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Rhetoric as Deliberation or Manipulation? About Aristotle's Rhetoric *and its Misuse in Recent Literature*

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Abstract

In contrast to some recent articles, which try to bridge the gap between Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and contemporary concepts of deliberative democracy, it is argued that Aristotle in this work does not plead for a rational and unemotional way of political decision making. On the contrary, his *Rhetoric* should be read as a manual for strategically oriented actors if not for demagogues. The well-known tension between the more ethical and the political parts of *Rhetoric* can be resolved if a distinction is made between a form of rhetoric, which has its place in an ideal polis, and the kind of rhetoric that is necessary in a corrupt regime. For Aristotle the democratic regime of Athens is such a corrupt regime. In the last part of this paper, it is demonstrated that Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* highlights the non-cognitive and emotional features of deliberative procedures and thereby corrects one of the most serious shortcomings of the theory of deliberative democracy.

Keywords: Aristotle, Rhetoric, Emotions, Deliberative democracy

Introduction

Interest in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* has significantly increased in recent years. John M. Cooper (1996) could still complain in 1996 that *Rhetoric* had been rather neglected in the research on Aristotle, this has changed dramatically. The growing interest in this work extends not only to the field of classical studies and philosophy but also to political theory.[1] In particular, as I show in the first section, several studies published in recent years discuss Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the context of contemporary democratic theory. The general topic of these contributions is the question of the relationship between the rhetorical and the argumentative aspects of democratic governance. A number of authors argue that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* should be understood as a complement to theo-

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ries of deliberative democracy (1). However, linking *Rhetoric* too closely to the concept of deliberative democracy must be confronted with the objection that Aristotle's teaching about rhetoric does not correspond in large parts to the academic ideal of rational decision making. Quite the contrary, as I will argue in the second section, Aristotle delivers a more realistic account of political struggle. For today's political theorists, who are familiar mostly with his *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is particularly surprising that according to Aristotle political orators ought to arouse emotions and even distort the facts (2). In the third section, I will address the tension between those passages in which Aristotle explicitly criticizes a manipulative use of rhetoric and those in which he teaches rhetorical skills which are not so far from manipulative techniques. I will show that this tension can be resolved if we distinguish between one form of rhetoric which is situated in an ideal polis and one that is located in the democratic context of ancient Athens (3). Therefore, we should consider the most parts of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* not as a supplement to the theory of deliberative democracy, but rather as standing in contrast to it, thus avoiding a problematic idealization of the political process (4).

1. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and contemporary political theory

Considering the contemporary discourse of democratic theory, the dominance of deliberative approaches is striking. Theories of deliberative democracies suggest that the legitimacy of political decisions results from a argumentative process that is characterized by the norms of equal access, reciprocity, respect and the 'forceless force of the better argument' (Habermas 2008: 157). Although a large number of competing paradigms remains, the mainstream theorist of democracy swims in deliberative water. A good example is the following statement by Philip Pettit: 'It is now widely accepted as an ideal that democracy should be seen as deliberative as possible' (Pettit 2004: 52). Even if some kind of exaggeration may lie in these words, they nevertheless demonstrate the current hegemony of deliberative approaches. This hegemony has led to empirical studies about the deliberative character of parliamentary debates and public participation processes. In accordance with this more empirical orientation, rhetorical aspects of arguing have gotten some considerations in contemporary research. When accepting rhetorical elements, one does not necessarily have to abandon the discursive nature of the deliberative procedure, as many authors argue.[2] However, a problematic tension exists between how much rhetoric deliberative processes can withstand on the one hand, and how much rhetoric is necessary to develop the motivational energy for accepting the results of deliberative procedures on the other hand as Simone Chambers (2009) emphasizes.

The question on the relationship between rhetoric and deliberation is also the central topic of a number of recent contributions regarding Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.[3] Most authors argue that Aristotle considers rhetoric and deliberation not as contradictory modes of speaking, but rather as practices that can only be separated analytically. To this end, his *Rhetoric* is reconstructed in such a way that the rational and ethical content of rhetorical practices emerges. In the words of Bryan Garsten, 'Aristotle's ambitious project was to make rhetoric a more modest art. He sought to reduce its dangerous political power by raising its intellectual status' (Garsten 2006: 118). Much the same can be found in Eugene Garver's reading of the *Rhetoric*. Garver makes a strong attempt to separate the artful rhetorician Aristotle has in mind and the sophists who use rhetorical techniques for 'ulterior motives'. According to him, Aristotle's 'rhetorical argument is essentially ethical' (Garver 1994: 222).

These interpreters mainly stress two aspects. On the one hand, they refer to Aristotle's figure of the *enthymeme*, a weaker syllogism that is based on probable opinions, thus distinguishing it from a scientific syllogism that is based on truth. Yet, the *enthymeme* is still based on the *logos*; it is a rational argument that is peculiar to rhetorical practice. *Enthymemes* are presented in court, as well as in political debates; their aim is to convince the audience about some facts. According to Aristotle, politics is characterized by contingency and uncertainty, and thus, one cannot obtain exact knowledge of it. However, practical knowledge can be achieved by the use of *enthymemes*. For this reason there is no opposition between rhetorical and deliberative practices. As Susan Bickford emphasizes, 'while rhetoric tells us how to give reasons to others, deliberation (public and private) is how we come to have reasons and take reasonable actions' (Bickford 1996: 416). From this perspective, rhetoric is nothing more than the ethical art of public deliberation.

On the other hand, the literature on *Rhetoric* claims that Aristotle overcomes the unfruitful dualism of rationality and emotionality in three ways.

First, Aristotle points out a specific functionality of emotions for the process of deliberation. From this perspective, emotions serve as a catalyst for deliberation, as they evoke a certain sensibility for arguments. I listen to a speech with much more attention when I'm feeling touched by the subject. However, if I face the speech in an impassive way, I won't care for the arguments. Emotions can also make me sensitive to particular perspectives and thus enable me to 'take the role of the other'.[4] 'This is why Aristotle says that the existence of the "passionate element"' in the human soul means that "he will deliberate in finer fashion concerning particulars"' (Abizadeh 2002: 287; cf. Chambers 2009: 334–336).

Second, emotions are also associated with rationality insofar as they, from Aristotle's point of view, can be influenced or even controlled by arguments. To achieve this goal, however, the speaker must have specific competences.

He has to know not only how to make an audience open minded and how to make them listen to him, but also which emotions dominate in his audience. For example, if the members of the audience are fearful, he could try to convince them that their fear is baseless. It is this knowledge of the interplay between facts and emotions that, due to this kind of reconstruction, enables the speaker to convince the listeners. In the words of Garsten: 'The assumption that the audience were competent at and interested in deliberation suggested that they could exercise their judgment when addressed by a speaker, that they could evaluate arguments according to criteria, and that they were willing to allow their desires and emotions to be affected by new considerations' (Garsten 2006: 132).

A third aspect of the interplay between reason and emotion from an Aristotelian perspective is highlighted by Paul Nieuwenberg under the programmatic title *Learning to Deliberate*. He reconstructs Aristotle's ethical writings as well as his *Rhetoric* with regard to the feeling of shame. According to Nieuwenberg, the fear of being embarrassed in public fosters the development of those virtues that are necessary for deliberative politics. To be respected by his fellow citizens, the orator avoids ethically objectionable practices such as demagoguery and deception: 'The truthful person avoids what is false in words and actions because of its shamefulness' (Nieuwenberg 2004: 460). Therefore, one has to read Aristotle's ethical writings as well as the passages in *Rhetoric* about the relevance of the character (*ēthos*) as a treatise for the education of those citizens who have to deliberate in the Athenian polis.

Overall, the recent literature on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* highlights the similarities between this work and the theory of deliberative democracy. The authors argue that Aristotle is anxious to strengthen the quality of the processes of political deliberation and for that reason stresses the importance of emotions. Thus, the new literature about *Rhetoric* emphasizes the complementary nature of emotions and arguments in the process of deliberation. However, as I will show in the next section, this democratic and deliberative interpretation of *Rhetoric* does not correspond to most of the textual basis of Aristotle's book.

2. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as a manual for politicians

In the opening pages of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle states that 'rhetoric is like some offshoot of dialectic and ethical studies (which is rightly called politics)' (*Rhet* I.2 1356a26–27).[5] The proximity to the dialectic in the sense of a philosophical conversation structured by rules arises from the need to persuade the audience by arguments. Explaining the relationship between rhetoric and dialectics, Aristotle introduces the already mentioned concept of the *enthymeme* – the main

rhetorical proof. The *enthymeme* is a kind of logical argument based on commonly held beliefs (*endoxa*).[6] An *enthymeme* is 'a sort of syllogism' (*Rhet* I.1 1355a8), a deductive argument that is not strictly logical like in the method of dialectic but still convincing in a commonsensical way. In contrast to the requirements of the dialectical method, which requires complete syllogisms, the premises can be concealed in an *enthymeme*, insofar as certain beliefs are taken for granted. By using *enthymemes,* rhetoric contributes to some kind of commonsensical truth: '[R]hetoric is useful, because the true and the just are by nature stronger than their opposites' (*Rhet* I.1 1355a22–23). This is not the place to discuss the validity of this epistemological optimism, but we can note that Aristotle dissociates himself from the view of Plato who, especially in *Gorgias,* completely denies any epistemic content of rhetoric.

In the opening chapter of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle also formulates some ethical standards for the use of rhetorical skills. He distances himself strongly from those teachers who give orators technical advice on how to deceive the jurors: '[F]or verbal attack and pity and anger and such emotions of the mind do not relate to fact but are appeals to the juryman [...] for it is wrong to warp the jury by leading them into anger or envy or pity' (*Rhet* I.1 1354a16–25). Aristotle, indeed, argues for a non-manipulative form of rhetoric that centers on the subject and uses only *enthymemes* for the purpose of persuasion. Thus, he formulates standards similar to those we can find in the contemporary discourse ethics of Jürgen Habermas (1990). As in discourse ethics, Aristotle also refers to deliberation as a means of ascertaining the truth, and to this end the orator should abstain from *ad hominem* arguments as well as from knowingly inducing perlocutionary effects (in terms of strategic action).

In the further course Aristotle distinguishes between three forms of speeches: forensic speeches, epideictic speeches, and deliberative speeches in front of the assembly or at the agora. The three forms of speeches follow different aims: in an epideictic speech, which is related to a particular person, praise or blame is given; a forensic speech focuses on past events and uses the form of an accusation and a defense; and a deliberative speech gives counsel or advice regarding future events or desirable situations. Concerning the deliberative speech, Aristotle points out that people can only reasonably discuss those future events that may happen but need not occur. A speech in front of the Athenian assembly denying defeat in the Peloponnesian War in 392 BC is just as absurd as a speech that argues for the sun not to rise the next morning (*NE* III.5 1113a, VI.2 1139b). Aristotle specifies five topics a deliberative speech can deal with: 'The most important subjects on which people deliberate and on which deliberative orators give advice in public are mostly five in number, and these are finances, war and peace, national defense, imports and exports, and the framing of laws' (*Rhet* I.3 1359b20–23). In a deliberative speech therefore, decisions that affect the entire polis are discussed.

Another crucial distinction consists in the technical means the rhetorician has to utilize to convince his audience. Aristotle distinguishes between those means that arise from the presented arguments (*logos*), those arising from the character of the speaker (*ēthos*), and those designed to put the listener into a certain frame of mind (*pathos*). In contrast to *logos* as the chief rhetorical proof, *pathos* and *ēthos* are not directly concerned with the discussed subject. However, if the speaker wants to be convincing, not only should his arguments make sense to the audience in accordance with their basic beliefs, but he must also present himself as a authentic person. Last but not least, the success of the speaker depends on his ability to evoke certain moods in his listeners, 'for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile' (*Rhet* I.2 1356a14–15).

Indeed, *Rhetoric* is such a remarkable text because Aristotle develops elements for a theory of emotion and emphasizes the importance of emotions in political practice. The basic premise for Aristotle is that emotions significantly affect the judgments of citizens and that politics therefore should not be equated with a sober and scientific search for the better argument. Rather, the orator will achieve his goals by knowing how to put his audience in specific moods. Under certain circumstances, this can be developed to such an extent that an audience assesses a situation completely differently than if the same facts are considered soberly. And if the audience has, for example, a rather bad image of a speaker, it will not follow his arguments, but rather will try to refute or debunk them.

The complex relationship between arguments, beliefs, and emotions is the main topic of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. His aim, however, is not to develop a moral theory or scientific explanation of the role of emotions in politics, but to teach his listeners and readers knowledge about the human psyche and the factors influencing it for a decidedly political use. This intent is particularly clear in a passage in which he distinguishes three aspects a speaker must know about arousing emotions:

> I mean, for example, in speaking of anger, what is the state of the mind when people are angry and against whom are they usually angry and for what sort of reasons; for if we understood one or two of these but not all, it would be impossible to create anger [in someone]. (*Rhet* II.1 1378a24–27)

Two things are apparent. First, Aristotle quite openly recommends the manipulation of emotions to his students. The listeners of a speech should be made to feel enraged in order to move them in a certain direction, for example against a political adversary. Second, Aristotle emphasizes that we must have a specific knowledge about the character of the adversary. The arousal of anger requires knowledge of the past actions or the character traits of the person

against whom the anger of the listener should be directed. It is also necessary to know the psychic structure and the already existing knowledge of the audience. For this technical knowledge to be effective, it is irrelevant whether it is 'true' or 'false', 'good' or 'bad': 'He [the orator, D. J.] does not need to know whether the things that usually make people angry ought to do so, or whether their beliefs about what is fearful are in fact true. […] But he needs to know what really produces emotion' (Nussbaum 1996: 305).[7] In other words, Aristotle discusses this interrelationship of knowledge, emotions, and judgments in a decidedly pragmatic way in his *Rhetoric*.

3. An art for a 'sad state'

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is thus characterized by a fundamental ambivalence. This concerns the epistemological as well as the ethical status of the suggested techniques of rhetoric. On the one hand, Aristotle is eager to stress the epistemic as well as the ethical nature of the art of rhetoric. As shown above, he not only criticizes the abuse of rhetorical skills for manipulative purposes, but also highlights the connections between the rhetorical and the dialectical body of proof. On the other hand, we find many passages in *Rhetoric* in which Aristotle advises the orator on how to induce perlocutionary effects in his listeners. In doing so, he neither avoids suggesting a distortion of facts, nor avoids suggesting the arousing of emotions in order to lead the people astray. As seen, the persuasive power of the speech results from the given arguments, from the character of the orator, and from the emotional state of the listener. Aristotle describes implicit or explicit methods of inducement for each of the three means of persuasion. The orator should, for example, present accidental circumstances as intentionally caused by him (*Rhet* I.9 1367b). Or he is invited to make facts appear more important by subdividing them into several parts (*Rhet* I.7 1365a). Elsewhere he advises only presenting those values or facts that are favored by the people, even if the orator knows that these presumed facts do not correspond to reality or that the favored values are not realizable (*Rhet* I.7 1364b11–13).[8]

In short, Aristotle no longer insists on the duty of ascertaining the truth in these passages. He rather underlines that the orator, if he wants to give a successful speech, must understand the techniques of manipulation as well as the cultural and psychological character of his audience. Because affecting the audience's emotions is more decisive than pure argumentative proof, the speaker must also appear as an authentic person and know the methods of putting the listeners into a mood that makes them inclined towards the desired decision. A passage in the second book concretely describes this program of an intended

fomentation of emotions like anger or fear. Aristotle writes:

> Fear makes people inclined to deliberation, while no one deliberates about hopeless things. The result is that whenever it is better [for a speaker's case] that they [i.e., the members of the audience] experience fear, he should make them realize that they are liable to suffering; for [he can say that] others even greater [than they] have suffered, and he should show that there are others like them suffering [now] (or who have suffered) and at the hands of those from whom they did not expect it and suffering things [they did not expect] and at a time when they were not thinking of [the possibility]. (*Rhet* II.5 1383a6–13)[9]

The scholarly literature intensively discusses the obvious tension between an understanding of rhetoric that is aimed at persuasion by arguments and one that is directed towards the manipulation of the audience. Ignoring the possibility of a simple inconsistency, which could have resulted from different epochs of origin, or an ex post composition of the text by one of Aristotle's students,[10] two interpretations seem to be plausible. First of all, one could make a distinction with regard to the institutional context of the rhetorical activity. The demand to stick to the subject and to refrain from the rhetorical manipulation can be found in reference to speeches in front of judges, but not in Aristotle's discussion of political speeches. In this respect, we can assume that the non-manipulative forms of rhetoric should apply to forensic speeches, while those with a more manipulative intention may apply to deliberative speeches in front of an assembly or council. The latter exemplifies the situation where people discuss future events, where values are more important than facts, and where decisions are taken by the political community. Just as political discussions often do not rely on clear criteria, insofar as they try to influence future events, the emotions of the audience as well as the character of the speaker may play a more important role in getting a 'feeling' for the right decision.

Thus, one can argue that Aristotle is well aware of the fact that in public deliberations 'a living reason' is necessary to convince the audience. A speaker who stresses his disinterestedness and his impartiality would certainly not be able to gain the support of his fellow citizens. There is indeed a crucial difference between political debates and philosophical or even juridical arguing, as Bernard Yack rightfully highlights: 'Dead reasons, impartial reasoning without emotions, may be worth trying to recreate when adjusting cases. But deliberation about what serves the common advantage requires a living reason, reasoning informed by the emotions that interest us in the consequences of our decisions' (Yack 2006: 433).[11]

Nevertheless, this institutional separation between a preferably factual use of rhetorical proof in a court and a more emotional use in public deliberation does not sufficiently explain why Aristotle suggests a malicious use of rhetori-

cal techniques in so many passages. It is one thing to point out to the rhetorician the necessity of gaining the emotional support of the listeners. It is quite another thing to give him advice on how to twist the facts and how to arouse rather destructive emotions like anger, fear, and hatred. Thus, in using a distinction of Karl-Otto Apel (1988), I suggest another interpretation of the described tension between a good and a bad use of the art of rhetoric.

Apel, who besides Habermas has developed the discourse ethics, inserts a part 'B' inspired by Max Weber's ethics of responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*). With this concept, he attempts to reply to the obvious objection that an ethical or political action that is solely geared to the perfect conditions of discourse ethics will be powerless and even self-defeating in the real world. The goal of part 'B' of Apel's discourse ethics is to offer an orientation for behavior in a non-ideal world, as it explicitly allows the performance of strategic actions that are not consistent with the universal principles of part 'A'. In order to bring the real world closer to the ideal world, Apel precisely permits a behavior that does not correspond to the presuppositions of the ideal communication community (*ideale Kommunikationsgemeinschaft*). A politician, for example, is allowed to lie under certain circumstances. However, these lies and any other non-generalizable actions have to be directed towards the realization of the ideal world, where part 'A' of the discourse ethics is located. 'To a certain extent, there is a need for an ethics of transition (*Interimsethik)* from existing circumstances to the realization of the specified conditions for the use of discourse ethics' (Apel 1988: 134; transl. D.J.). My suggestion is that we can find a similar distinction in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, where also an ideal constitution is contrasted with the real one which is subjected to different ethical standards.[12]

How did the Athenian polis look like in the eyes of its intellectual elites? In the writings of Thucydides and Plato, for example, one can find a harsh criticism of the supposed ubiquity demagoguery in democratic politics. For both of them, the passion of the masses, which is aroused by powerful orators, is the crucial element in decision making. In line with this assumption, both criticize the influence of orators whom they usually defame as seducers of the people. According to Josiah Ober's (1989; cf. Yunis 1996) description of the interdependence between political elites and the masses, Thucydides and Plato gave a realistic picture of democratic practice in former Athens, though in an exaggerated way. Nevertheless, the criticism of Thucydides and Plato changed little of democratic practices and the influence of the orators in Athens. Democracy was re-established even after the crises of the Peloponnesian War and the short-term rule of the Thirty Tyrants in 404/403 BC, and it lasted until Athens was conquered by the Macedonians in 322 BC. The importance of rhetorical practices in Athens during the 4th century BC comes notably to the fore in the extant speeches of Demosthenes and Isocratres (cf. Carey 1996).

It is in this context that Aristotle's political writings must be located. In *Poli-*

tics, he follows Thucydides and Plato at least in their general criticism of the political practices in democratic Athens. In this work, Aristotle also denounces the power of demagoguery in the political sphere in general and the *ecclesia* in particular. For example, he writes about democratic rule in the fourth book:

> However, a people of this sort, as being monarch, seeks to exercise monarchic rule through not being ruled by the law, and becomes despotic, so that flatterers are held in honor. And a democracy of this nature is comparable to the tyrannical form of monarchy, because their spirit is the same, and both exercise despotic control over the better classes, and the decrees voted by the assembly are like the commands issued in a tyranny, and the demagogues and the flatterers are the same people or a corresponding class, and either set has the very strongest influence with the respective ruling power, the flatterers with the tyrants and the demagogues with democracies of this kind. (*Pol* IV.4 1292a15–26)

Thus, the question for him was how to overcome this bad constitution. In the sixth book of *Politics,* Aristotle confronts existent democratic practices with a model that can be located between the democratic reality and Plato's utopia of a 'philosopher kingship'. The political participation of citizens is limited in this model to the election of officials who come from the higher classes. In a clever move, Aristotle called this model the best democracy, even though its constitution had distinctive aristocratic or oligarchic implications.[13] It is in such a regime, and even more in the ideal polis, which he describes in the seventh and the eighth books of *Politics,* that the art of rhetoric may be used in an ethical way (Skultety 2009).

Therefore, it is misleading to consider Aristotle as a proponent of deliberative democracy. Even if he mentions in a famous passage (Pol III. 11 1281a42-1281b3) the 'wisdom of the multitude' (Waldron 1995), Aristotle does not endorse a democracy in which every citizen should participate regardless of its particular competences (Cammack 2013; Garsten 2013). He rather favors a constitution which according to Melissa Lane has similarities with Schumpeter's minimal model of democracy: '[I]n relation to the authority of office holding, the people should not exercise that authority themselves by holding offices, but only elect and inspect their official's performances" (Lane 2013: 269).[14]

In contrast to his *Politics*, where Aristotle criticizes practices like demagoguery as well as flattery and argues for a more moderate or elitist form of democracy, he gives a rather different reply to the democratic hegemony of his time in his *Rhetoric*. As seen, he explicitly teaches manipulative skills like arousing emotions or twisting facts. Aristotle, in this way, meets the needs of his listeners who are probably more interested in instruction on political skills than in another criticism of democratic practices or another lecture in ethics. Thus, the political practices of Athenian democracy such as demagoguery and flattery

are not denounced, but are taken as an unavoidable part of real politics. While the introductory remarks on elocution can easily be interpreted as an expression of an ethical or epistemological ideal, which could roughly be realized in Aristotle's ideal constitution of the polis, the following passages deal with the current demands. This is clearly expressed at the beginning of the third book. Aristotle states:

> [F]or [those who study delivery] consider three things, and these are volume, change of pitch [*harmonia*], and rhythm. Those [performers who give careful attention to these] are generally the ones who win poetic contests; and just as actors are more important than poets now in the poetic contests, so it is in political contests because of the sad state of governments. (*Rhet* III.1 1403b32–35)

Although the current state of government is 'sad', it makes little sense to combat it through the use of practices emerging from an unrealistic ideal. Therefore, Aristotle argues that the ethically deficient form of rhetoric is not only unavoidable but also necessary in democratic Athens. In this regime, most of the citizens are supposed to be rather 'simple person[s]' (*Rhet* I.2 1357a11, cf. *Rhet* III. 17 1419a18). Aristotle also speaks about the 'uncultivated mind of the audience' (*Rhet* II.21 1395b1). Because the mass of the people do not possess the relevant cognitive skills, it seems unavoidable that demagoguery and the arousing of emotions are the only effective means for shaping political opinion. Aristotle concludes: 'But since the whole business of rhetoric is with opinion, one should pay attention to delivery, not because it is right but because it is necessary' (*Rhet* III.1 1404a1–4). Hence, it is the 'corruption of the audience' (*Rhet* III.1 1404a8) within a democratic regime that seems to demand the use of rather manipulative methods in collective decision making. His mainly elitist students probably welcomed these antidemocratic sentiments that Aristotle shared with other intellectual critics of democratic Athens.[15]

In this description, *Rhetoric* does not differ from the reservations against an extensive participation of common people in public decision making as expressed in his *Politics.* The difference is that Aristotle does not argue for a regime change, at least not directly.[16] Instead, he shows his students how to induce political effects within primarily democratic circumstances. Most of his listeners most likely had political ambitions. Accordingly, there was a demand for the teaching of skills for a political career, which Aristotle satisfied in his lectures on rhetoric. 'Aristotle thinks it necessary to give his students the skills to use unethical techniques due to the imperfection of the world in which they must act' (Poster 1997: 241). With his *Rhetoric,* he instructs his listeners and readers how they could gain political success in such a rotten regime like Athenian democracy in 350 BC.

Even if one does not want to attach a systematic content to such considerations, it will still be evident that Aristotle develops in his *Rhetoric* an understanding of politics that is oriented towards real practices. Thus, he does not try to confront the 'sad' political practices with an ideal of true statecraft as he did in some parts of his *Politics*. Aristotle rather counts on a political reality that is characterized by political conflicts that cannot be solved by the use of scientific expertise or deliberative proceedings. Thus, politicians cannot draw only on reason, but also must take into account the people's passions. This leads to the concluding remarks about the relation between politics, rhetoric and deliberation.

4. Conclusion: A more realistic theory of politics

As seen in the beginning, the recent interest in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is motivated by the expectation that this work can further strengthen the concept of deliberative democracy. According to Aristotle, however, a deliberative style of politics in the strict sense is only possible in an aristocratic regime. In a democratic polis like Athens during his lifetime, politicians must act in a more demagogic way, not only trying to arouse the citizens by emotional speeches, but also sometimes by twisting the facts. Thus, there are two lessons from *Rhetoric* that advocates of deliberative democracy could learn. The first is that in deliberative arenas the emotions of the participants are an important factor. The second is that politics, even in a democratic setting, is more about power than about reason.

In whatever way the idea of deliberative democracy may be implemented, the process of deliberation is very demanding in two ways: On the one hand, it relies on the basic dispositions and habits of the participants, such as being able to discuss something or being able to take the role of the other, which must be generated through the processes of social and political education. On the other hand, the success of the deliberative process also depends on the specifics of the discourse itself. These are conditions that reside below the threshold of the articulated arguments. Processes of arguing, therefore, depend on non-cognitive dimensions of social action, without which such processes cannot develop their persuasive power. In other words, deliberative processes are social practices in which the power of reason is not the only effective instrument of persuasion; so are the social and identity-specific conditioning of speech styles, facial expressions, gestures, and passionate advocacy. Thus, the emotions, moods, and unconscious preferences of the participants are at least as important for the success of deliberative processes as the persuasiveness of the arguments brought forward. The theory of deliberative democracy, however, addresses these non-

cognitive aspects, if at all, only insufficiently (cf. Young 2000).

Aristotle differs from advocates of a deliberative democracy with his recognition of the emotional basis of political debates. Although he also points to the need to deliver convincing arguments, the *logos* is only one aspect of a successful speech. In order to convince, the speaker must also win his audience by the style of his speech. This can only succeed if he is perceived as trustworthy and if he is also able to set the audience in a certain mood. To this end, Aristotle not only develops a very detailed moral psychology, but also teaches the techniques for arousing emotions. In short, it is the triad of *logos*, *ēthos*, and *pathos,* that is, the interaction of the presented arguments, the character of the speaker, and the evoked moods of the listener, that determines the success or the failure of a speech.

Insofar as the recent literature on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* stresses its potential for an extension of the theory of deliberative democracy, the effect could be a more comprehensive and therefore more realistic understanding of deliberative processes. However, most of the recent contributions about the impact of *Rhetoric* neglect these insights in the very nature of democratic politics, even if they argue for greater consideration of the emotional aspects of deliberation. As mentioned, these contributions focus on increasing the effectiveness of deliberative processes through the integration of rhetorical skills and therefore hope to increase the rational content of the political process. By this, these authors formulate an ideal theory of democracy that has only a small base in real politics. With his fundamental recognition of the emotional aspects of political debates, Aristotle clearly differs from present-day advocates of a deliberative democracy who try to neglect or to contain this crucial dimension of politics. This leads to the second lesson that could be learned from the suggested reading of *Rhetoric*.

I have argued that Aristotle develops in his *Rhetoric* an understanding of politics that is based on actual practices. He tries not to contrast the 'sad' political practices of democratic Athens with a model of the ideal state, as is the case in Plato's *Politeia* and also partly in Aristotle's own *Politics*. Rather, Aristotle emanates from a political reality in which disputes cannot be resolved solely through scientific expertise or deliberative processes.

The problem with the understanding of politics which is advocated by theories of deliberative democracy, however, is that it must downplay not only the impact of emotions but also of strategic action in order to get any empirical footing for its very demanding concept of democracy. When deliberative conceptions of democracy argue for the creation of new political arenas like citizen panels or deliberative opinion polls, these conceptions must, therefore, ignore the power games inside these political settings. Because citizens in modern democracies have different educational backgrounds and different rhetorical skills, there will always be a 'microphysics of power' (Foucault) even in delib-

erative arenas. These power games are neglected if the results of political processes are conceived as neutral or consensual, as the apologists of deliberative democracy often see them. Yet, this is not only true for smaller deliberative settings but also with regard to the broader political sphere. Here, theories of deliberative democracy also try to neglect the role of power and interests in shaping the hegemonic values and political ideas. To consider an argument as good or not depends on the wider cultural background of the setting in which the deliberative process is taking place. As feminist and postmodern authors have rightly shown, this cultural background is by no means neutral. Rather, it is also dominated by the values and views of the ruling class (cf. Young 1990; Sanders 1997).

In contrast to this expulsion of real politics in theories of deliberative democracy, Aristotle depicts the political and therefore strategic dimension of democratic practices in his *Rhetoric* quite openly and relentlessly.[17] Against the backdrop of a political regime that simply does not meet his ideal of a polity, he teaches his students the skills and techniques a politician must possess if he wants to be successful in the real world. These rhetorical or even manipulative techniques have lost little relevance in modern democracies, as everybody who studies electoral campaigns or political talk shows can quite easily see. By highlighting the emotional as well as the strategic dimension of politics, Aristotle sketches a picture of democratic practices that is still significant. His description of the political process, because he abstains from any idealizations and rationalizations, avoids concealing the power asymmetries of democratic decision-making as it is the case in recent deliberative theories of democracy.

Endnotes

1 For the more general discussion see Furley/Nehamas (2004); Rorty (1996); Gross/Walzer (2000).

2 See, for instance, Fontana/Nederman/Remer (2004); Dryzek (2010); Garsten (2011).

3 See Bickford (1996); Abizadeh (2002); O'Neill (2002); Nieuwenburg (2004); Bentley (2004); Yack (2006); Garsten (2006).

4 A similar point is stressed by John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* under reference to Cicero, cf. Urbinati (2002, 86).

5 In this article I follow the translation of George A. Kennedy (2007).

6 For the rhetorical figure of the *enthymeme*, its rationality, and the meaning of *endoxa* as established opinions, see Burnyeat (1996); Tessitore (1996); Gaines (2000); Farell (2000).

7 For similar views see Leighton (1996); Cooper (1996); Walker (2000); Sokolon (2006).

8 One will get a good impression of this technique if one watches the election cam-

paigns of contemporary politicians.

9 This advice to arouse fear may remind the reader of the debate in Athens about the Sicilian expedition given by Thucydides (6.21), in which Nicias attempts to persuade the assembly not to conquer Sicily by dramatically exaggerating the size of the required fleet. Today's politicians still use these well-known methods of manipulation. A remarkable example is the former US executive branch, which campaigned for support of its plans for invasion by alleging that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

10 This is argued by Kennedy (1963); Rapp (Rapp 2002: 341–319) gives a survey on past attempts to divide the development of the text into periods.

11 Garsten (2006) also emphasizes these institutional differences and tries to distinguish the rhetorical aspects of deliberative speeches from demagogic practices.

12 The confrontation of a real with an ideal community of communication also serves as an explanation of the discontinuity in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in Reeve (1996) and Sprute (1994).

13 As Ober (1998: 337) observes, the ideal democracy 'as described in the Politics would not, I think, be recognized as democracy by many of Aristotle's contemporaries who lived under a regime that they themselves called a demokratia'.

14 I have developed a similar thesis (Jörke 2011: 120–122).

15 His students were primarily young men who came from wealthy families and shared Aristotle's anti-democratic sentiments. 'The Athenian citizens whom he met at the Academy and Lyceum tended to be men who were thoroughly disillusioned with democracy. To reach them, it made sense for Aristotle to speak their language, a language critical of the Athenian regime' (Strauss 1991: 231); cf. Tessitore (1996) and Smith (1999).

16 One may argue that this rather ugly kind of rhetoric is justified as it is used to overcome the bad institutions of democratic Athens or at least to avoid the seduction of the vulgar and uneducated masses by demagogues like Cleon.

17 For a convincing criticism of the unpolitical and therefore elitist implications of deliberative democracy see Urbinati (2010) and Saffon-Urbinati (2013).

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