homonymously..." (17a35-36). Keyed by his phrase "not homonymously," (which is about relations between things, not words, for Aristotle), we know that he is appealing to an ontological sense of "the same thing of the same thing"[36]. Aristotle focuses, then, on the class of sentences that are declarative predications; their predicative structure is abstracted in the phrase "something of something."

Aristotle also makes an important observation about the third element of predicative sentences, the copula. Similar to the Categories, Aristotle maintains his two-valued split of the sentence into subject and predicate. But he explains why the copula is insignificant in the On Interpretation. He explains first that the copula "is" or "is not" signifies truth or falsity when it is added to uncombined names (16a9ff.). "To be" or "not to be," he explains in the third chapter, signifies only some combination. Alone, it signifies "no actual thing"; "by itself, it is nothing" (16b9ff.). Aristotle

is evidently interested in only those linguistic units which designate one or another of the categories. That is, in fact, Aristotle's principal criterion for linguistic meaning. He indicates that the copula, in its combinatory function, "cannot be thought of without the components." The meaning of the copula is determined by the relation between the components it joins together, and these, of course, refer to the categories[37]. Thus, from another perspective, we see how the diversity of reality (of ontological being) marks its diversity upon language in the multivocality of linguistic 'being.'

Finally, Aristotle looks at those linguistic units which quantify ("every," "no," and "some") statements and thus give statements a universal or particular character as either affirmations or negations (17a38-18-8). Again, his basis for doing so builds onto the ontological foundations provided in the categories. He claims in chapter seven, for instance,

Of actual things some are universal, others particular (I call universal that which is by its nature predicated of a number of things, and particular that which is not; man, for instance, is universal, Callias particular). So it must sometimes be of a universal that one states that something holds or does not, sometimes of a particular. (17a38ff)

In this manner, then, Aristotle builds up to his presentation of the four forms of general statement and their relations as contraries and contradictories. The important point to emerge from the opening chapters of the On Interpretation is the close relation between the linguistic observations in this work and the non-linguistic observations in the Categories. The predominant concept of the category of substance and its possible modifications by the other categories cause Aristotle to emphasize one class of sentences to the exclusion of others, declarative predications. Aristotle's reliance upon sentences in the basic subject-predicate form has

been criticized in the history of logic as giving "an oversimplified view of the nature of the basic proposition, and has been a hindrance to development of the logic of relations and of multiple general propositions." And, his exclusive focus upon the declarative sentence has created the false impression "that there cannot be logical relations between other types of utterances"[38].

#### 6.3.4.3 Linguistic Predication and the Predicables

In addition to Aristotle's stricter logical treatment of "statements" in the On Interpretation, he offers in the Topics (probably his earliest logical work) four different kinds of propositions. Commonly referred to as his "theory of predicables," these propositions are classified on the basis of the relationship between subject and predicate[39]. According to this classification, a predicate stands in one of four relations to the subject and is classified either as: (1) a definition, (2) a genus, (3) a property, or (4) an accident[40]. The first three are essentially related to the subject and therefore do not exclude one another, but the fourth has only an accidental relation to the subject and is not related to the first three (chapters 5-8). Such a breakdown is useful in the Topics as a forensic aid to identify kinds of proposition, because in the context of dialectical discussion, argument proceeds only after the setting forth of some proposition or problem.

But Aristotle's classification of propositions and predicates is more significant, at the moment, because of its connection with the doctrine of categories. After introducing the predicable in chapters five through eight, Aristotle brings the predicables under the scope of the categories, claiming

that the predicates of these propositions belong to one of the ten categories: "For the accident and genus and property and definition of anything will always be in one of these categories" (103b20-25). According to the theory of predicables, for example, the predicate in the proposition, "Black is a color," is the genus of the subject; however, according to the categorial scheme, color belongs to the category of quality. As such, the theory of predicables is a cross-categorial classification of predicates whose original significance stems from their designation of one or another of the categories. Although Aristotle's division of propositions and predicates into four kinds is a linguistic analysis, the relation of subject to predicate describes an ontological relation, as does the category designated denote an ontological entity.

#### 6.3.4.4 Linguistic Predication in the Analytics

Finally, Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics add to and reinforce his notion of linguistic predication. As Corcoran has observed, Aristotle's Analytics presuppose a "theory of form and meaning of propositions" and a "doctrine of opposition" as offered in the Categories (chapter 5) and On Interpretation (chapter 7)[41]. If we take Aristotle at his word in the opening sentence of the Prior Analytics, the subject of his inquiry is demonstration (24a10). As a result, the Prior Analytics stands as the "underlying logic" for his treatise on demonstrative science in the Posterior Analytics. An underlying logic is simply the "abstract system presupposed by a science," and is roughly akin to the distinction between botany and flowers[42]. Aristotle explains the gist of this distinction in the fourth chapter, saying, "Syllogism should be discussed before demonstration, because

syllogism is the more general: the demonstration is a sort of syllogism, but not every syllogism is demonstration" (25b27-30).

Since demonstration is the subject of Aristotle's logic, he is concerned with both the formal consistency and truth of an argument[43] (Prior Analytics, 24a27-31, 24b18-25). The truth or soundness of an argument is determined, apart from entailment among propositions, by the truth of its premises; and this brings into play problems of ontology and epistemology. Though less obvious in this treatise touted as the first in formal logic, there are still indications that Aristotle's concept of linguistic predication in the Analytics remains tied to a prior notion of non-linguistic predication, of ontology.

Of the three elements necessary to Aristotle's doctrine of the syllogism--premises, terms, and the syllogistical figure itself--we are interested in his definition of the premiss (especially of the demonstrative premiss) and of the term. A demonstrative premiss is defined as a,

sentence affirming or denying on thing of another. This is either, universal, particular, indefinite...a syllogistic premiss without qualification will be an affirmation or denial of something concerning something else;...it will be demonstrative, if it is true and obtained through the first principles of its science.  
(24a15-30)

This definition of the premiss corresponds to his definition of the statement-making sentence in On Interpretation. Note especially the match-up between the predicative "something concerning something" above and "something of something" in On Interpretation. Secondly, Aristotle defines a term as "that into which the premiss is resolved, that is, both the predicate and that of which it is predicated, 'being' being added and 'not being' removed or vice versa" (24b15-20). Here, as in On Interpretation, all three constituents of predication emerge, subject-copula-predicate.

Finally, Aristotle's definition of the universal affirmative, as that in which "one term is predicated of all of another, whenever no instance of the subject can be found of which the other term cannot be asserted: to be predicated of none must be understood in the same way" (24b27-30), sets his explanation of the universal affirmative in terms of the singular. It reveals not only his commitment to the normal subject-predicate form of a proposition but carries embedded in it the ontological notion of primary substance, the particular individual, as the ultimate subject of predication. The universal is dependent upon the particular[44]. This is very similar to a statement in the Categories: "for were it <man> predicated of none of the individual men it would not be predicated of man at all...So if primary substances did not exist it would be impossible for any of the other things to exist" (2a34-2b7). This statement, however, specifies ontological predication, and so, would appear to underlie his definition of the universal affirmative in the Prior Analytics. Moreover, the phrase "this belongs to that," Aristotle explains, "must be understood in as many ways as there are categories" (Prior Analytics, 49a6-7); it thus provides further evidence that Aristotle is intent upon mapping a correspondence between categorial, non-linguistic predication and linguistic-logical predication.

#### 6.3.4.5 Summary of Aristotle's Concept of Predication

Aristotle's dual concepts of non-linguistic and linguistic predication intricately intertwine as if spiraling, mirroring strands of one another. Although it would be overstating Aristotle's position to say that language mirrors reality in the sense it did for Plato, it is correct to say that Aristotle believes significant structures of language reflect and designate

the essential structures of reality. Names and verbs of statement-making sentences and terms of premises indicate categorial entities.

Statement-making sentences and premises which assert "something of something" do so as the result of ontological relations specified by "things said of or present in substance." And the truth and falsity of such statements are determined by the correspondence between linguistic and non-linguistic predications. The emphasis on the basic two-valued subject-predicate form of statement-making sentences reflects the two-tiered categorial scheme. The ultimate subject of ontological predication and thus of linguistic predication is primary substance, the particular independent individual. The other nine categories and secondary substance are dependent upon primary substance for their expression. Linguistic predication models itself after the configuration provided by non-linguistic predication.

It seems as though Aristotle short shrifts the copula, the third component of predication. He either ignores it, as in the Categories, or reduces it to insignificance (quite literally), as in the Analytics and On Interpretation. But Aristotle had good reasons for doing so. Believing that earlier philosophers had been duped by the verb "to be" by attributing to it an absolutely univocal, existential meaning (which caused them to absurdly speculate about the nature of reality), Aristotle drew attention to the ambiguous and equivocal character of language. He wasn't, however, examining language as language. His argument was based on his own ontology, namely that the equivocal nature of language was the result of the fundamentally diverse character of reality. That is, his doctrine of categories, which explains the variety of the sensory world, also accounts for the shifting nature of language. As a result, ontological being and linguistic 'being' of themselves

occupy no special position; their protean character changes value according to categorial variations. However, this is all during the time Aristotle wrote most of his Organon, before he wrote his own version of metaphysics introduced in the fourth book of the Metaphysics.

#### 6.4 METAPHYSICAL BEING AND PREDICATION IN THE METAPHYSICS

In the fourth book of the Metaphysics Aristotle begins to make some claims concerning ontological and linguistic being very different from those which precede in the first three books of that work and different from claims made in earlier works of the Organon. Contrary to his earlier position (that there is no genus of being) stated plainly in the Posterior Analytics (92b14) and even in the Eudemian Ethics (1217b25-35), he confidently asserts in the fourth book of the Metaphysics that there is a science of being qua being[45]. Unlike the special sciences which cut off some part of being and investigate the attributes of that part (1003a22-32), the subject of metaphysics is being in general; its purpose is the investigation of causes and principles of "nature in virtue of itself" (1003a26-28).

Coordinate with the claim that there is a science of being, Aristotle reverses his stance on linguistic 'being.' Aristotle explains that "the term 'being' is used in many senses, yet not equivocally, but all of these are related to something which is one and a single nature" (1003a33-35). Aristotle's description of a primary sense of 'being' is commonly referred to as the "focal meaning" of being[46].

These apparent reversals signal a new departure for Aristotle, indicating his "discovery of metaphysics"[47]. Previously, Aristotle's doctrine of categories with its emphasis upon the diverse and equivocal nature of



ontological and linguistic being had accounted for his "rejection of a single genus of beings and the separation of different sciences"[48]. Aristotle does not simply junk the categories, however; he reconceptualizes them in the Metaphysics, not in another work (as we would like) on the categories. As a result of the ontological and linguistic shifts with respect to being and 'being,' we should expect to find a shift in Aristotle's concept of predication. We have, therefore, two principal areas of investigation in Aristotle's Metaphysics: (1) First, we need to examine the specific changes in Aristotle's concepts of ontological and linguistic being and predication. (2) This requires us, secondly, to determine his reasons for making such radical changes.

#### 6.4.1 Being and Substance

We've already introduced the most dramatic changes in the Metaphysics, namely that there is a general science of being and a focal meaning of linguistic 'being.' But Aristotle is only able to make such moves because he envisages a fundamental, ontological being—one which is "primary in every sense: in formula, in knowledge, and in time" (1028a30-35). Signified by 'being,' this primary kind of being is the same as "whatness" or, as Aristotle now insists, "substance." Exuding an apparent sense of accomplishment, Aristotle claims that, in fact, the inquiries and perplexities concerning the nature of being "in early times and now and always," is really tantamount to an inquiry into the nature of substance. That is, an answer to the question "What is substance?" will answer the question "What is being?" (1028b1-15). Such strong and unqualified assertions patently diverge from his previous reservations about both ontological and linguistic being.

Aristotle has not simply discounted the varieties of "being" by ludicrously offering univocal accounts of either linguistic or non-linguistic being; instead, he has assimilated and unified these diverse and equivocal senses into one primary sense, in substance: "...each of the others exist because substances exist...for in the formula of each of the other categories the formula of a substance must be present" (1028a30-40). True, the other categories were dependent upon primary substance in the Categories, but they retained a degree of separateness from substance. It might help to conceive of the categories as parasitic attachments. However, in the fourth book of the Metaphysics they become absorbed or transmuted into the nature of substance, completely inseparable. Consequently, the focal meaning of 'being' ultimately reduces statements about non-substances into statements about substance. Non-substances have no matter and form of their own; they are only logical shadows of substance[49]. In this reconceptualization of the categories and of being we are beginning to witness Aristotle's own hypostatization of the many beings into the one Being.

In order for Aristotle to legitimately claim his science of being and the focal meaning of 'being,' he must reconstruct his categories; he does this by reconceptualizing substance. Whatever substance is, it must meet two criteria[50]: (1) it must be the ultimate subject of predication, not predicated of anything else, and (2) it must be a separately existing individual: "...substance...means the ultimate subject which is not predicated of something else, and also that which is a this and is separable ..." (1017b22-26; other similar explanations at 1029a8-9, 1038b15, 1020a27-28, 1070b30). The criteria have not changed much since the Categories, but the winning candidate has. In the Categories the particular sensible individual,

some particular horse or man, e.g., is regarded as primary substance. In the Metaphysics, however, the almost invariable response to the question "What is substance, in its full and primary sense?" turns out to be "form," and this is equated with "essence" (1032aa5-7, 1032b1-2).

But, as Rorty has observed, this response is not very informative. The real problem in the Metaphysics is to discover what essence or form is[51]. Part of the problem, for example, concerns universals. Universals are clearly excluded as substances in chapters 13, 14, and 16 of the seventh book (Book Z) but it appears that form is just such a universal. For instance, 'man' clearly designates a substance for Aristotle throughout the Metaphysics, but it seems that 'man' and that which it designates belong to more than one particular individual; but this happens to be Aristotle's definition of a universal (1038b10-12). There is a dilemma[52]. In general, however, as Ross explains, "the general tendency of <books> Z and A is to carry Aristotle away from his earlier doctrine that the sensible individual is primary substance, to one which identifies primary substance with pure form and with that alone"[53]. What Aristotle has moved away from is more certain than what he has arrived at, however. Since I think Ross' interpretation of substance as "pure form" somewhat overstates the case, we are still in need of further clarification of substance or essence in the Metaphysics.

#### 6.4.1.1 Substance, Essence and Definition

In addition to the equation of substance with essence, Aristotle sets up in several passages rough equivalences between substance and definition and between essence and definition. Since Aristotle explains essence and thus substance in terms of his notion of definition, the key to interpreting his

concept of substance turns on his explanation of definition. The following four steps give us access through definition to his concept of substance:

1. Definitions and essences are primarily of substances--"What is evident is the fact that definitions and essences, in the primary and unqualified sense, are of substances" (1030b5-6).
2. A definition exhibits the formula of an essence--"It is clear, then, that a definition is a formula of an essence, and that there are essences either of substances alone or of substances in the highest sense and primarily in the full sense" (1031a13-15). This passage is consistent with Aristotle's view that there are different kinds of substances and that, by implication, there are different kinds of definitions. That should not bother us. Important here is his stress upon the primary sense of definition, definition of primary and unqualified substance.
3. A formula has parts--"Since a definition is a formula, and every formula has parts, and since a formula is related to the thing in a similar way as part of the formula to the corresponding part of the thing...let us discuss this and inquire about the parts of the substance of the thing" (1034b20-25, 1035a1).
4. Finally, there are two principal parts to a definition, then genus and the differentia--"now there is nothing else in a definition but what is called the first genus and the differentiae...as in 'two-footed animal,' for example, in which 'animal' is the genus and 'two-footed' the differentia" (1037b29-1038a5).

If we accept the argument that essence and substance are captured in the relation between the genus and differentia, we have made the most important

step in understanding Aristotle's concept of substance. Still problematic is the nature of the genus and of the differentia, and the kind of relation they have with one another. The general interpretation here follows along lines drawn out by Rorty, Anscombe, and Geach. Based on two passages in particular, Rorty identifies the genus with "proximate matter" (1045b17-24 and 1038a5-9)[54]. In other words, the genus stands as the material cause of substance; Anscombe and Geach describe it as "the stuff out of which it <substance> has come," distinct from the "stuff of which it is made"[55]. The material cause is by itself, however, simply a batch of undifferentiated material and does not therefore count as a substance, since it is not both a "this and separable" (a necessary condition for something to be a substance). The "stuff" of substance might be, for example, the clay of a statue, the bronze of a sphere, or the flesh and bone of a man (1034a1-1036a26).

As we might expect, the differentia is to be identified with the formal cause. The formal cause is defined as "what makes what a thing is made of into that thing"[56]. Aristotle explicitly connects the formal cause with the substance of a thing: "thus, we are seeking the cause (and this is the form) through which the matter is a thing..." (1041b6-8). In at least two passages, Aristotle also identifies this cause with the differentia:

If then a genus does not exist unqualifiedly apart from its species, or if it exists but does so as matter (for the "voice" is a genus and is matter but the differentiae make the species or letters out of it), it is evident that a definition is a formula composed of the differentiae. (1038a5-10; also 1042b33-1043a3-7)

In sum, the relation between genus and differentia of a definition reflects the relation between the material and formal causes, and together they make a thing what it is[57]. They constitute the essence of substance.

Even more interesting than the explanation of substance in terms of the constituents of definition is the kind of relation which characterizes their combination so as to define substance. It is evident from the surface structure of a definition that substance is a composition of two different components--the formal and material causes, which are displayed in the differentia and genus. The apparent duality of substance presents Aristotle a problem of which he is well aware:

We have stated, then, that there is some difficulty with regard to definitions, and why this is so...for the difficulty raised there has a bearing upon our discussion of substance. The difficulty which I am referring to is this: why is it that a thing, whose formula we call 'a definition' is one? For example, let a 'two-footed animal' be the formula of a man. Why then is this one and not many, such as animal and two-footed? (1036b23-24, 1037b12-14)

Aristotle wants to believe that the elements of a definition describe a unity--"for a definition is one formula and a formula of a substance, so that this formula must be of something which is one (for, in our manner of speaking, a substance is something which is one and indicates a this)" (1037b25-30). The unity of definition (of genus and differentia) is explained, Rorty maintains, in terms of potentiality and actuality[58]. From Aristotle he cites, "But as we have stated, the last matter and the form are one and the same; the one exists potentially, the other as actuality...for each thing is a kind of unity, and potentiality and actuality taken together exist somehow as one" (1045b18-22).

The type of unity which obtains between the genus and differentia, Aristotle implies, is like the unity which obtains between a substance and its essence. He states, "From these arguments it is clear that each thing and its essence are one and the same....Moreover, not only a thing and its essence are

one, but also the formula of each is the same" (1031b19-20, 1031b34-1032a1). There are two different kinds of unity described here; the first encloses the "species" and "genus-differentia" together in the complete definition of an essence, while the second unity contains just the genus and differentia. There is a unity within a unity. For example, 'man' and 'two-footed animal' in a definition designate the same substance; but 'two-footed animal' also forms a unity in the combination of genus and differentia. Paraphrasing Aristotle, Rorty states that it may look as if we are talking about two different things, but they are really just one thing[59].

If such unities did not exist, Aristotle believes that things would be different from their essences. And if things are different from their essences, an unfortunate infinite regress would result. Because essences could not be located without positing other essences, substance would be impossible to fix; and this would undermine the possibility of substance (1031b28-35). Throughout Aristotle's discussions of definition and essence Aristotle is persistent in his attempt to definitely circumscribe the nature of substance; he intends to discover and display the bedrock of reality.

I do not want to question whether the unity of form and matter, of differentia and genus, or of actuality and potentiality, are genuine unities. We can allow Aristotle his claim that they "taken together exist somehow as one." The character of this unity is more interesting. Rorty interprets this unity as an "actualization, which is not, like predication, a dyadic relation between two things but a pseudo-relation between one thing and one non-thing"[60].

At this point I diverge from Rorty's interpretation. The relation between genus and differentia is clearly a dyadic relation; moreover, it is a

predicative relation. We should first observe that the unity which inheres between genus and differentia is different from the kind of unity which equates substance with its essence. The latter relation is one of identity; 'man' and 'rational animal,' for instance, denote the same entity. The genus-differentia combination identifies the species, and vice-versa. The unity of the genus and differentia, however, is not an identical relation; 'rational' and 'animal' denote very different concepts and objects. They form a unity only in copulation. Copulation, after all, does normally result in some kind of non-identical unity. This non-identical, copulative relation is predication. The relation between genus and differentia must describe an essential predication, however, as opposed to accidental predication. 'Rational animal' is such an essential predication, whereas 'white man' is not. Still, even for there to be accidental predication, as in 'white man,' an essential predication underlies it and makes the accidental predication possible. The net effect of this interpretation of substance is to describe substance itself as a predicative structure; that is, substance has an intra-predicative structure.

Another good reason for viewing Aristotle's concept of substance as a predicative structure, constituted by the relation between form and matter, stems from our characterization in the previous section of predication as describing a "something of something." In the relation between genus and differentia, the same concept is expressed: some form of some matter--spherical of bronze, rational of animal, syllables of letters. Genus and differentia cannot form a completely simple unity in an identity relation as occurs between the species and genus-differentia of a definition; as we also observed in the last section, the genus cannot be predicated of or



participate in the differentia. This is because, in the relation between genus and differentia, there must always be some specific difference. This difference, however, does not exclude unity; rather, the differences make their copulation (genus and differentia) and unified combination possible.

Such an interpretation has an added merit in that it sheds some light on a few curious passages in which substance is said to be a predicate of matter. These are unusual because substance, according to Aristotle's criteria, is not supposed to be predicated of anything else; it is to be the ultimate subject of predication. Here is one passage in which this incongruity appears:

But if a predicate is not of this sort but is a form or a this the ultimate underlying subject is matter and a material substance.  
(1049a34-1034b1)

Additionally:

For there is something of which each of these is a predicate, whose being is other than that of each of the predicates; for all the others are predicates of a substance, while a substance is a predicate of matter. (1029a23-24; also 1043a3-7, 1029a20-25).

Apparently, when substance is conceived in terms of the relation between form and matter in the structure provided by the genus and differentia, form becomes something like the ultimate predicate of matter, while, at the same time, matter is the ultimate subject of predication. On this account, substance, as an intra-predicative structure, is simultaneously the ultimate subject of predication and the ultimate predicate. All other subjects and predicates are derivative, and have their source in the basic, intra-predicative character of substance. And this conclusion converges with Aristotle's initial proclamation that everything else exists because substances exist (Book 4, chapter 1 and Book 7, chapter, 1).

#### 6.4.1.2 Summary

In the move from the Organon to the Metaphysics some kind of telescopic collapse has occurred. The diversified, distended structure of non-linguistic being and linguistic 'being' in the Organon is drawn up into the one category of substance and into the concept of focal, linguistic meaning in the Metaphysics. The various linguistic and non-linguistic predicative structures of the categories are compressed into the central, intra-predicative structure of substance in the Metaphysics. Such a re-fashioning of the categories and of substance still allows for the apparent diversity of reality and the ambiguous, equivocal nature of languages; but it does so through a reduction to a unified and fundamental source in reality and language, in substance. In what I take to be Aristotle's own hypostatization of features of reality and of language, he seems to be moving simultaneously both away from and towards Plato's ontology.

Finally, to answer our first inquiry into the Metaphysics, we can confidently assert that Aristotle's shift with respect to ontological and linguistic being is made possible by his reconceptualization of substance. Consequently, Aristotle's essentializing or hypostatizing of substance envelops in every sense his concept of being and predication. For all practical purposes, concepts of being, predication, and substance are different ways of talking about the same thing. Such a close correspondence among these allows us, for instance, to view the well-known four senses of being of Book 6 (accidental, true, categorial, actual/potential) in a centrifugal relation to the primary being of substance. Since the essential structure of substance is predicative, we would expect these derivative kinds of being to be predicative in nature also. But we must leave that possibility for now and conduct our second inquiry into the Metaphysics.

#### 6.4.2 The Rationale for a Metaphysics of Substance

Aristotle's rationale for such a reconstruction of his concept of substance consists of two interrelated arguments, one which stands as the immediate agency through which he justifies his ontology of substance, and another which stands as the final purpose for which his ontology of substance is justification. The first clusters around his principle of non-contradiction, while the second attends to the requirements of significant speech.

##### 6.4.2.1 The Principle of Non-Contradiction (PNC)

Introduced in the fourth book of the Metaphysics as part of Aristotle's newly discovered science of being, PNC is explicitly linked to his treatments of substance and definition[61]. The explanation of PNC points to forms of reasoning and knowledge which are beyond either the demonstrative or intuitive possibilities set forth in the Organon. Aristotle evidently believes he has discovered a new kind of knowledge with his new science of substance, the knowledge of the principles and causes of being qua being. But his metaphysical science is productive of this new kind of knowledge only because of its new form of reasoning[62]. Exemplified in his elaboration of PNC, the new form of reasoning is linguistic and, coupled with PNC, is the immediate agency through which Aristotle justifies his concept and science of being.

The principle of non-contradiction is this:

The same thing cannot at the same time both belong and not belong to the same object and in the same respect;...Indeed this is the most certain of all principles. (1005b18-23)

For this principle to be true, however, Aristotle specifies the precondition that linguistic expressions must "signify one thing": "First, then, this is

clearly true, that each of the expressions 'to be' and 'not to be' has a definite meaning; so that not everything can be both so and not so" (1006a29-30). Aristotle chooses his favorite example, 'man,' and defines its ontological signification as a two-footed animal. The phrase 'has a definite meaning' describes an ontological, not a linguistic property. Aristotle explains 'man' and its ontological correlate of two-footed animal in this way: "...if 'a man' means X, then, if something is a man, to be a man would be to be X" (1006a31-34). We know that Aristotle is not simply making linguistic distinctions about the use and meanings of words because he clearly states that "the problem is not whether the same thing can at the same time be a man and not be a man in name, but whether it can be so in fact" (1006b20-22). And, as Anscombe stresses, Aristotle is speaking primarily of substances and terms that signify substances[63]. In connection with this, Aristotle explains that

What this ('essence of man') signified was one thing, and this was the substance...But to signify the substance of something is to signify that its essence is not something else. (1007a25-27)

Given, then, the single signification of 'man' as a two-footed animal, Aristotle forms a linguistic definition of 'man' as 'two-footed animal.' Symbolically expressed 'A'='px', where 'A' is the defined term and 'px' are the defining terms; 'A' is the combination of 'being-p' and 'being-x.' Now, 'A' is a substance-term which signifies one thing, if and only if, given that A is anything, its being A is the same as being px[64]. When PNC is applied to definition and single, definite signification, we have the following results: if we are given that 'A'='px' (that 'man' is a 'two-footed animal') and that being A is being px (being a man is being a two-footed animal), then

PNC informs us that, if it is true to call something 'A', then it is necessarily true to say that it is also px. Therefore, it cannot not be px. Therefore, it cannot be true to say that it is not A. In Aristotle's own words, "Hence, it is not possible at the same time to truly say of a thing that it is a man and that it is not a man" (1006b28). The upshot here and the important result of Aristotle's argument is that PNC holds both of substance and of discourse which signifies and defines substance; PNC is not simply a property of linguistic terms and definitions[65]. It intends to make the language-reality relation inseparable.

Aristotle goes on to claim that those who deny PNC must "eliminate substances and essences...<and> say that all things are attributes" (1007a22-25). Consequently, if only attributes are signified, there would be an infinite regress, since there would be no "first subject of which something would be attributively a predicate." Aristotle is saying that attributes must have substances in much the same way that attributive predicates must have subjects in language.

To bring the first part of this inquiry to a close, we have seen that Aristotle's argument for the non-contradiction of substance and of discourse about substance proceeds from a linguistic-logical analysis in which he fixes the definition of a substance-word and subsequently churns out certain implications by applying the logical principle of non-contradiction. That the principle applies to ontological subjects and their definitions assumes, first, substance and, secondly, that an ontological definition with a definite signification will behave in the same way a linguistic definition and signifying term do under the scrutiny of PNC. Thus, it is with this kind of linguistic-logical analysis exemplified in Aristotle's tinkering with

definition and PNC that provides him with a new form of argument through which he can describe and justify the the character and primacy of substance and his new science of being.

#### 6.4.2.2 Substance and Meaningful Discourse

Finally, Aistotle's ultimate purpose, the reason for which his ontology of substance is paramount, emerges. Were we to ask Aristotle about his metaphysics, specifically about why his concept of substance is important and is presented and argued for in the way it is, his first response would be simple and direct. He would inform us that our question itself is made possible by the concept of substance, and that is why it is important. This is to say that Aristotle considers his ontology of substance and its first axiom of PNC necessary for meaningful thought and discourse. Without substances and PNC, thought and speech are undermined because they have no solid footing[66]. Aristotle's metaphysics is motivated by what he considers the essential criteria of significant speech.

The gist of his reasoning in the opening chapters of the fourth book states that if we have significant speech as formulated in subjects and predicates and in definitions that fix definite linguistic meanings, there must be substances which also have definite natures in which attributes inhere; moreover, these are prior to speech (1007a22-1007b19). Two passages should help clarify this line of reasoning. Concerning definitions and words which "signify one thing":

For not to signify one thing is to signify nothing, and if names have no meanings, then discussion with one another, and indeed with oneself, is eliminated; for it is not possible for anyone to conceive of anything if he does not conceive of one thing, and if it is possible, he could then posit one name for this one thing.  
(1006b8-13)

About the principle of non-contradiction, Aristotle adds,

Again, if anyone believes that something is so, or that it is not so, does he believe falsely, but he who believes both does so truly: If the latter believes truly, what does it mean to say that such is the nature of things? If he does not believe truly, but he believes more truly than he who believes that something is so, or that is not so, then things in some sense do possess something; and would be true to say that this is so, but it is not at the same time true to say that it is not so. But if one says that all speak alike falsely and truly, then such a man can neither speak nor mean anything; for he say that that this is so and not so at the same time. If he has no belief of anything but is equally thinking and not thinking, how would he differ from a plant? (1008b2-12)

Aristotle's form of reasoning has its analogue in Kant's transcendental argument[67]. Its abstract form is this: if X is necessary for Y, and we have Y, then we have X. In other words, we have significant speech in Y, and if X (Aristotle's ontology of substance etc.) is necessary for Y, then we must have X. Of course, establishing the necessity between X and Y is problematic, but Aristotle's accounts of substance, definition, and PNC are his major efforts to establish that necessity. Aristotle seeks to build a bridge between language and ontology. In sum, Aristotle's newly found science of being attempts to provide a justification for meaningful thought and language; but, conversely too, meaningful thought and language provide a justification for his science of being. Both aspects assume, however, that the form of language corresponds to the form of reality, that, as Porphyry and Aquinas observed long ago, Aristotle believes that the way men speak is the way things are[68]. And we add to that, for Aristotle, that it has to be that way.

#### Notes

- [1] Ernst Kapp, Greek Foundations of Traditional Logic, (1942; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967), p. 19. W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy VI (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 135-169.
- [2] I.M. Bochenski, A History of Formal Logic, trans. Ivo Thomas, 2nd ed.

- (1961; rpt. New York: Chelsea Publishing Company, 1970), p. 40.
- [3] Jan Lukasiewicz, Aristotle's Syllogistic From the Standpoint of Modern Formal Logic, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). Lukasiewicz interprets Aristotle's syllogistic as an "axiomatic science." By contrast, John Corcoran treats Aristotle's syllogistic as a "natural deduction system." John Corcoran, "Aristotle's Natural Deduction System," Ancient Logic and Its Modern Interpretations (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1974). For a brief comparison of the two alternatives, see Mary Mulhern's "Corcoran on Aristotle's Logical Theory," in Corcoran's Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations.
- [4] Andreas Graeser, "On Language, Thought, and Reality in Ancient Greek Philosophy," Dialectica, 31 (1977), pp. 372-273. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1972), pp. 218-219.
- [5] Frederick Jameson, The Prison House of Language, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 136. Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, 2nd German ed. (1934; rpt. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965). Also, see Chaim Perelman, An Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking, trans. Kenneth Brown (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 181-188.
- [6] Guthrie, VI, pp. 155-166. Gunther Patzig, Aristotle's Theory of the Syllogism, trans. Jonathan Barnes (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), pp. xvi-xvii.
- [7] I have used the following, along with Bochenski, as my basis for the chronological development of Aristotle's thought. Werner Jaeger, Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development, 2nd ed., trans. Richard Robinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.



- 197-198. Sir David Ross, "The Development of Aristotle's Thought," in Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century, eds. I. During and G.E.L. Owen (Goteborg, Sweden: Elander Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1960), p.11.
- G.E.L. Owen, "Logic and Metaphysics in some Earlier Works of Aristotle," in Aristotle and Plato During the Mid-Fourth Century above, pp. 163-173.
- [8] Kapp, pp.36-42. For instance, see the Topics, 103b20-104a2; the Prior Analytics, 48a40-49a10; the Posterior Analytics, 83a20-25; the Physics, 225b5ff; and the Metaphysics, 1017a23-31, 1026a33-38, 1028a10-1028b8, and 1034b8-15.
- [9] Compare, for instance, the Categories, (2a3ff.) with the Metaphysics, (1028a17-23).
- [10] Kapp, pp. 21-23.
- [11] Corcoran, p. 98. In the same work, see also Mary Mulhern's, "Corcoran on Aristotle's Logical Theory," p. 139.
- [12] Cited by Franz Brentano, On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle, ed. and trans. Rolf George (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 52-53. Emile Benveniste, "Categories of Thought and Language," in Problems in General Linguistics, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 61.
- [13] Also, see Prior Analytics, 48a40-49a10; Posterior Analytics, 90a1-5.
- [14] Graeser, p. 373.
- [15] Elizabeth Stroker, "Introduction," to Karl Buhler: Semiotic Foundations of Language Theory (New York: Plenum Press, 1982), p. 80
- [16] A close analysis reveals that the distinction is not quite that simple. See J.M.E. Moravcsik, "Aristotle's Theory of Categories," in Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. J.M.E. Moravcsik (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1967), p. 126-135.

- [17] Ackrill, pp. 73-76.
- [18] R.E. Allen, "Substance and Predication in Aristotle's Categories," in Exegesis and Argument, ed. R.M. Rorty and others (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum and Company, 1973), pp. 365-73.
- [19] William and Martha Kneale, The Development of Logic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 25-32. Moravcsik, pp. 141-145. J.L. Ackrill, "Notes," to Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione, trans. and notes by Ackrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 71-75.
- [20] Moravcsik, pp. 143, 145.
- [21] Moravcsik, pp. 135-145.
- [22] This conclusion seems, however, to contradict Aristotle's claim in the Metaphysics that "combining and dividing exist in thought and not in things" (1027b30ff.).
- [23] Allen, p. 370.
- [24] John Cook Wilson, "Categories in Aristotle and Kant," in Moravcsik above, p. 77.
- [25] G.M.E. Anscombe and Peter Geach, Three Philosophers (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 20-23.
- [26] Wilson, pp. 76-78.
- [27] T. H. Irwin, "Aristotle's Discovery of Metaphysics," Review of Metaphysics, 31 (1977), 215. Aristotle also has an interesting logical argument which supports his claim that "being" cannot be a genus appropriate for scientific investigation. In the fourth book of the Topics and third book of the Metaphysics, Aristotle specifies two negative conditions that must be fulfilled between a genus and a differentia: (1) a genus cannot "partake of" its differentia, that is, admit the definition of, since the genus has a wider denotation, and (2)

a genus cannot properly be predicable of its differentia. "Being" fulfills the first but fails the second. "Being" and "unity" are what Aristotle calls "universal predicates," true of every species, genus, and differentia. Since "being" is a universal predicate, it fails to qualify as a genus. Why? Why can't a genus be predicable of its differentia? If it were, the genus would already be present in the differentia, and the genus would simply be redundant since it would not add new information to what is contained in the differentia (Topics, 121a10-20 and 121b10-15; Metaphysics, 998b15-35). For example, in the definition of man as a rational animal, the genus, animal, is not predicable of the differentia, rational. Rationality is different from animality. If animal was predicable of rational, then animal would be superfluous because rationality would necessarily contain animality. See Hippocrates G. Apostle, "Commentary" to Aristotle's Metaphysics, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), note 9, p. 276.

[28] Owen, p. 165.

[29] Owen, p. 164.

[30] Ackrill, p. 71.

[31] Moravcsik, p. 135.

[32] Moravcsik, pp. 127-135.

[33] Kneale and Kneale, pp. 27-29.

[34] We must turn to some of his other works. See Ackrill, pp. 74, 82, for a discussion of Aristotle's notion of ontological (as opposed to linguistic) definition.

[35] Kneale and Kneale, p. 374.

[36] Ackrill, p. 71.

[37] Graeser, p. 374.

- [38] Kneale and Kneale, pp. 31, 54.
- [39] Bochenski, pp. 43, 51-52. Kneale and Kneale, p. 35.
- [40] Guthrie, pp. 147-148.
- [41] Corcoran, pp. 87-90.
- [42] Corcoran, pp. 87-90.
- [43] Guthrie, VI, pp. 135-136.
- [44] Kneale and Kneale, p. 31
- [45] Owen, pp. 163-173.
- [46] Owen, p. 169.
- [47] Irwin, pp. 210-229. Owen, p. 169.
- [48] Irwin, p. 215. Posterior Analytics, 88b1-3.
- [49] Owen, p. 180.
- [50] Guthrie, VI, p. 209.
- [51] Richard Rorty, "Genus as Matter: A Reading of Metaphysics Z-H," in  
Exegesis and Argument, eds. Richard Rorty and others, (Assen: Van Gorcum,  
1973), p. 393.
- [52] J. Leshner, "Aristotle on Form, Substance, and Universals," Phronesis, 16  
(1971), 169-171.
- [53] Cited by Guthrie, VI, p. 221.
- [54] Rorty, pp. 393-420.
- [55] Anscombe and Geach, p. 51.
- [56] Anscombe and Geach, p. 49.
- [57] Rorty, p. 394.
- [58] Rorty, pp. 401-404.
- [59] Rorty, p. 416.
- [60] Rorty, p. 416.
- [61] Anscombe and Geach, p. 413.

[62] Irwin, p. 222.

[63] Anscombe and Geach, p. 41.

[64] Anscombe and Geach, p. 40.

[65] Anscombe and Geach, p. 41.

[66] Irwin, p. 224.

[67] Irwin, p. 226.

[68] Cited by Kneale and Kneale, p. 27. Also, Larkin, p. 85.

## Chapter VII

### ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF LANGUAGE

In the next three chapters of our investigation, we will carefully explore how, for Aristotle, the way men speak is the way things are. In the final chapter we will examine some fundamental problems in his theory of language and his corresponding metaphysics. Previously, we demonstrated how and to what extent Aristotle's concept of predication, initiated in his doctrine of categories, formed his predicative logic and ontology. We must now advance one step further and determine whether a concept of signification is fundamental to Aristotle's concept of predication (in both its linguistic and ontological acceptations). A theory of signification and meaning is especially relevant to our endeavor because it constructs a matrix of relations among language, thought, and reality, which might otherwise remain obscured as unexamined assumptions. But finding a continuity between linguistic signification and predication presents the difficult problem of relating individual linguistic units to the unified whole; essentially, it involves a move from the word to the sentence. Although we might have to accept ultimately some sort of discontinuity, some points of intersection will surface here.

Specifically in this chapter we are continuing our deconstructive analysis of those conceptual forces which frame, in addition to the space in which Aristotle's logic and metaphysics develop, the first firmly grounded "logical-representational" theory of language. As the result of language's

designative and substitutive nature, the function of language is to describe the world, that is, to produce true knowledge in statement-making sentences; this statement briefly summarizes the nature and function of the logical-representational conception of language in Aristotle. Thus, following preliminary discussions of the sign, signification, meaning, and predication (in order to describe the theoretical perspective of the overall investigation) we will construct a theory of signification/meaning for Aristotle in relation to his concept of predication. These form together his logical-representational view of language and guide his evolving scheme of categories and resultant ontology, logic, and even rhetoric. Finally, once the construction is complete we will initiate a specific deconstruction of two features of Aristotle's ontology and theory of language--his concept of substance and his referential view of linguistic meaning.

## 7.1 THE SIGN

Although a deceptively simple unit, as simple as a word, the linguistic sign is a complex entity. It is complex because an analysis of the concept of the sign reveals a theory of linguistic signification and meaning within the conceptual infrastructure of the sign. The conceptual infrastructure of the sign consists of the signs's conceptual elements and relations among those elements. So as not to be misleading, we don't mean the phonological elements and properties that give the sign its material character. Rather, we are probing into the conceptual character of the sign after the manner of Saussure, who examined the linguistic sign and discovered its split conceptual nature[1]. In short, we want to look into the process of signification and meaning in language. The constituting elements and

relations account for the functioning, the value and reference, of the sign--within the linguistic system of which it is a part and in its referential tie to some extra-linguistic reality.

An analysis of the sign into its conceptual elements produces a complementing combination of signifying and signified elements; with Saussure, these elements are referred to as signifiers and signifieds. Benveniste describes this combination as the consubstantiality of the sign[2]. Such combinations of signifying and signified elements range variously from dyadic to even quadric arrangements of the sign's elements. Saussure's analysis of the linguistic sign into the signifier and signified, an acoustic image and a concept, offers perhaps the best-known dyadic or binary arrangement of the sign's constituents[3]. The sign's constituents are, for Saussure, psychological entities. More contemporary binary descriptions of the sign strip away the psychological baggage. Derrida, most notably, in his deconstruction of Saussure supplements and substitutes for, the linguistic model of speaking, with that of writing as the principle of signification and meaning in language[4]. When writing, i.e., the text, becomes the model of signification for linguistic meaning, the signified becomes absorbed into the signifier. The net effect is to divorce language from any essential ground in reality, since language remains confined within a network of signifiers that ultimately become their own signifieds. Language becomes fundamentally self-referential.

Perhaps a more traditional organization of the concept of the sign assumes a triadic or ternary arrangement. The Stoics were the first in ancient Greece to explicitly analyze the sign structure into three parts: the linguistic sign itself, the sound; the object or event denoted; and the



untranslatable lekton, what is conveyed by the sign[5]. Modern ternary descriptions of the sign can be found in Richards (whose organization of the sign was presented in the fourth chapter) and in Peirce[6]. Peirce's analysis of the sign yields the sign itself, the object and the interpretant. Finally, Frege in his well-known essay on semantics, "On Sense and Reference," analyzes the sign into: the sign or name; the sense; the reference, and; the associated idea or conception[7].

In addition to the possible number of configurations among signifying and signified elements, we must consider the kinds of relations among those elements. The relations perceived to be inherent within the conceptual infrastructure of the sign delimit the relations among language, thought, and reality. If we follow Foucault at this point, "It is because of the order of the signifier that we have the order of words and the order of things, and within this dualism, it is the former and not the latter that holds the key to understanding"[8].

The way in which the signifier and signified are related determines the type of sign. In general, the relation between these can be natural or conventional, a distinction which is traceable at least as far back as Plato's Cratylus. If the relation between signifier and signified is natural, two kinds of signs are possible: the icon and the index. An icon manifests a natural relation insofar as the signifier resembles or suggests the signified. Non-linguistic icons are perhaps the most typical, a painting or a map; linguistically, onomatopoeic sounds and the visual presentation of much modern poetry, portrayed for instance in William Carlos Williams or e.e. cummings. A different kind of natural relation is exhibited in the index. An index connects the signifier and signified through some sort of causal or

factual association. Non-linguistic indexes are again the easiest to imagine: a weathervane indicates the direction of the wind, smoke the presence of fire. In language, the demonstrative pronouns 'this' or 'that' function like pointing fingers and are able to make indications within and without the linguistic system. In contrast to natural icons and indexes, symbols are governed by a conventional relation between signifier and signified. A conventional relation among a sign's elements assigns some rule of habitual association. Language is almost totally symbolic, and is the best example of the conventional nature of the symbol as it is meant here[9]. For the most part, linguistic signs neither resemble nor causally indicate their signifieds. They obtain their significance according to the rules of a given language. Of course, as Peirce pointed out, relations between signifiers and signifieds can be variously construed; the relations are not fixed. Depending upon the perspective one adopts, a sign may function as a sign in more than one way[10].

Although it is possible to identify iconic or indexical uses of language, language has an essentially conventional character. Fundamental to the conventional signification of language, moreover, is its arbitrary and differential character, first established in a profound sense by Saussure[11]. The arbitrariness of language, more specifically of the linguistic sign, refers to the fact that there is no natural necessity binding signifier to signified. There is nothing about the word 'nothing,' for example, that naturally motivates its meaning. The relation is arbitrary, however, from the point of view of the linguist examining the language, not from the position of the person speaking it[12]. The discontinuity and arbitrariness between language and reality (between signifier and signified) is overcome, it

appears, when convention is imposed to create a sense of order between two very different orders. It is in this way, then, that the conventional character of language rests upon the even more fundamental, arbitrary relation between signifier and signified.

More fundamental still, the arbitrary character of language is due to its differential nature: "Arbitrary and differential are two correlative qualities"[13]. Saussure's discovery and reconceptualization of language as a relational, instead of substantial, entity constituted solely by differences has proven his profoundest insight. The differential character of language is the cornerstone of structural and post-structural thought. Summing up a discussion of linguistic value and signification in relation to the arbitrary and differential character of language, Saussure offers this analysis of the concept of difference[14]:

Everything that has been said up to this point boils down to this: in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that exist before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system. The ideas or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it. Proof of this is that the value of a term may be modified without either its meaning or its sound being affected, solely because a neighboring term has been modified (see page 115).

But the statement that everything in language is negative is true only if the signified and the signifier are considered separately; when we consider the sign in its totality, we have something that is positive in its own class. A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas; but the pairing of a certain number of acoustical signs with as many cuts made from the mass of thought engenders a system of values; and this system serves as the effective link between the phonic and psychological elements within each sign. Although both the signified and the signifier are purely differential and negative when considered separately, their combination is a positive fact; it is even the sole type of facts that language has, for maintaining the parallelism between the two classes of differences is the distinctive function of the linguistic institution.

Guiding the essential movement of language at its most fundamental and its most abstract level, the principle of difference projects itself as a heuristic principle at many levels--from phonology to metaphysics. In phonology, difference among phonemic elements creates an opposition that identifies a given linguistic sign. At the level of syntax, the linguistic sign achieves its particular form and meaning through the opposition of differences within its syntagmatic and paradigmatic environments[15]. In semantics, the difference between word and object creates an opposition that allows a correspondence to be set up between the two so that signifiers bring order to signifieds through the measurement of the latter in units provided by the former[16]. In metaphysics, the conceptual transformation of difference into difference so as to replace the sign by the trace (in Derrida) is at once a linguistic and metaphysical movement that deprives the signifier of its traditional signifieds; it is the result of the exploitation of the differing and deferring relations between signifier and signified--language and reality[17]. Plato sensed the metaphysical and epistemological implications of difference long ago in his Cratylus, observing, "that which is other and different from them <things> must signify something other and different" (438). Hence, Plato's commitment to a conception of language as an imitation of the world of Forms. Language, as we observed in the chapter on Plato, is essentially an icon for Plato. And only through some sort of intrinsic similitude between language and the Formal world could one gain access to knowledge of that supreme ontological realm. Plato's own apparent apprehension over the nature of language is finally and fully exploited by Derrida--who suggests in his metaphysical, deconstructive analysis of the linguistic sign[18]: "...the sign is that ill-named thing, the only one, that escapes the instituting question of philosophy: what is...?"

## 7.2 SIGNIFICATION AND MEANING

We have failed thus far to discriminate between the linguistic concepts of signification and meaning. Some clarification would be appropriate at this point. Signification, in its restricted sense, has to do with the internal workings of language; grounded in the Saussurian conception of language as an organic system of signs, signification encompasses the structural form and meaning of that system. Semiotics studies this aspect of language[19]. Through the differential analysis of the linguistic system, semiotics distinguishes both significative form and meaning in the language. Within a linguistic hierarchy that descends from the sentence to the merism, form is defined as the capacity of a linguistic unit to be segmented into constituents of a lower level. Inversely, meaning is the capacity of a linguistic unit to be integrated into a higher level. Although semiotics identifies both ascending and descending movements of signification, both the constituent and the integrative unit remain as parts embedded within a higher level whole; they are dependent upon that higher level linguistic unit for their form and meaning. The linguistic sign, the word more simply, is the fundamental heuristic unit of semiotics. It stands as the fulcrum between form and meaning, integrated into the sentence at the highest limit and segmented into phonemes and merisms at the lowest[20].

Standing in contrast to the narrow sense of signification is a similarly restrictive sense of meaning. The concept of meaning brings attention to the external movement of language, its extra-linguistic denotation or reference. The relation between word and thing, language and reality, becomes paramount. Semantics studies this aspect of language[21]. In contrast to Saussure's theory of signification (which describes a relation between two parts of the

linguistic sign) I.A. Richard's theory of meaning describes a triadic relation among the symbol, the thought, and the referent[22]. Semantic meaning defines itself in terms of the designative capacity of language. To paraphrase the early Wittgenstein, language designates objects with names and states of affairs with propositions. Whereas semiotics takes the linguistic sign and its differential character as its fundamental heuristic unit, semantics uses, for its basis, the sentence and its referential nature[23].

### 7.2.1 Semantics Versus Semiotics

Language transcends itself at the level of the sentence, passing beyond the self-referentiality of the sign system to establish an apparent referential connection with the world. It may proceed from the immediate ostensive reference of a particular situation that speakers share, or it may refer to another real or possible world about which discourse is intended[24]. Ricoeur establishes a clear distinction between the inward and the outward movement of language by drawing on Frege's division of meaning into "sense" and "reference." Language presses beyond the sense to a reference because, for Frege, language ultimately demands a truth value[25]. This transaction takes place fundamentally and irreducibly at the level of the sentence. The sense of a sentence discloses what is said, but the reference of the sentence is that about which the statement is made. In the following two sentences, for example, the sense is different but the reference is the same: "The evening star is the brightest planet" and "Venus is the brightest planet". That is, "Venus" and the "evening star" have the same referent even though they have different senses. According to Ricoeur, semiotics can explain the sense, but only semantics can explain the reference. There is no doubt a tension between

semiotics and semantics. Is one prior to the other? Ricoeur argues that semiotics is ultimately an abstraction from semantics[26]. It boils down, I think, to whether words are possible without objects. Here we can only begin to note the tension, however, to help us see the distinction between the concepts of signification and of meaning.

Within the context of semantics, it is controversial whether referential meaning is initiated at the sentence level and distributed then to its constituents, or whether reference begins at the individual word, the name, and builds up the reference of the sentence. Benveniste would subscribe to the first alternative, while Frege the second. More important, however, than an exact accounting of referential meaning is the insight shared by both that the meaning of a sentence is not merely the sum of its parts. According to Benveniste[27],

The sentence is realized in words, but the words are not simply segments of it. A sentence constitutes a whole which is not reducible to the sum of its parts; the meaning inherent in this whole is distributed over the ensemble of its constituents.

Similarly, Frege states that "...it is only within the context of a sentence that a word has meaning". This is an important insight which Wittgenstein affirms first in his Tractatus (3.3) and then later in his Investigations (sec. 49). There the notion of context extends beyond the sentence to that of the language game[28]. But, given this admission, that the linguistic context of the sentence is fundamental to linguistic meaning, it looks as if semiosis pre-empts the domain of semantics.

The delimitation of the meaning of a word within the context of the sentence is characteristic of the polysemic nature of language, the inevitable result of language's differential, relational make-up. Polysemy is an



ambivalent mixture of homonymy and synonymy in that it bears differences and resemblances to each. Homonymy refers traditionally to words that sound the same but have widely different meaning, often the result of divergent historical derivations; in short, same word but different meanings. Synonymy, by contrast, has to do with words that are different in form but that have the same or similar meaning. The difference between polysemy and these two is the perspective from which meaning of word is determined. Whereas synonymy and homonymy tend to construe the meaning of individual words from the level of the word, polysemy determines the meaning of words from the context in which a word occur. In the case before us, the sentence provides that context, although situational context would be fundamental to any thorough analysis of meaning. Essentially, then, polysemy can be defined as the fact that a word, the same word (in sound, derivation, etc.), changes meaning according to sentential context. The concept of polysemy draws attention to the indeterminate, protean texture of linguistic meaning. Of course, a word doesn't change its meaning enough so as to bear no resemblance to its use in other contexts, sentences; in this respect, it has a determinate, stable character. The concept of polysemy is much the same as Wittgenstein's philosophical metaphor of "family resemblance," which intends to capture simultaneously the difference and identity of word meaning from one context to another[29]. Witness polysemy and family resemblance at work by comparing O'Connors "A Good Man is Hard to Find" to the permuted "A Hard Man is Good to Find." Thus, the polysemic nature of "good" and "hard."



### 7.3 THE ASYMMETRY OF THE SENTENCE AND OF PREDICATION

The previous two sections propel us further toward the conclusion that the sentence has its own distinctive and irreducible character; there is, as a result, a basic discontinuity between the individual word and the sentence. Moreover, it looks as though the sentence is the fundamental linguistic unit of signification and meaning. This is to say that an individual word only finds its signification and meaning within the context provided by the sentence. Although we have not fully established the distinctive nature of the sentence, it will prove important for our deconstruction of Aristotle's theory of language and ontology. What constitutes a sentence is a worthwhile issue to pursue but difficult to find an answer for. A thorough explanation of the sentence is tantamount to a thorough account of predication. But finding an adequate account of predication has proven itself a genuine aporia in modern grammar, logic, and metaphysics. Moravcsik and Strawson (especially Strawson) have commented on the deficiencies of both grammar and logic in their noticeable lack of coherent explanations for predication. They point out, for instance, that modern grammatical and logical theory formally exhibit the dual nature of predication by using various binary symbolizations (to represent the subject/predicate, argument/function, singular term/general term, e.g.), but neither offers adequate explications of the distinctions marked in their formal notations[30]. Formal logic, for example, normally symbolizes a one-place predicate (such as "Socrates is mortal") as simply "Fx," where the variable "x" denotes the subject term and the letter "F" the predicate. However, explanations of the philosophical distinction between the two elements represented by the formal notation are still unsatisfactory. The clarification of these distinctions was one of Strawson's pursuits in his

Individuals, and more recently, this problem dominates his Subject and Predicate.

We can not, of course, provide here the definitive description of the sentence or of the concept of predication, but we will summarize and sketch out some essential insights. To sum up at the outset, the sentence is a polarity constituted by the interplay between an identifying/particularizing function and a characterizing/universalizing function[31]. The identifying function is a move towards particularization; it designates substantial entities and has, thus, an existentializing function. Subject expressions indicate the identifying function and typically use naming expressions to pick out what object is having something predicated of it. Naming expressions are indicated variously by proper names, demonstrative pronouns, and definite descriptions (the such and such). The characterizing function, quite differently, is a universalizing function; it lacks the ontological capacity to have its predicate expressions stick to particular existents. Indicated by various kinds of predicate expressions this function characterizes those existents by ascribing qualities, properties, relations, etc. The predicative function moves away from the particular to the universal, from the existent to the non-existent in its denotation. It provides the abstracting movement of language to form classes of which particulars are members. From Strawson's perspective, one has to be acquainted with spatio-temporal particulars to perform the identifying/particularizing function; however, one must know a language to carry out the characterizing/universalizing function[32]. Thus, the sentence sets up a dialectical tension as it is polarized by the simultaneous movement of language toward the particular and toward the universal.

Interpreted in this way, the sentence inhabits a domain shared by both semantics and semiotics. Leaning toward semiotic perspective, Benveniste emphasizes the predicate's function over the subject's, claiming[33],

The distinctive characteristic...inherent in the sentence...<is> being a predicate...the presence of a "subject" alongside the predicate is not indispensable; the predicative term of the subject is sufficient unto itself, since it is in reality the determiner of the "subject."

By contrast, Frege subordinates the predicative function to the naming function of the subject, saying[34],

For it is the referent of the name which is held to be or not to be characterized by the predicate. Whoever does not consider the referent to exist, can neither apply nor withhold the predicate.

We do not here want to elevate one function above the other. Together, they are the fundamental and irreducible constituents of the sentence and of predication. Recognition of this fundamental "asymmetry", as it is labelled by Strawson, is the first major step towards providing a necessary and sufficient explanation of the sentence and of the concept of predication. By taking the sentence, as such, to be a fundamentally asymmetrical entity, we will have a corresponding asymmetry built into a coherent description of predication. It is the asymmetrical nature of predication which will become important for a deeper probe into Aristotle's theory of language and metaphysics of substance[35].

#### 7.4 THESIS AND ORGANIZATION

The preceding remarks on the sign, signification, meaning, and predication introduce the general interpretative framework by which we will approach Aristotle's theory of language and its special connection with his metaphysics. Although we will continue to add to this critical framework as appropriate, we can now begin a summary textual exposition and analysis of certain linguistic concepts in Aristotle. This will include his views on linguistic signification/meaning and predication and their relation to his ontology of substance.

To reiterate earlier claims more precisely and to forecast the argument that follows, I want to assert that Aristotle's theory of linguistic signification and meaning, which brings with it a cluster of assumptions about the nature and function of language, subordinates and assimilates to itself his concept of linguistic predication. Aristotle's referential theory of meaning thwarts, in a sense, the possibility of his formulating an adequate account of linguistic predication. Although Aristotle had some insight into predication and knew in some way what it meant to assert something of something, it does not follow that he correctly formulated an account of predication[36]. And, neither does it follow, unfortunately, that from our criticisms of Aristotle we can, therefore, provide the definitive explanation. The previous section does indicate, however, aspects of the concept which seem fundamental to any correct understanding of predication. The difficulty of giving an adequate account of predication is wrapped up in the larger difficulty of explaining the unified meaning of any proposition. What or how is it that a certain string of words expresses the meaning or nonsense it does? According to Russell, this "indefinable unity" of the proposition cannot be simply located by an analysis of its constituents[37].

Beyond the modest thesis that Aristotle's theory of meaning determines and hinders the development of proper concept of predication is a more radical claim; it is particularly destructive to Aristotle's metaphysics, perhaps to any metaphysics. Specifically, the force exerted by Aristotle's theory of meaning upon his concept of predication motivates the hypostatization of language so as to create Aristotle's ostensibly extra-linguistic ontology; the influence of his theory of meaning, coupled with his failure to understand what predication is about, literally makes Aristotle's metaphysics possible. The hypostatization of language which creates a metaphysics of substance is formed by the simultaneous suppression and liberation of the fundamental, asymmetrical structure of predication--heterogeneously divided, as it is in the sentence, between subject and predicate. Aristotle's tacit suppression (perhaps repression, then) of a correct linguistic account of predication, held under thumb by his theory of meaning, liberates the asymmetrical structure of the proposition (Aristotle's statement-making sentence) to assume the non-linguistic guise of substance. Quite simply, a metaphysics of being or substance in Aristotle is due to the introjection of the linguistic subject and predicate into the interior of the concept of substance so as to form the patently predicative character of substantial being. In our earlier discussion of Aristotle's logic and ontology, we traced this movement in the telescopic collapse of the diverse categorial beings into the one primary being that Aristotle identifies with the category of substance.

To converge upon the same notion from another direction, an ontology of substance becomes a substitute in the vacancy formed by the unwitting displacement of predication from its proper linguistic realm. Although substance appears to be about something other than language (indeed, according

to Aristotle, makes language and discourse possible and meaningful), it can never transcend language because it is essentially a sublimation of linguistic form. Aristotle's discovery of his metaphysics of substance is no more than his discovery of the irreducible structure of his language. He is merely tracing out its form, thinking at the same time, however, that he is up to something quite different. It is intriguing to speculate that had Aristotle formulated a better account of predication than the one he had, he would have recognized substance as just such a linguistic entity. Perhaps he would have refrained from positing substance as a truly substantial kind of being and Western philosophical thinking would have been very different from what it is.

If such an analysis proves convincing, then we will have exposed or re-exposed a dissimulative and disturbing force behind what the origins of Western thought, symptomatic of what Derrida calls the "Metaphysics of Presence" and Foucault the "Will to Truth"[38]. Even though language appears to be about something other than itself, it is finally and only about itself; its reference is essentially self-reference. The implication of such an unmasking is not only to disarm the metaphysical pretense of a certain view of language, it would deny the possibility of attaining true knowledge of how things really are (whatever that means), the illusory and delusory vision towards and upon which a representational view of language impels and impales itself. It is such in Aristotle because the representation of substance is a tautological re-presentation of language, of predication.

Obviously, we have not yet earned the foregoing theses. Hence, the following argument divides into two parts among the next three chapters:

1. A construction of Aristotle's theory of language in relation to his metaphysics. These two chapters discuss interrelations among

Aristotle's understanding of signification and meaning, predication, and substance.

2. A deconstruction of Aristotle's concepts of substance and linguistic meaning. This chapter exposes the profoundly linguistic nature of substance and the deceptive representation of the name, the focal point of Aristotle's theory of meaning.

The discussion is a deconstructive analysis because it continues our investigation into the covert framework behind the overt features of Aristotle's ontology and theory of language, and as a result, uncovers their problematic foundations in incoherent assumptions about the nature and function of language.

#### Notes

- [1] Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1959), pp. 65-67.
- [2] Emile Benveniste, "The Nature of the Linguistic Sign," in Problems in General linguistics, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 43-45.
- [3] Saussure, pp. 11-12, 65-67.
- [4] Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp 30-73. Terence Hawkes, Structuralism and Semiotics (London: Methuen and Company, 1977), pp. 45-50. Jonathan Culler, "Jacques Derrida," in Structuralism and Since, ed. John Sturrock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 165-174. Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology," in Positions, an interview with Jules Kristeva, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 18-29.
- [5] Norman Kretzmann, "History of Semantics," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed.

- Paul Edwards, 1967. Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 42. Andreas Graeser, "On Language, Thought, and Reality in Ancient Greek Philosophy," Dialectica, 31 (1977), 379-380.
- [6] C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Company, 1936). Douglas Greenlee, Peirce's Concept of the Sign, (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), pp. 23-24. John K. Sheriff, "Charles S. Peirce and the Semiotics of Literature," in Semiotic Themes, ed. Richard T. De George (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Publications, 1981), p. 52.
- [7] Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference," trans. Max Black, in Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, ed. Peter Geach and Max Black (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), pp. 55-60.
- [8] Foucault, The Order of Things, cited by Eugenio Donato in "The Two Languages of Criticism," in The Structuralist Controversy, eds. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), p. 93.
- [9] Hawkes, pp. 123-150.
- [10] Greenlee, p. 72.
- [11] Saussure, pp. 67-69, 111-118.
- [12] Benveniste, p. 46.
- [13] Saussure, p. 118. Derrida, Of Grammatology, p. 118.
- [14] Saussure, p. 120.
- [15] Benveniste, pp. 101-107.
- [16] Foucault, pp. 50-57.
- [17] Spivak, "Translator's Preface," to Of Grammatology, pp. xvii, lxiv-lxvii. Derrida, Of Grammatology, pp. 18-19. 52-53, 62-63. Jacques Derrida,



- "Difference," in Speech and Phenomena, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 129-160. Derrida, Positions, pp. 18-19. Culler, pp. 164-174. Frederick Jameson, The Prison House of Language (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 168-176. G. Douglas Atkins, "The Sign as a Structure of Difference: Derridean Deconstruction and some of its Implications," in Semiotic Themes, ed. Richard T. De George (Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications, 1981), pp. 134-139.
- [18] Derrida, Of Grammatology, p. 19.
- [19] Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, trans. Robert Czerny and others (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 68-69.
- [20] Benveniste. 101-107.
- [21] Ricoeur, pp. 69, 74, 216-217.
- [22] Jameson pp. 31-32.
- [23] Ricoeur, pp. 23, 69, 218. Benveniste, pp. 108-111. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (1922; rpt. london: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), sec. 1., 2., 2.01.
- [24] Ricoeur, pp. 74-75, p. 216.
- [25] Frege, pp. 62-65.
- [26] Ricoeur, pp. 74, 217.
- [27] Benveniste, p. 105.
- [28] Frege, Grundlagen, cited by Michael in "Gottlob Frege" Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, 1967. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), sec. 49.
- [29] Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, sec. 67.
- [30] J.M.E. Moravcsik, "Aristotle on Predication," Philosophical Review, 76

- ((1967), 82. P.F. Strawson, Subject and Predicate in Logic and Grammar (London: Methuen and Company, 1974), pp. 4, 13. P.F. Strawson, Logico-Linguistic Papers (London: Methuen and Company, 1971), p. 101.
- [31] Ricoeur, pp. 70-72, pp. 216-219.
- [32] P.F. Strawson, Individuals (London: Methuen and Company, 1974), pp. 137-138, 178-180, 187-88, 212, 185-186. Strawson, Subject and Predicate, p. 39. Ricoeur, pp. 70-72, 216-219.
- [33] Benveniste, p. 109.
- [34] Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference," trans. Max Black, in Contemporary Philosophical Logic, ed. Irving M. Copi and James A. Gould (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), p. 70.
- [35] The asymmetrical nature of predication, inscribed within the asymmetrical structure and function of the sentence, has been variously explained since Frege's Begriffshrift. In that manifesto of modern logic, Frege replaces the grammatical notions of subject and predicate with the mathematical, logical concepts of argument and function; these have their semantic, ontological correlates in "objects" and "concepts." A concept is described as having a "completeness," a "saturation," that concepts do not. Objects can stand alone; concepts require completion. In the traditional example of "Socrates is a man," "Socrates" is the argument and identifies a particular individual in the world. If "Socrates" is deleted, we have only "...is a man"; this latter is the propositional function and is incomplete without a specific argument such as "Socrates." The function denotes a concept and remains incomplete until an argument is supplied. Hence, it is said to be "unsaturated." Although a full description of Frege's function theory of predication and his concepts of "object" and "concept" are beyond our scope here, it

should be noted that Frege is to be credited for re-introducing the Platonic insight that establishes an irreducible difference between subjects and predicates. <Gottlob Frege, Begriffshrift, trans. Stefan Bauer-Mengelberg, From Frege to Godel, ed. Jean van Heijenoort (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 3, 7, 12. Gottlob Frege, "On Concept and Object," trans. P.T. Geach, in Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), pp. 54-55. P.T. Geach and G.E.M. Anscombe, Three Philosophers (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 150-154. P.T. Geach, Logic Matters (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 72.>

Since Frege, contemporary philosophers such as Geach, Quine, and Strawson have elaborated further upon the asymmetrical nature of predication; the term "asymmetry" itself, as it applies to predication, comes from Strawson. In Reference and Generality Geach claims that "names and predicables," which are designated in a predicative proposition by subjects and predicates, "are absolutely different." To explain the distinction, he borrows the Fregean notion of completeness. Names can stand by themselves in acts of naming, while predicables require combination with names to give sense to a proposition. Interestingly, in tracing corruptions in the history of logic, Geach shows how Aristotle began with but subsequently "lost the Platonic insight that any predicative proposition splits up into two logically heterogeneous parts." Unlike Frege, Geach is hardly concerned with identifying the ontological referents of names and predicables--which is visible in his explanation of predication within the proposition: "A predicable is an expression that gives us a proposition about something if we attach it to another expression that stands for what we are forming

the proposition about; the predicable then becomes a predicate, and the other expression becomes becomes a subject." <P.F. Strawson, "The Asymmetry of Subjects and Predicates," in Logico-Linguistic Papers, pp. 96-115. Peter Thomas Geach, Reference and Generality (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 31-32. Geach, Logic Matters, p. 47. Geach, Reference and Generality, p. 25. Jack Kaminsky, Language and Ontology (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), pp. 160-161.>

Quine also describes predication in Word and Object as an asymmetrical relation, saying, "The basic combination in which general and singular terms find their contrasting combination is that of predication: 'Mama is a woman,' or schematically 'a is an F' where 'a' represents a singular term and 'F' a general term. Predication joins a general term and a singular term to form a sentence that is true or false according as the general term is true or false of the object, if any, to which the singular term refers." Similar to Geach, Quine too has little interest in developing an ontology that reflects the distinction between singular and general terms. His logic, in fact, allows through quantification the reparsing of singular terms (names) into general terms; such a maneuver also eliminates singular terms in Quine's austere logic. Ontology becomes, for Quine, "the commitment to entities designated by the quantified variable." <Willard Van Orman Quine, Word and Object (New York: Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960), p. 96. Quine, pp. 176-186. Strawson, Subject and Predicate, pp. 11-13. Kaminsky, p. 55. Quine, pp. 228-243. Willard Van Orman Quine, "On What There Is" in Logic and Philosophy, ed. Gary Iseminger (New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, 1968), pp. 146-156.>

Strawson has attempted, more so than the others, to illuminate in a

profound way the asymmetrical nature of predication. Therefore, one of his stated aims has been to account philosophically for the formal characteristics marked in grammatical and logical formal notations. He has had, as a result, to appeal to more powerful explanatory concepts than either logic or grammar can provide. He has drawn these from his epistemological metaphysics. In his book-length essay of descriptive metaphysics, Individuals, Strawson declares that his purpose is to "lay bare the most general features of our conceptual structure." He proceeds by relating the special status of material bodies and persons among things in general to the subject-predicate conceptual scheme; his aim is to explain the structure of that scheme and its encapsulization of our thought about the world. Since Strawson maintains the premise that the subject-predicate duality reflects "fundamental features of our thought about the world," he finds it necessary to "find a foundation for the subject-predicate distinction." As he has phrased it more recently, it is an attempt "to explain the general nature of this duality of role...of the terms combined in this basic combination of predication." <Strawson, Subject and Predicate, p. 13, 9, 4. Strawson, Logico-Linguistic Papers, p. 101. Strawson, Individuals, pp. 9, 246-247, 212.>

Strawson's begins his explanation of the asymmetry of predication in his Individuals by relating the subject-predicate duality with another, more traditional, ontological duality between particulars and universals. In the traditional scheme of things, and in Strawson's, particulars occupy a special and primary ontological status. For Strawson, it is because his spatio-temporal particulars can be identified as matters of empirical fact. Universals, however, as principles by which particulars are grouped or collected (under sortal, characterizing, or attributive

universals) are the creatures of language and do not, as such, present empirical facts. Ontologically, then, they occupy a secondary position under spatio-temporal particulars.

Subject expressions are thus correlated with spatio-temporal particulars, individual material bodies and persons; since these can be definitely named or identified, they become the paradigm logical subjects. A subject expression "presents a fact in its own right and is to that extent complete." However, since a predicate is matched with a universal, it does not "present a fact in its own right and is to that extent incomplete." As is evident, Strawson also retains the Fregean notion of completeness and incompleteness in his description of the constituents of predication. <Strawson, Individuals, pp. 137-138, 167-168, 185-188, 212-213, 246-247.>

Strawson's more recent account of the predicative "basic combination" in Subject and Predicate retains the original asymmetry particular-universal specifications, but it works toward a more comprehensive description of predication so as to bring theoretical accounts closer to what natural language displays. In this work he is more concerned with providing better linguistic foundations, now taking the earlier ontological framework of his Individuals for granted. He retains the term "spatio-temporal particulars" but "universals" have become "concepts." Concerning the distinction between particular and concept, Strawson has worked out a precise way to differentiate particulars from concepts, as he claims, "...concepts of particulars come in incompatibility-groups in relation to particulars but particulars do not come in incompatibility-groups vis-a-vis concepts." That is, in a given range of concepts, certain ones are incompatible with one another

in their application to a given particular. Concepts compete for expression in a given individual. For example, if President Reagan is a man, he cannot at the same time be a woman. However, there is no corresponding incompatibility among different particulars competing for the same or different concepts. Particulars do not compete with one another for concepts. If a given particular exemplifies a given concept, it does not mean that another particular cannot exemplify that concept. In our example, Reagan and some particular woman may both be white and animals. <Strawson, Subject and Predicate, pp. 18-19. Strawson, Logico-Linguistic Papers, pp. 96-115.>

At any rate, Strawson broadens the concept of predication in a two-dimensional generalization from the basic asymmetry expressed in "particular specification + general concept specification." He moves from there to "substantiation in general + complementary predication," to "logical subjection + logical predication," to finally, "grammatical subjection in general + complementary predication." Although his discussion is fairly intricate, it is clear that he wants to move a step beyond the paradigm logical subjects of his Individuals. His broadening rationale allows him to distinguish subjects from predicates on the basis of identificatory force; and this allows him to include, for instance, indefinite and pluralized subjects as legitimate logical subjects--thus bringing a logical description of predication closer to what occurs in natural language. <Strawson, Subject and Predicate, 99-100. 105-109, 118, 135-139.>

[36] D.W. Hamlyn, "Aristotle on Predication," Phronesis, 6 (1961), 110.

[37] Bertrand Russell, The Principles of Mathematics, pp. 466-467, cited by David Bell, Frege's Theory of Judgement (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979),

p. 8.

- [38] Derrida, Of Grammatology, pp. 10-26. Spivak, pp. xxvi. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," appendix to his The Archaeology of Knowledge, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), pp. 215-37.



## Chapter VIII

### THEORY OF SIGNIFICATION AND MEANING

Extending from the Topics to the Metaphysics, Aristotle's theory of signification and meaning can be divided into three general categories. Using linguistic classifications introduced by Charles Morris, we can distinguish within Aristotle's texts pragmatic, syntactic, and semantic varieties of meaning and signification[1]. (Note: although we observed earlier the restricted senses of signification and of meaning, it will be convenient here to conflate the two so as to get on with the argument; hopefully, the context will make clear just what is meant.) Although such a broad classification glosses over certain patterns of development, the force of the following discussion does not depend upon such precision. Moreover, it has the advantage of explicitly drawing out distinctions that lie obscured within a range of texts and contexts. Pragmatic and syntactic meaning are introduced here principally to distinguish the third, semantic division--the kind of meaning which is most important for Aristotle.

#### 8.1 PRAGMATIC MEANING/SIGNIFICATION

In the context of Aristotle's metaphysics, we are already acquainted with the idea of pragmatic meaning. In the fourth book of his Metaphysics, where Aristotle announces the discovery of his science of being, we saw Aristotle's attempt to justify an essential connection between language and substances in the world. His argument, deriving from a pragmatic approach to meaning, is

that if men are to communicate meaningfully, language must have definite meanings, for "...if names have no meanings, then discussion with one another and indeed with oneself is eliminated" (1006b8-10). Earlier in the same passage, Aristotle introduces the public, exterior character of pragmatic meaning, namely, "that the <the interlocutor> should mean something to him <the same interlocutor> as well as to another; for this is necessary, if indeed he is to say anything" (1006a20-23). Aristotle's reasoning here, used to support his notion of semantic meaning in the end, appeals to the idea pragmatic meaning; that is, meaningful discourse must mean something to someone.

Similar indications of Aristotle's appeal to pragmatic meaning occur also in the On Interpretation and Rhetoric. Meaningful words in the On Interpretation, nouns and verbs, function as names which "signify something" when "the speaker arrests his thought and the hearer pauses" (16b19ff)[2]. In the Rhetoric, itself a treatise on pragmatic communication, Aristotle explains that the deciding criterion for a "persuasive and credible statement" is whether "there is somebody whom it persuades" (1356b26-28). Pragmatic meaning, as defined in this discussion, refers to the way in which people use language in order to understand and influence one another in a communication situation. In other words, pragmatic meaning is the fiber of discourse.

## 8.2 SYNTACTIC MEANING

By contrast, syntactic meaning has little direct relevance to discourse and pragmatic meaning. The flow of meaning, of signification, remains confined within the organic system of language; it is more or less presupposed in the discourse of people. Syntactic meaning consists of the formal structures and

relations of language, and lies at the core of semiotics and its projections. If we accept the authenticity of chapters 20-21 of Aristotle's Poetics, we learn that he identifies eight syntactic categories in his language: the single letter, the syllable, the connective particle, the article, the noun, the verb, the inflection, and the unified utterance[3]. Of these eight, only three are considered by Aristotle to be significant or meaningful: the noun (or name); the verb (or predicate); and the unified utterance, certain phrases and sentences. The other syntactic units are considered non-significant. The criterion of meaning here, however, is that of semantic meaning. From the perspective of syntactic meaning, however, each category does indicate a significant structural element or relation.

Aristotle explains syntactic meaning, somewhat elliptically, in both the Poetics and On Interpretation. He explains, for instance, that connective particles form unified utterances by uniting two or more significant sounds; the resulting combinations are definitions, sentences, and combinations of sentences (Poetics, chapter 20; On Interpretation, chapter 5). In the On Interpretation, additionally, he makes it clear that the verb "to be" or "not to be" possesses only a syntactical significance, saying,

For not even "to be" or "not to be" is a sign of the actual thing...for by itself it is nothing, but it additionally signifies some combination, which cannot be thought of without the components. (16b19ff.)

### 8.3 SEMANTIC MEANING

The way into Aristotle's concept of semantic meaning is much rougher, but it is more interesting since it is integral to his logic and metaphysics. Convinced that he has forged some sort of link between language and the world so as to provide himself solid ground in his search for true knowledge, Aristotle concentrates his linguistic focus on semantic meaning. Finding our way through his tangled, semantic maze will be much easier if we keep consistently before us his basic semantic criterion, that is, the recurring notion of "signifying one thing" or "having one meaning." It is the idea of definite, unambiguous signification. The three significant or meaningful linguistic units mentioned above--the noun, the verb, and the unified utterance--share this criterion. We encountered this notion previously in our discussion of Aristotle's fourth book of the Metaphysics, where it is used to buttress his argument for the principle of non-contradiction and his general science of being. Aristotle's commitment to the idea of definite signification of certain linguistic units and levels is, fortunately, one consistent feature of his all too brief and too varied elaborations of semantic meaning. Although the way in which "signifying one thing" expresses itself varies among different linguistic levels (from individually significant to combinatorially significant linguistic units), it should not be disconcerting so long as a "family resemblance" remains evident from one generation of texts to another.

Individually meaningful words "signify one thing" by their designation of one or another of the categories (Topics, 178b37-179a10; Categories, 1b25). It is not possible for these individually meaningful words (uncombined words), with a few exceptions, to signify more than one category; this is sometimes

called the "semantic incommunicability of the categories"[4]. As we observed in chapter six, a category ultimately rests upon particular items of sense experience so that words designating a category are referable to discrete aspects of sensory experience. Additionally, Aristotle's theory of predicables, which specifies four possible relations between subject and predicate, makes it clear that the predicate signifies a category prior to its combination within the proposition. Very clearly, signification precedes predication for Aristotle. That is, the uncombined word signifies one thing before it combines with other words to form a meaningful sentence.

At the level of the sentence, Aristotle's description of the collective meaning and the movement of signification between subject and predicate sheds light upon the definite signification of the sentence. The meaning of the sentence, presented in the On Interpretation, is contained in its individually meaningful constituents. That semantic meaning resides fundamentally within the parts that make up the whole is clear from Aristotle's definition of the sentence as "a significant spoken sound some part of which is significant in separation--as an expression, not as an affirmation <a combination>" (16b26). An expression is defined elsewhere as an individually significant word, i.e., a name or a verb (17a17). Having established the atomic nature of meaning within the more general molecular structure of the sentence, Aristotle describes the statement-making sentence, saying that, "A single affirmation or negation is one which signifies one thing about one thing..." (18a13). In this, Aristotle describes the movement of signification within the sentence, a movement which signifies one thing about one thing; additionally, he tells us in another passage that the statement-making sentence "reveals one thing", namely, whether the sentence is true or false.

Foreshadowed in this last observation is Frege's claim that a proposition has a truth value for its reference[5]. Although Aristotle does not go so far as to assert that a sentence or statement-making sentence denotes the True or the False, the abstract referents of a Fregean proposition, Aristotle's movement is in that direction. Aristotle's tendency is Fregean, that is, to project the naming signification of the individual word to the level of the sentence. Words designate categorial things, while sentences designate truth values. Two factors, however, preclude its realization. First, Aristotle does not sufficiently distinguish a "sense" from the "reference." Secondly, the collective nature of the meaning of a sentence, summed up in its individually significant units, limits such a possibility. If a sense and reference could be distinguished for an Aristotelian sentence, they would belong to its parts and not the whole. Aristotle's view of linguistic meaning, since it associates meaning with the individual word, is at odds with the modern consensus that maintains the meaning of a word is dependent upon the context in which it occurs. In this respect, Frege, Wittgenstein, Benveniste, and Quine are in agreement[6].

Finally, we have already observed how a definition "signifies one thing," that is, how a combination of the genus and differentia distinguish in the case of substances, a certain this, (the Metaphysics, Book 6, for example). The combination of "two-footed animal," for instance has one meaning, "man" (Metaphysics, Book 4, chapter 4). Aristotle's concept of "signifying one thing" with a definition is linked to his frequent discussion of the unity of definition (for instance, On Interpretation, chapters 5, 11; Metaphysics, Book 6, chapter 12; Book 7, chapter 6; Book 8, chapter 9; Poetics, chapter 20). More elaborate discussions of this important Aristotelian concept are available in Les1, Ackrill, and Moravcsik[7].

In sum, Aristotle's semantic theory, whatever else it may do, is bound to the notion of "signifying one thing." Such definitive signification is necessary in some form at every linguistic level, from the individual word to the sentence; it is a prerequisite to determining truth (of propositions) and knowledge (of substances). What follows is a deeper inquiry into the nature and function of Aristotle's concept of semantic meaning/signification. For the most part, I want to establish Aristotle's commitment to the isomorphic proportion among words, thoughts, and things. Individually significant words name things or properties of those things, while sentences describe combinations of these. Constrained by the criterion of "having one meaning," both linguistic levels display the predominating referential capacity and function of language. As we learned from our earlier investigation into Aristotle's "discovery of metaphysics," the apparent combination of different categorial items signified by the subject and predicate of a sentence is really the re-naming of a substance. The subject and predicate both designate the same substantial entity, and this is tantamount, linguistically, to the containment of the predicate in the subject. This idea will be developed further in the section on predication. However, we can infer as much now because we have already observed how Aristotle collapses in his metaphysics the diverse categories of being into the primary category of substance. This development in Aristotle's metaphysics has allowed such concepts as the "focal meaning" of 'being' to be identified in Aristotle. Moreover, this ostensibly ontological assimilation of the categories to substance is the result of the introjection of the linguistic subject and predicate into the conceptual interior of substance; and this constitutes, specifically, the hypostatization of language that creates Aristotle's metaphysics of being.

#### 8.4 THEORIES OF SIGNIFICATION AND MEANING

With Aristotle's central semantic criterion of "signifying one thing" in mind, we can probe further into the linguistic signification of words and sentences. If we take at face value passages in which Aristotle explains how words mean something or other (in the semantic sense), we have to admit that he presents at least two conflicting accounts of signification[8]. From a history of semantics perspective Aristotle presents both referential and ideational theories of signification. The issue between these two traditional alternatives is whether words primarily signify things or whether words signify ideas, the mental images of things[9]. For Plato, neither of these alternatives are acceptable; we saw that for Plato words primarily signified the Forms, a fantastic possibility to which Aristotle correctly objects. While Aristotle's referential theory of meaning is located in the Topics and Categories, his ideational account of signification is presented in the On Interpretation.

##### 8.4.1 Referential Theory of Meaning

The following passages from the Topics and the Categories present Aristotle's referential theory of meaning:

1. It is impossible in a discussion to bring in the actual things discussed: we use their names as symbols instead of them; and therefore we suppose that what follows in the names, follows in the things as well, just as people who calculate suppose in regard to their counters; but the two cases (names and things) are not alike. For names are finite and so is the sum-total of formulae, while things are infinite in number. Inevitably, then, the same formulae, and a single name, have a number of meanings. (165a5-14)
2. For 'Man,' and indeed every general predicate, denotes not an individual substance, but a particular quality, or the being related to something in a particular manner, or something of that sort. Likewise also in the case of 'Corsicus' and 'Corsicus the musician,' there is the problem, "Are they the same or different?" For the one denotes an individual substance and the other a quality, so that it cannot be



isolated; though it is not the isolation which creates the "third man," but the admission that it is an individual substance. For 'man' cannot be an individual substance as Callias is. Not is the case improved one whit even if one were to call the element he has isolated not an individual substance but a quality; for there will still be the one beside the many, just as 'man' was. It is evident then that one must not grant that what is a common predicate applying to a class universally is an individual substance, but must say that it denotes either a quality, or relation, or a quantity, or something of that kind. (Topics, 178b38-179a10)

3. Of things said without any combination, each signifies either substance or quantity or qualification or a relative or where or when or being-in-position or having or doing or being affected. (Categories, 1b25ff.)
4. Every substance seems to signify a certain "this." As regards the primary substances, it is indisputably true that each of them signifies a certain "this"; for the thing revealed is individual and numerically one. But as regards the secondary substances, though it appears from the form of the name--when one speaks of man or animal--that a secondary substance likewise signifies a certain "this," this is not really true; rather, it signifies a certain qualification, for the subject is not as the primary substance is, one, but man and animal are said of many things. (Categories, 3b10ff.)

The first passage comes from the introduction to Aristotle's Sophistical Refutations, his epilogue to the Topics, and is part of a warning to the dialectician/reader to discern real reasoning and refutation from that which is apparent. In this context Aristotle gives two specific warnings: (1) Since a name or word has a number of meanings due to the fact that there are more things than names, do not seek or invent the bearer of a name--a Platonic error which sought the entity corresponding to the name; such a search led Plato to create the Forms because such entities could not be found in the ordinary world[10]. (2) Since words are not like things and can shift their correspondence from one object to another, be wary and confirm what things are being denoted by words used in argument.

In the first passage, which is supported by the other three, words as symbols primarily signify actual things and are able to stand for those things

in much the same way that mathematical counters stand for things. Though it is not directly stated in this passage, it is clear that the sign relation between word and thing is conventional, which we know from the specified dissimilarity between word and thing that enables names to be symbols of things. Of course, the kinds of things signified are those belonging to one or another of the categories.

The first passage contains a statement, however, that appears to stand in conflict with Aristotle's semantic principle of signifying one thing. The statement that "a single name <has> a number of meanings" does not genuinely contradict the semantic requirement, though. We need only distinguish between the nature and the numbers of meaning that a word has. A word has a number of meanings not because Aristotle has discovered the polysemic nature of language, but because a significant name applies to a range of the same kind of things; that is, there is no single bearer of a name. The nature of the meaning of a word is in most cases fixed, anchored to the category it designates (note passages 2, 3, and 4). The kind of meaning does not vary from category to category, but there may be numerous instances in which a word applies to different things of the same categorial sort. Although there are some notable exceptions in which words such as "good," "being," and "one" apply across the categories (Topics, 107a5-11; 121a17; 121ab7; 127a27a27,33), the general rule of meaning is "one word-one thing"[11]. Aristotle also provides a clue in the fourth book of his Metaphysics which casts some light on this problem concerning the number of meanings a word has. As part of his explanation of "having one meaning" in the fourth book and fourth chapter of the Metaphysics, he writes, "...for we do not use 'having one meaning' in the sense of 'predicated of one thing,' since in such a sense 'the musical' and

'the man' would also have one meaning, and so all of them would be one, for they would be synonymous" (1006b15-18). Although we have in the Topics just the reverse situation (how one predicate applies to many things), we can, by analogy, turn this line of reasoning around. As a result, the concept of "having one meaning" allows words to apply to more than one in the same way that several words apply to one thing. Thus, "having one meaning" is distinguished from both the application of several words to one thing (in the Metaphysics above) and the application of one word to several things. The concept of "having one meaning," is still to be identified with the single category a word signifies. Thus, the principle of "semantic incommunicability" is still in force in this important passage displaying Aristotle's referential theory of meaning.

In the second passage and to some extent in the fourth, Aristotle distinguishes between two classes of words in terms of their category differences. That is, he recognizes definite singular terms, proper names such as "Callias" and "Corsicus"; and he recognizes general terms, common predicates such as "man" or "white" or "musical." These are not primarily linguistic distinctions, however. His purpose is to make an ontological point; it is part of his general effort to make clear the differences between independent substances and their dependent qualifications. He does clearly establish an ontological asymmetry between these two sorts of categories.

In our developing perspective of Aristotle's theory of language, it is particularly important to note here that Aristotle fails to present the words together in a contrasting combination so as to describe the linguistic relation of predication. He treats the words separately, just as we should expect, since the meaning of a word is given in its uncombined state by

atomically denoting one of the categories. His failure to bring the words together into the unified combination of predication is symptomatic of the pressure exerted by his referential notion of meaning upon his understanding of predication; it prevents him from seeing predication as a more fundamental linguistic relation. Aristotle's restricted view of meaning forces him to see language as a set of labels to be affixed to things. Though it is not so difficult to label things with some words, it becomes increasingly difficult with others; and sentences and predication become altogether inscrutable on this view of meaning.

#### 8.4.2 Ideational Theory of Signification

The following passages from Aristotle's On Interpretation provide the basis for his ideational view of linguistic meaning:

1. Now spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of--affections of the soul--are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of--actual things--are also the same. These matters have been discussed in the work on the soul <De Anima, III, chapters 3-8> and do not belong to the present subject. (16a3ff.)
2. Just as some thoughts in the soul are neither true nor false while some are necessarily one or the other, so also with spoken sounds. For falsity and truth have to do with combination and separation. Thus names and verbs by themselves--for instance 'man' or 'white' when nothing further is added--are like the thoughts that are without combination and separation; for so far they are neither true nor false. A sign of this is that even 'goat-stag' signifies something but not, as yet, anything true or false--unless 'is' or 'is not' is added (either simply or with reference to time. (16a9ff.)
3. A name is a spoken sound significant by convention, without time, none of whose parts is significant in separation. (16a19ff.)
4. I say 'by convention' because no name is a name naturally but only when it has become a symbol. Even inarticulate noises (of beasts, for instance) do indeed reveal something, yet none of them is a name. (16a26ff.)

5. A verb is what additionally signifies time, no part of it being significant separately; and it is a sign of things said of something else. (16b6ff.)
6. When uttered just by itself a verb is a name and signifies something--the speaker arrests his thought and the hearer pauses--but it does not yet signify whether it is or not. For not even 'to be' or 'not to be' is a sign of the actual thing (nor if you say simply 'that which is'); for by itself it is nothing, but it additionally signifies some combination, which cannot be thought of without the components. (16b19ff.)
7. A sentence is a significant spoken sound some part of which is significant in separation--as an expression, not as an affirmation. (16b26ff.)
8. Every sentence is significant (not as a tool but, as we said by convention), but not every sentence is a statement-making sentence, but only those in which there is truth or falsity. There is not truth or falsity in all sentences; a prayer is a sentence but is neither true nor false. The present investigation deals with statement-making sentences; the other we can dismiss, since consideration of them belongs rather to the study of rhetoric or poetry. (16b33ff.)
9. (let us call a name or a verb simply an expression, since by saying it one cannot reveal anything by one's utterance in such a way as to be making a statement, whether one is answering a question or speaking spontaneously.) (17a17ff.)
10. Of these the one is a simple statement, affirming or denying something of something, the other is compounded of simple statements and is a kind of composite sentence. (17a20ff.)
11. An affirmation is a statement affirming something of something, a negation is a statement denying something of something. (17a25ff.)
12. Now of actual things some are universal, others particular (I call universal that which is by its nature predicated of a number of things, and particular that which is not; man, for instance, is a universal, Callias a particular). So it must sometimes be of a universal that one states that something holds or does not, sometimes of a particular. (17a38ff.)
13. Now if spoken sounds follow things in the mind...the same must hold also of spoken affirmations. (23a32ff.)
14. If then this is how it is with beliefs, and spoken affirmations and negations are symbols of things in the soul, clearly it is the universal negation about the same things that is contrary to an affirmation; (24b1ff.)

Of the foregoing passages, the first is credited as the most influential text in the history of semantics; it may not be a text on semantics at all but rather a text on the conventional nature of signification and language, and thus plays a more modest role[12]. We will treat it as both since the kind of signification of language is an essential element in the meaning of language. This passage and Boethius' commentary on it are the sources in the history of semantics for the view that words primarily signify ideas (sometimes called concepts) instead of actual things. This view is perhaps better known in John Locke's version of ideational signification and meaning. In his Essay on Human Understanding, Locke writes, "The use then, of words, is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification"[13]. Locke's "idea" is equivalent in Aristotle to "affections of the soul," "things in the mind," and "things in the soul" (passages 1, 13, 14 above). Aristotle seems in each case to have in mind some sort of psychological, sensory impressions which provide subjective images of concrete objects in the world[14]. In fact, he describes these as "likenesses of actual things" (#1).

The obvious difference between the ideational account, contained largely in the first passage above, and the referential account of the Topics and Categories is the interjection of mental events between words (either spoken or written) and actual things. The direct connection of "thought" (my convenient label for this type of mental activity) to language occurs in passages 1, 13, and 14. As others have observed, there is indeed no stated association in these passages between words and things at all[15]. Only by implication can words be related to things, and this has been predominantly the case[16].

Rather than explain just how words are related to things, Aristotle is more intent upon setting up an important proportion between spoken and written words and spoken words and mental images. Spoken words (SW) stand to mental images (MI) in the same way that written words (WW) stand to spoken words (SW):  $SW/MI = WW/SW$ . Viewed in context with passages 3, 4, and 8, Aristotle's purpose in setting up the proportion is to establish the conventional nature of language with respect to both speaking and writing. From the more obvious case between speaking and writing he explains the less obvious between speaking and thinking. Although we now take some of these things for granted, that language conventionally signified as a symbol was a point that still needed to be made in Aristotle's time. Aristotle is attempting to resolve a controversy stated in Plato's Cratylus (383b, 385e, 390a) concerning the "correctness of names," the conflict over whether words have a natural or conventional relation to what they signify. Kretzmann construes Aristotle's view of conventional signification as something like a rule-governed procedure which sets up a correspondence between marks and sounds on the one hand and sounds and thoughts on the other[17]. Since nothing naturally or necessarily binds these dyads together, written marks could be assigned different spoken sounds, and sounds could be assigned different mental images. Convention, for Aristotle, "lies in the assignation of the meaning to one sound rather than to another," which is of course patterned after the visible convention between writing and speaking[18]. This is all from the point of view of the linguist examining the language, to be sure, not the person using it.

Although Aristotle makes clear the conventional nature of signification among writing, speaking and thinking, he maintains that the relation between thought and thing is natural. Mental events in some way resemble actual



things. Thus, there is an important contrast between the conventional relation of word to thing and the natural relation of thought to thing. This natural relation guarantees that not only are actual things the same for all people, but most importantly, their thoughts are essentially the same. This is not a happy consequence for Aristotle.

By bringing these two premisses together (the one concerning the conventional relation of language to thought and the other concerning the natural relation of thought to thing), we obtain a very important insight into Aristotle's view of language. Given these two admissions, Aristotle must construe language as a notational system, a nomenclature; language is on a par, say, with Morse code or even pig-latin. This is to say that language is a second order abstraction from the first order of representation in thought, and is, as a result, accidental to the meaning of language. In other words, if language stands in a notational relation (as a code or nomenclature) to mental events and, by implication, to things, the meaning of language is not affected in the least by the fact of language. This is too important to say just once. On this view of linguistic meaning, the meaning of language resides completely apart from the language itself; regardless of whether ideas or things are primarily signified, the semantic aspect remains untouched[19]. That Aristotle sees language as a nomenclature is much more important than the controversy over whether words signify things or ideas.

To return now to that issue, it seems that Aristotle favors a referential, instead of ideational, theory of meaning. Although he specifies no direct connection between word and thing in the principal semantic passage in the On Interpretation, it seems a stretch of reason to deny such a clearly implied relation, especially since other texts and even other passages in that



work do make the necessary connection. For example, Aristotle's description of universal and particular statements (#12) builds upon his stated relation between words and things. And his correspondence theory of truth is presented in terms of the relation between statement and fact (18a34ff.). It is more likely, as Derrida suggests, that Aristotle simply suppresses the intermediary of thought since, for Aristotle, thought is a transparent shroud upon things themselves[20]. His purpose here in treating this transparent intermediary between word and thing is, as Kretzmann suggests, to underscore the conventional nature of linguistic signification and to contrast that with the natural relation between thought and things[21].

#### Notes

- [1] Charles Morris, "Foundation of the Theory of Linguistic Signs," The International Encyclopedia of Unified Science (1938 rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).
- [2] Walter Lesl, Logic and Metaphysics in Aristotle (Padova, Italy: Editrice Antenore, 1970), p. 35.
- [3] James Hutton, Aristotle's Poetics, trans. and notes by Hutton (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1982), p. 66.
- [4] Lesl, pp. 39-45.
- [5] Frege, "On Sense and Reference," p. 63. Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, eds. and trans. Peter Geach and Max Black (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), p. 63.
- [6] Willard Van Orman Quine, Word and Object, (New York: Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1960), pp. 9-18. Emile Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 105. Frege, Grundlagen, cited by Michael Dummett in "Gottlob Frege," The Encyclopedia

- of Philosophy. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), sec. 49.
- [7] J.M.E. Moravcsik, "Aristotle's Theory of the Categories," in Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Moravcsik (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1967), pp. 130-132. Lesl, pp. 50-59. Ackrill, pp. 126-127, 146-147.
- [8] W. Keith Percival, "Ferdinand de Saussure and the History of Semiotics," in Semiotic Themes, ed. Richard T. De George (Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications, 1981), pp. 2-4.
- [9] William P. Alston, Philosophy of Language (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964), pp. 12, 23.
- [10] Norman Kretzmann, "History of Semantics," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, 1967, p. 367.
- [11] Lesl p. 43.
- [12] Norman Kretzmann, "Aristotle On Spoken Sound Significant by Convention," in Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, ed. John Corcoran (Dordrecht: C. Reidel Publishing, 1974), pp. 3-5, 10.
- [13] E.J. Ashworth, "Do Words Signify Ideas or Things?" Journal of the History of Philosophy, 19 (1981), 300-301.
- [14] Ackrill, p. 113.
- [15] Kretzman, Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, pp. 4-5.  
Percival, p. 3.
- [16] Kretzmann, Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, p. 5. Bochenski, p. 48. Lesl, pp. 29-30.
- [17] Kretzmann, Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, pp. 13, 5-6.
- [18] Lesl, p. 29.
- [19] Lesl, p. 29.

[20] Derrida, Grammatology, pp. 11, 324.

[21] There is another tantalizing possibility, however, which skirts the controversy between referential and ideational theories of meaning. We have doubtlessly not had the last word on that controversy. But, by suspending those two accounts, we can make respectable case for a third. I would like to suggest that Aristotle is on the verge in the On Interpretation of making a semantic distinction similar to Frege's distinction between the "sense" and the "reference" of names (or words and sentences).

Frege explains his semantics in the terms of sense and reference in the following way: "The regular connexion between a sign, its sense, and its reference is of such a kind that to the sign there corresponds a definite sense and to that in turn a definite reference, while to a given reference (an object) there does not belong only a single sign." Of the sense, he explains, "I should like to call the sense of the sign, wherein the mode of presentation is contained," whereas the "reference of a proper name is the object itself which we designate by its means." In sum, "A proper name (word, sign, sign combination, expression) expresses its sense, stands for or designates its reference. By means of a sign we express its sense and designate its reference". Quite simply, for example, the morning star and the evening star both have the same reference; that is, each phrase designates the planet Venus; but the mode of expression, the sense, is different in each case. It is possible in Frege's semantics for there to be words with a sense but no reference--"Odysseus," for instance. And it is possible, as in the example above, for different words to have different senses but the same reference; and the obvious case of different senses and different

references. Both the sense and the reference have an objective character in that they are shared by different people speaking the same or different languages. And both of these are distinguished from a third aspect of meaning, the associated idea or conception, which are the subjective, psychological impressions and associations connected with a word for a particular individual.

The sense and reference apply not only to individual words and phrases but also to sentences. For Frege, a sentence contains a "thought," which expresses a sense and demands a reference. A thought is "not the subjective performance of thinking but its objective content, which is capable of being the common property of several thinkers." The difference between the semantics of the name and that of the sentence (which Frege transforms into a kind of name) is the truth value; only sentences possess truth values. Frege ultimately identifies the truth value of a sentence as the reference of the sentence, i.e., the True or the False; needless to say, these are abstract objects. <Frege, "On Sense and Reference," pp. 57-64.>

Such a semantics is trying to be born in Aristotle. Coordinate with the interjection of "thoughts in the soul" (#2), Aristotle introduces in his example of the "goat-stag" distinctions among an expression's sense, reference, and truth value. "Goat-stag," he plainly states, "signifies something"; but it is not an appropriate combination of words to obtain a truth value, and it is also obvious that the phrase has no existential referent. In other words, the phrase has a sense but no reference and no truth value. <Ackrill, pp. 14-15; Lesl; pp. 30-32; Kretzmann, Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, p. 16.>

The combination "goat-stag" signifies something because its

individual components are meaningful. Aristotle's semantic criterion of definite signification gives us reason to describe the combination as significant because its constituents are meaningful in isolation; that is, "goat" and "stag" separately designate one or another of the categories and thereby ultimately refer to actual goats and stags. The combination, as it is however, violates the semantic criterion because it designates no single category and thus has no reference to any real entity. It has a "sense," we might say, but no "reference" or truth value.

The general equivalence between Aristotle and Frege, respectively, are these: thoughts in the soul/sense and actual things/reference. In both cases, the relevant semantic features are objective, are shared by all men. A sense or thought in the soul is possible without a corresponding reference. There is an important discrepancy, however. Although Frege denies the subjective, psychological experience of a particular individual as a relevant semantic feature, Aristotle includes such experience in his description of thoughts or affections in the soul. Aristotle conflates the objective with the subjective, semantic contents. His psychologizing tendency is unfortunate, I think, in that it taints the possibility of his forming a sophisticated semantics of the Fregean type. This reliance upon psychology is not typical of Aristotle, though, in his other linguistic explanations or in his logic. Although he appears to have made a wrong turn in tying his theory of meaning to a psychological basis, it does not erase certain correspondences with Frege's semantics. <Ackrill, pp. 113; Kretzmann, Ancient Logic and its Modern Interpretations, pp. 8-9. Kapp, 43-51, 58-59.>

There is yet another parallel. If we accept the general equivalence

and see a more nebulous Frege in Aristotle, sentences as well as individual words have both a sense and a reference for Aristotle. In the latter part of the On Interpretation, Aristotle states that, "spoken affirmations and negations are symbols of things in the soul" (#14). The sense is expressed by "things in the soul," while the reference is designated by individually significant words. The class of sentences described here is the class of sentences which have truth values. For Aristotle, the difference between statement-making sentences (as an appropriate combination of words) and individually meaningful words (uncombined names) is truth value; truth value is possessed only by statement-making sentences, and these correspond to Frege's declarative sentences. Sense and reference thus apply to the level of the sentence for Aristotle and Frege, and truth value is a distinguishing characteristic in each one's semantics. Aristotle does not go so far as Frege, however, to designate the reference of a sentence as its truth value, the True or the False.

## Chapter IX

### THEORY OF PREDICATION

In the transition from Aristotle's theory of signification to that of predication, we move from the level of the individually significant unit, the "name" for Aristotle, to the combinatorially significant unit, the "sentence." Introduced and defined in the On Interpretation, the "statement-making" sentence is most notably the focus of Aristotle's logic, which is "from first to last...a theory of the subject-predicate relation"[1]. But this kind of sentence is also integral to Aristotle's metaphysics in some obvious ways, and in some not-so-obvious. We traced out in chapter six its more obvious connections to his doctrine of the categories, observing how in the early version of the categories the subject and predicate expressions were to designate entities belonging to the categories and describe certain ontological relations ("said of" and "present in") between the categories. As both a linguistic and ontological notion, Aristotle's concept of predication linked to his theory of meaning and to his metaphysics. Metaphorically, the concept of predication acts as the middle term of an enthymeme relating the outer terms of signification and ontology. Predication provides the common ground upon which language and ontology meet. Part of the remaining task will be to examine how predication in the basic statement-making sentence emerges in those not-so-obvious ways in his metaphysics of substance.

By presenting a summary account of Aristotle's changing views on predication in relation to his developing metaphysics, I hope to reveal some

features of the language-ontology relation that force a deconstruction of two conceptual cornerstones, in Aristotle's theory of language and in his metaphysics. To accomplish this, I will present the two lines of argument previously forecast:

1. The first argument claims that Aristotle's referential view of linguistic meaning, encapsulated in the concept of the name, guides the overt development of his views on linguistic predication and on ontology. This line of development is more visible than the second.
2. Below that more visible tide of influence, the final chapter describes a swirling linguistic undercurrent which sweeps the ground away from under those two concepts so prominent in Aristotle's theory of language and corresponding metaphysics.

Within Aristotle's theory of meaning and within his ontology are linguistic constructs which make his theory of language and ontology problematic, at the least, and perhaps altogether incoherent. Specifically, it turns out that the ostensibly ontological concept of substance defines only a linguistic object through its replication of the abstract form of the basic subject-predicate sentence. Secondly, the concept of the name fails to provide an adequate explanation of linguistic meaning.

#### 9.1 PREDICATION IN THE POSTERIOR ANALYTICS

In the chapter on Aristotle's logic and ontology we examined the relation of predication to the doctrine of categories. There we traced a two-stage development in Aristotle's ontology and observed the assimilation of the diverse modes of categorial predication to the category of substance, a transaction which permits Aristotle to create his general science of being.



In that discussion we used passages appropriately drawn from the Topics, Categories, On Interpretation, and the Metaphysics, because we were focusing on the connections between the categories, predication, and metaphysics. However, Aristotle's fullest treatment of predication is in the Posterior Analytics (chapters 4-6, 19-22). Treated in relation to his demonstrative science, predication achieves status as a philosophical topic. Whereas it is normally difficult to determine linguistic from ontological observations in Aristotle, it is apparent he pays some attention to the differences in these chapters; his conscious attempt is to formulate a linguistic account of predication that conforms to his ontological perceptions. His attempt, it should be noted, is part of a larger purpose in the Posterior Analytics to elucidate the nature of demonstrative science, to explain "on what things and what sort of things demonstration depend" (73a25-26)[2].

Additionally, there are good reasons to construe Aristotle's treatment of predication in this work as a transitional stage in his ontological development. A certain tension is evident between earlier perspectives of the Categories (and other early works) and positions adopted later and more fully in the Metaphysics. The tension spans, in short, the gap between the diversity and focality of ontological being; it is attributable to the growing influence of Aristotle's uncritical view of linguistic meaning upon his concept of linguistic predication. In the following exposition of predication in the Posterior Analytics I will try to identify those features of predication which point back to earlier influences and those which foreshadow later developments.

### 9.1.1 Natural-Essential Predication

Aristotle defines predication in the Posterior Analytics in two classifying movements. At the most general level he distinguishes "natural" from "unnatural" predication[3]. As one example of natural predication, Aristotle gives the statement, "The log is white" (83a9). An unnatural predication inverts the normal subject-predicate order into "The white thing is a log" (83a11). Aristotle is even reluctant to call the latter a predication, saying,

Well, if we must legislate, let speaking in the latter way be predicating, and in the former way either not predicating at all, or else not predicating simpliciter <natural predication> but predicating incidentally <unnatural predication> (83a15-17)...Thus let it be supposed that what is predicated is always predicated simpliciter of what it is predicated of, and not incidentally; for this is the way in which demonstrations demonstrate <which Barnes takes to mean in his commentary "these are the sorts of predications occurring in demonstrations">. (83a19-20)

Aristotle does not see that what he recognizes as unnatural predication is a statement of identity[4]. In the second movement, Aristotle identifies two subdivisions within the general division of natural predication: "in itself" or "essential" predication and "incidental" or "accidental" predication (different from the incidental type above). For simplicity, we will adopt the terms "essential" and "accidental" to represent the two varieties of natural predication. Of these two varieties Aristotle identifies essential predication as the kind of predication with which demonstration deals (Posterior Analytics, 73a34-73b6, 75a18).

In general, the subject and predicate of an essential predication signifies the necessary relation of the entities denoted by the subject and the predicate[5]. Here, the great Classifier discerns four kinds of essential

predication, two of which are useful in demonstrative science[6]. Although there are no specific names for these two types of essential predication, the subject and predicate are described in terms of their relation by definition. In the first kind, the predicate is a necessary part of the definition of the subject; for example, in the sentence "man is an animal," "animal" belongs in the definition of man ("man is a rational animal"). In the second alternative, the subject is contained in the definition of the predicate. Aristotle is less clear here, but he indicates in his example that the subject "number" is necessarily contained in the predicate "odd." It is not clear just what statement he has in mind[7]. Aristotle does explain in the Metaphysics that in this second variety of predication,

Each of these attributes (a) has in its formula the formula or the name of the subject of which it is the attribute and (b) cannot be signified apart from that subject. For example, whiteness can be signified apart from man, but the female cannot be signified apart from the animal. (1030b23-25)

Although Aristotle is obscure on some of these things, the point to take away from this discussion is that he restricts the predications of demonstrative science to those which are natural and essential predications.

Contrary to what the preceding discussion might suggest, the distinction between natural and unnatural predication is not founded upon linguistic criteria, i.e., in the syntactic inversion of subject and predicate. Instead, Aristotle envisages an ontological configuration underlying natural linguistic predications; and this is the main reason why he limits the kind of propositions appropriate to his demonstrative science. Aristotle introduces the ontological criterion in the fourth chapter (Book A) which enables him to distinguish different ontological configurations underlying natural,

linguistic predications. Primarily, he differentiates things which exist "in themselves" (or independently) from things which exist "incidentally" (or dependently). An independent entity is "just what it is without being something else" (73b6-8). And he adds, "Thus things which are not (said) of an underlying subject I call things in themselves, and those which (are said) of an underlying subject (I call) incidentals" (73b6-10). Using this ontological principle, Aristotle establishes in later chapters (19-22) the classifications of natural and unnatural predication:

We argue universally, as follows: one can say truly that the white thing is walking, and that large thing is a log, and again that the log is large and that the man is walking. Well, speaking in the latter and in the former ways are different. For when I say that the white thing is a log, then I say that which is incidentally white is a log, and not that the white thing is the underlying subject for the log; for it is not the case that, being white or just what is some white, it came to be a log, so that it is not (<a log>)\*\* except indidentally. But when I say that the log is white, (<I>) do not say that something else is white and that it is incidentally a log, as when I say that the musical thing is white (for then I say that the man, who is incidentally musical, is white); but the log is the underlying subject which did come to be (<white>) without being something other than just what is a log or a particular log.

Well, if we must legislate, let speaking in the latter way be predicating, and in the former way either not predicating at all, or else predicating simpliciter <natural predication> but predicating indidentally <unnatural predication>. (What is predicated is like the white, and that of which it is predicated is like the log.) Thus let it be supposed that what is predicated is alway predicated simpliciter of what it is predicated of, and not incidentally; for this is the way in which demonstrations demonstrate.

Hence, when one thing is predicated of one, either (<it is predicated>) in what a thing is or (<it say>) that (<it has some>) quality or quantity or relation or is doing something or undergoing something or (<is at>) some place or time. (83a1-23) <\*\* Barnes' insertion>

Influences from the Categories and the On Interpretation are quite evident in this passage. From this description of predication it is clear that the

predicates of a natural predication are divided among the secondary categories, while the subject designates a substance in the primary category[8].

But, as we have noted, demonstration also depends upon essential predication. Since natural predication is by itself too general a classification, Aristotle further restricts his concept of predication to those propositions whose subject and predicate expressions signify an essential relation between necessarily related entities (73a21-25, 74b5-15, 73b16-18, 74b5-40, 75a1-40, 76b4-23). Although the two varieties of essential classification are problematic, Aristotle's primary intent is to exclude accidental predications from the fold of proper predication and, thus, demonstration (83a24-35, 84a12-17, 73a34-73b5, 73b16-18). An accidental predication is one which indicates a non-necessary or incidental relation between ontological entities. That a man might be white or black is an accidental fact; that a man is an animal and that an animal is either male or female are necessary facts. In this manner, then, Aristotle attempts to fashion the linguistic model of natural-essential predication according to ontological criteria. The result is a proposition composed of a subject and predicate which isomorphically corresponds to the necessary coherence of substances and certain attributes.

## 9.2 SIGNIFICATION, PREDICATION, AND ONTOLOGY

Here is the point at which we begin to uncover the impact of Aristotle's referential theory of meaning upon his concept of predication and upon his metaphysics. Note that we have three interrelated concepts: (1) ontology or metaphysics; (2) linguistic signification or meaning; (3) and linguistic

predication. This is the order in which Aristotle would arrange the elements of the language-ontology relation: individual extra-linguistic objects (ontology)-->individual linguistic units (signification)-->combined linguistic units (predication). Ontology grounds meaning, and meaning, in turn, grounds predication. Though ontology is prior to signification in this proposed Aristotelian schema, it seems more likely (and it is my thesis) that the middle category of signification exerts the actual, visible control over Aristotle's understanding of linguistic predication and ontology. Aristotle would no doubt reject such an idea at first, but he could be shown that developments in his concept of predication and metaphysics do support such a claim. He would begin to see, as we should, the extent to which he is in the grasp of unexamined linguistic assumptions; this is a legitimate tactic on our part because, as we have more than once observed, language qua language does not fall within the bounds of Aristotle's many philosophical investigations. This is not really a novel thesis, as others have voiced similar interpretations[9]. This particular claim concerns developments that are more or less overtly manifest. Shortly, however, we will discover that even more is at stake in a covert line of development. For the moment, we are obliged to trace out more explicitly how Aristotle's unexamined faith in a referential view of meaning distorts his understanding of predication and makes possible his metaphysics.

### 9.2.1 Review of Theory of Meaning

We should first review and emphasize some features of Aristotle's theory of signification. Individual words are the building blocks of linguistic meaning and cannot, by definition, be syntactically segmented into smaller significant

constituents and, at the same time, retain any meaning. In combination these units construct the meaning of a sentence, and can, in turn, be de-constructed into their original significations. Prior to their combination in a sentence Aristotle views all meaningful words (nouns and verbs alike) as "names"[10]. The concept of the name is the epitome of linguistic meaning for Aristotle. In this Aristotle is merely continuing within a linguistic paradigm he inherited from Plato and the Presocratics[11]. Nouns and verbs are names not in the strict sense of modern logic, which typically recognizes only the proper name or one of its equivalents; they are names because meaningful words are defined in terms of what is called the "name relation." That is, the meaning of a word is what the word designates, be it a particular thing or person, or a general attribute[12]. In a figurative sense we can imagine that names are like nails holding down pieces of wood. A word is a label of sorts, and is attached to things by convention.

Although words are by themselves conventional, their meaning is not; Aristotle believes the meaning of language is natural, i.e., located outside of language in real, extra-linguistic and extra-mental objects. Like Plato before him, Aristotle subscribes to a realist semantics and believes, consequently, that true knowledge of realities designated and described by language is possible. Unlike Plato, however, Aristotle rejects the Forms as intelligible semantic objects. In fact, he calls them "nonny noes," sounds made by people who sing without making sentences (Posterior Analytics, 77a5-9, 83a33-35), certainly not the kind of meaning language should have[13].

Instead, Aristotle offers the categories as objects of linguistic meaning; the categories, as we know, provide a comprehensive classification of the world as given in sense experience. This is Aristotle's first move.



Eventually, when Aristotle creates his own version of metaphysics, he collapses the ten categorial divisions into one and, in so doing, restricts the kind of things that can be genuinely named to substances (Metaphysics, 1003b5-20, 1006a12-1007b18, 1028a10-1028b8, 1030a5-1031a14). This becomes evident in the way that Aristotle claims that talk about attributes is really talk about substances, in the way he claims that there are only genuine definitions of substances, and in the way he argues that meaningful speech requires the existence of substances. Epitomized in the fourth book and fourth chapter of the Metaphysics, we have previously traced how Aristotle argues that the ontological reduction to substance is a precondition of meaningful communication. Thus, in a very basic and cognizant manner, Aristotle restricts the primary signification of words to substances. Although the nature of substances (the concept of substance) remains problematic, Aristotle never doubts their reality because too much depends upon their existence.

Aristotle's theory of meaning parallels the Augustinian conception as described by Wittgenstein in the Investigations. In his usual terse fashion, Wittgenstein describes this view of language as presenting,

a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects--sentences are combinations of such names--In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands. (sec. 1)

His comment upon this view of language a few sections later is that, "this general notion of the meaning of a word surrounds the working language with a haze which makes clear vision impossible" (sec. 5). We can now examine how Aristotle's view of linguistic meaning, summed up in the concept of the name, influences his understanding of predication and ontology.



### 9.2.2 The Problem of Predication

It has been suggested that Aristotle forms his views on predication in response to a problem he inherits from Plato[14]. Raised in Plato's Philebus (14d) and Sophist (251a), the problem of predication is this: given that words are names of things, why is it that one thing seems to have more than one name? It is said of the man Socrates, for instance, not only that he is "Socrates," but also that he is a "man," "white," "wise," etc. What do these different names designate, and how are they related to what they designate? Is the statement "Socrates is wise" about one thing or two; that is, is it just about Socrates, or is about Socrates and wise (or wisdom)? Furthermore, does it make sense to say that such statements can be true or false? One of Plato's rivals, Antisthenes (reputedly a student of both Socrates and Gorgias), claimed that such statements were false. He claimed they were false because the things named (Socrates and wisdom) were different from each other and could not therefore be truly equated in an assertion. Indeed, Antisthenes would allow truth to only tautologies or statements of identity. This was the result of his forcing univocal constraints upon the "is," restricting it to the "is" of identity. Such a statement as the one above is false, if it is interpreted to mean that Socrates is identical with wisdom[15].

Plato correctly believed, however, that such assertions were true, but he was nonetheless committed to the view that the subject and predicate expressions named real and different entities. This assumption, however, required that Plato postulate the existence of things much different from those in the ordinary world. Thus, by creating the Forms as objects of linguistic meaning, Plato answers the problem of predication by providing for a "communion" among the Forms[16].

### 9.3 ARISTOTLE AND THE PROBLEM OF PREDICATION IN EARLY WORKS

Aristotle responds in more than one way to the problem of predication; indeed, his response parallels the development of his metaphysics. In some of his earlier logical works, Aristotle makes headway into the problem of predication, but he is ultimately diverted from greater success by his assumptions about the nature of linguistic meaning. In the Topics (Book 1, chapter 9) and again in the Categories (chapter 4), Aristotle straightforwardly indicates there are a number of different kinds of things in the world signified by words; his is a pluralistic ontology. The diversity of reality is matched by a corresponding diversity in language. Meaningful words designate items belonging to one or another of the categories, and combinations of those words reflect possible combinations of those ontological categories.

As part of his description of the types of relations possible among the categories, Aristotle introduces an ontological asymmetry among the categories; he makes the secondary categories dependent upon the primary, independent category of substance. Although the secondary categories are dependent upon substance for their realization, they retain (as distinct ontological genera) a partial independence and separation from the primary category. The ontological relations between substance and the other categories provide two configurations which underlie ordinary linguistic predication[17]. Things designated by predicate expressions are either "said of" or are "present in" things (substances) designated by subject expressions; substances are defined just the reverse. These are the only two predicative configurations offered in the Categories.

From what is evident in the Topics and Categories, Aristotle answers the problem of predication in this way. In a predication of the basic type the same thing is not named twice, although it may look that way. Different things are signified by the subject and predicate expressions. That does not mean we must resort to Antisthenes' or Plato's solution. All kinds of statements can be true, not only tautologies. Aristotle proposes, instead, that we must understand in what way subject and predicate expressions are related. The diversity of things given in the categories, coupled with the two basic configurations of predication, make possible a wide variety of meaningful and true assertions. In a sentence of the basic type, where one thing is asserted of another, the subject designates a primary substance and the predicate an entity belonging to one of the other categories. The referent of the predicate depends upon the referent of the subject for its expression in either of the two ontological configurations of predication underlying predication[18].

On this account of predication the subject and predicate expressions are both names, but they name different things. Although in the predication "Socrates is white" the name "white" applies to "Socrates" it names the individual white in Socrates[19]. In Aristotle's terminology, white stands in a homonymous relation to Socrates, which means the name but not the definition of white applies to Socrates. In the sentence "Socrates is a man" both the name and the definition of man apply to Socrates; in Aristotle's terms, again, man stands in a synonymous relation with Socrates. Whereas the first example is underridden by the "present in" relation, the second is structured according to the "said of" predication. In either of the two ontological configurations underlying predication, it is important to see that although

the category designated by the predicate is dependent upon the category of substance for its expression, it is not strictly a part of substance. This is due, it seems, to Aristotle's assumption that the meaning of a sentence hinges upon its segmentation into uncombined meaningful constituents. That is, if the meaning of a word is what thing the word names, that thing must be distinguishable; and Aristotle's categories intend to provide the necessary distinctions. Even though a sentence combines the categories into a unified utterance by one of the two configurations of predication, the names and the categories signified inhabit their own discrete universes. Aristotle's main failure is that he does not approach the sentence as an irreducible linguistic unit itself; but he is prohibited from doing that by his view of the meaning of words.

### 9.3.1 Summary and Analysis

There are several positive elements in Aristotle's early treatment of predication, however. His theory of the categories definitely catapults the concept of asymmetry into the linguistic domain, a concept which I take (following Strawson) to be fundamental to any adequate account of predication. But the fact that Aristotle does not see the postulated ontological asymmetry as an inevitable result of the already given linguistic asymmetry between subject and predicate, that he, in fact, reasons from the reverse conception, is perhaps his greatest misunderstanding of language and predication. Secondly, and closely related to the ontological, categorial asymmetry set forth in the Categories is Aristotle's description in the On Interpretation (1a16ff. and 16a9ff.) of the sentence as a combination of heterogeneous constituents. Following Plato's characterization of the "assertion" in the

Sophist (262), Aristotle describes the sentence as certain combination (sumploke) of two different linguistic elements, nouns and verbs[20]. Peter Geach has the most incisive comment on this matter. Once Aristotle moves on to develop his syllogistic, he evidently forgets or simply ignores the differences previously marked between subjects and predicates; this is obvious in the way Aristotle indifferently interchanges subjects and predicates as terms within premises of the syllogism. According to Geach, this is a major flaw in Aristotle's logic, although it does not adversely affect the theory of the syllogism. By obscuring the distinctive and heterogeneous (or asymmetrical) nature of the proposition, Aristotle thus sets the logical tradition on an uncertain footing until Frege, who rediscovers the distinction between subject and predicate in the late nineteenth century and makes it a cornerstone of modern logic[21].

Finally, as we indicated in the section on Aristotle's theory of meaning, Aristotle differentiates singular from general terms in the Topics (178b38-179a10; also located here in chapter 8, section 2.4.1, passage 2; and in the On Interpretation (17a38ff.; located here in chapter 8, section 2.4.1, passage 12). According to Quine, as was outlined in our first chapter on Aristotle's theory of language (chapter 7), predication is defined as "the basic combination in which singular and general terms find their contrasting roles." That Aristotle makes the distinction between singular and general terms is in his favor. That he does not use it to develop a better concept of predication is not. Where Aristotle introduces the distinction between singular and general terms in the Topics, his purpose is simply to expose the fallacy of interpreting general terms as signifying substances. He is underscoring, as I take it, an ontological point. And in the On

Interpretation, after briefly noting the ontological differences between singular and general terms, he immediately ignores those differences and claims that in a proposition either singular or general terms may occupy the subject position. This is done of course as a prelude to the square of opposition in that work and to prepare the way for his theory of the syllogism in the Prior Analytics.

If one is accustomed to viewing Aristotle's logic in relation with his ontology, this is a curious development because it certifies that expressions other than those designating substances may occupy the subject position in a statement-making sentence, the basic type of linguistic predication. Apparently, Aristotle's success in developing his syllogistic theory causes him to treat logical subjects much differently from ontological subjects (the primary substance of the categories). The flexibility of the subject position so that it receives both singular and general terms (described in chapter 7 of the On Interpretation) sows the seeds for what develops more fully in Aristotle's theory of the syllogism. This brings us again, from a slightly different direction, to Geach's "interchangeability thesis" because we have once more the unrestricted interchange of subject and predicate expressions (singular and general terms) as terms among the propositions of the syllogism.

Thus, Aristotle's early views on predication are incomplete and inconsistent, albeit there are several possibilities for significant developments. He recognizes a difference between singular and general terms and between subject and predicate expressions, but he does not use these insights to further his understanding of linguistic predication. Very curiously, after describing in his ontology an asymmetry between substances and the secondary categories and after explaining in his ontology that

substances are denoted by singular terms and the secondaries categories by general terms, he ignores these distinctions in his logic--evidently the result of his pursuit of the doctrine of the syllogism.

#### 9.4 THE PROBLEM OF PREDICATION IN THE POSTERIOR ANALYTICS

Although Aristotle scores some points in his early bouts with predication by drawing attention to the asymmetry inherent in the two ontological configurations underlying predication (the "said of" and "present in" relations), these non-linguistic relations present many difficulties upon close examination. By the time of the Posterior Analytics Aristotle has abandoned these classifications of predication in favor of the essential/accidental dichotomy, first established in the Topics in the theory of predicables[22]. The main difficulty relevant to the problem of predication is this: Aristotle commits himself to entities in the secondary categories which exhibit some kind of existence apart and different from the primary substance they are either "said of" or "present in." This is as it should be because it is in accord with his doctrine of categories and with his view of the atomic, referential nature of linguistic meaning--the first of which slices up the world into distinctive ontological pieces and the second of which pinpoints those pieces by naming them. But there is also evidence of a residual Platonism. Even though Aristotle avoids the nether world of the Forms, his secondary categories continue to elude the referential grasp of language because words cannot be readily pinned onto qualities, quantities, etc.

Therefore, the problem of predication still looms before Aristotle in the Posterior Analytics: how is it that in a predicative sentence of the basic

type the same thing appears to have more than one name? We determined at the beginning of this chapter that Aristotle limits his demonstrative science to natural-essential predications. The question now, how does this kind of predication relate to the problem of predication? Dominated by his restrictive, referential view of meaning, Aristotle must try another tack to guarantee that meaningful words designate real and identifiable things, and more specifically, that linguistic predications are about those things. Since ontology precedes language for Aristotle, this requires that he first describe what sorts of things are signified in a predication. Thus, his view of linguistic meaning not only pushes him to restrict the domain of predication to predications described as natural and essential, it also begins to motivate a shift in his ontology--away from the diversity of being to the focality of being. The shift eventually culminates (as we observed in the chapter on Aristotle's logic and ontology) in the fourth book of the Metaphysics where Aristotle proclaims his general science of Being. I am saddling Aristotle's theory of signification and meaning with a lot of responsibility, but I think there is good reason for it.

Coming to the Posterior Analytics, Aristotle has not yet solved the problem of predication. His initial response, presented above, is to suppose that many things are named in a predication (as many as can be found in the categories). But this precariously commits him to things that cannot be as easily named as primary substances can be; similar to Plato's Forms, the secondary categories continue to exude an unreal aura, freely floating from one primary substance to another. Aristotle is faced with a dilemma of sorts: he must either modify his pluralistic ontology as given in the categories, or he must modify his view of linguistic meaning. I doubt that it even occurs to



him to do the latter, so fervently is he dedicated to his realist semantics, his referential view of meaning. Of course, Aristotle is simply reasoning from the unquestioned presupposition dominating Greek thought about language, namely, that words are names of things; the meaning of a word is what it labels. As a result, Aristotle's only recourse and response to the posed dilemma is to modify his ontology, not his assumptions about linguistic meaning.

Hence, whereas Aristotle offers in his earlier account the explanation that different things are named in a predication, in the Posterior Analytics his solution is just the reverse. That is, in a natural-essential predication the same thing is named by both the subject and predication expressions. The thing that is named by both is the hypokeimenon, which Hamlyn translates as the familiar "substance"[23]. The subject expression picks out the particular substance and the predicate designates a certain characteristic inherent to that substance. Both the predicate and subject expressions name the same thing because natural-essential predications are about those substances and attributes which are necessarily related; they are related to the extent that an attribute is just part of what the substance is. A natural-essential predication describes just what a substance is. On this newer accounting of predication, a predicate is just as much a name of the substance as the subject because it belongs to it[24]. Unlike Aristotle's early account which allowed attributes in the secondary categories a partial independence in that they were not strictly considered a part of the substance upon which they depended, in the Posterior Analytics predicate expressions denote things that are necessarily related (inherent in) in the substance upon which they still depend.

We might see the difference in this way. In the early account, to name an entity with a predicate doesn't entail naming any particular substance or kind of substance. However, in the Posterior Analytics, designating an entity with a predicate expression entails that a particular substance or kind of substance is also named. This is of course true for only natural-essential predication, not unnatural or accidental predications. For example, the predicate 'man' entails that some individual man is named. In this first kind of essential predication, the subject is contained in the definition of the predicate. Or, in the second variety of essential predication, the predicate 'female' entails that the subject expression designate an animal. In this case, the predicate contains the subject in its definition.

To briefly sum up. Aristotle is pressed by his theory of meaning to secure a foundation in the world for meaningful words in real, identifiable things. He reasons, I think, that if there are names of things and things are the meanings of names, then there must be things to be named. Aristotle's restrictive account of predication, viewed within the context of the problem of predication, is one version of his attempt to guarantee the existence of those things. By restricting predication to necessarily related subject and predicate expressions (which reflect the stuff of the world), Aristotle does pin down a class of things which are named by both subject and predicate expressions. He thus fulfills the requirements imposed by his concept of linguistic meaning. Hamlyn observes that Aristotle's ontological position in the Posterior Analytics is very much like Leibniz' view of the relation between an individual substance and its attributes[25]. Leibniz claims that in a true predication, reflecting as it does the nature of things, "the content of the subject must always include the predicate in such a way that if

one understands perfectly the concept of the subject, he will know that the predicate appertains to it also"[26].

We are witnessing in Aristotle's treatment of predication in the Posterior Analytics an ontological reduction in the kinds of things that can be genuinely named. Predicate expressions, at least in natural-essential predications, no longer designate items in the secondary categories which are really different from what they depend upon--as was the case in the early doctrine of the categories. Predicate expressions are really indirect ways of naming substances. If this is so, we are at the threshold of Aristotle's general science of Being that is soon to be heralded in the Metaphysics.

#### Notes

- [1] Peter Thomas Geach, Logic Matters, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 45.
- [2] Barnes, "Notes" to Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, pp. xixi, xviii.
- [3] Barnes, p. 116. The labels "natural" and "unnatural" are not original with Aristotle. They are terms used since the ancient commentators to conveniently refer to what Barnes translates as "predicating simpliciter" and "predicating incidentally." We will adopt the traditional convention here.
- [4] Andreas Graeser, "On Language, Thought, and Reality in Ancient Greek Philosophy," Dialectica, 31 (1977), p. 375.
- [5] Barnes, p. 83.
- [6] Barnes, p. 113-118. Barnes provides thorough discussions of each of these types and situates them with respect to Aristotle's demonstrative science.
- [7] Barnes, p. 115.
- [8] Barnes, p. 168. D. W. Hamlyn, p. "Aristotle on Predication," Phronesis, 6 (1961) p. 122-125.
- [9] Hamlyn, pp. 110-111, 116-117. Graeser, pp. 373-378.

- [10] Walter Lesl, Logic and Metaphysics in Aristotle (Padova, Italy: Editrice Antenore, 1970), pp. 34-35.
- [11] Graeser, p. 363. W.K.C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 204ff.
- [12] Franz Kutschera, Philosophy of Language, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1975), pp. 24-25. pp. 24-25.
- [13] Barnes, p. 169.
- [14] Hamlyn. p. 110-111.
- [15] Hamlyn, p. 111. Ernst Kapp, Greek Foundations of Traditional Logic, (1942; rpt; New York: AMS Press, 1967), pp. 52-57. Guthrie, pp. 209ff.
- [16] D. W. Hamlyn, "The Communion of Forms and the Development of Plato's Logic," The Philosophical Quarterly 5 (1955), 289-295.
- [17] J.M.E. Moravcsik, "Aristotle on Predication," Philosophical Review, 76 (1967), pp. 82-83, 85-92.
- [18] Hamlyn, "Aristotle on Predication," p. 124. Moravcsik, p. 82, 93-96.
- [19] R.E. Allen, "Substance and Predication in the Categories," in Exegesis and Argument, ed. E.N. Lee and others (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1973), p. 373.
- [20] Moravcsik, pp. 126-26. Ackrill, 73, 114.
- [21] Geach, Logic Matters, pp. 45-47.
- [22] Guthrie, VI, pp. 146-148.
- [23] Hamlyn, "Aristotle on Predication," p. 122.
- [24] Hamlyn, "Aristotle on Predication," pp. 116, 125.
- [25] Hamlyn, "Aristotle on Predication," p. 125.
- [26] Wilhelm Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics, trans. George R. Mopntgomery (1902; rpt. Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1937), p. 13.

## Chapter X

### A DECONSTRUCTIVE GLANCE AT SUBSTANCES AND NAMES

Since we have already examined in chapter six the extent to which Aristotle's concept of substance emerges as the ultimate ontological category, I will not retrace the connections between Aristotle's understanding of predication and ontology in the Metaphysics. To summarize a few important points from that discussion, however, we should note that the ontological reduction to substance is achieved by the assimilation of the secondary categories to the primary category of substance. This is to say that, from Aristotle's revised metaphysical perspective, the secondary categories are already present within the full idea of substance. They no longer have reign over their own distinctive and irreducible domains. This ontological shift happens in connection with the problem of predication because Aristotle's referential notion of linguistic meaning manufactures the necessity that words name real and identifiable things in the world. As such, the argument advanced thus far suggests that Aristotle makes basic shifts in his concept of predication and in his ontology in order to accommodate assumptions about the nature of linguistic meaning. Aristotle's conversion to a belief in the encompassing nature of substantial being and in the focal nature of linguistic 'being' indicate the profound influence his concept of linguistic meaning exerts upon his philosophy.

As set forth in our earlier interpretation of Aristotle's fourth book of the Metaphysics, Aristotle's motivation and justification for his ontology

originates with his concern over the necessary conditions of meaningful discourse. Using Kant's transcendental form of argument (that "X" is necessary for "Y") Aristotle makes the buck stop at his metaphysics of substance. The full concept of substance ("X") is necessary for meaningful discourse ("Y"). His basis for postulating substance as such consists of his linguistic-logical arguments pertaining to definition, the definitive signification of names, and the principle of non-contradiction.

#### 10.1 SUMMARY OF THE LOGICAL-REPRESENTATIONAL VIEW OF LANGUAGE

That sums up the visible tide of influence which Aristotle's theory of linguistic meaning exerts upon his linguistic and metaphysical development. Over the course of his metaphysical development two concepts emerge as the locus of the language-ontology relation. The concept of substance is the essence of Aristotle's ontology, while the concept of the name is the essence of his view of linguistic meaning. We have painstakingly attempted to trace the influence of his view of linguistic meaning upon his concept of predication and, most importantly, upon his concept of substance.

Aristotle's response to the problem of predication (how comes it that one thing has many names) shows his failure to understand what predication is about and uncovers the linguistic assumptions guiding his developing ontology.

This all strikes me as the result of a certain view of the nature and function of language which has been conveniently labelled here as the "logical-representational" conception of language. Basically, this view of language assumes that language obtains its meaning from the sorts of things named by words and combinations of words. At the level of the individual linguistic unit, a word names (designates or identifies) some extra-linguistic

entity for which the word stands proxy in the absence of the thing named. In this way, the nature of language is representational. At the level of the sentence designation yields to description, a certain combination of names that describe a fact about the world. The function of language, according to this view, is to ascertain true knowledge about the nature of reality. It is a logical function because these kinds of descriptive sentences (Aristotle's statement-making sentences) are distinguished by their capacity to have truth values. Reasoning and argumentation is sound on this account of language, if propositions are true and inference is valid. In Aristotle's case, the end result is either scientific or metaphysical knowledge. The inseparable connection of this view of language with metaphysical pursuits is especially evident in Aristotle's metaphysics. His metaphysics of substance offers itself as the ground of linguistic meaning in such a way that, without it, human communication would be impossible.

## 10.2 THE COVERT NATURE OF SUBSTANCE

To conclude our study of Aristotle's theory of language and to bring the larger investigation to a temporary halt, I would like to briefly examine the two conceptual cornerstones of Aristotle's theory of language and his corresponding ontology--first, the concept of substance and, second, the concept of the name. In previous chapters we have traced in some detail the interrelation of these two concepts. Even if that line of argument proves unconvincing, each of these concepts of themselves are problematic enough to cast serious doubt upon the coherence of both Aristotle's theory of language and his metaphysics. And if Aristotle's view of language and metaphysics proves incoherent, so will much of Western philosophical thinking about

language and the world. In the two previous chapters I have outlined the influence of Aristotle's assumptions about linguistic meaning upon his ontology and concept of predication. The visible effect of Aristotle's referential view of meaning, with the name as its linguistic paradigm, is to pinpoint the meaning of language to substances. Substances are what language is really about.

However, an almost imperceptible covert transaction takes place along that overt, ontological line of development. It is imperceptible because it is almost too obvious and because it strikes against a view of language which is still very much in power. The covert transaction is this: the concept of predication which Aristotle does not articulate in his theory of language smuggles its way into his ontology; it is disguised, however, as his concept of substance. In spite of Aristotle's inattention to it, language finds its own way, anyway. In other words, Aristotle's tacit displacement of a proper account of linguistic predication creates a tension that forces the asymmetrical and irreducible linguistic structure of predication to project and express itself in another form. There is a simultaneous suppression and liberation of predication. The suppression is due to Aristotle's referential view of meaning, which is unalterably opposed to the irreducible, asymmetrical nature of predication; the liberation and expression of predication freely emerges in an altered form as the deviant creation of his metaphysics, namely, in the concept of substance.

That Aristotle fails to comprehend what linguistic predication is about is, perhaps, a point that needs further emphasis. In general, he does not recognize or respect the irreducible, asymmetrical integrity of the sentence. The sentence is a complex linguistic unit that, for Aristotle, is reducible to



the sum of its simpler, meaningful constituents. Moreover, he collapses the predicate into the subject, and he does this in a variety of ways. The class of natural-essential predications identified in the Posterior Analytics as the kind of predication demonstration deals with requires that the predicate necessarily inhere, already be a part of the subject. Secondly, Aristotle's syllogistic logic allows, in general, the free interchange of subject and predicate expressions as terms within premises of the syllogism; as Frege, Geach and others have observed, this move ignores the heterogeneous, asymmetrical structure of the logical proposition. Finally, and most poignantly, in the Metaphysics Aristotle draws the secondary categories up into the primary category of substance in such a way that the secondary categories are already given in the full concept of substance.

Thus, as we draw near to the heart of substance and look at Aristotle's description of that metaphysical masterpiece, it becomes increasingly evident that what he has failed to articulate in his theory of language finds a subconscious fruition in the quintessence of not-language. The internal composition of substance, we find upon scrutiny of the constituents of substance (or essence, as given in definition), displays the same predicative structure as the basic type of linguistic predication; in Aristotle this structure is most explicitly described in his characterization of the "statement-making sentence," the foundation of his syllogistic logic. In other words, the combination of the genus and differentia (which represents the union of matter and form, respectively) is really a replication of the asymmetrical, irreducible polarity that distinctively characterizes linguistic predication. Hence, the intra-predicative structure of substance, formed as it appears from the combination of its heterogeneous constituents, is an

abstraction from linguistic structure; and in its role as an ontological construct, the concept of substance is born from the hypostatization of linguistic predication.

The intra-predicative structure of substance results from the introjection of the exterior, linguistic subject and predicate form into the interior conceptual space of substance. The basic subject-predicate, linguistic structure is simply a given in Aristotle's language. But it does not clearly emerge in his ontology until it has been thoroughly displaced from its proper linguistic domain by the increasing predomination of his referential view of meaning. In short, linguistic predication undergoes a process of sublimation by a coerced transformation from the linguistic to the non-linguistic realm. The structure of language is sublimed into the fundamental structure of reality in the ostensibly metaphysical construct of substance. Reality has the structure of language not because reality determines the structure of language (as Aristotle would have it), but because the only structure possible is that given by language. Wittgenstein says the same thing better in his Investigations. Concerning the general form of the proposition ("this is how things are"), he comments, "One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing's nature over and over again, and one is merely tracing round the frame through which we look at it" (sec. 114).

A brief comparison of the structure of substance with the structure of the basic type of predicative sentence reveals more than just an accidental family resemblance between substances and sentences. In chapter seven where I outlined our critical approach to Aristotle's theory of language and ontology, I established as fundamental (following Strawson, Ricoeur and others) the irreducible nature of the sentence, constituted by the

asymmetrical combination of an identifying/particularizing function with a characterizing/universalizing function. The subject expression performs the first function, the predicate the second. The dialectical asymmetry of these structures inscribed together within the sentence provides us a fundamental account of predication. Predication does not exist below the level of the sentence. By its referential movement to designate existent things in the world, the identifying function is primarily an existentializing function. In contrast, through the abstracting movement away from particular existents, the characterizing function reaches toward the universal and forms general qualifications that apply to a range of things. Although some value one function over the other (Frege and Benveniste), the asymmetry itself is essential to the integrity of the sentence, of predication, of linguistic meaning in general. One function without the other is not a possibility. To believe that one is possible without the other would be to misunderstand predication and language itself; linguistic difference makes their being possible. In general, while the subject expression posits the brute existence of something (of some material or abstract matter), the predicate characterizes that something into a determinate fashion. This is predication, this is the differential play between subject and predicate--from this dialectic meaning emerges and can, subsequently, be distributed to its constituents.

Aristotle's description of substance is strikingly the same. Inscribed in the structure of the genus-differentia combination of the definition, the concept of substance exhibits the same asymmetrical nature as the basic predicative sentence. The genus posits the existence of some undifferentiated mass of matter (as the material cause) while the differentia (as the formal

cause) gives the matter a specific form. Again, the same differential play of language, this of that. At some point, one has to stop speaking--nothing else can be explained. It has to be seen. Together, they define the essence of substance. I hope someone else sees it.

To thwart off a couple of quick objections to my interpretation of substance as this kind of linguistic object, I don't think: (1) the concept of substance and the concept of the sentence/predication exhibit only an analogical similarity, and (2) this asserts the dull and trivial claim we must use sentences to describe the world. I will use the same reason to answer both possible objections. Aristotle's description of the concept of substance is not a normal type of description, for instance, of a familiar object or event in the world (e.g., of this table upon which I'm typing). Of course, one has to use sentences with subjects and predicates to say, "the table is brown." Aristotle has moved into the more abstract regions of the conceptual universe, and he is intent upon laying out the underlying structures of things, the real essence of this table even. His concept of substance does not describe an object like this table, but rather the structure which makes this object possible, which makes the table what it is. His concept of substance as given in the structure of definition is Aristotle's best attempt at grasping this abstract object. What he doesn't realize is that his reflections and efforts to abstract the structure of substance can only yield replications of linguistic form, specifically that of predication--so dominant in his logic, so given in language. This effort moves him beyond the realm of ordinary descriptions, and it tells against a mere analogical resemblance between the concept of substance and the concept of linguistic predication.

Aristotle tells us very little about the real world, as he imagines it, but he tells us a great deal about language. Of course, his metaphysics looks as if it is about something other than language, and Aristotle clearly believes he is up to more than a language game. This is one reason, I think, why Aristotle has such great difficulty in describing the concept of substance. He is trying to describe the nature of language, a quest (though now articulated) which has proven just as inscrutable, as elusive, to modern linguists and philosophers as Aristotle's quest for substance. They are the same thing; and I doubt whether language will rend the veil of language any more than it gives access to Aristotelian substances. That dream is built into the language, though.

#### 10.2.1 Substance and Transformatinal Grammar

The concept of substance can also be interpreted as linguistic construct from the perspective of transformational grammar (TG). For this explanation I will use Aristotle's definition of the substance "man" as a "rational animal." According to Aristotle, this definition is a combination of the genus "animal" and the differentia "rational." It gives us the essence of man. Within a transformational grammar a combination of this sort falls within the class of nominalizing transformations. Such a nominalization as "rational animal" is the result of a recursive transformation performed upon more primitive linguistic levels. These deeper structures have, supposedly, a syntactically simpler form. The abstract form of the kernel structure underlying this nominalization is "T-N-is-Adj" (i.e., article-noun-is-adj). In this case "X animal is rational." Denoted here by "X," the "T" slot may be empty. After the transformation in which the "is" is deleted and the "noun" is preposed by

the "adj," the surface structure yields the abstract structure of "T-adj-noun"; the result is "rational animal" in this case[1].

It seems, then, that all definitions of the type described by Aristotle are, from a TG perspective, the surface effects of transformations applied to deeper, kernel structures. The important point is not the particular transformation (since others are possible that yield a genus-differentia combination). The important point is that the underlying structure of the genus-differentia derives from the same basic subject-predicate construction so prominent in Aristotle's logic (and in Indo-European languages). In every case it would seem that the genus differentia combination has a transformational history that can be traced back to the subject-predicate construction. One has to see by inspection that the genus-differentia of a definition is a refashioning of the more basic subject-predicate relation. Fortunately, transformational grammar provides a descriptive mechanism that illuminates the recursive structuring of language, and, consequently of Aristotle's concept of substance. From this perspective, then, Aristotle's substance hypostatizes the recursive structuring of language. And he has given us another tautology; linguistic structure discovers linguistic structure.

### 10.3 THE NAME AS THE BASIS OF LINGUISTIC MEANING

There remains, finally, the argument concerning Aristotle's concept of the name. In previous chapters where I treated Aristotle's theory of meaning, we established his commitment to a referential view of meaning. The essence of this view of meaning is summed up in the concept of the name. According to this view, words name things; the meaning of language is located apart from

language in real, identifiable objects. The kinds of things genuinely named range, for Aristotle, from diverse possibilities provided by the categories to the single possibility of substance. My effort here is to show that the concept of the name is incoherent when taken in its role as providing the foundation of the meaning of language. Moreover, although the criticisms here are directed against Aristotle's "logical-representational" view of language, they apply in many ways to the traditional doctrine of linguistic meaning. In the modern era, for instance, the Logical Positivist and General Semantics movements march under this banner in an extreme way.

To accomplish this deconstructive task, a passage from Aristotle's On Interpretation will serve as the basis of argument. Although the text overtly states one thing, it covertly says something quite different. Elucidating the nature of the name, Aristotle explains,

A name is a spoken sound significant by convention....I say 'by convention' because no name is a name naturally but only when it has become a symbol. Even inarticulate noises (of beasts, for instance) do indeed reveal something, yet none of them is a name. (16a19, 16a26-28)

As part of his general purpose in the first few chapters of this work, Aristotle is making an argument for the conventional nature of language. In this passage he develops a clear contrast between the conventional and natural alternatives. Animals, for instance, make natural noises and indicate something (as indexical signs), but their inarticulate (agrammatoi) noises do not count as names. They do not count, for Aristotle, because they are not first symbols in the way in which human "names" are first symbols.

A name must first be a symbol in this way. As others have interpreted this passage, a spoken sound is a symbol if it is formed according to

rule-governed conventions. That is, a symbol is capable of being segmented into discrete sounds; it is resolvable into phonemes, in other words[2]. Defined in this way, the symbol presupposes the concept of writing. Except in crude onomatopoetic representations, the noises of animals do not have the possibility of being written. They are agrammatoi, unwriteable[3]. In this way, then, the concept of writing is prior to that of speech. This is, of course, an important point with Derrida because it upsets the traditional perception that writing is a representation of speech, and is, therefore, somehow inferior.

There is more to it than this, however. Aristotle does not realize the full import of his insight that a name is first a symbol, that, in general, the conventional character of language is due to its symbolic character. By his own admission in this passage, in order to justify the conventional nature of language, Aristotle makes the name a complex concept in that it presupposes the concept of the symbol. How complex can the name be? This can be answered by asking and answering to what extent the symbol is prior to the name.

Aristotle would appear to limit his description of the symbol to the syntactic domain in that a symbol is defined in terms of its ability to be segmented into phonemes. Such a description shows an awareness of the rule-governed and differential character of language. But it tends to bypass the central semantic feature of the symbol, namely, that a symbol, as a symbol, stands for something. That semantic notion of representation is wrapped up in the concept of the name. A name designates something, which something is its meaning. However, before a name can designate anything, the name must first be understood as a symbol which can substitute for things. The concept of substitution precedes that of designation.



But the concept of substitution, of letting "X" go proxy for "Y," demands something still more primitive than the concept of the symbol. It assumes no less than a complete linguistic system, a language. And this is the devastating blow to the concept of the name. Obviously, if a language makes possible the concept of the symbol and the symbol makes possible the concept of the name, the name fails miserably as as a basis for linguistic meaning. Naming is more of a meta-linguistic activity, a complex linguistic activity that already assumes an indefinite number of more basic linguistic levels.

The members of a speech community must already possess a language in order to agree that "X" can stand for "Y." Only then can things be labelled with names. It seems that we are forced to conclude that the meaning of language is given in the language, not beyond. But this thrusts us into the differential and differantial construction of meaning. And difference or differance makes reference even more problematic. But we will not pursue that suggestion at this point.

The problem just described, which makes the concept of the name incoherent, is not a problem that confronts Aristotle, however. The reason: language is for him a nomenclature, a code. Speech stands to thought in the same way that writing stands to speaking. However, the relation between thoughts and things is not conventional, but natural. The semantic aspect of thought is not affected in the least by spoken or written language. Although men may not all share the same language, Aristotle believes they do share and have agreement among themselves in their experience of the world. Since speech and writing are nomenclatures for Aristotle, the concept of the symbol does not become problematic. There is something beyond speaking and writing, something in thought which maintains and guarantees the natural representation

of the world, something which would pull the name and its object together. As such, Aristotle is committed, without saying so, to another kind of language, a mental language that would not have the symbolic character he attributes to names in the passage above--it is beyond convention.

At this point, I think Wittgenstein could shed some light on the preceding argument against the name. One of his principal contributions in the Investigations is to display the problematic, complex activity of naming. Indeed, he demonstrates in numerous ways that one must already know a language in order to name anything. This is his major criticism of the traditional, Augustinian conception of linguistic meaning (Sec. 30-33). More graphically, Wittgenstein attacks the idea of ostensive definition, the gestural correlate of the linguistic name. Ostensive definition is simply the action of pointing at something in order to define it . One might point at a chair, person, gadget part, and so forth. This is ostensive reference, one way of defining words in a language. Indeed, General Semanticists think this is the very best way. Pointing, like naming, is a complex activity. One must already already know a language in order to know what is being pointed at. How is it possible to distinguish, for instance, when someone is pointing at shape or at color? (sec. 33-36)

Although Aristotle is prohibited from seeing the incoherence of the name as the basic unit of linguistic meaning, this incoherence is embedded in the full concept of the symbol in the midst of his semantic theory. Since language remains throughout a nomenclature for Aristotle, the semantic aspect of language remains untouched by the fact of language. Naming does not become problematic for Aristotle because the assumed natural relation between thought and things overrides the conventional nature of language to guarantee the

correspondence (the isomorphism) between a piece of the code (a name) and its real referent. Were Aristotle to consider the possibility that thought is impossible without language, his whole scheme would founder. But this is not really a possibility for Aristotle.

#### 10.4 CONCLUSION

It is a sobering moment to contemplate the probability that the knowledge we can grasp is reducible to knowledge of linguistic structure; even more, the knowledge we seek beyond language. For myself, this moment strikes a discordant note over the nostalgic memory of an almost forgotten verse: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The duplicity of this text resurrects still another meaning. The Being men seek is the Being sought by language, but this Being is already and only given in 'being.' What else could it be? That is the the real conclusion. There are others less compelling, however.

Throughout this investigation into early Greek thought, I have attempted to bring to a more conscious level the linguistic assumptions which "originally" pitted logic against rhetoric and set the stage for their historic incompatibility. Since Aristotle and Plato are the seminal figures in this Western epoch, the most urgent need has been to examine their successes in establishing the "logical-representational" view of language. Although I have begun dismantling elements of that traditional linguistic doctrine, the task is yet undone. Beyond the early founders of rhetoric and beyond a brief sketch of the critical perspective guiding my deconstruction, little effort has gone toward developing the "rhetorical-semiotic" view of language.

If the undoing of the "logical-representational" view of language could ever be successful, certain implications would follow. Discourse theories which assume fundamental epistemological or ontological categories would prove incoherent (D'Angelo's). The same would go for grammatical theories that try to do more than describe the grammar of a language (Chomsky's). General Semantics could be dismissed. George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" would lose its revered status in English departments. Ramus' split of rhetoric from logic would be reconceptualized, as would the current debate over paradigm shifts in composition pedagogy. Thesis and topic sentences would fall from grace. The literacy crisis would be gone.

What would replace these things? Language would be examined in the context of human action. It would also be treated as an end in itself. This stuff has already been done, right? I don't know exactly what it would mean in a practical sense. Though I haven't much thought about it, the perceived necessity to manufacture and measure out in coffee spoons the practical applications in a classroom strikes me, at this moment, as an attempt to subvert a new possibility by stuffing and sealing it into that traditional envelope. I don't want to think about it just yet.

#### Notes

- [1] Noam Chomsky, Syntactic Structures, (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1957), pp. 72, 114.
- [2] Norman Kretzman, "Aristotle on Spoken Sound Significant by Convention," Ancient Logic and Its Modern Interpretations, ed. John Corcoran (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1974), pp. 15-17. Ronald Zirin, "Inarticulate Noises," in Corcoran above, pp. 23-25.
- [3] Newton Garver, "Preface," to Jacques Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

RHETORIC, LOGIC, AND LANGUAGE IN EARLY GREEK THOUGHT

by

B. Dennis McCutchen

B.A., Hardin-Simmons University, 1976

---

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

---

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas, 1984

(c) B. Dennis McCutchen, 1984

## ABSTRACT

One history of rhetoric is the history of its struggle against logic. Although both originated in ancient Greece, logic pre-empted the intellectual field and became the approved form by which truth, knowledge, and value were attained and communicated. It assumed its dominant position when it usurped rhetoric. While Plato initiated the move against rhetoric with his dialectic, Aristotle completed the transition with his syllogistic theory.

Interestingly, the logics of both Plato and Aristotle emerge from their metaphysics. Although their logics and metaphysics are different in many respects, they share a similar conception of the nature and function of language. By contrast, Gorgias denies the possibility of a coherent logic or metaphysics. Assuming an altogether different view of language, he elevates rhetoric and its focus upon the practical, human uses of language.

As a result of modern efforts of scholars such as Saussure, Derrida, and Wittgenstein, it is now possible to articulate these different conceptions of language. Whereas logic assumes a "logical-representational" view of language, rhetoric bases itself on a "rhetorical-semiotic" conception. Such different conceptions help account for their historic opposition and, more specifically, the displacement of rhetoric from the mainstream of the Western intellectual tradition.

The key to rehabilitating and maintaining a legitimate tradition of rhetoric is to increase the tradition's consciousness of linguistic foundations. Once linguistic possibilities have broadened, it is possible to dismantle the unquestioned authority of the "logical-representational" view of language. In this respect, then, it is important to consider how the fundamental theses of Aristotle's logic-metaphysics and theory of language can be deconstructed.