Aristotle's Politics between Rhetoric and Philosophy

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If you intend to praise, consider what you would have suggested; if you intend to suggest, consider what you would praise.
(Gorgias, Encomium of Helen, 1368 a 6 ff.)

§ 1. I need to explain why I selected this argument for my writing sample. Is time to reclaim the *Rhetoric* as a philosophical work, to analyze its relation to ethics, politics, that Aristotle blends with wisdom with psychological aspects; all of these connected with his Logic. I wish renewe philosophical interest in a work that had been left in the hands of the critics comes from different directions: from a concern about ethical constrains on pubblic discourse; from an interest in the varieties of persuasive arguments and its technique; from the investigation about what Aristotle means about the best State and the best statement. But essentially, about what kind of man could be Aristotle's *politikos*, the one that decides in deliberative and judicial ways. These investigation lead us directly to the connection between Aristotle's psychology and his logic.

What are the instruments of reasonable persuasion? How do rhetorical and politics skill serve one another? How do appeals to the imagination and the emotions vary with subject matter and the audience? How do linguistic strategy Aristotle used in persuasion? Is rhetoric an essential knowledge for a *politikos*?

The *Rhetoric* provides a great example of Aristotle's capacity of combining an analysis of the ends and structure of a practice, with normative advice to its practitioners. His description of successful rhetorical strategies gives guiding counsel to aspiring rhetoricians, whether or not they intend to speak truthfully or not. But since he agrees with Plato that the right rhetoric, the successful one, is truthful, he wants to give the best rhetoricians advice about how to construct persuasive sounds and persuasive arguments. Aristotle can make the best case for his complex position by concentrating on deliberative rhetoric, a mix between decision and action that is the main activity of the *politikoi*.

Not less important, is to understand how the politics enter in Aristotle's historical period, the emotions connected to it, what was the best way to build the best State: if the persuasion of the rhetoric –today we use the word 'propaganda'[1]- was necessary, if the feelings for the homeland were the same than today, if someone is able to use politics for the common good and not only for his own egoism.

[1] About the difference between ancient and new rhetoric: G. Folena, *Parole introduttive, vecchia e nuova retorica*; in: AAVV, *Attualità della retorica* (Padova, 1975)

§ 2. Of the many types of political systems (*politeia*) Aristotle recognizes, tyranny and extreme democracy are the worst, barely counting as genuine political systems at all (*Polit.* 1292 a 30 - 32, 1293 b 27 - 30). These bad systems –deviation from kingship on the one hand and from a polity or republic in the other- have their own characteristic rhetorics: flattery in the case of tyranny; demagoguery in the case of extreme democracy[2] (*Polit.* 1292 a 2 - 30). It is this fact and its significance for our understanding of Aristotle's conceptions of the relations that hold among politics and rhetoric that I propose –all schematically, I'm afraid- to explore.

In the opening chapters of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, politics (*politike*) is characterized as an architectonic science[3] that control rhetoric as well as all the other craft and sciences, prescribing which of them 'ought to be studied in the cities, and which one each class in the city should study and to what extent they should study it' (*N E* 1094 a 1 – 1094 b 10). To prescribe effectively its practitioner –the *politikos*- has to know what the goal of the enterprise is, he has to know the human good, *eudaimonia*, and how to bring it about for the city (*polis*). But he also has to know quite a bit about the various crafts and sciences he is directing in order not to become hostage to the experts who practice them, and have politics lose its place as science with the most control (like in the recent past). If he needs to know just as much as the experts in every case, politics becomes unattractively encyclopedic –too much like omniscience to be of any practical significance-. If he needs to know as much as some experts but less than others, we will need a credible explanation of why this is so, and of how possessing some lesser knowledge will prevent him from becoming controlled by those who have more.

Politics comprises ethics, household management, legislation, deliberative and judicial expertise and the knowledge of political system: what the best political system is, what system is appropriate for what people, how any political system whatsoever can come into existence and be preserved, and what system is appropriate for all cities (*Polit*. 1288 b 21 – 35).

A *politikos* must have theoretical knowledge of all of the practical aspects of the craft of wealth-acquisition, but 'he will gain practical experience of them only if he has to' (*Polit.* 1258 b 10 – 11; see also 1258 b 33 – 35; 1277 a 33 – 35); 'even in the case of some of the civilized sciences, whereas it is not unfree to partecipate in them up to a point, to study them too assiduously or pedantically' is liable to debase the mind and deprive it of leisure (*Polit*. 1337 b 15 – 17). Thus some kinds of knowledge are positively off limits (except, perhaps, in extreme situation) to the *politikos*, who must always be an *eleutherios*, a civilized man, a free man.

Moreover between ignorance and expert knowledge, there is a kind of knowledge that has, at least in some areas, just as much authority as expert knowledge. One might think that only an expert doctor 'should judge whether or not someone has treated a disease correctly', but, in Aristotle's view, an educated person who has studied medicine 'as part of his general education' is also capable of judging such questions (*Polit*. 1282 a 3 – 7). In the *De Partibus Animalium*, the scope of such judgment is show to be extremely wide: 'In relation to every study and investigation, humbler or more valuable alike, there appear to be two kinds of proficiency. One can properly be called scientific knowledge of the subject, the other as it were a sort of educatedness. For it is mark of educated man to be able to judge successfully what is properly expounded and what is not. This in fact is the sort of person we take the generally educated man to be, and by being educated we mean being to do just this –except that in his case we consider one and the same man capable of judging about practically everything, whereas we consider another man capable in some limited field; for there may be another who is qualified in the same way as the former, but only in a restrincted area (*Part. An.* 639 a 1 – 6. See also: *N E* 1094 b 27 – 1095 a 13; *Metaph*. 1006 a 5 – 9)'.

[2] About *poleis*' democracy: L. Canfora, *Democrazia*, (Bari-Roma, 2006)

[3] I use the term 'science' to traslate Aristotle's *episteme*. But I do so, as lawyers say, without prejudice –in other words, without intending to prejudge the vexed question of whether all the various disciplines Aristotle classifies as *epistemai* ore to be thought of as canonical Aristotelian sciences, as system of syllogistic demonstrations from necessary first principles.

Thus, for example, an educated person is in a position to judge whether a treatise by someone purporting to be an expert biologist is 'properly expounded', is indeed the product of genuine biological knowledge. Aristotle does not have much to say in general terms about what general education is or just how it confers this very broad capacity to judge. But his scattered remarks suggest that it is philosophical knowledge and ability –dialectical acumen appropriately understood- that is largely responsible for making someone civilized and educated. Thus, for instance, errors that show lack of education are all philosophical failure: not knowing that logic precedes metaphysics; not knowing 'what we should, and what we should not, seek to have demonstrated (*Metaph.* 1006 a 5 – 11)'; 'inability to judge which reasoning are appropriate to the subject and which foreign to it (*E E* 1217 a 7 – 10)', or thinking that rhetoric is the same as politics (*Rhet.* 1356 a 7 – 9). On the other hand, things that show that one is educated –such as knowing whether a scientific exposition is properly expounded, of knowing what kind of precision to look for in any area (*N E* 1094 a 23 – 27)- clearly include being able to reveal the ignorant pretender to either knowledge or demonstration, an ability that dialectical training in particular bestows[4]. Indeed, the entire *De Partibus Animalium* is a contribution to general education, designed in part to enable one to judge whether expositions in biology are properly expounded (*Part. An.* 639 a 12). But it is also, of course, a sophisticated essay on the philosophy of biology that anyone other than a trained philosopher would have trouble absorbing and appreciating.

§ 3. A *politikos* must have the human good, we said, in order to design a political system and introduce legislation that will help bring it about for his city. Where does he get is knowledge? Since politics in the same state as practical wisdom (*N E* 1141 b 23 - 24), he must get it from the same sources as the practically wise man. And one of these is the sort of philosophical investigation into *eudaimonia* that we find in Aristotle's ethical writings. A *politikos* might be able to acquire this knowledge second hand by listening to expert philosophers, whose views he is himself able to evaluate because of the philosophical acumen he has acquired as part of his general education[5]. His own philosophical expertise will have to be a good deal deeper than that, however, for what Aristotle's investigation into *eudaimonia* reveals is that theorizing –theoria is identified in first philosophy or metaphysics- is either *eudaimonia* or the most important component of it. Consequently, since a *politikos*, as a practically wise person, achieves *eudaimonia* both for himself and for his city if anyone does, he must be a philosopher.

Philosophy, then, like ethics, legislation, and the rest, is a discipline of which the *politikos* has expert knowledge: in his own right he is a philosopher, an ethicist, a legislator, and so on. But there are many areas of which the *politikos* has no practical knowledge, in other areas only a general knowledge. This is how he achieves authority without omniscience.

The acquisition of practical wisdom (and hence of politics or political science) is a cognitive task, a matter of coming to know what the goal of life is, but it is also a conative one, a matter of acquiring the virtues of characters, of having feelings and appetites 'at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way (*N E* 1106 b 16 – 24). These two tasks are inseparable, however, because we come to know the goal in part as a result of a reflective intellectual process whose raw material are our own socialized appetites, emotions and feelings.

If we have been properly socialized and educated the things we desire and enjoy, or that inspire our love and affection, will be the very things that promote *eudaimonia*, while those we avoid and find

[4] See: Pr. Anal. 24 a 22 – b 15; Post. Anal. 72 a 8 – 11, 72 a 31 – 32, 81 b 18 – 23; Top. 161 a 24 – 33, 162 a 27 – 28; Soph. El. 169 b 25 – 29.

[5] In a fragment of Peri Basileas, Aristotle suggests that it would be disadvantageous for a king actually to be a philosopher, but that he 'should be attentive and obedient to true philosopher'. But not all kings are philosopher, one might well ask, as Aristotle himself does in a similar context see: Plit. 1269 b 32 – 34), what the difference is between having philosopher-kings and having kings who are obedient to philosophers.

painful of abhorrent, or that make us angry, will be the very things that are impediments of it. When we ask what is that makes life worth living and lacking in nothing, when we ask what *eudaimonia* is, we draw on our experience of what we find enjoyable and life enhancing. If we have been socialized to enjoy the right things, the things that really are life enhancing, the answer we arrive at will be correct. If we have been badly socialized, our answer will be mistaken. That is why 'virtue makes the aim correct (*N E* 1144 a 8 – 9; 29 – 36)'. Socialization is, of course, effected by many different means, but the most important is education –education that is inevitably tailored to the particular type of political system in which one is (or eventually) to live like citizen: 'But the most important of all of the ways that are mentioned of making political system last is one that everyone in fact despices, namely, a system of education that is suited to the political system. The most beneficial laws, even when ratified by all the citizens, are no use if people are not habituated and educated by the political system –democratically if the laws are democratic, oligarchically if they are oligarchic (*Polit*. 1310 a 12 – 18)'.

Just how one is socialized, then, is in large part a political matter (*Polit.* 1310 a 12 - 18). What is taken to be justice in an oligarchy or democracy, for example, is not unconditioned justice, but condicional justice or justice of a part. Hence what someone acquires under the name of justice, through being socialized in this system, is not justice, but a condicional form of it. Thus what in such a citizen occupies the place of practical wisdom (politics) is not unconditionally practically wisdom (politics), but wisdom (politics) of a sort.

The relativity of the virtues to political systems is explicitly recognized by Aristotle in the Politics. The corresponding relativity concept of *eudaimonia* to types of life is central to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But unlike cleverness conditional practical wisdom –practical wisdom of a sort- also has one specific end. It is just that the end in question is not *eudaimonia* but only *eudaimonia* of a sort.

We are now in position to formulate some related questions about rhetoric in an appropriately rich and nuanced way.

When a *politikos* is prescribing which of the various crafts and sciences ought to be studied in the city, what will he prescribe for himself in the case of the art or craft of rhetoric?

Do the answer to this question remain stable as we move from political system to political system?

Will a home-grown *politikos* prescribe the same knowledge of rhetoric for himself in an aristocracy as in a oligarchy or republic?

§ 4. In *Rhetoric* 1 . 1, Aristotle castigates the framers of the current treatises on rhetoric for ignoring the enthymeme[6]: this is a kind of short syllogism, a short speaking, a mode of persuasion. He recognized three kinds of persuasions: persuasion through character –when the speech makes the speaker worthy of credence-; persuasion through the hearers –when the audience is led to feel emotion by the speech-; and the persuasion through the arguments –when we show the truth or apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case-. Here he characterized persuasion through character not enthymematic persuasion as 'roughly speaking the most controlling factor in persuasion' (*Rhet*. 1356 a 13). Various attempts have been made to reduce the tension between these two views of rhetoric –which is epitomized though not reducible to the apparent conflict over which mode of persuasion has the most control- but none has met with much success. Indeed, a recent translator and commentator has concluded that 'is probably better to acknowledge frankly that chapter is inconsistent with what follow[7]'.

When we look more closely at *Rhetoric* 1 . 1, we see that Aristotle's highlighting of the enthymeme is in part justified by political arguments. In cities with good laws, as little as possible is left the discretion of judges. This is because the law is dispassionate, while the judges are not: 'Someone who asks law to rule would seem to be asking god –that it to say, intellect alone to rule- while one

[6] Enthymemes are discussed in: M. Burnyeat, *Aristotle's rhetoric: philosophycal essays* (Priceton, 1994)

[7] G. A. Kennedy, *On Rhetoric: a theory of civil discourse* (Oxford, 1991) p. 28

who asks human being asks a wild beast as well. For passion is like a wild beast, and anger or spiritedness perverts rulers, even when they are the best men. That is why law is intellect without passion (*Polit*. 1287 a 28 – 32; se also: 1286 a 17 – 20)'.

So the ideal would be for the opponents in a trial to have 'no function except that something is or is not true or has not happened (*Rhet*. 1354 a 26 – 28)', and for the judge to have no function except to decide, on the basis of the opposing arguments, 'whether something has happened or has not happened (*Rhet*. 1354 a 17 – 20). Moreover, when we turn from the judicial or forensic oratory –on which the traditional writers on rhetoric focused- to deliberative rhetoric, we find Aristotle telling very much the same kind of story.

In cities with good laws, where the citizens are educated in virtue, all a speaker addressing a deliberative body will have to do is to show that circumstances are as the speaker say. Thus rhetoric is not only restricted to enthymeme in such cities, but enthymeme are restricted to the very narrow role of establishing the fact. The speaker in not even allowed to comment on whether what happened is important or trivial, just or unjust. Let us say, then, that in well-ordered cities rhetoric – whether deliberative or judicial- is enthymematic (persuasive, at different levels). To be sure, this ideal is closely approximated only in cities with good laws, and fully achieved only in cities with the very best ones, but it remains the ideal nonetheless.

We have already had occasion to notice that Aristotle contrasts what is unconditionally just with what is just only in relation to a given political system. But, of course, this type of contrast is one he makes quite systematically. Moreover, he usually identifies what is unconditionally *X* with what is *X* in relation to a good thing of some sort. For example, what is the unconditionally choiceworty is what is choiceworty to a good man (*N E* 1113 a 22 – 33); what is unconditionally pleasant is what is pleasant to the good man (*N E* 1176 a 15 – 19); what is unconditionally just is what is just in the best political system. In *Rhetoric* 3 . 1, this contrast is invoked to make a point about the importance to delivery in persuasion: 'Since the whole business of rhetoric is with opinion, one should pay attention to delivery, not because it is just to do so but because it is necessary, since justice, at any rate, seeks nothing more in a speech than it neither pains or pleases. For it is just fight the case by appeal to the fact alone, so that everything except the demonstration is incidental. All the same, as been said, because of the corruption of audiences has great power (*Rhet*. 1404 a 1 -8)'.

It is surely reasonable to conclude that the apparently conflicting claims consist in the same kind. The enthymeme has not the most control unconditionally speaking (or in a good cities); persuasion through character has the most control conditionally speaking (or in the cities generally). It matter, then, that we bear in mind that what holds true of rhetoric in one political system may not hold true of it in another. It is evident from the foregoing discussion that even in the best city or political system, a *politikos* must have an educated person's non specialist knowledge of rhetoric in order to know what sort of legislation to pass regarding it, in order to know who in the city should study it and to what degree. Moreover, it is evident that this kind of non specialist knowledge is constitutive of politics, given its defining status as the science with the most control. It may also seem evident that in such a city or system a *politikos* will have to have practical knowledge or narrowly enthymemetic.

The message is that the rhetorician knows something about persuasive arguments, but qua rhetorician he is not in the business of generating the practical premises of the rational arguments. He needs to knows which of them various kinds of audience find persuasive. Hence he needs to knows which of them are true because 'true and better underlying facts are by nature always more productive of good arguments and are, in a word, more persuasive' (*Rhet.* 1355 a 37 - 38).

In the best political system, all the citizens are men of practical wisdom, all of them are *politikoi*, expert in politics[8]. Since political and judicial offices are open only to citizens, they alone hold such

[8] The person of practical wisdom will approach a concrete situation ready to respond to it emotionally in the appropriate way. What is appropriate is given by the general ethical theory, in the role it ascribes to external goods that can be damaged. This ethical theory is critical of much that Aristotle's society teaches. People have too much emotions in

offices. Hence both in the law court and the deliberative chambers, where political and judicial judgement take place, the audience to be persuaded are expert audiences. To the degree that the various sciences constitutive of politics are competitors of rhetoric, then, they will obviate the need for it. After all, the function or job of rhetoric is to deal with 'matters that we deliberate about without arts or crafts to guide us, before an audience that is not able to see many things all together or to reason from a distant starting point (*Rhet.* 1357 a 2 - 3)'.

Hence, when an expert is talking to an expert, who are able to see many things together and reason from distant starting point, they will need only the appropriate competitor sciences can do all of rhetoric's work, the *politikos* will not need practical knowledge even of narrowly enthymematic rhetoric.

It would be a long and difficult task, no doubt, to establish just what this extent is –in part because there is considerable disagreement about just how scientific or demonstrative politics and its constituents really are. I have argued elsewhere that they are more closely analogous to the acknowledged sciences than they are usually represented as being, and that unconditional scientific knowledge (*episteme haplos*) is available in them, but it is not my intention to presuppose that controversial view here. Instead, I want simply to advertise the fact that these texts from the Rhetoric show Aristotle committed to the existence of competitor science that need to be carefully distinguished from rhetoric itself, and to point out that there is an open question about whether in the best political system a *politikos* needs even narrowly enthymematic rhetoric in order to carry out the central political tasks of deliberating and judging.

According to Aristotle, the *politikos* will need sufficient general theoretical knowledge of these, as of deliberative rhetoric, in order to know who in the city should study them and to what degree. But practical knowledge of how to prosecute others or defend himself in court is hardly constitutive of politics. Here, it seems, a *politikos* who finds himself needing to do either of these things, might well hire an expert to help him, without in any way compromising his own claim to political expertise. Thus, even if a *politikos* does need narrow expertise in deliberative enthymemes, he may not a similar expertise in judicial ones.

§ 5. Another factor we need to consider is audience. When a *politikos* in the best system is talking to his fellow political expert, he may not even need narrowly enthymemetic rhetoric. But surely he will sometimes have to talk to people who are not expert, such as the members of his house-hold (wife, children, and slaves) as well as any other inhabitants of his city who are non citizens possessed of practical wisdom. Of course, he will. But the fact that he does may have little bearing on the question of how much practical knowledge of rhetoric he, at any rate qua *politikos*, needs to have.

The fact is, after all, that women, children, slaves, and noncitizens are all non participants in the ideal political system, and so they are excluded from deliberative and judicial decisions [9]. Hence a *politikos* in his role as a *politikos* will never find himself having to persuade them to judge or decide that someone or something is just or unjust, advantageous or disvantageous, fine or shameful. When we turn to the *politikos* in his role as an ideal head of household, matters are non doubt a lot less clear. He will, of course, talk to them, and it is even conceivable that he might explain to them on occasion why certain sorts of decisions have been made on their behalf by citizens, but these communications, not being aimed at eliciting judgment, do not involve rhetoric as Aristotle –in contrast with his contemporary thinkers who see rhetoric as having a place in all communication-

connection with money, possession, reputation, some times not enough in connection with the things that are truly worthwhile.

[9] This suggest that there will be a fair amount of give-and-take in their relationship. But then Aristotle also claims that the deliberative part of woman's soul is *akuron*, lacking in authority or control, which suggests that her views never prevail over her husband's (See: Polit. 1260 a 13; 1328 a 6 – 7; 1327 b 23 – 38).

understands us. When we turn to the *politikos* in his role as ideal head of household, matters are no doubt a lot less clear. They are certainly less clear to me.
Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine a *politikos* treating the members of his household as judges with the power to decide important questions. Surely, ho decided for them and does not try to persuade them to decide to themselves. This does not mean, of course, that he simply issues orders to them. A *politikos* rules his wife and children 'in a manner appropriate to free people (Polit. 1259 a 39 - 40)', and rules his wife in particular with precisely the kind of political rule that he exercises in a political system governed by himself and his peers. Even where slaves are concerned, Aristotle is explicit that those 'who tell us not to use reason with slaves but to give them orders exclusively are mistaken (Polit. 1260 b 5 - 7)'. But reasoning with slaves, and talking with family members is not for the purpose of eliciting their judgements or decisions. Hence, for the same reasons as before, such communication does not seem to involve an exercise of Aristotelian rhetoric, strictly, conceived.
When we look at the best political system, then, what we find are *politikoi* who are expert philosophers possessed of unconditional practical wisdom, who have general theoretical knowledge of rhetoric but either make no political use of it or only minimal us of that part of it that is narrowly anthymematic. Clearly, this is an extremely austere and Platonic view of rhetoric (we must remember that Aristotle was a student of him). But when we leave the best political system, a very different picture emerges.
Given the influence of law and education on character, a home grown *politikos* will usually have the kinds of virtues, practical wisdom, and politics that are fitted or suited to his political system.
But is surely nonetheless for a mismatch to occur –for an unconditional *politikos*, possessed of unconditional practical wisdom, to be living in a less than ideal political system-. In any case, by beginning with the latter situation, even if it is only a remote possibility, we shall be able to see just how rhetoric comes to infiltrate not just the political life of the city but the soul of the *politikos* himself.
Since rhetoric aims at persuasion and what is persuasive is always persuasive for someone, an artful or technically competent rhetorical argument is suited to the soul of its audience. Hence the further those souls are from practical wisdom –the further they are from having the right feelings and emotions 'at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, end in the right way'- the more the orator or rhetorician will need to deal with their unruly emotions in order to gain conviction. Thus even a good orator who is also a good men (*Rhet.* 1355 b 17 - 21) aiming to persuade his audience to do what is in fact just or advantageous will need to make use of the technique of persuasion beyond the enthymeme to persuade audience whose own characters are less than good. Like the fact that Aristotle is no deontologist, this too is something that need to be taken into account in assessing the apparent amoralism or immoralism that some readers have detected in his advice to speakers: persuading the bad to pursue the good involves corrective deception, 'noble lies', fullblow rhetoric.

§ 6. So much, no doubt, is pretty obvious. A *politikos*, even one possessed of practical wisdom and all the virtues of character, will need rhetoric to achieve moral political purposes before corrupt audience. But in a less than ideal political system, a home grown *politikos* will, of course, be tinged with some of the same corruption of the audience, corruption that, as we have seen, consist very largely in a defect of feeling or emotion. Like a lover or a coward he will register the fact at less or more than their true weight. He will be made furious by a trivial slight or left indifferent by the grossest insult. In metaphorical but illuminating terms, it is as if his appetites, desires, and emotions are always being either inappropriately stimulated or quieted by a less than narrowly enthymematic rhetoric. As a result, his virtues will be no more the conditional virtues that are suited to his political system, and what he pursues as *eudaimonia* will not be true happiness, but what living in that

system was caused to look like happiness to him, honour pleasure or gratification. In other words, the goals of what in him is practical wisdom or politics are, as it were, shaped and controlled by a concealed rhetoric. But when the goals a *politikos* pursues, whether for himself or the city he controls, are themselves shaped and controlled in this way, rhetoric has in effect begun to infiltrate politics and philosophy. For, as we have seen, it is philosophy that yields the truth about *eudaimonia* to those who have been properly socialized, and only politics informed by philosophy can socialize a city to live in the light of that truth.

Just how extensive the infiltration is depends on just how far from being narrowly enthymametic the inner rhetoric is. But when we reach extreme democracy or tyranny, where those in control are themselves controlled by their appetites, and live a life suitable for cattle (*N E* 1095 b 19 – 22; 1176 b 9 - 17), it is perhaps intelligible without further argument that both in the soul of *politikos* and in his city a narrowly enthymematic rhetoric will have been all but replaced by demagoguery and flattery. The infiltration of philosophy and politics by rhetoric will then be so complete that rhetoric will have dressed itself up as politics in earnest and taken control of the city.

In an ideal city rhetoric has minimal role to play; in a very corrupt one it has dressed itself up as politics and taken control. But most cities lie somewhere in between. And in them rhetoric, in the right political hands, can be powered force for good, counteracting distorting feelings and emotions to move a city toward genuine *eudaimonia*. Of course, there is always a danger as there is with any powerful weapon, that giving it houseroom will result in its taking over. Certainly, any *politikos* who used all of rhetoric's resources, even for good ends, risk having his soul infiltrated by it: in the face of external disorder and extravagant lies it is difficult for truth to treasure or heart to bless an inner narrow strictness.

But in Aristotle's view, this is an imperfect word, is simply the challenge rhetoric poses to practical wisdom and politics.