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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

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Mary Jean Braun
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ABSTRACT

I am interested in locating assumptions about democracy and logos in the Greek democratic city-state which have been carried over into the modern, democratic national-state. The assumptions, I argue, offer insights into the hegemonic view among rhetoricians that antagonistic rhetoric is inappropriate in our contemporary democracies. In Chapters One and Two, I analyze the development of democracy in Ancient Greece in order to uncover the assumptions upon which that system was based. I argue that these assumptions are dominated by what I call “the ideology of sovereign right.” In Chapter Three, I illustrate how this ideology has been carried over into contemporary treatments of democratic argumentation that have had influence in the field of rhetoric and composition. I argue that the Western tradition has privileged and continues to privilege the Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction, and thus, has left no legitimate place for antagonistic rhetoric. In Chapter Four, I return to ancient Greece to investigate the struggle over the construction of the rational that took shape in pre-Socratic philosophy. I argue that prior to the Socratics, another treatment of rationality developed, one based on the logic of contradiction, which provides a place in rhetoric for antagonism. In Chapter Five, I argue that dialectical materialism, as opposed to Aristotelian dialectics and post-structuralist notions of rationality, challenges the ideology of sovereign right embedded in democratic systems. In the Epilogue, I comment on the significance of this argument for the field of Rhetoric and Composition.
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW:

ANTAGONISM AS RHETORIC’S OTHER

Introduction

This dissertation treats a certain type of social conflict I call “antagonism.” I use the term “antagonism” to refer to contradictions between classes, strata, and groups that develop over questions of social justice that have reached the point of irreconcilability. Antagonism is a social fact, I argue, because at certain historical moments, social relations reach a point that is no longer sustainable. Social configurations no longer cohere as they once did. Antagonistic social contradictions circulate within the knowledge systems of the political economy, a term that stands in for the inextricable connections between economic, political, and ethical/ideological social structures: micro and macro systems of production and exchange; complex social formations that come in and out of being; and, shifting and contested values, norms and standards.

In the present era, antagonistic contradictions ebb and flow in the type of political economy of capital. As defined by Marx, capital is a social relationship determined by a method of accumulating wealth that requires the commodification of human labor. Capital, in Marx’s view, requires social relationships in which the value of certain human beings is primarily determined by their worth as a thing, a commodity to be traded like any other commodity.¹ Myriad social relationships, such as those defined by patriarchy or ethnicity, pre-date the emergence of capital, as many contemporary Marxist treatments
of political economy point out, but the tendency of capital to bring these relationships into the process of the commodification of labor intensifies over time as capital expands from its initial appearance in Europe to every other part of the world. According to the expansionist logic of capital, all social relationships increasingly become pulled into the sphere of the capitalist form of the accumulation of wealth. In the same way, struggles for social justice tend to be more and more tied to practices of capitalist accumulation.

I also use the term “antagonism” throughout this study to identify a particular type of rhetoric. Antagonistic rhetoric refers to those arguments that appear simultaneously with antagonistic social contradictions. Antagonistic rhetors purport to identify a specific situation or a general phenomenon that has become untenable due to the presence of an irreconcilable contradiction. The rhetor claims that the tenability of a situation has been rendered unsustainable because two courses of action have emerged over the course of time that preclude each other not only discursively, but tangibly. The opposition identified in antagonistic rhetoric is argued to have reached a point beyond mitigation. The argument is warranted by the view that the social reality argued for by one position can only be realized if the social reality argued for by the other is eliminated. Antagonistic rhetoric, therefore, as I define it in this study, is that rhetoric intended to bring about the maintenance or replacement of one social configuration by another. In this sense, antagonism does not refer to the tone or tenor of the utterances, but to the presence of an oppositional content in the form of two mutually exclusive premises regarding the
goodness of concrete practices. In this regard, antagonistic rhetoric appeals to reason as well as ethics. Most importantly, it is communicated by people who place themselves on either side of an irreconcilable contradiction. In and of itself, antagonistic rhetoric is not attributable to one group or other. Because antagonistic rhetoric emerges out of social relationships that have reached the point of antagonism, it is used by both antagonists.

Scholarly treatment of antagonistic rhetoric, however, is most often performed on the rhetoric of oppressed people. Indeed, rhetoricians have tended to recognize antagonistic rhetoric only when it emerges in the language of protest. Furthermore, when protesters claim that an irreconcilable conflict exists, rhetoricians have tended to judge their claims as unreasonable, that is, outside of the realm of the really possible, not real choices or courses of action. However, when those at whom the protest is aimed claim that an irreconcilable conflict exists, their representations tend to be considered as falling within reason; they offer possible and real choices or courses of action. This exceptional treatment of the rhetorics of oppressed people indicates that there is a blind spot, or ideology, at work that has had the effect of delegitimizing arguments made by oppressed people. This delegitimization is ironic given that rhetoricians have also tended to write the history of their discipline as having been born through the struggle for democratic inclusion. But, as I will argue throughout this study, there is nothing ironic about this at all. In fact, it is precisely the ideological marriage of the belief in democratic rhetoric as a rhetoric of inclusion that has so effectively silenced oppressed people when they have
spoken the unspeakable.

One particularly stark example of this ideological marriage occurred during the emergence of the black liberation struggle in the United States. In the late 1960s, the Black Panthers constructed an antagonistic argument when the Party made its case for self-determination. In the "Ten-Point Program," the Black Panther Party (BPP) argued that because American political and economic institutions function through the ideology of white supremacy, black people must create their own institutions that exclude white supremacy and must develop a means of defending these new institutions. Their argument was designed for those who had experienced white supremacist institutions and others who supported people targeted by those institutions. Its goal was to forge black communities into areas where "Black people... are able to determine our destiny."

Arguing for a self-determinist rather than a national-secessionist program, the Panthers contended that because the federal government had ultimate control over political and economic institutions, it should turn over control of the "means of production," housing and land, and the educational system from the "White businessmen" to the black community, which, with government aid, would "employ all of its people and give a high standard of living," and build cooperatives to provide for the housing and educational needs of the black community. Furthermore, the program advised black people to refuse to "fight in the military service... and kill other people of color" and organize an armed defense force that would protect black communities from "racist police oppression and
brutality." It also demanded that the government make good its post-Civil War promise to give land to black people, and free all imprisoned black people because the courts had fatally compromised the principle of fairness and impartiality (The Black Panther Party).

For the BPP and many of their supporters, the argument was reasonable because their reading of the entire history of the United States had already proven that American institutions were governed by white supremacist institutions. It was within reason to demand restitution, self-determination, and the right of self-defense because the reality in which the black community existed had already been forged by "robbery," state-sanctioned coercion, unlawful incarceration, and murder. Because the practices were perpetrated by white businessmen and landlords, the courts, the police, the educational system, and the federal government itself, these practices could only be eliminated if the people perpetrating them were absolutely prevented from continuing to carry them out. Accordingly, the BPP and their supporters rejected the argument that broadly pervaded the civil rights movement that blacks could obtain equality by entering these same institutions. The only reasonable course of action, the Panthers argued, would be for black people to build separate institutions which they would defend. As a way of demonstrating the reasonableness of their position, the tenth point of the program concluded by quoting the opening words of the Declaration of Independence, a program of separatist, revolutionary practice thought of by most Americans as having produced a social good. As we know, of course, this argument was overwhelmingly rejected
throughout U.S. society. It was seen as an unreasonable solution and an unrealistic choice to what most Americans considered the country's racial problems.

It may seem obvious why the Panthers were widely received as operating and speaking outside of what was considered reasonable, possible, and good in the U.S. context of the late 1960s. After all, the BPP argued that they had the right to use arms to defend themselves against the police. The antagonistic rhetoric in this case was largely understood as a declaration of war against white people and the police, as well as an attack on the democratic way of life. But it must also be noted that it was obvious to many generations of black people that a war against them had in fact been in progress for hundreds of years and that this war was constantly being justified by arguments every bit as antagonistic as the rhetoric of the Black Panther Party. However, the majority of people in the U.S. only recognized that an antagonism, indeed, a state of war, existed once black people began speaking and acting antagonistically in large numbers and increasing organization. For this majority, the antagonism, of course, was seen to have been instigated or invented by black agitators, rather than having been born of oppressive conditions in U.S. society.

This short page from the history of rhetoric in the United States suggests to me that in writing the histories of rhetoric and analyzing and promoting "good" rhetorical practice, we must look at what the rules of well-reasoned and ethically sound argument enable as well as suppress. When rhetoricians make any claim about the ineffectiveness
of warranting a logical claim by identifying a social antagonism, we are, of necessity, repressing that argument, the people making it, and the possibilities that argument and those people are in the act of creating. The repressive aspect of assessing rhetorical practices is unavoidable because as soon as rhetoricians legitimize one set of practices, other practices are, of necessity, delegitimized. Making ourselves aware of our own acts of repression seems particularly important at the present moment, the beginning of the twenty-first century.

By the end of the last century, new waves of antagonistic arguments had entered the global public sphere. This occurred, in part, because the old world order, so long characterized by the antagonisms of the Cold War, dissolved, allowing potential antagonisms which had been held in abeyance to place themselves on the table for resolution. One stark example of this was the seemingly overnight emergence of a “globalized economy.” By the 1970s, the Cold War political order had begun to hamper the ability of U.S. capital to circulate new techniques of producing and moving goods, services, and capital around the world. Although a contradiction between the beneficial and detrimental effects of the Cold War on U.S. capital had existed since the beginning of the Cold War, once one of the antagonists, the Soviet Union, was torn apart by its own internal antagonisms, U.S. capital’s need for liberal market theories (neo-liberalism) was given free reign. An explosion of new techniques of capitalist trade and finance seemed to appear from nowhere and promised to accelerate the accumulation of capital. But this
accumulation or "globalization" of capital was almost immediately confronted by its own internal and external contradictions as well as a very visible international protest movement that also seemed to appear from nowhere during meetings of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in November 1999. The multiple articulations of antagonisms between neo-liberalism and its opponents span a mind-bending range of movements. 7

Although these protests seem to have declined since the attacks on the New York International Trade Center in September, 2001, it seems unlikely to me that they will be in decline for long. Instead, the emergence of what Secretary of State Rumsfeld referred to as "a new Cold War" has the potential to exponentially proliferate the sites of antagonistic social contradictions and the rhetorics surrounding them (Samuels 56). The antagonistic pronouncement of President George W. Bush that "you are either with us or against us" has not faded into the background, but rather is driving almost every policy decision made at the federal and state levels, and is pushing the nation-states throughout the world to do the same.

Because as teachers, researchers, and public intellectuals, rhetoricians assess the effectiveness of arguments, we play a role in influencing how these emerging antagonistic rhetorics are understood by Americans. An analysis of antagonistic rhetoric and some of the factors that have led to its suppression in our democracies and in our analyses and pedagogies seems warranted if we do not wish to denigrate and delegitimize the arguments of those who advocate courses of action that do not conform to the exigencies of the
Here I restrict myself to inquiring into how “the reasonable” has been defined in rhetorical theories prescribed for democracies. The central inquiry that runs throughout this study, then, seeks to find the connections between assumptions that undergird theories of knowledge and logical proof in philosophy and rhetoric and assumptions that undergird theories of democracy. By so doing, I have sought to explain why marginalized and exploited people are considered to be unreasonable and irrational when they make antagonistic arguments. I trace these connections by focusing on dialectics, a term that in this study refers to the logical methods that prescribe how democratic subjects may inquire into and make arguments about an issue. In the historically constructed restrictions of dialectic, I argue, the rules of knowledge production and the logic of the political economy are congealed.

I am interested in locating assumptions about democracy and logos (that is, rational argumentation) in the Greek democratic city-state which have been carried over into the modern, democratic national-state. The assumptions, I argue, offer insights into the hegemonic view among rhetoricians that antagonistic rhetoric is inappropriate in our contemporary democracies. In Chapters One and Two, I analyze the development of democracy in Ancient Greece in order to uncover the assumptions upon which that system was based. I argue that these assumptions are dominated by what I call “the ideology of sovereign right.” In Chapter Three, I illustrate how this ideology has been
carried over into contemporary treatments of democratic argumentation that have had influence in the field of rhetoric and composition. I argue that the Western tradition has privileged and continues to privilege the Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction, and thus, has left no legitimate place for antagonistic rhetoric. In Chapter Four, I return to ancient Greece to investigate the struggle over the construction of the rational that took shape in pre-Socratic philosophy. I argue that prior to the Socratics, another treatment of rationality developed, one based on the logic of contradiction, which provides a place in rhetoric for antagonism. In Chapter Five, I argue that dialectical materialism, as opposed to Aristotelian dialectics and post-structuralist notions of rationality, challenges the ideology of sovereign right embedded in democratic systems. In the Epilogue, I comment on the significance of this argument for the field of Rhetoric and Composition.

One final note before I begin. Many of the philosophers and scholars dealt with in this study are not only writing before “gender-sensitive” language became the norm, but are also writing in a world in which the words “he,” “man,” and “men” represented a masculinized world view. Because Aristotle, Heraclitus, Hegel, and even Marx, Burke, or Corbett discussed human thinking or speaking using masculine markers, it would be revisionary in the negative sense of the term to pretend that the different forms of patriarchal ideologies prevalent in their historical periods were not embedded in their thinking. As Bakhtin has demonstrated, each utterance and word has ideological content. To correct the gendered ideologies of these men when I interpret them by using
“humankind” instead of “man” or “men” would be to infuse meaning into their texts that is most likely historically inaccurate. All of these men lived in cultures which had not yet experienced the critique of patriarchy, much less, the critique of patriarchal linguistic markers. Therefore, in an effort to avoid an ahistorical reading of many of the philosophers and scholars who appear in this study, I will retain their masculinized representations in my own text.
CHAPTER ONE
ANCIENT POLITICAL ECONOMY AND
THE CIRCULATION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The political history of Greece, Joseph Bryant states, is usually broken into five periods that demarcate distinct political structures. From 1700 to 1200, the Myceanean Palace Age, the peoples who later came to identify themselves as Greek lived in and around palaces on both coasts of the Aegean Sea (present day Greece and Turkey). The definitive political relationship that marked these societies was between the palace sovereign, a figure whose sovereignty derived from his blood relationship with the gods, and his subjects who occupied the land on the periphery of the palace and led lives which were absolutely subject to the will of the sovereign. From 1200 to 800, the Dark Age is marked by a regression to clan-based social structures following the destruction of the Myceanean palaces. The Archaic Age, from 776, the year of the first Olympiad, to 492, the expulsion of the Persians from Greece, is marked by a social and political recovery that resulted in the polis formation, the city-state, that required collaborative rule and power sharing, as well as the emergence of a pan-hellenic identity. In the Classical Age, from the expulsion of the Persians to the fall of Greece to Alexander the Great and the Macedonians of 323, the polis evolves into a democratic form of government marked by varying levels of popular participation in ruling councils, legislative bodies, and court
systems. Finally, in the Hellenistic Age, from 320 to the ascendancy of Rome over 
Greece during the second century, the governance of the *polis* retains some of the 
democratic political structures, but devolves into political regimes that are effectively 
tyrannies or oligarchies.

Although traditional scholarship has often depicted the various historical periods 
of ancient Greece as sharply distinctive, recent scholarship has challenged this view. 
Archaeological data, Renfrew argues, reveals “continuities in population, culture, religion 
and language” (8; also see R. Osborne 1-18). The scholars I primarily rely on are those 
who offer accounts that recognize the cultural continuities from one historical period to 
another. In this chapter, I argue that political structures can also be traced from one 
period to another by identifying the values and ideologies that are continued from one 
period to another. The continuity that has been most striking to me is the value attached 
to sovereignty. Sovereignty, I argue, not only survives from one political age to another 
in the political history of ancient Greece, it also continues to thrive in modern, democratic 
nation-states. Furthermore, sovereignty also ideologically asserts itself in the theories of 
knowledge and logical argumentation that came to dominate both ancient city-state and 
modern nation-state democracies. My entire study is devoted to illustrating the 
devastating effect of what I call “the ideology of sovereign right” on the reception of 
agonistic rhetorics in democracies. In this chapter, I first define what the ideology of 
sovereign right is and then trace its circulation in the political economy of ancient Greece.
Sovereignty in the Ancient World

In the non-Greek world, large-scale palace societies left relatively substantial archeological and written records from which to make somewhat reliable speculations about social stratification and identity formation. These societies were able to sustain huge concentrations of subjects to be long-lived and to develop extremely complex technological systems, social relationships, and political protocols. One type of palace society situates itself around a great river and its surrounding basins. As Joseph Bryant explains:

[T]he social complexes of Egypt and Mesopotamia, China and India . . . situated in the ecology of great river valleys . . . featured the early emergence of highly centralized command structures, “states” that arose in connection with the organizational imperatives of hydraulic engineering and defense needs of large-scale, requisition-based agriculture. The immense surpluses generated by artificial irrigation and bureaucratically administered labor came to sustain teeming human populations and considerable craft specialization, as well as an enriched ruling stratus comprised of the palace and its privileged functionaries in the military, civil service, and priestly sectors. (1-2)

In these cultures, the court of a sovereign king, who enforced the absolute subjugation of the populace, managed the integration of all of these systems. However,
Bryant explains, a palace civilization could only maintain compliance among all the
various social strata to the regimes of the division of labor imposed by the sovereign if the
technological systems required for large-scale survival remained viable. In order to ensure
a steady continuity of the complex technological systems, such societies required a
defining social relationship of sovereign and subject, the total subjugation of each
individual in each social strata to the state. Each individual had to accept the permanence
of his or her position in the social order. The geographical center of this society was the
life-giving river; the sovereign who oversaw it, in many respects, was the life-giver.

However, the Minoan and Mycenaean palaces societies scattered around the
Aegean region differed from the “river” cultures Bryant describes above. Most
significantly, rivers did not play the defining role in these palace political economies.
Third and second millennia Minoan and Mycenaean palaces were primarily located along
the coasts and on the islands of the Aegean Sea, the smaller sea that extends inland from
the northeastern section of Mediterranean located between present day Turkey and
Greece. All of these lands are characterized by rigid mountain ranges, low, flat, and
sometimes swampy plains, and extremes in climatic conditions and temperatures,
requiring a variety of agricultural techniques such as terracing on the hillsides and both dry
farming and wet farming on the plains (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 1-4, R. Osborne 60-
63). Agricultural life, therefore, was more uncertain and variegated than that of the great
river cultures for whom the source of its sustenance seemed permanent and
technologically controllable.

From their inception, each Mycenaean palace constituted an individual kingdom that served as the center of a well-fortified, walled citadel, around which a collection of unfortified towns populated by the king's vassals engaged in small scale agriculture. This arrangement is well preserved at the site of the palace of Mycenae where the original palace walls and the entrance way into the citadel loom over the small agricultural villages surrounding them (Littman 26-29). These arrangements suggest that given the limited and uncertain arable conditions of the land in the Aegean area, agricultural producers relied on the techniques and technologies of family farming that did not require the coordination of hundreds or even thousands of workers, as did the palace projects of Egypt and China.

The distinction between reliance on small-scale rather than large-scale farming practices and technologies must be considered salient in the development of Greek ethnic and political identity. In Aegean cultures, the palace peoples shared the seas and the natural harbors as their permanent geographical resource, not a river. Although life in ancient Mycenaean cultures was sustained primarily by agriculture, each palace sovereign depended on connections with the outside world through some type of overseas trading to insure the survival of his subjects. This geographical exigency, Renfrew contends, indicates that in the millennia before the Mycenaean Age, the peoples inhabiting the Aegean area engaged in trading practices that promoted an unique and characteristic "international spirit." For example, Karageorghis explains that trading in obsidian, "a
volcanic glass used mainly for producing sharp cutting blades," has been dated to the seventh millennium B.C. (161). There is ample evidence that overseas trading of pottery and mined metals existed among the Aegean island communities and Cyprus from the third millennium B.C. on. Littman reports that “[d]uring the Early Minoan period (c. 3000-2100 BC) the Minoans extended their flourishing overseas trade as far as Egypt” (27). Dunbabin points out that the literary record reveals that Greek knowledge of Italy and Sicily attained through trading during the Mycenaean period was remembered, not forgotten, throughout the Dark Ages.

Given the geographical exigencies of these sea cultures, therefore, it is likely that the Greeks were motivated to produce maritime as well as agricultural technological innovations. These technologies required the development of navigational and meteorological knowledge, and engineering techniques for building ships capable of long voyages and manufacturing techniques for the huge ceramic storage containers which could take the beating they received from rough seas. Continuous engagement in trade, therefore, contributed to the production of the surpluses necessary to sustain a palace society and was directed by the sovereign figure who was responsible for ensuring the survival of the kingdom.

As in river cultures, the specialized techniques of writing and mathematics were also developed in palace cultures in order that accounts of these complex economies could be kept and diplomatic messages or threats of war could be sent. Mycenaean records
from the fifteenth to the thirteenth centuries written on clay tablets in a syllabic symbol system adopted from the Minoans called Linear B were inadvertently baked in the fires that eventually destroyed the palaces, preserving these texts. These records reveal that the palace coffer was fed by a tax on the sovereign subjects in return for the sovereign’s protection in war. Tribute was also paid to the king by conquered peoples and the pool of labor these wars provided also bolstered the palace economies. Piracy at sea, that is, outright theft of one palace’s goods and people by another palace, was a common form of accumulation that characterized ancient Greek political economies throughout their entire existence.

The Mycenaean palaces, unlike the river cultures, were relatively short-lived (500 years or so). Evidence from necropolises showing large concentrations of people abruptly ends around 1200 B.C. and marks the beginning of the Dark Age. The “Dark Age,” according to Bryant, refers to the dearth of a historical record during this period:

[T]he massive devastation and turmoil that attended the fall of Mycenaean civilization plunged the entire Greek peninsula into historical darkness for several centuries, as material poverty and the loss of scribal skills conspired to mute the testimony of those who endured amid the ruins. (15)

Historians have disagreed on the causes of the demise as well as on the question of how culturally regressive this period was. Scholars have speculated that three possible causes for the collapse are most likely: first, that climatic disasters probably disturbed the
delicate balance of Greece’s fragile agricultural systems; second, that marauding outsiders including pirates, mercenaries, and migrating Greek tribes overtook the palaces; and, third, that social strife erupted either within or between the palaces. It could be that an earthquake, such as the ones that are known to have hit the Minoan palace at Knossos in 1750 and 1600 could have devastated the delicate balance of the life-sustaining technologies of the Mycenaens (Littman 27). Invasions by other “sea peoples” from Cyprus or the “Dorians, believed to be a new branch of the Indo-Europeans” could also explain the dramatic demise of the Mycenaean palaces. Internal strife (stasis) could have occurred between princes of a single palace or could have been ignited by revolts on the part of the “oppressed social categories” (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 21).

How Mycenaean culture disappeared is not known, but that it did, in fact, abruptly disappear is not disputed. Continuity theorists, however, argue that it is inaccurate to think that none of the social identities from the palace era survived in the early Dark Age. Social organization, as I am about to argue, maintained adherence to the social ethics of the past. People did not lose their previous understandings of social organization and the sovereign/subject hierarchies associated with them.

The small body of archeological evidence from the early Dark Age reveals that the devastation following the fall of the palaces was extremely uneven, even though all social life became simplified and scaled down. The size of tribes and the means they employed to survive varied radically. Some continued to engage in sea trade while maintaining a
village form of agricultural production, while others resorted to nomadic existence for survival. A successful tribe might have maintained a population of only ten to fifteen people for generations given the probable death rate and agricultural yields required to support a single life. Other tribes may have supported up to one hundred members (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 64-67). During the entire recovery period and up to the political reorganization of Greece that we refer to as the Classical Age, familial, tribal and political institutions were formed. It is through those institutions that sovereign right continues to circulate.

In the Dark Age, sovereignty is exercised in extremely small tribes, the oikoi, as well as military alliances between tribes. The oikos, an economically, self-sustaining agricultural unit, is usually thought of as an extended family made up of the hierarchically identified noble, as oikos, and non-kin, independent, bonded, and enslaved groups through which the work of the oikos, as tribe, is accomplished. The lord of the noble family, therefore, acts as sovereign over the oikos both as a kinship and tribal structure. Oikos also reflects a new concept, land ownership. In this sense, oikos is "a collection of possessions and people, a household," through which private property, inherited property, surplus production and status gradually came to be conceptualized (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 31). The oikos could be composed of several families, each owning some land, but the oikos is led by a noble family whose name, over time, often becomes the ethnonym by which all oikos members identify themselves. One family name, for
example, Achaea, could refer to the noble family, while also referring to all the members of the *oikos* as an tribal unit, the Achaeans. Later groups of non-noble people who no longer maintained dependent ties to the noble family, nor their lands, could still be referred to by the family name, for example, the people of Achaea. In this way, a family name becomes an ethnonym that preserves the sovereign subject relationship.

From the Dark Age through the Archaic period, the Greek *oikos* is particularly associated with the creation of *aristoi*, "the best people," and the identity of the noble as a semi-divine personage descended from a blood line begun by the sexual union of a human and a god. This belief is maintained through the family's association with their god of choice to whom all the members of the *oikos* supplicate through sacred, and often secret rituals. Littman argues that the noble aristocrats were assumed to have sovereign powers so similar to those of the Mycenaean sovereigns and so entrenched that these powers were only "somewhat curtailed" by the *oikos* structure. Aristocratic sovereign right remained recognized as a special status derived from a noble bloodline throughout ancient Greek history. For example, writing in the sixth century, Pindar defines a noble as "a man of weight who has inborn glory . . . conspicuous in nature, passing from sires to sons" (quoted in Bryant 106). In the mid-fourth century, Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, a text to instruct democratic rhetors, defines happiness as stemming from two "goods" -- the internal and external, in which the external goods are clearly reserved for the *aristoi*: "good birth and friends and wealth and honor" (*Rhetoric* 57-8). Aristotle also describes the
“good” birth of a city as an aristocratic entity:

Good birth, for a nation or a city, means that the people is indigenous or ancient; that its earliest leaders were men of eminence; and that many of their offspring have been eminent for such qualities and deeds as we admire. (58)

In sum, the oikos and the noble aristocracy with which it is associated strongly continues the ideology of sovereign right. All non-kin members of the oikoi become sovereign subjects of the male members of sovereign noble family. Therefore, unlike Mycenaean societies, the oikos structure also allowed for the proliferation of new status categories and identities through which sovereign right circulated that were impossible in the palace structure. Homer provides evidence of this proliferation.

There has and continues to be controversy among scholars about what time period Homer is depicting. But, as Bryant explains, the deciphering of Linear B has convinced most scholars to abandon the idea that Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey represent the culture’s memories of the Mycenaean period preserved through the oral tradition of The Dark Ages. Rather, most scholars are now convinced “that while Agamemnon, Odysseus, and the Trojan war itself belong to the Mycenaean era (c. 1200), the institutional life represented in the epics is largely that of Dark Age Greece, with only minor Mycenaean survivals and occasional projections from Homer’s own period, probably the eighth century” (Bryant 15).

In his reading of Homer, Garlan speculates that late Dark Age oikoi were “small
kingdoms of an aristocratic nature" characterized by “less centralized and less hierarchical forms of community organization” (30). Garlan analyzes the oikos of Odysseus in The Odyssey as a prototype that illustrates the proliferation of slave and worker identities that could not have existed in Mycenaean society. Under the supervision of the noble’s wife, female slaves took care of visiting nobles, prepared and served banquets, cleaned the home, spun wool, created objects of art, and milled barley and wheat. Male slaves herded flocks under the direction of three master herders, each himself a slave, the swineherd, the goatherd, and the cowherd. The agricultural work, on the other hand, was performed by a new order in the hierarchy, the thetes, the lowest order (33). The thetes were agricultural workers who had become detached from the land. They certainly existed as a firmly established strata by Homer’s time. The thetes, like the slaves, were non-kin members of the oikoi, and were dependent upon and belonged to the noble family. But unlike slaves, they were of the oikos, not enslaved to it, giving an independent character to their low order in the hierarchy.

This contradictory relationship of dependence and independence to the sovereign also comes through in the thetes’ relationship to the slaves. As non-kin sovereign subjects, both thetes and slaves were required to work, a condition of life antithetical to the life of nobles. However, Garlan points out that personal service to the nobles is reserved for slaves. Slaves took care of the most intimate needs of the noble family, such as dressing them, feeding them, being at their side in war, or nursing their children, as well
as managing the affairs of the house. About half of the slaves became completely integrated with the nobles, and are represented by Homer as living their lives at the level of the nobles and identifying the family’s goals and hopes with their own. The other half of the slaves were not allowed to hold an intimate place in the family, and these were the slaves whom, in Homer, the nobles fear as those most likely to revolt. The slave, although subject to treatment reserved only for chattel -- deracination, torture, execution at will, and sexual exploitation and control -- was nevertheless also potentially privy to a dependent relationship to the nobles that more resembles the relationship he had with his blood kin.

Sovereignty is also dispersed through the proliferation of military alliances. In a military alliance between oikos-based tribes, Bryant states, the oikoi sovereigns organized themselves into phratria (brotherhoods). A sovereign’s role in the phratria depended on the alliance’s concerns for the survival of each oikos-tribe in the alliance. Among the nobles, a basileus (warlord) who directed the campaign was elected by the phratria. Basileus status was bestowed upon a noble based on his military skill. It was not a permanent or hereditary position, just as the particular configurations of alliances during the Dark Age were probably not permanent. The choice of basileus was made only after the phratria had considered the particular skills of each noble and how these skills would help in the particular campaign being planned. Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel point out that political decision-making by council and assembly in later democratic poleis began in these
war councils of the phratria (31-3). The warlord’s principle duty was to declare what action to take, but, Bryant contends, he increasingly had to win his support “through adherence to tradition and effective argumentation” (18). A picture of the basileus and his fellow noble lords are frozen in time in Homer’s Iliad and reveals the cultural logic of the agon (the contest) that undergirds both military and civic life of the sovereign aristoi.

Agonal consciousness drives all of the characters in Homer’s poetry who believe that a man’s virtue (arete) is determined by noble birth and proven by his success in winning a physical contest (agon) with his enemies in the form of tribal warfare. The agonal ethic in war meant that the basileus and his noble horsemen engaged in the heaviest fighting, thus increasing or decreasing their status depending upon whether they won or lost the contest. The relationship of social, and later political status, to a man’s success in an agon continued over into later poleis society. In democratic Athens, for example, Pericles was dismissed in disgrace, in spite of his otherwise sterling successes in war and government, when Athens lost their second engagement with Sparta in 430.

But the basileus was not the only member of the alliance whose status was at stake according to his performance in the agon. All members of the various oikoi, both noble and non-noble, were expected to join the war by supplying himself with whatever means he could afford. Any member of a noble’s oikoi who was unable to commission a weapon of war could not participate in war, rendering him outside of the military orders, with devastating effects on his social status as a whole. The members of the oikoi who
were most likely excluded from military service were the *thetes*, the poorest of the poor. That large numbers from the *thetes* were excluded from service by this status-based practice indicates that war primarily served the purpose of maintaining the circulation of sovereign right, and was secondarily driven by economic motives. Of course, booty, tribute, land, and slaves were acquired through war, and this had the effect of expanding surpluses enough that some non-nobles were able to increase their holdings. However, given the disparity between the sovereigns and the sovereign-subjects, only the noble members of the *oikos* were able to go into battle on a horse, donning helmet, breastplate, shield, and weaponry, military regalia that would come to be later associated in *polis* society with a new political order, the *hippeis* (the horsemen). The *thetes* did not have the means to own weapons, not even an iron digging implement with which to qualify to enter the service of the basileus. As polis-states came into being, the *thetes* found themselves excluded from participation in the citizen assemblies due to their inability to contribute to the most important *agon* -- war.

The Further Dispersal of Sovereignty in the Archaic Age

The archeological evidence that marks the end of the Dark Age is found in the necropolises which indicate that the Greek population and way of life was beginning to stabilize by the ninth century, a factor that led to a dramatic expansion of the political economy. More importantly military alliances between *oikoi* also undergo a dramatic change. It is clear that by the ninth century, the nobles of different *oikoi* had long
established the practice of joining into military associations. Littman refers to these associations as tribal states. Littman explains that:

The tribal state was formed from a number of loosely knit villages and towns originally settled by a single tribe. Its origin was in the periods of migration during which a tribe settled in a particular area, as the Achaeans did in Achaea. Very often the country assumed its name from the tribe, such as Locris and Achaea. The tribal state lacked political organization and remained both economically and culturally primitive. (29)

Littman's distinction is crucial. A military alliance of oikoi, the tribal state, should not be confused with the polis, the city state. The polis differs from a military alliance in that a polis is a physical place where the economic and political activity is carried on among oikoi. It is comprised of an agora, a market place, and an acropolis, a place for commonly shared religious festivals and meetings of the councils and assemblies designated to make policy decision for the entire region. Significantly, in the polis, oikoi are no longer self-contained at the level of culture. Bryant contends that although the polis is significantly different from the oikos, the roots of polis organization are, nevertheless, deeply embedded in the practices of the military alliances in the Dark Age.

Along with the appearance of poleis or city-states, dynamic changes begin to occur. Inscriptions on pottery shards that have been dated to the ninth and eighth centuries indicate that the Greeks had by this time adopted the Phoenician alphabet and
had already adapted it to the Greek language. Because the technology of writing was fully integrated into Greek culture by the eighth century, the archaic period is often referred to as the Homeric period. R. Osborne explains that the process of reinstating writing into Greek cultures was most likely carried out by the Ionians of Asia Minor, not mainland Greeks. The Milesians had, sometime in the ninth century, begun extending their commercial practices in the Mediterranean. Archaeologists begin to find Ionian pottery and other distinguishable Greek artifacts scattered around in ninth century Mediterranean ruins. These finds provide evidence that Ionians most likely embarked in technologically advanced ships from the sea port of Miletus (located on the eastern coast of the Aegean in present day Turkey) and followed the trade routes that the Phoenicians had established at least a century earlier. It is well founded in the archaeological record that the Phoenicians had already been trading from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, embarking from the Near Eastern city of Al Mina, continuing along the European coast of the Mediterranean, and proceeding around Italy as far as Gibraltar, then returning to Al Mina by way of the African coast of the Mediterranean, including a lengthy stay at the thriving Phoenician colony of Carthage (105-112). There is compelling evidence, therefore, that writing returned to Greece via the Milesians’ contact with the Phoenicians along the trade routes the Phoenicians established.

Engagement in trade at this level indicates a very high level of social organization, technology, and surplus. Renfrew, as I stated earlier, refers to the tendency of Greeks to
assimilate the technological advances of other cultures as the Greek "international spirit." However, such characterization, so common in the myth of the birth of western civilization, obscures the fact that Greeks were not the first of the Mediterranean peoples to engage in overseas trade. Furthermore, this characterization obscures two other important details. First, people engaging in overseas trading, including the Greeks, also colonized other peoples living in the areas in which they wished to establish ports. “Colonial expansionism” rather than “internationalism” better captures the spirit of certain Mediterranean peoples, such as the Phoenicians and the Greeks. Second, Greek colonization was begun in Ionia, particularly by Miletus, the same polis where the Greek alphabet was most likely developed. In popular histories of Western culture, including recent ones such as Norman Davies’ 1998 Europe: A History, the pathbreaking role of Ionia is often overlooked in favor of locating the beginnings of the civilization in Athens, Sparta, and Corinth on the Greek mainland. The ancient Mediterranean world, given its dependence upon the sea, is better understood as a world of constant movement in which cultures mixed through war and trade, and languages, including very early forms of writing, were constantly being exchanged. In this rapidly changing world, there is a proliferation of strata formation and along with it, the ideology of sovereign right is dispersed among new strata.

One of the most profound transformations in status is experienced by the non-noble, land-holding farmers, as evidenced most decidedly by the eighth century
appearance of the *Hoplite* Phalanx, a completely new order in the military hierarchy that soon came to dominate and fundamentally change the strategy and tactics of ancient warfare. The *Hoplite* phalanx consisted of tightly-packed rows of non-noble, small-scale farmers all equipped with the same type of heavy shield and helmet. Unlike the regalia of the nobles which was highly individualized, the Hoplites gear was rigorously standardized to render the entire phalanx less vulnerable to injury and more effective as a fighting unit. The gear consisted of a large shield, a sword, and a flat, standard-sized, breast plate not made specifically for a particular body. Each man held the shield to protect the left side of his own body as well as the right side of his fellow. This arrangement freed up his right hand for sword fighting. It also made the task of protecting fellow soldiers an integral part of waging war.

The *Hoplite* phalanx created an agonal identity quite distinct from the Homeric, agonistic hero identity. Ironically, during the same century that Homer created the image of the hero in whom the agonal ethic was individually embodied, the Greek people were confronted with the contradictory practice of *Hoplite* warfare in which agonal ethic was beginning to be constructed collectively. This reconstruction of *agon*, with its contradictory outcomes of glory or shame, was brought into relief in ancient Greek society by the fact that the new technology of *Hoplite* warfare proved to be extraordinarily successful against those who lacked this technology. The collective agonal identity that emerged in warfare, it is often argued, helped to diminish the absolute
authority of the sovereign phratries. *Hoplite* phalanx methods of fighting were superior to traditional methods. Calvary attacks by enemy nobles became ineffective as "no horse would charge more than once" an impenetrable wall of *hoplite* shields (Osborne 175).

The *Hoplite* phalanx is often seen as the first indication of the democratizing effect the *polis* seemed to foster. In his analysis of war and ideology in ancient Greece, for example, Peter Hunt states that "*Hoplite* ideology tended to see every farmer in every state as an equally armed and equally important member of the phalanx" (185-6). This ideology naturalized the collective *agon* and suggests that the collective identity of a sovereign citizenry finds its earliest expression in the *Hoplite* phalanx. Bryant points out that Weber's thesis that "[t]he occidental city is in its beginnings first of all a defense group, an organization of those economically competent to bear arms, to equip and train themselves" remains particularly insightful (17). The Hoplite's role in determining the success of a conflict amounted to a "democratic alteration in the compositional mix of the warrior group" allowing men to achieve the social status previously reserved for aristocrats (49). Burial practices also reflected the democratizing effect of *Hoplite* warfare. Before this type of warfare, a man was buried with his military gear which would indicate exactly which strata of society he occupied. With the invention of the *hoplite* phalanx, most men were no longer buried in their armor after the eighth century because the use of shields no longer required the wearing of such armor; furthermore, shields, and the light weight, one-size-fits-all breast plate could be passed down from one
generation to another (Osborne 176). Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel argue that Hoplite warfare is indicative of "the extension of the civic body that went hand in hand with the birth of cities," and that it is most likely that both are "a cause and consequence" of each other (41).

These observations do not indicate, I argue, that democratic social relations are beginning to assert themselves in opposition to the sovereign/sovereign-subject relationship, but that the sovereign/sovereign-subject relationship is beginning to be more dispersed among new strata that are proliferating in the expanding political economy the polis structure encourages. As new strata are granted some privileges of citizenship, these citizens come to identify themselves as having sovereignty over lower strata who are excluded from the Hoplite phalanx, such as the thetes, as well as other peoples who are being brought into an expanding Greek world as both slaves and colonized peoples.

In addition to the military means of extending the ideology of sovereign right to new status groups, the initiation of colonization by mainland poleis around 750 allows for a similar extension. Settlements were established further east of the mainland in the northern Aegean and far to the west in Italy and Sicily, the area known as "Magna Graecia." Massive population increases, rivalry between oikoi, the increasing division of property among oikoi kin, the depletion of the soil, the scarcity of arable land, and the growing ubiquity of the polis structure have all been suggested as the causes of Greek expansion throughout the Mediterranean (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 45-6, Bryant 44-46,
Finley 171-172). Surely all of these things played a part, as is evidenced by what types of colonies are set up and how they remained related to their "mother" cities. Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel identify two types of colonies: the trading or commercial colony and the settlement or agrarian colony, known as the *apoikia*, "home away from home." Trading colonies did not involve mass migration. Rather traders from a Greek city-state established permanent contacts with traders in non-Greek areas. The choice of trading partners was determined by mutual need -- the non-Greek partner might have wood or metals which they traded for Greek oil or weapons. Many Greeks migrated to the trading centers to ensure a smooth flow of goods between the mother city and the trading center; however, these merchants' ties to their *polis* were strong in that they did not migrate for any purpose other than trade (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 45-46).

Agrarian settlements have a much different history. These migrations involve large groups of people whose intent is to never return to the mother city. The stories told of the immigrants' leavetaking indicate that migration was a political necessity, a way of relieving some social tension that threatened the *polis*. Some groups seem to have been forced away from their home, while others seem to have offered themselves as candidates to migrate. These leavetakings involve elaborate ceremonies and consultations with the *polis'* god. Groups only leave after consultation with an oracle, and they are led under the protection of an *oikiste*, a man chosen by the oracle to spiritually guide the expedition by interpreting the oracle's signs. The settlement was established only once the *oikiste*
was certain that the immigrants had reached the exact spot envisioned by the oracle. The
oikiste and his descendants retained a sovereign position in the new colonies. The
settlements were founded in areas which were always more or less occupied; the resulting
contact zones ran the gamut of relationships from mutual benefit and cultural exchange to
extreme hostility and cultural imposition (46-50). Athens engaged in most of its
colonizing by establishing trading relationships overseas. Closer to home, on the
mainland, Athens absorbed a large number of contiguous areas by offering smaller poleis
the dubious choice of being sacked or becoming a tribute-paying protectorate. Sparta,
Corinth, and other Peloponnesian poleis aggressively formed agrarian settlements in
Magna Graecia.

The difference between the eighth century colonization practices of Athens and
Sparta is particularly important because of its future connection with the formation and
practice of Athenian democracy. The two major wars, the Persian War and the
Peloponnesian War, that marked the beginning and the end of the fifth century, the period
that democracy flourished in Athens, were partially fought over the question of who
would have sovereignty over both the eastern and western colonies. In the late sixth
century, the eastern protectorates would become sites of violent contention between the
Persians and the Athenians. The defeat of the Persian army by Athenians in the early
fifth century laid the basis for the building of the Athenian empire that supported
democracy under Pericles’ archonship. Peloponnesia’s hold over the western colonies
was not challenged until the late fifth century when Athens sent her fleet against the Spartan colony of Syracuse during the Peloponnesian war. By the fifth century, in other words, poleis had to engage in practices to protect their colonial holdings. Early colonization, however, acted to bring about the birth of panhellenism, a collective Greek ethnic identity that conflicted with as well as supported the aristocratic sovereign order.

R. Osborne argues that throughout the Dark Age, ethnic identity had been forged not only through military alliances, but through the sharing of gods among tribes. By the Archaic Age, however, these gods were consolidated into specifically Greek divine identities, laying the basis for the development of a panhellenic, Greek identity. The sanctuary at Delphi, for example, located in central Greece on Mount Parnassos, Osborne points out, brought the elite from a wide range of regions together. Through their oracular duties, the priests, themselves members of noble families, not only gathered information from individual poleis, they also consolidated knowledge about the Greek people as a whole and disseminated it. In this way, the sanctuaries acted as “information centers” through which Greek self-knowledge circulated (206). The first Olympiad in 776 B.C., requiring cooperation and planning among the Greek poleis for the purpose of athletic, rather than military competition, further ritualized Panhellenism by turning Olympia into a collective Greek space “where honour [could] be disputed in a wider world than the world of individual community” (206). The importance of religion and sports in constructing panhellenism in the Archaic period is further evidenced by the large amounts
of wealth that *poleis* dedicated to upgrading and expanding extant sanctuaries and adapting the areas contiguous to the sanctuaries for panhellenic games, and later, theatrical productions and assembly meetings. These areas become the center of the city, the acropolis. Osborne argues, however, that as the cities pour more of their wealth into elaborate ceremonial sites for panhellenic display, the games eventually devolve into sites for aristocratic intrigue. The oracles serve as the conduits of this intrigue.

A story Strabo claims he quoted directly from Antiokhos serves to illustrate the ways in which sovereign right continued to circulate through the collective identities that are forged in *hoplite* warfare, colonization, and panhellenism. Antiokhos discusses the founding of the colony of Taras by a group of Spartan men. Following Sparta’s conquest and enslavement of the Messenians in the seventh century, a group of “Lakedaimonians who did not participate in the campaign were separated off,” along with the conquered Messenians, into the status of helotage, a status identical to slavery except that a helot, unlike a slave, could not be sold (Antiokhos quoted in Osborne 204). The Lakedaimonians, considered ethnic Greeks by the Spartans, had not acted honorably by failing to send their *hoplite* phalanx against the non-Greek Macedonians and were thus punished en masse. The children of these Lakedaimonian *helots*, who identified themselves as the Partheniai, “could not tolerate” being deprived of civic rights, and plotted an uprising to occur during the Spartan games held to celebrate the “festival of Hyakinthia at the Amyklaion sanctuary.” The plot is discovered by Phalanthos, one of
the Spartans sent to infiltrate the Partheniai plotters. Phalanthos, however, sides with the revolt, not because he sympathizes with the cause, but because he is politically opposed to some of the members of Sparta’s ruling council. He offers to help the Partheniai in the hopes that their revolt will weaken the council, giving him a chance to take control of it. He tells the insurgents that when he puts on his leather cap, that will be their signal to begin the revolt. The Spartan Council learns of Phalanthos’ betrayal and during the games announces that “Phalanthos must not put on his hat.” After being taken from the stadium by guards, Phalanthos is taken to the oracle “to ask about settlement abroad” rather than being executed. The oracle tells him that he and the Partheniai may go to the region of Taras to live in Satyrion, a land already inhabited by “Barbarians” and “Cretans” who had been shipwrecked there in the third millennium.

In this story, Osborne explains, panhellenic identity works both against and for the tribal community of Lakedaimonians. Sparta expects them, as Greek tribes, to fight with her. Those who comply are absorbed into the community of Spartan citizens; their status is raised according to their willingness to form a hoplite phalanx to support the Spartan basileus. Those who refuse suffer the same fate as the non-Greeks. But panhellenism also seems to ultimately help their descendants, the Partheniai. Their Greek identity enables them to free themselves from helotage. The non-Greek Messenians, however, because of their non-Greek ethnic identity were never considered by the Spartans as anything other than helots. On the other hand, Phalanthos’ good fortune
probably has little to do with the Panhellenic spirit but with the colonialist spirit. He doesn’t suffer the fate of execution, murder by intrigue, or ostracism because Sparta was also in an intense period of colonization.

In Strabo story, colonialism also functions to settle inter-aristocratic disputes that threatened social cohesion. Ambitious aristocrats, such as Phalanthos, while removed from the concerns of the lower strata, nevertheless made use of lower strata to position themselves to win in an inter-aristocratic agon. This growing phenomenon is raised to the level of technique among the Athenian aristoi throughout the sixth century, the periods known as the Age of the Tyrants. Competing aristocrats vie for popular support as the means of securing the archonship. The priests who delivered the oracles, like the one who gave the signs to Phalanthos, although always perceived as non-partisan, were from aristocratic families and, through the discourse of religion, made judgements concerning the political arena. Serving in sanctuaries, like serving in governing councils and in the military, was strictly decided by status in polis societies. Although large numbers of non-aristocratic hoplites attained citizen identity in Sparta, the concerns of the aristoi continued to dominate by controlling the circulation of sovereign right in proliferating status identities and the institutions through which they functioned. Although sovereign power had clearly taken on a political character that restrained the arbitrary exercise of power by the aristocracy, sovereignty was still appropriated by the aristoi, a social strata, but it was circulated through a politically constituted state. In the
same way, the construction of centralized cities and colonies, and the identities that proliferate in these formations, the citizen, the Greek, and the non-Greek, should also be understood as the circulation of sovereign right. The poetry of Hesiod serves as an example.

Hesiod: The complaints of a “nasty man”

Hesiod was a non-noble, landed farmer who lived in the town of Askra in the large region known as Boeotia. Boeotia was originally colonized by the Milesians and was contiguous to Athens, the polis that later absorbed much of it. As a late eighth or early seventh century landowner, Hesiod tended to the day to day activity of farming. In Bryant’s view, for the first time in Greek literary history, Hesiod articulates an identity radically opposed to that of the aristocracy, an identity based on the belief that work is virtuous. By extolling the virtue of work, Hesiod challenges the assumption that virtue is reserved for the aristoi who must not work because of their sovereign right to be hegemon over the land and the people who work it. Aristocratic virtue in polis society remains attached to their military service, but also becomes increasingly attached to their civic service. For the aristocracy, therefore, virtue is assured only through “the absence of occupation” (Ancient Economy 44). When Hesiod associated virtue with work, he turned the aristocratic virtue on its head.

Hesiod probably came from the strata that the aristoi derogatorily referred to as the krakoi, a word that Josiah Ober roughly translates as “the nasty men” (Mass and
The krakoi were “a noticeable group of individuals who were rich but not noble born” who vied for the political power denied to them throughout the seventh century. Hesiod certainly appears to be an aspiring member of this strata. In a section of his poem, *Works and Days*, a poem addressed to his brother, Perses, Hesiod reminds him of which strata their father comes from, a strata of farmers forced into the insecure world of the distribution of surplus production. Hesiod tells his brother:

You yourself wait until the season for sailing is come and then drag a swift ship down to the sea. Equip it with a well-fitting cargo so as to bring home a profit. That is how my father and yours, poor Perses, used to sail on ships, because he lacked a good livelihood. And once he came even here, he left Kyme in Alolis and completed a journey over a great stretch of sea in his black ship. He did not feel riches, wealth, and prosperity, but dreadful poverty which Zeus gives to men. He settled down near Helikon, in a wretched village, Askra, bad in winter, awful in summer, and good at no time of the year. (quoted in Osborne 146).

This section describes the instability of the lives of the krakoi and the ease with which their children could fall from prosperity. Hesiod warns Perses against becoming a merchant who takes to the sea “to bring home a profit” during “the season of sailing.” Hesiod indicates that Perses is following in his father’s footsteps. Their father is described as having become a merchant as a result of being detached from his oikos and his polis. For Hesiod, being severed from working the land makes one poor. He reminds
Perses that their father left their homeland in Kyme, an Ionian polis in Asia Minor, and resettled in the “wretched village,” Askra in Boeotia. In Kyme, their father had “lacked a good livelihood.” For Osborne, this history lesson indicates that people “were highly mobile” in the eighth and seventh century (119), indicating the increase in an “independent” population. However, the reasons for that budding independence are contradictory when considered in the context of colonization.

Colonization, in both its early and later stages, helped to relieve the internal strife of a polis, as shown above. But, as indicated in Hesiod’s personal history, his father had not immigrated in the first wave of colonialism with a group of new immigrants, funded by an aristocrat and protected by an oikiste who retains his family ties to the aristocracy of the mother city. Rather, his leavetaking was of an independent nature. Hesiod’s father was probably forced to take to the sea because he was no longer able to sustain his family as a farmer. However, he could not sustain himself solely by mercantilism. The father’s engagement in mercantilism is ambiguous in that his “freedom” to do so indicates his increasingly alienated relationship with his polis. Hesiod makes it clear that his father was forced to leave because of his deteriorating situation as a farmer. Had he perhaps become overwhelmed by debt bondage? Did he pay off this debt and break the conditions of his bondage by ceding his land back to the lord? Did he use the small amount of gain he made from his mercantile activities to buy an inadequate farm in Askra? Hesiod does not reveal how his father acquired the land in Askra, but his ability to do so, as well as the
exigency to do so, is certainly part of the colonial experience. For R. Osborne, this passage is indicative of Hesiod's assumption that it is virtuous for people to live by farming, that "it is misguided to imagine that [trading] offers an easy way to escape debt and poverty," and that new notions of prosperity have corrupted the community ethics of justice and fairness (145). But when depicted in the context of politics, Hesiod's complaint indicates the political complexity of his representation of virtue.

The fate of Hesiod and Persus is also tied to the colonial experience. Once the Askra parcel was divided, the sons were unable to sustain themselves. A fissure develops between them which can only be resolved through the systems of sovereign right circulating in the polis. Hesiod bids his brother to do "what is just," but this moral dictate also indicates Hesiod's response to the changing ethics in archaic Greek societies. He sees his brother as having been corrupted by the new values circulating among the people. He and Perses are engaged in some type of legal dispute that seems to be connected to the division of their father's land. Hesiod condemns the arbitrary decisions of the new ruling political figures. He condemns those political figures who engage in unjust practices, such as taking bribes. There is a sense that it is these "crooked" practices that turned his brother against him, indicating that Hesiod feels that the aristoi were destroying virtue. In this sense, Hesiod can be seen as a reaction to the new ways that sovereign right was circulating in the polis. Works and Days exhibits both a sense of political helplessness in the face of unjust rulers as well as a faith that a moral society can be attained. To argue
his case through poetry, he revises the aristocratic concept of justice from the *oikos*
structure that has been corrupted in the new political economy of colonialism. By
condemning his brother for following in his father’s footsteps, Hesiod clings to the old
relationships based on land and *oikos* ties. Hesiod attempts to construct a new
understanding of justice in another poem, his *Theogony*, a retelling of the origin myth of
the gods through which Hesiod retains the main characters from the Olympian tradition,
but refashions them as deities who model a new morality for the people.

Hesiod’s story challenges the traditional anthropomorphic view in which all
human foibles are modeled in divine behavior. In his *Theogony*, “Zeus weds *Themis*
(Right), a union that yields three ‘ideal’ daughters: *Eunomia* (Good Order), *Diké* (Justice),
and *Eirēnē* (Peace)” (Bryant 88). These are the ideals of *Works and Days* as well. His
concept of *eunomia* is not a plea for democracy, but a plea for a well-ordered *polis* whose
virtuous aristocrats make just, not crooked judgements. Zeus is refashioned, Bryant
argues, as a socially responsible god who can ordain punishment against unjust judges and
those who bribe them. Under the good order of justice, Osborne argues, Hesiod implies
that men who labor hard can become prosperous. But prosperity should not have to be
achieved at the expense of others through bribes, but through good judgements in dispute
settlements. Hesiod does not condemn the fact that prosperity gives the prosperous
power over others, something which Hesiod’s commitment to *eunomia* allows him to
accept as natural. Rather he refashions Zeus as a model of a good ruler who maintains the
good order of the polis through just decisions. A just polis, furthermore, should not require violence. Hesiod argues for a world without civil strife in *Works and Days*.

Hesiod promises Perses that:

> In the end justice wins out over violence, as the fool discovers by suffering. Oath comes quickly on the heels of crooked judgement. There is a clamour when justice is dragged around, when men who take bribes lead her on and make judgements about what is right with crooked justice. She follows wailing through the city and the haunts of men, clothed in mist, bringing evil to men who drive her out and do not deal straightly with her. (quoted in Osborne 145)

Here Hesiod opposes the new, hidden ways in which sovereign right is circulated, but not sovereign right itself. By taking bribes, the aristoi breach good order by interfering with the good order of the oikos. Those who work the land, therefore, must become the new defenders the old aristocratic order.

Finally, Osborne notes, war pervades Hesiod’s argument for good order, not by its presence, but its absence from the poem. War is as invisible in Hesiod as it is visible in Homer. Osborne speculates that this omission is necessary to support his argument that “labour and prosperity” reinforce each other. If the moral of Hesiod’s poetry is that justice brings peace within the polis, and with justice, the people can prosper as long as they work, and that all of this can take place within the good order of an aristocratically ruled polis, he must remain silent about interpolis war because the effects of war breach
prosperity for all by destroying some sections of the people and enriching others.

Hesiod’s poetry, therefore, is a cry against an unjust ruling structure, but not a cry against the aristocracy itself. There is not a sense that Hesiod demands to be included in the ruling council. His poetry provides us with a vivid picture of some of the sources of internal social antagonism, and the distribution of political power. Hesiod accepts the aristocracy’s right to sovereignty, but demands that this sovereignty be exercised with justice. Osborne states that Hesiod’s poetry reveals:

a world where political authority is being debated and explored, where power is not simply inherited, where social status correlates closely with access to power, but does not determine it. Public speaking, and the arguing out of a case in a public forum, is normal in this world, and rhetorical skills are both admired and highly developed. (Osborne 155-6)

It is profoundly important for Osborne that Hesiod could only have produced his poetry if the society as a whole were not absolutely subject to the arbitrary exercise of sovereign power. The polis, in this view, even in its most aristocratic form, lays the basis for a future democracy because a rhetoric required for decision-making was also circulating in polis culture. But Osborne fails to attend to the fact that the shift from a culture of absolute sovereignty to shared sovereignty also sends the exercise of sovereignty underground where it functions outside of the official mechanisms of an increasingly variegated political economy. For Hesiod, what is hidden is also what is not natural and
so must be weeded out. He sees bribery as outside of sovereign justice, not as a new mechanism through which sovereignty right must circulate if it is hold its own amidst the proliferation of new strata.

Nevertheless, Hesiod’s participation in the debate over sovereignty is no less radical even to the extent that he accepted sovereign right; he challenged traditional concepts of virtue by extolling the virtue of those who work the land and exposed the injustice of bribery. Bryant argues that Hesiod’s writings “convey an unmistakable subversive tone” that retains the agonal impulse of his time but supplements it with “the agon of productive labor,” thus offering us “the first articulate expression of the ‘moral economy’ of the Greek peasantry” (85-87). His radical views were widely circulated throughout Greece for many centuries.

Conclusion

Here I have argued that ancient Greek societies were held together from one period to another by the ideology of sovereign right. Although sovereignty undergoes shifts in order to meet the organizational needs of an increasingly centralized political economy, its dominance over the consciousness of the people accounts for the coherence of the various forms of social organization. Democracy is not systematized until poleis begin to write constitutions to codify the power shifts I have outlined above. I will deal with the newly constituted societies in the next chapter. I will argue that the ideology of sovereign right remains dominant throughout the entire period of Greek democracy. The
dispersal of sovereign right, that is, the right to dominate others, ideologically determines the success of democracy. Though Greek democracy existed, it becomes the means through which certain groups of people can exploit other groups.
CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCULATION OF SOVEREIGNTY IN ANCIENT DEMOCRACIES

In their study, Class Ideologies in Ancient Greece, Ellen Mieksins Wood and Neal Wood claim that all polis societies (not just the democratic ones) foster a new ideology, the political, and a new identity, the political subject. Wood and Wood argue that the political ideology challenges the ideology of sovereign right which they define as the practice of arbitrary absolutism and the coercive enforcement of the sovereign subject identity. In this chapter, I will counter this view by arguing that the old ideology of sovereign right continues to circulate in democratic poleis through a different identity, the sovereign citizen. Wood and Wood explain that the polis:

[R]epresents a truly distinctive form of association, ... [and] it is with the polis that politics was born . . . as a new form of communal relationship which is neither tribe . . . a patriarchal and heirarchical household writ large. The social relations and modes of governing in states other than the polis are not, in this sense, ‘political’. Political relations exist where kinship and tribal custom, as well as the relation of master and subject and the arbitrary will of the master, have been overtaken by civic bonds, a territorial organization, and the rule of law as the fundamental principles of social order; where the command and obedience relations and the arbitrariness of the master-subject nexus have at least in principle been superseded by deliberation by a free citizen body with a framework of law;
where reason and persuasion rather than the force of a master or the violence of the tribal vendetta are regarded as the essence of social order. In all these respects too, democracy can be said to be the most political form of the state, the form in which these departures from traditional associations are most developed. (27)

Through the political principle, Wood and Wood argue, social conflicts are arbitrated outside of judgements overdetermined by the intractable, absolutist relationship between the sovereign and his subjects. The new political ideology gradually develops in Greece because of the new material practices that polis societies allow for and the new social relationships that proliferate in these societies. Sovereign right is transferred from the site of a single person to the site of a territory, the city, and eventually, allegiance to a hierarchical figure is transferred to this territory and its state, the political representative of the physical place. In their “historical materialist” view, they argue, increasingly democratic codes address new social antagonisms which have already developed and become visible to the state. The state must acknowledge the peasants and the thetes because to fail to do so would threaten political cohesion and the polis itself. The political principle, therefore, allows for social relationships to be challenged. For Wood and Wood, sovereignty is distinguished from “the political” in that sovereignty relies on the right to exercise power arbitrarily over the people; conversely, the political relies upon the right to negotiate policies and courses of action through persuasion.

The political does not merely temper sovereign right, Wood and Wood argue, but
dehegemonizes it. Absolute sovereignty can only be hegemonic if the sovereign makes decisions according to his own whim; as soon as decisions must be negotiated, the political is born. The political bodies that make up the state provide the material conditions for this development. For them, as I am about to show, Sparta would be just as subject to the political principle as Athens in that *polis* forms have been established. In the Athenian *polis*, however, a new class that was created in an early constitution becomes the foundation for democracy. In abolishing the bonded labor of the serfs, Solon's reforms create an independent peasant class. This class did not develop in Sparta because helotage, a form of dependence, allayed the contradiction between the citizens and the nobles. By “independent,” the Woods mean that a person is free and clear of all attachments (to the lord). The independent peasant class is attached only to his own labor. The condition of independent labor breaks the traditional ties to a hierarchical figure and forges the ideology required to replace a hierarchal politic with a democratic politic. Hierarchal politics, therefore, are challenged by “a milestone in the relations between appropriators and the producers” (27). The creation of an independent producer allows for the creation of the independent citizen.

Sparta

Sparta was the first *polis* to set up a constituted political body that identified a new category of historical subject, the citizen. The written codes governing the new social order were known as the Great Rhetra, an “agreement,” the complete text of which
Plutarch claims to have transcribed (Osborne, 178-9). W.G. Forrest dates the period of the Great Rhetra and the Lykourgan reforms that followed it as occurring in the seventh century, "in the half-century of so around 650" (58). In Plutarch's account, the Rhetra was delivered to Sparta by her two kings in the form of a Delphic oracle; therefore, the Rhetra was divinely decreed and delivered to the people by its greatest nobles (Osborne 179). This pattern of establishing new mechanisms through which sovereign right could continue had been long established, as I argued above. The aristocratic leader, Lykourgos, who, W.G. Forrest explains, may have been either a historical or mythical figure, is said to have overseen the formation of the governing bodies recognized in the Rhetra (40). The codes sanctioned two governing bodies, the first made up of "a council of thirty elders" and the kings (the gerousia). The gerousia consulted with the second body, an assembly of citizen-soldiers (apella). The gerousia would "introduce measures and reject measures" that the apella could then discuss and offer its verdicts to the gerousia (Plutarch quoted in Osborne 179). The Rhetra was later added to, according to Plutarch, by including the "crooked" amendment, which stated: "If the people make a crooked decision, the oldest in birth and the leaders of the people can be setters-aside" (179). The kings and noble aristocracy, in other words, could set aside any decision made by ordinary citizens-soldiers, indicating that Sparta was founded as, and continued to be, an aristocratic polis. The use of the term, "crooked decision" here is the same term Hesiod used to describe an unjust practice. For Hesiod, however, the ruling council makes
crooked judgements; in Sparta's Rhetra, the ruling council corrects the crooked judgements made by the people. This distinction did not escape the attention of the ruling elite in Sparta. By the late sixth century, King Cleomenes of Sparta disparagingly called Hesiod "a minstrel for Helots and slaves" (Bryant 86).

Forrest argues that the Rhetra merely codified social changes which were already taking place. Sparta's victory over Messenia, he argues, more than any other factor, created the conditions that allowed for the creation of a citizen body. After their victory, the Spartans identified the non-Greek Messenians as "Helots," a status identical to slavery, except that Helots were not chattel, that is, they could not be bought and sold. Rather, Helots were permanently bonded to a parcel of land owned by a citizen, able to keep only enough product for themselves to live at subsistence level. The Homoioi or "equal citizens" of Sparta, defined as those males thirty years of age capable of contributing to the syssition or "daily common meal," were each given a parcel of land, the kleros, and had at their disposal the helots who cultivated it (Orrieux and Schmitt-Pantel 74). Rather quickly, Sparta had at her disposal a means through which enough surplus could be produced to free all of Sparta's citizens from any labor other than preparing for and fighting in wars. Furthermore, the citizen is barred from engaging in agricultural labor. Citizen status identifies him as one who does not work, but exhibits his virtue militarily, and who is sovereign over a plot of land and the helots who work it. These social relations resemble those of the noble aristoi and his oikos. As with the aristocracy, a
citizen’s position in the state is identical to his position in the military. Citizen-soldiers could participate in the assembly, but not the ruling council of thirty to which Sparta’s two kings belonged and held the final decision making powers. Finally, formal education was established for the future citizens: Lykourgos’ “second great invention,” Osborne contends, was “the agoge or system of military training” for Spartan boys who had reached six years of age (51). In this way, sovereign right has been centralized in the aristocratic council but also dispersed within the citizen-soldier identity.

In historical accounts, such as Forrest’s, Sparta’s political system is depicted as resistant to historical change. Its political orders, once established, remain in tact because its economy depends upon agrarian production by an enslaved people, a social arrangement that requires a large body of professional military to maintain control over this population and expand territorially. However, this thesis reduces “the political” and “the citizen” to only those forms that seem to be inexorably moving toward the formation of a democratic citizen whose political freedom has become abstracted from privilege and complicity in the enslavement of others, and, most importantly, absolutely stratified categories through which the sovereign/subject relationship is naturalized.

In contrast to Sparta, histories of Athen’s constitutions tend to depict the Athenian polis as a place of continual and progressively democratic change in political, economic, and militarily regimes. Rather than form colonial settlements, for example, Athenian colonization primarily consisted of expansion of trading centers and the
formation of alliances with the cities with whom it traded and absorbed into its domain. During the seventh and sixth centuries, Athens engulfed the small villages surrounding it, rendering Athens second only to Sparta in land mass. The inhabitants of these villages eventually became citizens of Athens. In this account, Athens strength lies in its ability to extend democratic citizenship in a way that subordinates categories of aristocratic privilege still at work in military and economic regimes to the dominate category of “the political.” My account of Athens, however, argues that while the circulation of sovereign right is dispersed in Athens in different ways than in Sparta, the right to sovereignty nevertheless defines the Athenian political system and the citizen identity, even though that system is democratic.

Athens

The first evidence of codes that attempted to bring *eunomia* (good order) to the Athenian *polis* are the Draconian Laws of the late seventh century (c. 621). Compared to the Great Rhetra, these codes show no evidence of an expansion of the citizen identity. Little is known of these laws except that they regulate the punishment for homicide. At this time, the Athenian *polis*, like many *poleis*, was ruled by a series of kings or tyrants. In the ancient world, the word “tyrant” does not necessarily have the same negative meaning it has today. Tyranny simply refers to a form of running the *polis* under the direction of a strong single figure. Tyrants are distinguished from kings in that they come into and out of power during a political crisis by imposing a solution to an intractable
disagreement that has developed among the aristocrats in the ruling councils. Tyrants, then, assume special power during temporary crises; they ascend to power by extrapological means involving intrigue, coups, and murder. Archons, on the other hand, are also governing figures who have the same special powers of a tyrant, but have been elected by the ruling council to resolve a particular crisis. An instance of tyranny seems to have preceded the ascension of Drako to the position of Archon. Around the time of Drako, Herodotus tells us, Kylon (Cylon), “an Athenian Olympic victor . . . proudly thought himself worthy of being tyrant, got himself together a group of contemporaries, and tried to take the Acropolis.” After their defeat, Kylon and his partisans were murdered, even though the magistrates had ruled “that their punishment should not include death” (Herodotus quoted in Osborne 216). A very prominent oikoi, the Alcamaionidai, were blamed for this murder, were subsequently ostracized from Athens, and remained an accursed family for over a century. Whether Kylon’s coup or some other attempt sparked the Draconian Codes is unclear; however, in the midst of this coup-laden period, Drako was elected by the ruling council to be Archon. Tradition has it that Draconian Law laid out harsh punishment for homicide aimed at the aristocracy and acted to restrict their arbitrary exercise of sovereignty. However, it has also been suggested that the laws also acted to preserve aristocratic sovereignty; by establishing alternative methods for noble families to settle murder cases, these laws freed these families from an agonal course of destructive and destabilizing long-term retribution. In
this view, Drako’s codes were not so much about setting up judicial codes, as they were a means of establishing rules through which the aristocracy would continue to be able to exercise power and not destroy itself in the process. Drako’s laws, therefore, unlike the Spartan Rhetra, did not address the multiplicity of social antagonisms that existed between the aristocracy and the rest of the population, nor did they expand citizen rights to any new strata.

By the early sixth century, however, Athens, like Sparta before it, turned to the concept of the citizen to allay these antagonisms. This progressive political leap is attributed to Solon. Elected Archon in 594, Solon is said to have begun democratization by redefining and expanding the political structure of the polis into four orders, a rearrangement that recognized the thetes as participating citizens for the first time. The new orders, Bryant states, merely recognized the social changes and antagonisms among the social strata that had already begun to unfold during the eighth and seventh centuries. However, Solon’s reforms did disrupt previous understandings of the hierarchy by defining strata according to a person’s place in the economy, not in the nobility, per se. The criteria for each strata consisted of precisely quantified landholdings and potential yield from these lands: membership in the pentakosiomedimnoi or “five hundred bushel men” required at least thirty acres of land with five hundred bushel yield; the hippeis or “horsemen” required eighteen or more acres producing three hundred bushels; and the zeugitai or “men of yoke” required twelve or more acres with two hundred bushel yields.
The *thētes* or "laborers" were granted limited rights to participate in the judicial process for the first time, an innovation that earned Solon the reputation of being a populist (Bryant 70, *Athenian Constitution* 77). In theory, at least, once they were granted citizenship, the *thetes* would be able to participate in the lower assemblies that reviewed, but did not promulgate the policies made by the ruling council which was still composed of representatives from the first two orders.

Bryant notes that in addition to adding economic categories to the definition of citizen, these newly defined political orders continued to follow the military hierarchy that existed before Solon’s reforms. The nobility, primarily members of the first order, continued to lead during war. The second order is clearly tied to the old military order as well — *Hippēis* warriors, and the third order, the *Hoplīte* phalanx. The thetes, however, for the most part, were still unable to afford the military gear required of a *Hoplīte*. For Bryant, Solon’s restructuring of the orders should not be seen as having taken much of a step towards political equality; rather, the Solonian Reforms primarily acted to strengthen status categories because it continued to delimit each citizen’s place in Athenian society according to a well-established military order, while adding an economic category as well.

Bryant and other scholars argue that historical accounts that recognize Solon as a political reformer who provided an important step towards the establishment of democracy obscure the possibility that during the sixth century, the aristocracy was being forced by mass unrest to find new ways of circulating its sovereignty. G.E.M. de Ste.
Croix argues that from the purely political point of view, Solon’s highly elaborated political restructuring of the council and assembly utterly failed in that the political institutions through which the orders were to function rarely operated as intended for the rest of the sixth century. Instead, a series of aristocratic tyrants, backed by aristocratic military alliances, became the conduits through which legal and judicial matters were decided. Ste. Croix suggests that the position of Archon itself is a mechanism of Tyranny, a non-political form of governance in that the Archon, although elected, acts in lieu of the council and assembly. As discussed earlier, R. Osborne also notes that by the sixth century, the aristocracies of different poleis begin to interact in ways that reveal what he calls “city particularist” interests, rather than panhellenist interests. The Greek aristocracy use the occasion of panhellenist sporting and religious events as opportunities to seek financial backing from nobles of other cities in order to attempt to unseat their rivals in the council, often with mercenaries hired with these funds. Inner-poleis aristocratic rivalry and intrigue, in this way, expands into inter-poleis aristocratic alliances. Inter-strata strife between the aristoi and the bonded serfs in one city becomes the concern of the aristoi in other cities. By the fifth century, one polis may provide an aspiring tyrant in another polis with both financial support and assistance from the city’s military orders. Military leagues, such as the Peloponnesian and the Delian, are formed as a result of new forms of aristocratic alliances. Osborne also notes that it is during the late sixth and fifth centuries that building structures begin to represent a widening divide
between the relative wealth of one city and the relative poverty of another.

For these scholars, these new relationships among the aristoi call into question some traditional historical verdicts regarding Solon, particularly his reputation as having freed the serfs and fostered democracy. Prestation, a condition of permanent bondage to the aristoi, had become widespread; by Solon’s time, many non-noble, agricultural workers had fallen into this relationship (Osborne 222). According to his own poems, quoted in The Athenian Constitution, Solon abolished this bondage by establishing the code known as the Seisachtheia, “the shaking off of burdens,” and a number of other social reforms including canceling all debts and repatriating previously enslaved Athenians (The Athenian Constitution 79). He did this by abolishing the hektemoroi, a practice that is thought to have forced small farmers to turn over one-sixth of their land or one-sixth of their yearly yield, as well as the practice of “contract[ing] a loan secured on his person,” placing a peasant in a state of debt bondage. It is considered historical fact that debt bondage, so prevalent in 594, indeed, had been essentially eliminated by 510, transforming the countryside into small, independent farms along with the remnants of the ancestral estates of the aristoi. The tyrannies of the sixth century, however, suggest that the transformation of bonded farmers into independent farmers could not have been accomplished through Solonian decree, but rather, through a grueling process in the decades following that decree that most likely provoked aristocratic intrigue and rivalry, rising anger among the most devastated members of the lower strata, and aristocratic
attempts to mobilize those strata for their own ends through a rhetoric of populism.

This interpretation of the sixth century is first articulated in Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*. Aristotle states that Solon's intent is "generally acknowledged" by the fourth century to have been to establish eunomia, and to do so, he had to "antagonize both factions while saving the country" (78). The nobles, Solon says, who had expected him to allow them to continue to plunder the peasantry, now look at him "as an enemy" (78). However, Solon also makes it clear that his intention was not to raise "common people" to the level of the nobility. He did not, he says, give them "more than their due" because "the people will follow the leaders best if it is neither given too much license nor restrained too much. For satiety breeds insolence when too great prosperity come to men lacking judgement" (78-79). Aristotle concludes that Solon was a man who was not willing to "conspire" on behalf of one side or another, but to give the country the "laws that were best for it" and then leave Athens so as not to become "an object of invidious attack" in that "both sides were alienated from him because the settlement has turned out contrary to their expectations" (78).

Aristotle’s representation of Solon is reminiscent of Hesiod’s depiction of a virtuous aristocrat. Solon was interested in establishing the land as a site of justice, therefore, he canceled debt-bondage in order that the peasantry would no longer be alienated from the land, but also deprived the nobles of monopolizing the land. This reordering, Solon hoped, would result in a Hesiodian view of good order (*eunomia*) in that
it does not call the elevated virtue of the aristoi into question, but allows them to practice that virtue in a way that will not destroy them as the ruling strata. In the political realm, Solon clearly places the state in the hands of the nobility who he hopes has been restored to virtue. He also gives the peasants, according to The Athenian Constitution, “the right of appeal to a jury court,” supposedly making them “the masters of the state,” but, Aristotle quickly states that this view is erroneous: “this is not likely” because “the general character of his constitution” does not warrant such a view” (77). Hesiod’s refashioning of the aristocratic virtues of agrarian justice and eunomia envisioned just such an order; however, he predicted that such virtues would lead to eternal peace. When a similar conception of justice and eunomia became articulated in Solon’s laws, Athens experienced antagonistic struggle unprecedented in her history. This indicates that sovereignty based on aristocratic values and social relations could only circulate in ways that defied both Hesiod’s and Solon’s vision. Hesiod’s vision of eternal peace is replicated in Solon’s hope that once he was out of the picture, the antagonisms his laws regulated, but did not abolish, would be able to be settled in ways that would appease both sides. This hope, once articulated as law, certainly served to embolden the peasantry, but the aristocracy were equally emboldened to find new ways of circulating the sovereign right that Solon’s law had not challenged. Osborne points out that in the late fourth century when “constitutional debates brought on by the crisis in confidence in democracy during the Peloponnesian War” raged in Athenian public life, Solon’s name is
evoked in the anti-democratic, aristocratic case against *isonomia*, the principle of equal order. Using the concept of Solonian Law, the aristocracy appealed for the reestablishment of *eunomia*, the principle of good order based on aristocratic virtue (222).

There are other ways of interpreting the power struggles of course. Josiah Ober attributes the radical political shift from tyranny to democracy to a revolutionary crisis in which the "mass" as a revolutionary agent, takes control of the state from the "elite." The elite are not able to wrest back control from the mass for the next 180 years. Ober argues that the two days during which the common people laid siege to the Acropolis is a "moment of rupture" that resulted in "fundamental changes in both ideologies and institutions" (The Athenian Revolution 32). The ideological shift comes from the common people who define themselves as citizen-agents. Institutional change follows this ideological shift, and those changes represent nothing less than the actual suppression of aristocratic sovereignty by popular democracy. Cleisthenes' role in this process is only as a good reader of historic motion in that he reads "the text of Athenian discourse in a revolutionary age, and . . . recognize[s] that Athenian mass action had created new political facts . . . . The Athenian *demos* has permanently changed the environment of politics and political discourse" (52). Cleisthenes' reorganization of the districts along democratic, rather than status lines, does not indicate that he acted through a sense of *noblesse oblige*, but rather, out of a sense that Athenian politics could no longer function in the old way. In Ober's view, the new institutions and reformed rules of governance
that took shape in the thirty year period following the "Athenian Revolution of 508/7," are initiated by the "mass" through which the "elite" lose political hegemony. Ober describes the theoretical lens through which he reads history as his "tendency to seek out and analyze a particular event that is associated with a particular historical figure who is arguably less an agent than a conduit of change." The historical figure is able to act as a conduit because "a long series of prior ideological and institutional adjustments" has already taken place that has "precipitate[d] a dramatic shift in sociopolitical order generally" ("Rules of War" 54). Cleisthenes, in this case, plays the role of accommodating the ideological shift by changing legal codes and institutional relationships.

In the case of Cleisthenes, Ober argues, these changes were not incremental, in that one section of the people had merely been given access to the same institutions from which they were previously excluded; instead, these changes were revolutionary in that they took power out of the hands of the elite and turned it over to the mass. The change, in Ober's view, was real in that the material consequences of the new legal codes and institutional arrangements could not have occurred if the elite still controlled the political sphere. When the antagonistic relationship between the mass and the elite reached the point of mutual exclusivity, a revolutionary situation developed in which a real overthrow of the elite by the mass occurred. The real consequences of the revolution are material. 

After the revolution, every citizen had to serve in government in some capacity. The
councils, assemblies and courts drew lots to determine who would oversee the day to day functions of these bodies. A thetes was as likely to serve in this position as an aristocrat. Terms were strictly limited to one year. The demes also drew lots to determine which citizens would serve on the Ruling Council. In the courts, agendas were set for each day, but there was no presiding judge. Rather, the jury of 200-500 citizens listened to the litigants and any other citizen who wished to speak on a case and directly and immediately decided the outcome. In the Assembly, a president for the day was chosen who presented the agenda which was then discussed by whomever appeared on that day and directly voted on. Ober states that “there is no reason to believe that any class of Athenian citizen was systematically under-represented at the Assembly” (The Athenian Revolution 23). After the democratic revolution, the “exercise of collective power by the Athenian demos thwarted the political hegemony of the elite -- and was intended to do so” (19). Ober concludes that “the ‘power of the people’ was not a cover for elite rule” (19). The works of Moses I. Finley, which pre-date the analyses above, continue to seriously challenge the value of democracy in ancient Greece.

Finley, in my view, continues to offer us valuable insight in the circulation of sovereignty in democratic Athens. Finley’s studies challenged ideas about ancient democracies prevalent in the Marxist studies of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. These studies tended to dismiss the claim that the aristocracy was ever seriously challenged by the “democratic masses.” Their argument, Finley stated, anachronistically imposed modern
capitalist categories on ancient economies which simply did not exist. Finley explains that Marx often stated in his writings that all states represent the interests of the ruling class. In this sense, he occasionally noted that the ancient states were ruled by the landed aristocracy and that the class they directly relied upon to create the surplus upon which they lived was the slave class. As he points out in his ground-breaking work on ancient economies, however, "neither Marx nor Engels ever worked out a properly thought-through definition of class, nor were they sufficiently concerned with the concept in non-capitalist societies" (Ancient Economy 183). Therefore, any statements made by Marx or Engels on ancient political economy should not be taken as authoritative because ancient political economy fell outside of their area of study. Concurring with Finley's assessment of Marx and Engels in his study of ancient slavery, Yvon Garlan explains that:

[B]oth men (but especially Marx), like all the educated bourgeois of their age, had acquired a direct and very solid familiarity with Graeco-Latin literature and kept themselves abreast of the best historical scholarship of their times. . . . We should also remember, however, that they never undertook any systematic and detailed study of ancient societies, which interested them only to the extent that they fueled reflection on the origins of capitalism; Marx and Engels used ancient societies to take retrospective historical "soundings" at a very general level. (3)

Many ancient historians, however, have used Marx's and Engels' statements about the ancient economies as theoretical constraints (Finley Ancient Slavery 11-66, Garlan 1-23).
As Finley and Garlan contend, however, a scholar can do Marxist work in ancient history, but he or she must approach the works of Marx critically, while, at the same time, maintaining his general approach to political economy itself.

The general model of the ancient political economy of his European contemporaries, Finley argued, imposed modern categories such as class, market, capital, surplus value, mode of production, and imperialism onto ancient social practices. These categories promote anachronistic interpretations of the ancient economy, most importantly the concept that the Graeco-Roman world was an integrated market economy that followed the rationalizations typical of a capital market economy. In a retrospective essay on Finley’s work, Ian Morris identifies five basic premises of the Finley model that reflect his attempt to avoid these anachronisms: first, for Finley, status rather class constructions affect economic practices; second, the creation of citizen status tends to promote a labor force sharply divided into chattel slaves and independent laborers; third, the administration of profitable (or wealth producing) activities was increasingly carried out by non-citizens; fourth, wealth was pursued through “legal and political channels rather than through what we would call economic avenues”; and fifth, exploitation was increasingly pushed “outside of the citizen community,” giving citizens a motive to pursue war and imperialism as “natural ways to acquire wealth” (xxii-iii).

Although democracy was not Finley’s focus in Ancient Economy, Finley also rejects the explanation of the birth of democracy offered by many Marxist scholars of his
day. According to this view, democracy can exist only if the economic sphere has been separated from the governing sphere, a separation brought about by the existence of a market operating for the production of capital. Finley argues that although ancient economies did produce a surplus, the aristocracy who accumulated most of the surplus wealth did not, of necessity, reinvest it in their own enterprises in order to retain their place in the social hierarchy. Instead, the aristocracy retained their high status, in part, by contributing large sums of money (leitourgia or liturgies) to public institutions and cultural events made available to all citizens. The amount and purpose of the leitourgia were decided by the democratic polis. The aristocracy, therefore, maintained and expanded their status by primarily supporting public institutions, not private enterprise (150-71). This use of wealth does not follow the rationalization of capital in which wealth can only be reproduced if profit is primarily reinvested back into the capitalist's private enterprise. Finley argues that the social cohesion of Athens during its democratic period, therefore, cannot be attributed to capital and does not show that capital and democracy go hand in hand.

Finley argues that social status, not class, influences the circulation of surplus in ancient political economies. Radical restructuring of status groups, something that did occur in democratic Athens, is more dependent on political decree than the rationalization of the economy. For example, in the sixth century, the Solonian decree freed the peasantry from debt bondage to the aristocracy, a political fait-accompli impossible in
early capitalist economies. The process of transforming the serfs into independent workers in England took centuries and followed the slow economic transformation from feudalism to capitalism. Even up until the present time, in the post-colonial countries that are now bonded to the advanced capitalist countries through neo-liberal dependencies, this process of transforming the peasantry into a working class, the process of "primitive accumulation," has barely gotten underway (Perelman).

Democratic Athens was supported by a surplus of wealth, but wealth was not generated according to capitalist regimes. The amount of surplus needed to support democratic Athens, Finley contends, was primarily generated by slave labor and tribute extracted from poleis which had been conquered by Athens or pressured to join the Athenian-led Delian League. (Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology 87-91). For Finley, the enormous expansion of Athenian citizenship participation to previously disenfranchised people, and the social cohesion that resulted from it, must be explained as the garnering of wealth from those excluded from the system. In this sense, democracy is a system of alleviating internal social antagonism, but this can only happen if the political economy accomplishes two things: first, it must create a surplus by shifting its most egregious exploitation to non-citizens and "foreigners"; second, it must enlist its citizens into participating in this exploitation and allow them to gain from it in some tangible way. Although my analysis of the political economy of Athens concurs with Finley's important insight that it was not driven by the regimes of capital but by regimes
based on status, I will extend his treatment of status by looking at citizen identity in
connection with the surplus wealth that allowed for social cohesion. I am particularly
concerned with the development of the identities through which the concept and exercise
of sovereign right were enacted. It is important to understand identity in terms of
sovereignty because in ancient Greece, the circulation of sovereign right, not "the
political," provides the rationale of every facet of Greek life.

Wood and Wood, who relied heavily on Finley's analysis in *The Ancient Economy*
as a non-capitalist formation, at the same time countered Finley's argument in *Ancient
Slavery and Modern Ideology* that slavery and empire provided the foundation upon
which democracy could be built. In Finley's view, democracy is certainly a product of
the massive social upheaval of the sixth century; however, he argues, democracy could not
have come into being without it resting on the shoulders of slavery and empire. Slavery
and empire, not the ideological shift to "the political," nor the development of an ideology
of independent labor, provide the material basis for democracy. For Finley, the free-
citizen identity is forged against the identity of the other -- primarily the slave, who is
other by virtue of his or her total exclusion from the political, and the Barbarian, who is
other by virtue of his or her inability to speak Greek.

Ellen Meiksins Wood reiterated her original position in her 1995 study,
*Democracy Against Capitalism.* In this study Meiksins Wood defends her "historical
materialist" view that independent labor is "the backbone of democracy" (183). Her
purpose in her recent study is to counter present-day postmodernist theorists who find new hope for democracy with the emergence of late-capitalist or post-capitalist fragmented identities. These new theories of democracy erase what for her is primary. Where democracy appears in history, be it in Athens or contemporary capitalist societies, she argues, is also where a proletariat appears. Democracy is fundamentally bound to the presence of this class. She insists that any theory of democracy that does not recognize the foundational roll of independent labor will fall into one of two errors. First, the postmodernist error replaces the proletariat with fragmented identities as the focus of democratic studies; therefore, it erases revolution from democratic struggle because it obfuscates the antagonism between independent labor (the proletariat) and those who appropriate it. Second, in Finley’s account of ancient politics, democracy’s existence depended upon the institutions of slavery and imperialism. Meiksins Wood does not deny that appropriators then and now rely upon the surplus wealth derived from the superexploitation of subjects (those who contribute to the economy of the state, but are not allowed to participate in it) to allay internal social contradictions. But these forms of superexploitation are not the material basis of democracy, nor is democracy simply a means the appropriators invent to mediate internal contradictions in order to assist the flow of appropriation. She defends democracy, therefore, as a mechanism for resistance against the appropriating classes.

In this regard, Meiksins Wood has much in common with Ober. Both look to the
new citizens from the common people as the agents of history, and both attribute the
historical appearance of the citizen/agent with practices of resistance that arise out of
crude conditions. In Ober's analysis of democracy, the governing bodies in Athens
were composed of mechanisms of free speech and decision-making that were beyond the
control of the aristocracy. Ober, like Meiksins Wood, argues that democracy was not
"given from on high and was not a unique product of elite culture; rather, it was
established and constantly revised in the practice of public debates" ("Power and
Oratory" 91-92). Both argue that democracy appears once new ideological formations
become hegemonic: for Ober, the ideology of the "mass," for Meiksins Wood, the
ideology of "independent labor." Both Ober and Meiksins Wood recognize the presence
of slavery and empire in the democracy, but these formations do not participate
ideologically in the practice of the citizens.

For Finley, however, the ideology of the Athenian (and later Roman) free citizen
is overdetermined by what it is not -- the absolute category of the unfree, the slave.
Furthermore, the ideology of the "free" citizen cannot reflect the ideology of "free" labor.
Finley argues that independent labor, if defined as hired, wage workers, played a very
insignificant role in Athens. "[F]ree hired labour," he argues, "was spasmodic, casual,
marginal" (Ancient Slavery 68). Although hired workers were more prevalent in urban
settings, probably accounting for their inclusion in the literary records of the political and
legal debates in the Acropolis, most citizens hired themselves out only to supplement
their normal source of sustenance because that source has succumbed to seasonal or other economic slumps. Most labor performed in Athens from the sixth to the fourth centuries continued to be driven by some form of compulsion, rather than a new form of independence. The dominant distinction in forms of labor throughout the history of Greece, Finley argues, is "between slaves and other types of compulsory labor" (69). Finley does not deny that hired labor existed and actually gained ground in classical Athens, but the overall opposition remained that between the absolute compulsion of slavery and the multiple varieties of non-absolute compulsion in other forms of labor.

Finley's thesis is worked through in more detail by Garlan in his study of the construction of labor in Greece. Two of his claims are salient. First, Garlan argues that the social antagonism that Solon attempted to ally with his reforms was not between a formerly independent peasantry that had fallen into dependence by debt and the aristocracy to whom it is indebted. The logic of the political economy in ancient society in general, as well as in archaic society in particular, is realized through social hierarchies that maintain status designations. Hierarchy is realized economically through the "control of the forces of production (the land and even more importantly, those who cultivated it)," not the drive for profit (90). The accrual of debt in the seventh and early sixth centuries merely exacerbated the condition of dependency imposed by status categories. Second, there is no evidence that after the peasantry acquired land after Solon's reforms that status dependency and the compulsory relationships attached to it were erased.
What is new, Garlan argues, is the surge in the numbers of slaves in Athens following Solon's reforms, a social fact that is unchallenged in almost all recent historical accounts.

In the sixth century, Athenian slaves came primarily from the areas around the northern Aegean, particularly from the polis of Thrace in Scythia, and the Black Sea. After Athens' routing of the Persian armies (c. 480), slaves were obtained from the non-Greek speaking peoples of Asia Minor "liberated" by Athens: the Carians, the Lydians, the Cappadocians, and the Mysians (46-7). Garlan argues that these slaves became an integral part of every type of production. In classical Greece, the majority of citizens were landowners. Large landowners had moved to the city, but continued to visit their farms frequently. This arrangement was supported by a work force of slaves and slave managers (141-2). The aristocracy’s homes, commercial enterprises, and duties to the polis in the city also required large numbers of slaves. The zeugites (hoplite farmers with adequate plots of land), as well as the thetes and non-citizen metics who had become small landholders, may or may not have participated in the work of farming but also owned handfuls of slaves who worked both in the home and in the fields. The urban artisans also utilized slaves in their workshops or at least held this arrangement as an ideal to strive for. The polis itself owned slaves who functioned in managerial, service, and labor capacities for the financial, religious, athletic, theatrical, policing, and military requirements of the state. The idea that the urban thetes comprised a permanent, free labor force, however, is not supportable (142-5).
While wage work took many forms, none of the forms constituted a way of life for the majority of people who collected money by selling their labor and service or the products of their labor. Children and women performed much of this work as either paid or unpaid workers through their roles as apprentices and weavers. In the countryside, smaller farmers sustained themselves by farming, but most of them also performed occasional work for each other, such as fixing things or helping out with a heavy harvest. Slaves also engaged in casual wage work either by being hired out by their owners or hiring themselves out with the permission of their owners. Garlan contends that these work arrangements constitute a society dominated by the exchange of use-values, not exchange values. Slaves were not necessary to the economy because their labor produced profit, but because their labor produced the "necessary things" Athenians needed to live the good life and achieve happiness (138). Solonian law had extended this previously aristocratic notion of the good life to the citizenry at large. In this way, slaves came to be thought of as a political necessity, that is, a means of supporting the political way of life. For Garlan, the presence of slaves in almost every citizen's life provided the basis for citizens to participate in political life. In this way, the unfree defined the free, not as free labor but as free citizens. Although Meiksins Wood's recent study also acknowledges the opposition of free citizen to non-citizen slave in Athenian democracy, she turns Garlan's telos on its head. She states that: "It is not so much that the existence of slavery sharply defined the freedom of the citizen but, on the contrary, that the freedom of the labouring
citizen, both in theory and in practice, defined the bondage of slaves” (Democracy 185).

For Meiksins Wood, the functioning of the political system, because it embodies the ideology of the independent worker, overturns the functioning of aristocratic ruler embodying the ideology of absolute sovereignty.

A similar dispute regarding which practices and ideologies were prevalent in democratic Athens appears in two recent analyses of empire building and warfare. Both Ober and Hunt draw upon previous studies that argued that the long established rules of hoplite warfare were radically changed in the fifth century and that Athens initiated the change. Ober argues that these military innovations not only enabled Athens to defeat the Persians, but would most likely have been impossible had the democratic revolution of 508/7 not taken place. Following this revolution, Athens enjoyed an unprecedented period of internal peace. The political center of gravity had changed from the elite to the mass, and with this, so too did the notion of who was fit for military service. Hoplite warfare had certainly opened up a polis’ military orders to large numbers of farmers, simultaneously opening up new political categories through which they participated as citizens. The democratic revolution, by granting universal citizenship to all Athenian men, removed all restrictions on who could serve in the military orders. For Hunt, however, this argument is reductive and idealistic. The wars that were fought by Athens and the new radical changes in the protocols and mechanisms of war developed by Athens, his research shows, not only required large numbers of newly franchised citizens,
but a large number of slaves and helots as well. While both Ober and Hunt concur that because of Athens’ innovations, hoplite protocols died out over the course of the fifth century and that a much more labor intensive mechanism for waging war, the naval war ship (trieme) came to dominate war fighting procedures, they are at complete odds with each other over the nature of the exigencies behind these new practices.

Under hoplite rules of engagement, Ober and Hunt agree, treaties made prior to war were upheld, just as resolutions to end a war were honored. Messengers and heralds who negotiated the terms of war before and during the battles were not killed. Because war was fought to settle a dispute between opponents, victory was determined in a matter of days in a single, bloody contest; the losing army was the first to signal its defeat by requesting that it be allowed to collect its dead. The victor negotiated the terms of the victory before leaving the battlefield. If pursuit of the defeated opponent was undertaken, it was done through a ritual of restraint, rather than total destruction and seizure. Battles were fought only during the summer season so as not to disturb the planting and harvesting duties of the hoplite farmers. Both Ober and Hunt also agree that Athens broke with these rules of engagement first, and that this break coincided with its construction of democratic institutions in the early fifth century and its war with Persia.

On the one hand, Ober argues, Hoplite war is a “warfare without strategy” between two Greek poleis. The opposing armies follow a ritualized protocol from which they do not deviate (“Rules of War” 61). The invasion of the Persians at the beginning
of the fifth century, however, marks the first time that Greece is seriously threatened by non-Greeks. Ober speculates that it is during Athens’ leading role in the defense of the mainland that the rules of hoplite engagement are “voluntarily” broken by Athens (62). As non-Greeks, Persians did not follow the same “sociomilitary system” as the Greeks, and Athens had to develop a new strategy to engage this enemy who was not out to defeat it, but to decimate it. Athens’ army broke with the ritual of hoplite warfare in its engagement with the Persians when it “summarily executed heralds,” “offered no formal challenge to battle or exchange of war dead,” pursued and “relentlessly slaughtered” thousands of Persians at Marathon, and “massacred” the Persian “survivors of the battle of Plataea,” Athens’ port (61). After the expulsion of the Persians, however, Athens did not return to the traditional rules of war. Instead, Athens committed outrages against other Greeks that would have been unthinkable prior to the fifth century. On the other hand, Hunt reminds us, during the period from 490 to 338, “Athens was at war two years out of every three and never experienced ten years of peace” (7). Throughout the Persian War, and in the years following it, Athens had built up the Delian League. By 450, Athens controlled and collected tribute from 160 subject states, “the first (and only) really successful empire run by a Greek polis” (Ober “Rules of War” 65). By the second half of the fifth century, Athens’ relations with its subordinates had to be maintained increasingly by war or threat of war. Athenian hegemony could not have been established under the ritualistic hoplite rules of war because these rules were designed to settle
disputes between aristocratically governed poleis, not to build an empire composed of scores of subject states. By the time of the Peloponnesian War, Ober argues, Pericles rises to the occasion by developing the first imperial strategy suitable for the protracted warfare required to build an empire:

This was a key moment in the history of Greek warfare in that it was the beginning of truly sophisticated long-term strategic analysis. Rather than worrying about the tactical problem of how to win a particular battle, Pericles thought through the interplay of a variety of forces — military, financial, political, and psychological — over the course of a war that he knew would take several years at least. He had, in essence, invented grand strategy. (66)

Ober argues that without the democratic system of Athens, such a strategy could not have developed along these particular lines. In his view, democracy was real, not merely the latest in the series of aristocratic adjustments made to quell social antagonism. None of the previous attempts by aristocratically ruled poleis had in fact accomplished the goal of internal social peace. Such peace was only realized after the Athenian Revolution of 508/7. Democracy had in fact provided the means for solving the antagonisms between the elite and the mass because the mass were able to make policy, establish laws, and assert their interests in judicial proceedings. The political, in its democratic form, changed the material relations between the mass and the elite sufficiently enough for the mass that internal antagonisms were materially and politically allayed. But Ober finds it troubling
that once the mass has a place in the political, a type of warfare is created that leads to
the undoing of democracy. In the hands of tyrants, such as Philip and Alexander of
Macedonia, imperial war fighting strategies were able to wipe out independent
democracies because protracted war, not defense of one’s way of life, became an end in
itself. The Macedoneans were able to develop technologies, such as catapult artillery,
which rendered independent poleis’ technologies for border defense obsolete. For Ober,
this is a “profoundly disturbing conclusion for any citizen of a democratic state” in that it
suggests that democracy poses a conflict between the means it employs to resolve
internal antagonism and the measures it must take to ensure international security (70).

Hunt also understands that allying internal social antagonisms is concomitant with
the radical shift in warfare from a ritualistic contest that allowed for the survival of
individual ways of life of the contestants to a protracted imperial strategy that decimated
people, property, and relatively diverse social systems. However, Hunt’s critical
analysis of Herodotus, Thucidides, and Xenophon seriously challenges Ober’s view that
democracy is the primary agent responsible for the appearance of both phenomena. For
Hunt, the more inclusive political practice of citizenship is not an agent, but a
consequence of new complex mechanisms through which aristocratic sovereignty
continues to function in fifth and fourth century Greece. For Hunt, the new strategies of
warfare would not have been possible without the wide participation of the most
despised sections of the people, the slaves and the helots. Their participation is only
hinted at in the histories of Herodotus, Thucidides, and Xenophon. This is because their participation would have been impossible according to the ideology of the day that held that slaves and helots were incapable of fighting courageously for their polis. In each of these histories, the historians repeatedly express the belief that slaves and helots have no virtue, and, as non-citizens, cannot participate in the defense of the polis, to which they do not belong. Nevertheless, these same historians place slaves at every significant battle, not as servants who carry their master’s weapons and tend to their needs, but as warriors who die in battle, or, when they survive, are rewarded with manumission. Another practice that contradicts Greek attitudes about slaves is the increasingly prevalent practice of inciting revolts amongst one’s enemy’s enslaved population. This was a very dangerous practice in that a polis that engaged in it faced revolt at home.

Both Ober and Hunt also argue that Athens’ innovative strategy of building up a naval force to defeat the Persians also precipitated the end of ritualized hoplite warfare. Under the Decree of Thermistocles, one of Athens’ Archons during the Persian War, an unprecedented expansion of the navy was publically financed. Funds were raised by the deliberative bodies who assessed the amounts of the liturgies to be paid by Athens’ wealthiest families. By the time of the battle of Salamis, Athens and Chios had 200 triremes at their disposal. Each ship required 200 sailors, most of whom were rowers. The 40,000 men committed to the battle dwarfs, by comparison, the largest phalanx numbering between seven and eight thousand hoplites that Athens could muster at the
battle of Plataea (Hunt 40-41). Athenian methods of waging war not only started to
deviate from traditional Greek protocol, but became labor intensive as well.

The role of the navy was so strong by the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War,
Pericles based his entire strategy on it. Ober explains that Pericles theorized that the
Athenians should not engage the Spartans when their hoplite forces arrived in the Attic
plain late in the summer of 431. Instead, he ordered the huge numbers of Athenian
citizens living in the countryside to take up residence inside the city gates, depriving the
Spartan army of a battle. Having equipped themselves with only the amount of food
required of a short battle, and having reached the end of the traditional summer season for
fighting, the Spartan phalanx retreated back home having been deprived of the traditional
means of solving its dispute with Athens. Pericles then proceeded with the second stage
of his strategy, ensuring that the Athenians would not starve as they continued to be
confined inside the city walls. He ordered a surprise invasion of Megara, a polis belonging
to Sparta’s Peloponnesian League, again, a complete deviation from hoplite ritualized war
in that Megara was not notified that Athens wished to engage it in order to resolve a
declared dispute. The Athenians’ purpose was to provide sustenance for Athenians in
order to serve the long-term strategy of destroying the Peloponnesian League. After the
navy successfully carried out a surprise attack and “ravaged Megara’s small agricultural
plain,” Pericles planned to continue to use naval power to expand the theater of the war,
as well as the season of war, by inventing a new kind of war dependent upon surprise and
seizure (Ober “Rules of War” 67 ). But during the second year, a plague hit Athens, most likely brought on by the filthy living conditions created by massive overcrowding. Athens lost perhaps 20% of its population during the plague. This prevented Athens from carrying out Pericles’ strategy of protracted war. Ober contends that during the second year, Sparta was able to adapt to the new rules of engagement, begin to build its own navy, and take advantage of the ravaged conditions inside of Athens.

In Ober’s view, the Athenian empire was able to be built, and Athens was able to withstand its final defeat by Sparta after a quarter century of war, because its strong democracy had laid the basis for the building up of its navy as well as its internal stability. In Greek society, Ober reminds us, one’s ability to fight in war was determined by one’s political status. Because after the Revolution of 508/7, the political “center of gravity” had been relocated to the class of ordinary citizens, rather than the hoplite class, the military “center of gravity” also changed to one in which ordinary citizens could participate. A labor intensive navy allowed for the “beginning of truly sophisticated long-term strategic analysis” (“Rules of War” 66). For Ober, democratic ideology is the basis for this change.

For Hunt, however, this view presents problems. Hunt, like Ober, argues that the close identity of the military with the political order indeed remains in tact as an ideology throughout the entire period of Athenian democracy. However, a close reading of the history of Athens’ wars written by Herodotus, Thucidides, and Xenophon, reveal that
Athens new labor intensive fighting capacity not only required the participation of
Athens expanded citizen body, but of slaves as well. He argues that slaves participated in
large numbers in every campaign of the fifth and fourth centuries, not only those of the
Athenians, but of all the poleis who adapted to the new labor intensive, protracted model
of war. Unlike in the hoplite rules of engagement, in which slaves accompanied the
masters as servants and weapons bearers, in the new model, slaves performed the duties
of soldiers. In naval battles requiring the participation of tens of thousands of men, Hunt
argues, up to half of them could have been slaves. This presents a problem because the
presence of slave/soldiers contradicts two long established foundations of Greek warfare:
first, that war was a privilege reserved for citizens; and, second, that slaves were
incapable of fighting war because they were naturally inferior in body and virtue to
Greeks, and their loyalty to the cause of the state could only be enforced through
coercion, not volition.

Conclusion

Hunt concludes that during what we think of as the pinnacle of Greek civilization,
its Classical Age, the Greeks combined “one of history’s worst systems of oppression
with the organized mass-murder of war” (220). Through the regimes of allegiance to one’s
polis and notions of political equality, the privilege of the nobility remained in tact. The
ideology that defined virtue against the despised slave, and the gross economic inequalities
among the citizenry “are kept pure” (221). Hunt’s observations conflicts with the
positive spin of Ober’s claim that the long period of internal peace in Athens is attributable to the democratic character of the Classical Age throughout which the masses controlled the reigns of power. If Ober is right, and the mass really did achieve political hegemony in Athens, and, if Ober is again right that the period of democracy was accompanied by an unprecedented blood-letting and expansion of slavery, this suggests that “political freedom” should not be the acid test when we assess the significance of democracy.

Both Meiksins-Wood and Ober understand democracy as the struggle for hegemony between citizen power and sovereign power through which freedom, justice and equality are rhetorically and institutionally refashioned. In democracy, they argue, hegemony is held by the citizens; sovereign right is subordinated. Even though this opposition is one of many that circulate in a democracy, I argue that the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equality also circulate through the ideology of sovereign right. Sovereign right continues to be the foundation of the Athenian democratic identity -- the people, their territory, and their state are now sovereign. The polis itself becomes sovereign, and all considered citizens of it, sovereign as long as their polis is strong. The political, and later the democratic principle shifts the identity of the sovereign from a traditional social stratus to the concept of the polis itself. Sovereignty hasn’t been replaced by democracy because this would imply that sovereignty as a concept and a practice has been overthrown. Rather the concept and practice of
sovereignty has merely been extended to enough people to ensure social cohesion within a particular territory.

Sovereign identity in its most tyrannical or its most democratic form all serve the same purpose — to subjugate the value of some lives so that other lives can be valued more highly. Sovereignty and the right to it always acts to determine what is reasonable for some to expect but what is unreasonable for others to expect. In the next chapter, I argue that the ideology of sovereignty, not reason and rationality itself, allows for people, such as the slaves, to be written out of history, even written out of the history of democracy, by those who should know better. Sovereignty always allows for social antagonisms, such as the one between democratic citizens and slaves, to be set aside, to be out of order, to be ill-timed, an interference, because some other, more overriding, more worthy concern, requires attention. In the case of Ober and Meiksins Wood, that more worthy project is democracy. In this chapter, I hope to have shown why, by making our object of inquiry political economy, not “the political,” our attention should be focused on the problem of patriotism, nationalism, and the problems of the ideology of sovereign right in the concept and practice of citizenship and democracy.
CHAPTER THREE

ANTAGONISM:

AN IRRECONCILABLE CONTRADICTION FOR RHETORIC?

In this chapter, we will leave historical democracy and look at current democratic practices and theories that have legitimized the continuation of sovereignty in the twentieth century. Previously, I stated that antagonistic arguments are made in response to antagonistic social relationships. Such arguments, I pointed out, are routinely made by both those in power and those marginalized and exploited by those in power; however, rhetoricians tend to recognize and condemn antagonistic rhetoric only when it is spoken by marginalized and exploited people. This "blind spot" indicates the presence of an ideology through which rhetoricians assess antagonistic rhetoric as irrational and illegitimate only when it is spoken by some groups and not others. This delegitimization of oppressed people is a general tendency in the discipline of rhetoric whether it is theorized, practiced, and taught in the Aristotelian tradition of the classical and modern periods, or whether it is theorized, practiced, and taught as a poststructuralist endeavor. Both theoretical paradigms, I argue, act against those most historically situated as agents for revolutionary and progressive change.

The Aristotelian Case Against Antagonistic Rhetoric

We have a relatively recent example of rhetorical analyses of antagonistic rhetorics in American public discourse that are based in Aristotelian theory. A number of
rhetoricians studied the rhetorical strategies employed in the protest movements that flourished during the social upheavals of late 1960s. Two articles, "The Rhetoric of Confrontation" by Robert L. Scott and Donald K. Smith and "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," by Edward Corbett, are notable because of the stature of the authors and the seemingly antithetical conclusions each reach. Scott and Smith's examination of the rhetoric of confrontation concludes that these rhetorics challenge the presumptions of civility and rationality in traditional rhetoric because these presumptions no longer suit the needs of the present age. In his response to this article, Corbett claims that there is no need to question the traditional rules of rhetoric that define what is civil and rational rhetoric because these rules ensure that rhetoric will remain inclusive only if it remains committed to open-handed, not close-fisted, argumentation.

Neither analysis traverses outside of the parameters of the methodological and categorical assumptions codified in Aristotle's Rhetoric. Both articles follow the method of rhetorical analysis explained in the opening sentences of the Rhetoric. Aristotle tells us that it is possible to observe the speech of "the general public," discern why certain proofs or means of persuasion (pisteis) succeed, then prescribe the paths that produce the most persuasive effects. This prescription, then, cultivates "the activity of an art [techne]" called rhetoric (29). Both articles analyze "closed fist" or "confrontational" rhetoric by first locating the means of persuasion in the rhetoric of black power movement, then finding similar means in the rhetoric of the student movement, and finally
drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of these rhetorics for both movements.

Both articles also assess effectiveness by staying well within Aristotle’s analytic categories of the three artistic pisteis: ethos, pathos, and logos. Like Aristotle, their analyses assess the ability of the rhetors to identify with their audience by analyzing the projected ethos of the speakers, as well as their pathetic connection to the audience. The arguments themselves (logos) are also assessed in Aristotelian terms; the authors analyze the plausibility of the argument. Corbett asserts that the rhetoric of the closed fist is void of logos. Any rhetoric that advocates force, according to Corbett, has abandoned reason. Scott and Smith, on the other hand, see stylistic evidence of a logical appeal in “the rhetoric of confrontation,” but conclude that ultimately, the logical proof fails because there is no real evidence that the reality the claim stands on is anything other than an illusion. By relying on strictly Aristotelian categories of analysis, the authors appear to be blind to the possibility that their analyses may be racialized or classed. Their analyses become lessons in how to delegitimize the rhetorics of black and student rhetors by examining how well these rhetors appear to be rational. The possibility that these rhetors are positioned and speaking from an historically situated antagonism becomes secondary to the question of the perceived rationality of their presentation.

For Corbett, the rhetoric of the closed fist is an inarticulate means of persuasion. It relies on non-verbal media such as marches, pins, flags, arm bands, boycotts, sit-ins, take-overs, and riots which he dubs “muscular” or “body” rhetoric. By using the labels
“body” and “muscular,” Corbett implies that closed fist rhetoric does not require mental activity and contrasts it to Greek or Renaissance rhetoric, which “required close attention to the sequence of ideas” (290). Corbett’s claims identify black or student rhetors through a mind/body binary that excludes their “body” rhetorics from the mental faculty which houses the rational. Corbett also stresses the importance traditional rhetoric places on the individual accepting responsibility for what he says in rational political discourse. In contrast, the rhetoric of the closed fist is a “mass,” “gregarious,” or “participatory” rhetoric, a rhetoric that embodies a desire to be “retribalized,” that is, to find “safety and strength” in numbers (292-3). The implication here is that the rhetoric of the closed fist is a regression to pre-civilized, social values that existed before the rise of the individual in enlightened societies. Finally, the rhetoric of the closed fist uses coercive, rather than persuasive tactics. Coercion is irrational in that it relies “on the seat of the pants” rather than “the seat of intellect” (293). This rhetoric offers no choices, Corbett continues, implying that “closed fist” rhetoric is undemocratic and non-conciliatory. It does not seek to integrate itself with an audience, but goes out of its way to “antagonize or alienate” the audience (294-295). In sum, Corbett shows preference for “the older mode of discourse which was verbal, sequential, logical, monologuist, and ingratiating” in contrast to the new rhetoric that is “non-verbal, fragmentary, coercive, interlocutory and alienating” (295). The rhetoric of the closed fist is ineffective, in short, because it has no rational component. This lack, however, also stands in for the racialized and classed
identities of the rhetors.

Corbett recognizes that those who resort to closed fist rhetoric are "the dispossessed, the disenfranchised in our society -- poor people, students, minority groups -- people who do not have ready access to the established channels of communications" (293). But he quickly distinguishes students from poor and minority people. While he "can understand why some people . . . resort to gut reactions," he becomes "apprehensive" when he sees people, whose immediate freedom or welfare "is not at stake," abandon "the reasonable and reasoning approach." Corbett expects reasonable rhetoric from those who are educated and those who, because of their relative privilege, will not always be disenfranchised from "established channels of communication." When these people, those "whom we would expect to be more responsible," adopt "the habit, both in ordinary conversation or in formal discourse, of saying the thing that is patently untrue or grossly illogical" and show "deliberate disdain for, even revolt against, truth and logic," rhetoricians must critique these students so that they learn the "proven soundness" of the old rhetoric (293, 296). Corbett's defense of rational and civil rhetoric is racialized and classed. Oppressed people, whose freedom and welfare are not secured, are associated with the rhetoric of black power, a racial category. When students speak in this rhetoric, they are adopting a racialized way of speaking that does not suit them, given that they are privileged stake-holders, a class category.

Corbett argues, in effect, that those who are dispossessed are incapable of arguing
their own case effectively. The experience of disenfranchisement ensures that the
disenfranchised will continue to be excluded from policy making until they learn to talk
reasonably. However, according to the rules of rational discourse, Corbett reminds us,
they must learn that they should not rely upon self-identification, but, following Kenneth
Burke, must temper their ethos, by identifying themselves with the values of their
audience (295). Or, Corbett continues, this time following Jim Corder, once they learn
the rules of traditional rhetoric, the dispossessed will understand that they can only
represent what is “partial” about themselves, proving to the audience that it is worth their
time to listen. For Corbett, therefore, closed fist rhetoric can never be considered rational
or civil because it does not seek compromise. It is antagonistic in that it identifies two
mutually exclusive positions. For Corbett, this is not allowed in the rules of rational and
civil discourse. According to these rules, it doesn’t matter if the claim of antagonism is
an accurate representation of a material condition. An antagonism cannot be uttered
because to utter it, renders the arguments non-persuasive, ineffective, and incapable of
generating transformation.

Unlike Corbett, Scott and Smith are willing to argue that there is something to be
learned from antagonistic rhetorics and that rhetoricians have the responsibility to revise
traditional rhetoric based on that. To lay the groundwork for this revision, they set out to
identify the commonplaces of what they call “the rhetoric of confrontation.” Like
Corbett, they turn to the rhetoric of the black liberation movement for their raw data.
Once they identify the strategies in this rhetoric, they show how these strategies have been adopted in the student movement. Confrontational rhetors construct a "radical division" between those who have power and those who don't. Confrontational rhetoric is not devoid of thought, as Corbett claims; rather, it begins with ideas that are already part of a larger argument, such as the argument against colonization or technocracy. Scott and Smith also differ from Corbett in that they do not assume that the intended audience of these rhetorics are those in power; this rhetoric is designed to recruit the dispossessed so that they will act. To win this audience over, educated rhetors educated in theories of colonization and technocracy construct "a logic of the situation" that identifies the victims as a degraded people who have been made that way by an enemy who is responsible for their hopeless state (6). According to the logic of the situation, the victimized group has been morally corrupted by the enemy and can only redeem itself, and thus become morally superior, by eliminating the enemy. The construction of this logic requires a totalizing rhetoric that dehumanizes the enemy in order to justify fighting, and even killing him or her.

Scott and Smith recognize that this rhetoric can be very effective in that the audience may adopt the logic of the situation constructed in the rhetoric. If the audience acts according to this logic, the physical confrontation often forces the "establishment" to respond in a way that confirms that they are indeed evil and brutal. The rhetoric of confrontation provokes the institutional authorities and they must respond. Thus, the
logic of colonization or technocracy is made real through a provocative act that only allows for one kind of response. Unlike Corbett, Scott and Smith do not portray confrontational rhetoric as "body rhetoric" nor "gut reaction." They recognize that this rhetoric appeals to reason; however, the reasoning is illusory. The rhetors create the logic of the situation; this logic is not already at work in institutions, in other words, until the rhetors create it through confrontation. Scott and Smith depict the rhetoric of confrontation as a hyperbolic, metonymizing, rhetorical construction that does not allow the rhetors to make "practical" political moves involving compromise and accommodation. Those who have been constructed as the enemy, such as university administrators or police, are then "forced" by this rhetoric to do things they would not otherwise do. They imply that an institution's violent response is neither internal nor necessary to the institutional logic; nor, for that matter, is the violence initiated by the dispossessed internal or necessary to the condition of oppressed people. Rather, the violence is precipitated by a rationale that has been constructed in a rhetoric that precludes the practice of problem solving.

But importantly, Scott and Smith contend, there are lessons to be learned from the rhetoric of confrontation. This rhetoric reminds us that "the essential nature of discourse is action" and the aspirations of those who use it "are not easily dismissed" (7). The emergence of this rhetoric, they conclude, should make rhetoricians question "the presumptions of civility and rationality underlying the old rhetoric." These
presumptions, even if found to be sound,

can no longer be treated as self-evident. A rhetorical theory suitable to our age
must take into account the charge that civility and decorum serve as masks for the
preservation of injustice, that they condemn the dispossessed to non-being, and
that as transmitted in a technological society they become the instrumentalities of
power or those who "have." (7-8)

Although confrontational rhetoric is impractical because it is based on a totalizing logic
that cannot be realized politically, Scott and Smith recognize the material basis for it is
injustice and the fact that certain groups have been relegated to invisibility. But for Scott
and Smith, the old rhetoric is merely antiquated; there is nothing internal to its logic that
renders it inherently complicit in a non-democratic system of exclusion. Rather, it is the
new appearance of a totalizing rhetoric on the part of the oppressed that has upset the
democratic process. The presumptions of the old rhetoric may be inadequate, but they
are practical and reasonable because they offer rhetors the chance to argue for a real, rather
than an illusory possibility. The antagonistic rhetoric, however, because it is absolutely
impractical, is not reasonable.

To make this argument, they construct a history of the assumptions undergirding
American democratic rhetoric. Scott and Smith state that throughout its history, this
rhetoric is based on the assumption that the powerful share the same values as the
dispossessed:
The old language evokes the history of staid, well-controlled concern on the part of those who have, for those who have not. It suggests that remedy can come from traditional means -- the use of some part of the wealth and talent of those who have to ease the burden of those who have not, and perhaps open opportunities for some of them to enter the mainstream of traditional values and institutions. (2)

They argue that this “old language” is the rhetoric of the New Deal and the Welfare State spoken in the benevolent tone that all men seek the same goods: wealth, education, opportunity. The “haves” were able to speak this way because the “have-nots” shared these assumptions about democratic society. These assumptions were not challenged until the present time in which the “have-nots picture themselves as radically divided from traditional society, questioning not simply the limitations of its benevolence but more fundamentally its purposes and modes of operation” (2). This brief, but quite sweeping understanding of the history of American democratic discourse allows Scott and Smith to conclude that the current discord between the haves and the have-nots is discursive, not substantive. The haves continue to assume that everyone shares the same democratic values. This assumption undergirds their rhetoric. The have-nots, however, no longer hold this fundamental belief about the “mode of operation” of democracy. In this regard, confrontational rhetors differ from their counterparts in the past who based their arguments on the assumption that all Americans valued the same things and were
working towards the same ends.

A brief look at the rhetorics of some of these historical counterparts reveals the problem of this claim. From the Whiskey Rebellion to the Black Liberation Movement, there is ample evidence to write an historical account that could claim that representations of irreconcilable social antagonism have often been part of the rhetorics of have nots, for example, the rhetorics of rebellious slaves and radical abolitionists before the Civil War, the rhetorics of anarchists, women suffragists, and socialists before World War I, and the rhetorics of farmers, factory workers, and communists prior to World War II. We do not have to wait until the post World War II period to encounter extreme social antagonism in American history nor to find this antagonism represented in numerous instances of confrontational rhetoric.

As with Corbett, Scott and Smith's Aristotelian methodology prevents them from acknowledging the assumptions undergirding their own historical representations. Blindness to one's own assumptions, as I am about to argue, indicates the presence of an ideology. In the next section, I argue that this ideology can be traced to the assumptions undergirding Aristotle's theory of knowledge upon which his treatment of *logos* in the *Rhetoric* is based. Aristotle's theory of knowledge desires and assumes that through rational inquiry, the inquirer can arrive at a truth that can not be contradicted

The Logic of Non-Contradiction

Jasper Neel has pointed out that to appreciate Aristotle's construction of *logos*, 
the contemporary student of rhetoric must also study his works on politics and ethics, as well as a group of works known as the *Organon*, the body of works on logic and reasoning processes, the processes Aristotle sometimes broadly refers to as dialectics. Neel suggests that the beginning of rhetoric is so intricately bound up with the origins of philosophy that the story we tell should emphasize the interpenetration rather than the separation of rhetoric and philosophy. Neel argues that Aristotle privileged philosophy over rhetoric and wrote the *Rhetoric* to discipline practices he found abhorrent — democratic public speaking. In Neel’s reading, the *Rhetoric* is less about how to produce good arguments and more about why rhetoric is not a serious academic subject.

According to Neel, it is extremely ironic, therefore, that Aristotle has influenced those who do take public speaking and democracy seriously and use his disciplinary parameters (with or without being aware of it) as the basis of their pedagogy.

For Neel, Aristotle’s rules of reasoned argument reflect the type of society he supported, a society structured according to the master-slave relationship. In the *Ethics* and *Politics*, Aristotle follows his own rules of reasoned argument to justify the practice of slavery. Aristotle argues that slavery is justified because, by nature, some people are slaves and some people are free. This proof by natural cause, Neel states, provides Aristotle with a ready-made and universally applicable refutation to any arguments that challenge the way things are. In the *Politics*, Aristotle argues that nature is composed of hierarchies. Because man is part of nature, hierarchies are natural in human social
arrangements. Aristotle’s argument based on nature allows him to speak as “a separate, perceiving intellect capable of disinterested, objective analysis. In no way is this intellect implicated or imbricated in what it knows” (24). Aristotle’s *logos*, the appeal to reason, therefore, is inextricably bound to Aristotle’s theory of knowledge, a reflective theory of representation in that it purports that nature speaks for itself. This theory of knowledge allows his rules of rhetoric to privilege the discourse of the master-slave, a discourse that assumes that the dominance of the masters over the slaves is natural.

According to Neel, rhetoricians have tended to overlook the politics of *logos* at work in the *Rhetoric*. This oversight is often tied to the confusion surrounding Aristotle’s use of the term, dialectic. Aristotle uses the term “dialectic” in the first line of the *Rhetoric*: “Rhetoric is the antistrophos (counterpart) of dialectic” (Rhetoric 28). The first sentence is often understood to mean that rhetoric and dialectic are separate processes. But this is a misreading, according to Neel. Throughout the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle uses the term “dialectic” generically to refer to all the processes of reasoning that produce truth claims. This indicates to Neel that not only does Aristotle prefer *logos* to the other appeals, but that he effectively constructs the rhetorical appeal to reason to mimic the proof by natural cause.

Neel’s claim that the term “dialectic” is used in confusing ways by Aristotle is consistent with many treatments of dialectic in philosophical studies. For example, in an overview of Aristotelian logic, Robin Smith explains that for Aristotle, there are three
kinds of truths: objective, probable, and momentary. There are three types of dialectic (or methods of reasoning) corresponding to each type of truth. Statements can be deemed objectively true by subjecting them to the rules of the syllogism, a method of demonstrative reasoning that results in scientific truths regarding nature. Scientific truths are discovered when a syllogism is premised on a first principle (archon), a premise that cannot be contradicted or challenged. Susan Wells has pointed out that this form of scientific method of reasoning or dialectic assumes that a dialogue is taking place between a scientist and a thing in which the thing speaks to the scientist because the thing contains the truth about its being (53-62). In this sense, the thing speaks its truth to the philosopher.

Before proceeding with Neel's argument, a definition of first principle (archon) is required. Aristotle defines archon in a number of places; however, the following selection from the Metaphysics offers a particularly helpful description:

The principles of eternal things must be always most true; for they are not merely sometimes true, nor is there any cause of their being, but they themselves are the cause of the being of other things, so that as each thing is in respect of being, so is it in respect of truth. (1570).

In this passage, Aristotle establishes a teleological hierarchy of the truth value of knowledge in which a statement qualifies as archon if it transcends time and has no prior cause (telos), but provides the telos upon which other knowledge is discovered.
For Aristotle, Smith goes on to explain, all knowledge that does not qualify as scientific truth can only claim to be "probably," not "absolutely" or "universally" true. Two types of inquiry rely on this form of dialectic, philosophers, who seek universal truth that does not involve proof by natural cause, a type of inquiry broadly referred to as metaphysics, and rhetoricians, who seek momentary truths in a court of law or a deliberative council. In his Organon, Aristotle often uses the term "dialectics" to refer to the reasoning processes of metaphysical philosophers.

In Plato's dialogues, Aristotle argues, Socrates was interested in discovering metaphysical, rather than physical truth. The Socratic method or dialectic teaches an inquirer to begin by identifying a previously unchallenged belief (endoxa) by posing yes-no questions to another philosopher or student who then wrangles over it by ignoring premises that are negated and pursuing those which are affirmed. Each affirmed premise is then interrogated by posing another yes-no question and the process of eliminating the negated premises continues. Any truths reached in philosophical inquiry are not first principles, according to Aristotle, because they do not have a natural cause and may still be contradicted at some future time. These truths are universal because their premises purport to find eternal truths, but they are not scientific because they do not demonstrate a natural cause.

The second type of probable truth identified by Aristotle is rhetorical truth. Unlike metaphysical truth, rhetorical truth does not claim universality, but rather only
claims to be momentarily true. Its subject is a specific event that requires judgement or a specific condition that requires deliberation. Rhetors, ordinary men dealing with the immediate concerns of their lives or their poleis, follow a method of reasoning Aristotle calls the enthymeme. Enthymemic reasoning often fails to premise its proof because the premise is understood to be already shared by the rhetor and the judges or deliberators. Unlike syllogistic and dialectical methods of reasoning that seek to establish premises of natural causes or challenge a previously unchallenged premise to arrive at a new premise, the enthymemic method of reasoning produces knowledge based on premises that are not spoken because these premises are already understood and shared by everyone.

In reading Aristotle, Smith tells us, it is sometimes unclear whether Aristotle is referring to scientific reasoning, metaphysical reasoning, or rhetorical reasoning. Throughout Aristotle’s Organon the single word, dialectic, often stands in for any of these methods of reasoning or as a general term for the reasoning method itself.

Returning to Neel, we note that it is this confusion over the term dialectic in the Rhetoric that reveals not only Aristotle’s preference for demonstrative, scientific dialectic, he actually privileges only one of these methods, scientific truth, the truth that is true because it is premised by a first principle or statement of non-contradiction. Neel argues that in the Rhetoric, Aristotle uses the concepts of dialectic and syllogism, with which the students are already familiar, in order to explain not only how enthymeme differs from them, (is the antistrophos of dialectic) but, more importantly, how enthymeme has the
same purpose as them: to establish in the mind of the audience that only one judgement, a
judgement representing one unified understanding of truth, is possible. Once that point is
reached, further inquiry is shut down, and all remnants of plural knowledges are erased,
not temporarily, but through a univocal determination every bit as final as non-
contradictory first principles. For Neel, Aristotle structured the enthymeme and the
syllogism to produce the same effect, the erasure of contradiction. In Aristotle’s system,
logos or the reasonable argument always follows the regime of a non-contradictory logic.

For Neel, Aristotle’s rhetoric becomes a polemic against sophistic rhetoric in
which all truth claims are contestable. Although sophistic rhetoric is not the subject of
Neel’s study, nevertheless, invites scholars to examine the theories of knowledge
undergirding sophistic rhetoric in order to critique those undergirding Aristotle’s rhetoric.
For Neel, sophistic rhetoric disrupts the concept of reason itself by providing a model of
argumentation which, because of its reliance on the permanence of contradiction,
continually delays the utterance of a non-contradictory statement. Neel identifies
Aristotelian logic as a discourse of power constructed to naturalize the master-slave
relationship because it produces truth statements that can’t be contradicted. Neel
suggests that any form of argument that does not disrupt the claim to objective reality
(phusis) reproduces the Aristotelian model of logos.

Neel’s argument offers important insights into Corbett’s and Scott and Smith’s
ideological blindness to the exclusions that they naturalize in their Aristotelian analyses of
confrontational or closed fist rhetorics. If a rhetorically reasonable solution to a conflict requires that all parties accept a premise that can not be contradicted by any side, then any party who contradicts this premise is operating outside of reason. Out of this critique, Neel makes a case for sophistic rhetoric, a rhetoric that promotes discursive relativity, rather than an antagonistic rhetoric that promotes radical social change. Neel’s recourse to sophistic rhetoric, while embracing contradiction, would not support antagonistic rhetoric because antagonism relies upon the identification of an intractable, and therefore, essentialized difference that can not be negotiated.

The Logic of Non-Contradiction Under Fire

In the thirty years following the publication of Scott and Smith’s and Corbett’s articles, much of the theory that has added to our understanding of the rhetorical regimes that delegitimize the knowledges of the marginalized has been written. This scholarly work in Rhetoric is part of the explosion of social and critical theory that has challenged centuries of western assumptions about essential and universal truth, authoritative and unitary accounts, and Eurocentric superiority. Indeed, much of contemporary theory is referred to as having taken a “rhetorical” or “cultural” turn in that the theory assumes that the truth value of any statement is always disputable or in flux. In this sense, the Aristotelian desire to find the best possible means of persuading by appealing to human reason in order to arrive the true nature of a thing has been irreparably damaged. The concepts of the rational or the reasonable, and their attendant concept -- that the most
reasonable reflects the most probably true or accurate account of reality — and any claim founded upon this concept becomes subjected to the questions: Whose truth? Whose account? In this sense, the terms "rational," "reasonable," "rationality," and "reason" have become suspect. The confidence with which previous theory wielded these terms as truly existing phenomena has been shattered. Theory that recognizes the rhetoricality of truth has relegated these terms to quotation marks which indicate the absolute irretrievability of the concept, the hopelessly decayed status of no longer useful concepts.

To mark the death of the rational world, a world in which human representation is believed to be capable of mirroring its object either exactly, accurately, or in the best and most probable way, contemporary theory often employs the term "rationalization" to stand in for all attempts to revert to the certitude of Aristotle's *logos*.

The critique of rationalization in contemporary theory has helped to both make visible and legitimate the struggles of oppressed people. Corbett's statement quoted above, for example, that he prefers "the older mode of discourse which was verbal, sequential, logical, monologuist, and ingratiating" to the closed fist rhetoric that is "non-verbal, fragmentary, coercive, interlocutory and alienating" resonates an obsolescence rendered by the volumes of feminist work challenging Corbett's "preferences." In the same vein, Scott and Smith's sweeping statement that up until the late 1960s, the haves and have-nots shared the common view that American democracy required a real opening up of power sharing would likewise raise Lyotardian concerns in the mind of the readers.
about the rationalizing effect of such a metanarrative (*The Postmodern Condition*).

Reading these articles some thirty years later should remind us all of the profound effect that the research regarding the contingency of truth has had in the public sphere. This research, once confined to the erudite discourse of the American academy, has spilled into analyses that circulate in the media. For example, the idea that historical accounts do not escape the subjectivity of the historian has certainly become a part of public discussion because it is sometimes discussed in the mass media. Analyses of official governmental statements in mass media also inform the public that they are written with a particular “spin.” These and other examples are testimony to the influence of academic research in the humanities and social sciences and its spread beyond the confines of the academy and the pages of academic journals.

However, the turn against rationalization, while having a progressive political influence, also suffers from limitations imposed by the category of rationalization itself. In attempting to challenge Aristotelian positivism, much contemporary theory has established a similarly positivist confidence that social relationships are discursively, not materially constructed. I want to focus on the problem antagonistic rhetoric faces when it is subjected to social theory that claims to transcend rationalism. Its fate is similar to what it faces when confronted with Aristotelian categories.

**The Post-Structuralist Case Against Antagonistic Rhetoric**

Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau’s work on democracy is a good representation
of emerging poststructuralist theories of democratic practice and rhetoric that claim to transcend rationalization. They call their model "radical democracy." Importantly, they recognize that social antagonisms assert themselves in democratic societies, not as aberrations, but as integral to these societies. In a recent interview conducted by Lynn Worsham, Mouffe explains that radical democracy, like traditional democracy, embraces the liberal democratic values of freedom, equality, and justice. But unlike traditional democracy, radical democracy acknowledges that liberal values are always already exclusionary. When marginalized people recognize the exclusionary logic present in the liberal values of democracy, they can better struggle to gain hegemony. She states that the most pressing task facing the always unfinished democratic revolution requires that traditional democratic concepts of the citizen, pluralism, and argumentation be reidentified by the signifier, agonal, a concept closely related to, but also distinguishable from antagonism. In radical democratic rhetoric, agonal discourse allows for oppositional positions to be articulated in the form of a power struggle in which one position strives to gain hegemony over the other. The agonal practice of citizenship, plurality, and argument allows for new hegemonies to be established. Without agonal practices, old hegemonic views of liberal values such as freedom, equality, and justice can not be reconfigured. Antagonistic rhetoric, although it inevitably emerges in democratic societies, impedes the process of establishing new hegemonies.

For Mouffe, democracy is a work in progress in which the struggle to define the
liberal values of freedom, equality, or common good, will never be resolved. The redefinition of liberal values will be on-going because there can never be a unified understanding of those values. Laclau and Mouffe’s revision of traditional, democratic practice does not challenge liberal values. Rather, at crucial moments in the history of democracy, conditions present themselves that require the containment of old hegemonic understandings of liberal values in order that new understandings of these values can gain hegemony. For example, in the present historical moment, a crucial task facing democracy revolves around the need to redefine consensus. Although consensus is an always present liberal value of democracy, they argue that the current hegemonic view holds that consensus is reached through an inclusive pluralism. But this view of democratic consensus requires revision, Mouffe explains, because “consensus is by nature exclusionary” (Worsham 170). The problem facing the democratic revolution today is the need to dehegemonize this old concept of consensus by struggling for a new hegemony that recognizes that “there can never be a completely inclusive consensus” because “the very condition of the possibility of consensus is at the same time the condition of the impossibility of consensus without exclusion.” This condition is social division, which “is not something that we establish; the social division is there” (190).

Consensus is by nature exclusionary because democracy itself is founded upon an idea of the demos that both creates and effects social division. Mouffe explains:

In order to have a democracy -- a working democracy -- you need to have a demos.
You need to have a demos for citizens to be able to exercise their right of citizenship. To have a demos means that you need to have a "we" and that some people need to be excluded from that "we." This is an effect of the democratic project because in order for a democratic society to exist, for democratic citizens to be able to express their sovereignty, you need to have the demos and the demos needs to have people who are not part of the demos. That's the logic of exclusion.

The social division in contemporary democracies is affected by the hegemonic flux of arguments that render the values of some citizens in the demos more powerful than others. Citizenship, in other words, is a "principle of action" through which some are more able to act than others (176). The present hegemonic view that consensus is inclusive, a view that she equates with rationalism, denies that a struggle for power and hegemony is foundational to democracy. By rationalism, Mouffe seems to be pointing to the Aristotelian concept of logos. She explains that, "the rationalist longing for an undistorted rational communication and for a social unity based on rational consensus is profoundly antipolitical because it ignores the crucial place of passions and affects in politics" (194). In opposition to the desire for a "rational consensus," Mouffe poses the oppositional category "passion," the category that proponents of the rational often condemn as irrational. Mouffe argues that in order to redefine democracy as a political system that recognizes its inherent logic of exclusion, a new democratic rhetoric, as a
passionate rhetoric, will help to deconstruct the "longing for an undistorted rational communication," a longing that naturalizes the logic of inclusion. For Mouffe, "rational consensus" brings the struggle between the included and the excluded to a stand still. Passionate rhetoric, a non-rationalizing rhetoric, would not allow any exclusion to become rationalized, that is, naturalized. Therefore, "a poststructuralist or deconstructionist view is important; it impedes the naturalizing of some forms of exclusion and makes it all a question of the struggle for power and hegemony" (186). Radical democratic rhetoric therefore, must allow for the articulation of these exclusions, making these exclusions visible. To do this, an agonal rhetoric is required, a rhetoric that redefines the adversarial relationship in democracies.

Agonism challenges the rationalization of pluralistic, inclusive consensus. If consensus continues to be defined according the rationalizing notion that we are all included, adversaries will only come from the already included. Therefore, when adversaries replace each other, they do so "without transforming the relations of power." But Mouffe redefines adversaries as those who hold oppositional understandings of liberal values, for example, what is freedom for you is oppression for me. When adversaries are defined like this, positions held by previously excluded groups become legitimate. The goal of the adversarial contest is reconceived as having the goal "to establish a new hegemony." The adversaries are opponents who recognize that pluralism is exclusionary and that the winning position will enact values that privilege different
citizens over others because the value of those citizens has been reconceived within the framework of liberal democracy. Agonistic citizenship and agonistic rhetoric, therefore, make visible the exclusionary nature of democracy.

In radical democracy, agonism is a positive term identified through its negation, antagonism and is the antidote to antagonism. Antagonism, Mouffe explains, is “a relation between enemies; they want to destroy each other. ‘Agonism’ is a relationship among adversaries” (180). Agonism, the relationship between adversaries who hold oppositional understanding of liberal values, must gain hegemony in a radical democracy, but, antagonism, the opposition of enemies who want to destroy each other, unfortunately will not completely disappear in radical democracy. The main aim of radical democratic politics is to “transform antagonism into agonism,” (enemies into adversaries); however, “once antagonism (an enemy relationship) has emerged, it’s very difficult to transform it into agonism” (181). In her view of radical democracy, agonism moves radical democracy forward; antagonism, however, is something radical democracy can do without. Mouffe recognizes that enemy relationships emerge in democracies, but when these relationships make their way into rhetoric, they impede the flux of the democratic struggle between the included and the excluded. Antagonism stops the possibility of deconstruction because it rationalizes an exclusion.

In *The Democratic Paradox*, Mouffe advocates a deconstructivist agonistic pluralism as the corrective to the problem of antagonistic rationalization. She explains
that:

Envisaged from the point of view of 'agonistic pluralism', the aim of democratic politics is to construct the "them" in such a way that it is no longer perceived as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an 'adversary', that is, somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into question. This is the real meaning of liberal-democratic tolerance which does not entail condoning ideas that we oppose or being indifferent to standpoints that we disagree with, but treating those who defend them as legitimate opponents. This category of the 'adversary' does not eliminate antagonism . . . An adversary is an enemy, but a legitimate enemy, one with whom we have some common ground because we have a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality. But we disagree concerning the meaning and implementation of those principles, and such a disagreement is not one that could be resolved through deliberation and rational discussion. Indeed, given the ineradicable pluralism of value, there is no rational resolution of the conflict, hence its antagonistic dimension. This does not mean, of course, that adversaries can never cease to disagree, but that does not prove that antagonism has been eradicated. To accept the view of the adversary is to undergo a radical change in political identity. It is more a sort of conversion than a process of rational persuasion. 102
In this view, the adversarial and the antagonistic are two possible political identities that can be fashioned in response to an “ineradicable pluralism of value.” That is, two possible meanings of a liberal value, such as freedom, antagonistically struggle with each other. Such struggles are ineradicable because freedom will never have a universally agreed upon meaning. There is no rational, deliberative resolution of the conflict. The two sides, in other words, cannot sway each other based on arguments regarding what exists and should exist because it is precisely over this question that difference lies. Therefore, a political identity must be resorted to. The success of this move requires that all hold a general adherence to a common value that legitimizes each adversary.

Mouffe’s scheme, in its practical application, seems not so distant from Burke’s neo-Aristotelian notion of identification evoked by Corbett, in that she privileges *ethos* and *pathos* over *logos*. Nor does her scheme seem too distant from the desire for the return to a shared discourse embedded in Scott and Smith’s metanarrative of Americans’ past ethical consensus. Both sides must agree that they share the same liberal value. To give a fair reading to Mouffe, however, it is important to realize that she and Laclau distinguish traditional from radical democracy in that radical democracy admits to its exclusionary nature, and as such, it is a work in progress, indeed a theory of democracy that does not now have hegemony. Mouffe and Laclau have developed their political theory as a means of radically transforming and overthrowing old hegemonies, including the present hegemonic view of democracy itself.
However, their claim that democratic rhetorics and practices should avoid what they call rationalization undermines their project. By way of illustration, I want to apply Mouffe’s prescriptions for radical democratic argument to the antagonistic rhetoric I discussed in the Introduction — the argument for self-determination by the Black Panthers. When considered in the context of the late 1960’s in the United States, Mouffe’s scheme seems as awkwardly out of place. The Panthers did not organize themselves around a platform of self-determination until a number of civil rights activists had been killed. This terrorism had continued for a number of years before the Panthers advocated self-defense. Self-defense was only advocated once many people, both black and white, but particularly black people, began to believe that the police had no intention of solving the murders, and the courts, no intention of prosecuting them. The proliferation of random violence in the form of assassinations, lynchings, and bombings targeted at black communities supported the belief that the violence was state sanctioned.

We must ask ourselves, what purpose would it have served for black people to have looked at government officials and the terrorists they were sponsoring as a “legitimate enemy with whom [they] have some common ground because [they] have a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of liberal democracy: liberty and equality,” with whom they only “disagree concerning the meaning and implementation of those principles” (102). To have engaged in this kind of rhetoric, which was essentially the rhetoric of civil rights movement, would have only served the purpose of hiding the
antagonism between white supremacists and those people, both black and white, whom they targeted as enemies, while allowing this antagonism to continue unchecked by state officials, who, in many but not all cases, ordered and directed the white supremacist terrorist campaign. Without the presence of the Black Panther Party, I am suggesting here, the limited, but progressive results of that particular round of the struggle of black people in the United States would have been decidedly diminished. But in Mouffe and Laclau’s view, antagonistic rhetoric, such as that of the Panthers, does not facilitate radical democratic change, but rather, impedes it because such rhetoric represents the social conflict by rationalizing it. In such a situation, which did take place in a liberal democracy organized under the principles of “freedom and justice for all,” Mouffe’s understanding “that there is no unbridgeable gap between power and legitimacy” sounds to me to be naive at best, and, at worst, elitist. It is also a rationalizing premise of the most Aristotelian sort (100).

As John Trimbur points out in his critique of the theory of radical democracy, its proponents are so concerned that rationalization will impede the “proliferation of the places of enunciation,” their theory promotes the indefinite proliferation of enunciations that indefinitely postpones the revolutionary moment (“Problem” 287-88). In this way, I would add, in the name of avoiding rationalizing, antagonistic statements such as the Panthers’ claim that the government of the United States was “White” and “racist,” the theory of radical democracy effectively censors the articulation of antagonism, and the
types of knowledges and practices that may develop as a result of such articulations. Had the Panthers and other revolutionary nationalists followed the rules for radical democratic rhetoric, American political and economic institutions would have been less inclined to deal with institutional racism to the limited extent that it did. The Panthers' antagonistic rhetoric made visible, in other words, a social antagonism that was really there -- institutions that had been infused with the ideology of white supremacy from the moment the framers of the U.S. political system deemed that owning slaves fell under the liberal value of freedom to own property. We, as rhetoricians, need to think about what American society would have lost had the Panthers not entered public discourse.

Mouffe and Laclau follow in the long tradition of rhetorical studies in that they see democratic persuasion as the opposite of totalitarian coercion. If we are promoting the former, in other words, we are not participating in the latter. This view creates an ideology I call "democracy hope," the belief that democracy is a process that constantly opens up spaces for liberation (Braun 131). "Democracy hope," as an ideology, naturalizes democracy, that is, dehistoricizes it. In this way, democracy's liberal values escape critique. If the democratic value of equality is always in a state of becoming, evidence of inequality does not challenge democracy itself; it merely presents an opportunity for democracy to improve itself and open up its promise to more and more people.

Both Aristotelian and post-structuralist rhetorics have delegitimized antagonistic
rhetoric. In both treatments, antagonism is deemed ineffective in a democracy because it either does or does not fall into the category of the rational. Aristotelians, who privilege appeals to reason and the resolution of difference, see antagonistic rhetoric as outside of "the rational"; post-structuralists, who privilege passion and the permanence of difference, also see antagonism as inside the category of "the rational." The verdict on antagonism, whether it is accused of being attached to the rational or attached to the passionate, is the same -- it prohibits rather than promotes democratic practice.

Both approaches agree that "the rational" is a univocal discourse in the Bakhtinian sense in that it forces meaning towards a unifying account; however, the Aristotelian approach values the univocal while the post-structuralist approach does not. This is due to the way oppositional accounts are understood and valued in the theories of knowledge that underlie each approach. Aristotle's theory of knowledge privileges a dialectic (or logical method of arriving at truth statements) that is based on the logic of non-contradiction. Because antagonistic rhetoric reveals a contradiction, it violates Aristotle's commitment to non-contradiction as the goal of reasoning. Post-structuralist theories of knowledge privilege a method of uncovering difference that delays the constructing of truth statements. Because antagonistic rhetoric reveals an irreconcilable difference, for post-structuralists, the designation "irreconcilable" halts the deconstructive process and participates in the act of rationalization, a practice post-structuralists do not authorize. I argue that the problem inherent in both approaches is centered in their understanding of
the rational as a reductive practice. Both approaches, in other words, accept that a theory of the rational must be based on the logic of non-contradiction, essentially allowing Aristotle the first and the last word on the concept of the rational.

Unlike Neel, therefore, I am unwilling to grant Aristotle the last word on *logos* or abandon the concept of the rational. I oppose postmodernist and post-structuralist theories, such as those of Lyotard or Derrida and their offshoots, that challenge, it seems to me, the ethical validity or “goodness” of the commitment to the concept of essence found in both Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian rational models. Finding a legitimate place for contradiction in logical argumentation, as well as antagonistic contradiction, the type of contradiction that indicates the possibility of macrosystemic change, remains a task in contemporary Western rhetoric. This task requires some recovery work in order to rewrite the history of the dialectical method.

**Conclusion**

If we look into the history of Western philosophy, however, we find that in the two centuries before Aristotle delimited *logos* to the logic of non-contradiction, another model of rational inquiry was developed by a disgruntled aristocrat, Heraclitus, who, in the midst of the Persian invasion of the Ionian city-states, was watching his world crumble around him. Heraclitus developed a model of rational thinking based on the logic of contradiction. Heraclitus’ insights into rational thinking at this particular historical moment, insights informed by the earlier natural philosopher, Anaximander, were
polemized into obscurity by the intelligentsia of imperial Athens, most notably, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Nevertheless, Heraclitus’ ideas have continued to periodically reappear in the history of philosophy, particularly at moments when social antagonisms have exploded in ways that challenge the rationalized order of things. In the next chapter, I examine the origins of rational inquiry in pre-socratic philosophy in order to make the case that rational thinking and rational argumentation need not be bound to the logic of non-contradiction. By so doing, I argue that non-Aristotelian dialectic is the antidote to the Aristotelian dialectic. The non-Aristotelian dialectic counterposes Mouffe’s post-structuralist commitment to the process of deconstruction.
CHAPTER FOUR:

THE RATIONAL TURN IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

AND THE DEBATE OVER THE LOGIC OF

CONTRADICTION AND NON-CONTRADICTION

By the time of Plato’s Academy in fourth century Athens, two oppositional models of the rational world had been widely circulated throughout the Greek world. In this chapter, I will explain these two models and the radically different logics and dialectic each suggest. The notion that the essence of all phenomena is active and oppositional is represented in the first historical records of Western philosophy by the Ionian philosophers, Anaximander and Heraclitus, aristocrats from the eastern Greek states Miletus and Ephesus respectively. The notion that the ontological essence of all phenomena is fixed and unitary is represented during the same period by the Eleatic philosopher, Parmenides, an aristocrat from the Western Greek colony Elea. These beginnings of logical inquiry took shape during the sixth century and the early fifth century. These philosophies developed and made their way to Athens because of and through overseas trading practices, interpolis alliances and wars, and colonial relationships. By the latter half of the fifth century, these philosophies became the subjects of newly established, formal educational practices propagated by the professional teachers known as the sophists.

In this chapter, therefore, I construct an account of the development of the two
paradigms of dialectic or logical method in the earliest historical record of Western philosophy. Most recent counterpoises to Aristotle's *logos* are fashioned through comparative analyses of the sophistical rhetoric (Jarrett, J. Poulakos, T. Poulakos, Vitanza). I argue, however, following Edward Schiappa, that to understand Plato's and Aristotle's criticism of the sophists, as Schiappa compellingly shows, we must go back to the Ionian and the Eleatic philosophers. Without this philosophical background, we will fail to understand how the controversies over relativism and positivism developed within the dynamic political economy of fifth and fourth century Athens. I will look at the development of logic not as theories alone, but as products of the macrosystemic political economies in which these philosophers lived and the contradictory ethical assumptions reflected in the various theories.11

The logical premise that all things are constituted as oppositions is introduced, Charles Kahn argues, when the Ionian natural philosophers, particularly Anaximander, began to write down the first scientific principles from which truth statements about astrological and meteorological phenomena could be produced. With this move, the first "physicists" reconceive "a cosmic god: a deity conceived not as the supreme patriarch of a quasi-human family but as the ruling principle of an orderly universe" (Art and Thought 11). They invent the concept of a universe (*kosmos*) that stands in for both cosmic substance and the cosmic order of substance. These philosophers seek to discover what things are composed of (their physical substance) as well as the cosmic principle through
which things are formed (the overarching universal law that orders the physical). Having
created universal principles, they are then able to generate new statements about a
particular object of inquiry. This method, which we now associate with theory, had to be
invented.

As Kahn points out, it is not only tempting, but helpful to view Anaximander as a
generative historical moment, a beginning of the rational trajectory in Western thinking.
By thinking of the first attempt at a mathematical physics “as if it were the work of a
single mind,” we are able to conceive of the historical break between mythic and rational
thought as a “systematic unity of Melisian cosmology” (Anaximander Preface xiv).
However, such thinking is perilous in that it promotes the view that knowledge is
produced by great men who thought independently of their historical moments. We can
rewrite that narrative, however, in a way that factors in the historical context that
provided the conditions that brought the contradiction between mythic and rational
explanation into a conjunctural moment.

The Ionia of the Anaximander and Heraclitus

For approximately three centuries prior to time of Anaximander, Miletus had built
a colonial empire throughout the northern coasts of the Aegean and further north along the
coasts of the Black Sea. To do this, Miletus had conquered peoples throughout these
areas, benefitted from the resources extracted from the colonized lands, and been able to
export its own excess populations to these colonies when internal social antagonisms
arose within the *polis*. During these three centuries, Miletus was perfectly situated as a site for the exchange of technical knowledge such as, shipbuilding, navigation, architecture, mechanical engineering, and material engineering (metallurgy and ceramics), with the Babylonians, Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Assyrians, and especially the Phoenicians. Unlike the city states of mainland Greece, Miletus had grown up as a port first and foremost, not as a collection of agricultural villages which eventually developed an urban center. In this sense, the cultural life of the *polis* was more defined by its commercial than its agricultural activity, even though all ancient political economies were primarily dependent for their survival on agricultural production. Because of this, Miletus' success as a port depended upon a very different set of exigencies than those of cities, like Athens, with large agricultural peripheries. The ruling families of Miletus, from whom all of the religious, political, and military leaders were drawn, were likely to have been connected or concerned with commercial, as well as agricultural endeavors. The same cannot be said of the ruling families of Athens during this same period, nor many of the mainland *poleis* which established themselves through a process of gradual political coalescence among the landed aristocratic estates. In other words, the central ruling council, the oracles, and the military fraternities of Miletus had to pay close attention to the commercial health of Miletus in order to secure the social coherence of their *polis*. The ruling Milesian aristocrats, therefore, gained a cosmopolitan knowledge of practical and scientific thinking as a result of the commercial and religious exchanges they were privy to
Kirk, Raven, and Schofield concur with this view, and state that the Milesians benefitted from “material prosperity and special opportunities for contact with other cultures” (75). They note that the doxology depicts the two Milesian philosophers, Thales and Anaximander, as thoroughly engaged in the military, political, and commercial life of their polis. Thales, whom some accounts depict as a native Milesian of noble Phoenician ancestry, “drew the attention of the Milesians to the navigational value of the Little Bear, used earlier by Phoenician sailors” (77). Herodotus also credited Thales as having suggested to the ruling councils of the Ionia poleis that they should form a “single deliberative chamber” in Teos, a city centrally located in Ionia, to which all the Ionian cities would then be demes (78). Herodotus also credits him with an engineering feat, rechanneling a river, that rendered it fordable for the Milesian army. Thales is also reported to have offered a meteorological explanation for the flooding of the Nile, knowledge he may have gotten from having traveled to Egypt to visit one of Miletus’ colonies there or from Milesian traders (79-80). Anaximander is also depicted in the doxology as a cosmopolitan gatherer of world knowledge who put that knowledge to practical use in the interest of his polis. He was said to have used the Babylonian knowledge of “the celestial sphere” and the Babylonian instrument, the gnomon, “a vertical rod whose shadow indicates the sun’s direction and height,” to correctly calibrate the ground for one or more of Sparta’s sun dials (103). This service to Sparta could have
had diplomatic or commercial overtones. He may have directed Miletus' overseas expedition to found the colony of Apollonia, the birthplace of Diogenes, a later Ionian philosopher. His use of proportional reduction to chart a map of the earth, a feat Karl Jaspers calls "the discovery of a principle of representation," was based on the empirical knowledge he gathered from Ionian navigators who worked on commercial and military sea vessels.

Karl Jaspers refers to the development of the first models of natural science as having taken place "without polemics against anyone" (3). For these theorists, he argues, there were no conflicts between the popular knowledges they gathered and used and the theories they were inventing. I would like to suggest that this seeming harmony between popular and aristocratic knowledges may be explained by understanding the new scientific paradigm as having emerged out of a dynamic commercial political economy in which the necessity for a new probability, the rational view, had proliferated sufficiently enough in social life to gain dominance over older, absolutist religious constructs. The religious constructs certainly did not die out altogether, but among some of the aristocracy in Miletus, they became subordinated to the needs of the *polis* whose commercial life created the material conditions for the development of scientific constructs. This favorable historical moment, however, would also come to an end.

Around the same time of Anaximander's death (547), the city of Sardis, a land-locked *polis* located along the interior trading route of Ionia, fell to the Persian army, and
the aristocracy of Miletus was threatened for the first time by a formidable enemy with which it had little, if any, commercial contact (Pedley 93). The pursuit of science would continue throughout Ionia, but not without polemics which broke out amidst the destruction of the colonial order the aristocracy had enjoyed in the principle Ionian port cities of Miletus and Ephesus. Heraclitus, whose dates Kirk et al estimate to be 540-480, dates which coincide with the Persian incursion into the Greek poleis (181-2), was a member of the principle ruling family of Ephesus and had extensive knowledge of Milesian, Pythagorean, and religious texts. He developed his philosophy during the collapse of the aristocratic order of which he was a part. Unlike Anaximander, who died just before the Persians began to attack the coastal Ionian ports, Heraclitus was in his prime when Miletus was sacked. In Ephesus, the ruling families made peace with Persians, saving their city from the same fate.

Comments by Heraclitus indicate that the aristocracy was not only deeply divided at this time, but were also engaged in intrigues that were carried out through religious and political institutions. What position Heraclitus held in the internal struggle is not known, but that he took sides is evident. In one of the fragments, Heraclitus condemns the stupidity of the council for ostracizing one of the citizens he considers to have been the best among them:

What the Ephesians deserve is to be hanged to the last man, every one of them, and leave the city to the boys, since they drove out their best man, Hermodous,
saying "Let no one be the best among us; if he is, let him be so elsewhere and among others." (Kahn, *Art and Thought*, 59)

As I stated earlier, the practice of ostracism was a political tool employed by the aristocracy to fight political battles among members of its strata. The ruling councils, made up of only the best families, would initiate a polling of the citizenry at large to vote, by anonymous ballot, for some citizen whom they felt was upsetting the unity of the *polis*. Of the ostracisms for which there are archeological records, R. Osborne reports that these elections resulted in an enormous show of unity on the part of the citizenry at large, this in spite of the fact that the ruling council did not offer the citizens a selected list of candidates. Rather, the process involved the distribution of ceramic shards upon which the citizens were asked to write any name they wanted. The great degree of unanimity that resulted from this process indicate that the most powerful aristocrats would circulate influence over the citizenry through the oracles who gave advice at the temples and through military fraternities to which most of the citizenry belonged. In the ostracism of Hermodorus, Heraclitus, a man who had inherited one of the most powerful religious positions in Ephesus, had been powerless to stop the expulsion of a fellow aristocrat whom he admired. This saying of Heraclitus, which seems to have a decidedly anti-democratic message in that it attacks the democratic notion that no one should declare himself better than the rest, is more historically complex than what appears in the decontextualized text. Once the Persian governors had established themselves in Ephesus,
it is widely reported by ancient and contemporary historians alike that democratic practices, for a time at least, expanded in Ephesus in the early days of its occupation. In its original context, the statement may carry more of an anti-Persian message than an anti-democratic message.

Heraclitus stepped down from his inherited position of basileus, turning over the religious and political duties it entailed to his younger brother. In Diogenes Laertes’ Lives, this act is interpreted as an indication that Heraclitus was an apolitical aristocrat who retired from public life in order to pursue the life of a hermit who engaged in extremely bizarre, anti-social behavior. Yet, in the context of the Persian War, it is hard to read the fragments without feeling the presence of an intensely political aristocratic mind, keenly aware of the world falling apart and spinning out of control around him, a circumstance shockingly new to aristocratic Ionians. For example, Heraclitus wrote that “The people must fight for the law (nomos) as for their city walls” (59). This analogy indicates that Heraclitus was neither anti-political nor pro-Persian.

It is also hard the read the fragments without feeling the presence of a man who had been quite involved in the commercial life of the city. On more than one occasion, Heraclitus explains a point of philosophy by making an analogy with the everyday life of the polis. For example, in order to explain how difficult the process of reasoning is, Heraclitus wrote that “seekers of gold dig up much earth and find little” (Kahn, Art and Thought, 31). In another fragment, Heraclitus explains what a universal principle is by
comparing its function to the function of the *polis*:

Speaking with understanding they must hold fast to what is shared by all, as a city holds to its law, and even more firmly. For all human laws are nourished by a divine one. It prevails as it will and suffices for all and is more than enough. (43)

Finally on this point, Heraclitus explains the cosmic principle of Melisian philosophy by referring to the commercial practice, first developed in Ionia, of using money as a universal exchange medium: “All things are requital for fire, and fire for all things, as goods for gold and gold for goods” (47).

Although Anaximander and Heraclitus were aristocrats, I am suggesting here that the aristocracy of Miletus and Ephesus may have seen their political, military, and religious functions in the *polis* differently than the aristocracies of the *poleis* whose status was more dependent upon the large agricultural periphery. The Ionian philosophers seemed to have concerned themselves with the practical commercial life of the *polis*. Anaximander’s pursuit of meteorology and astronomy required that he collect data while on diplomatic, military, colonial, and commercial missions for his *polis*. Heraclitus, on the other hand, sought to apply scientific logic to the problems of man’s thinking in the midst of an unprecedented rift in the ethical life of his class and its role in his *polis*.

In the following accounts of each philosopher, I rely upon the works of philologists and classicists. Within these fields, a wide range of methodologies are employed to interpret ancient texts. The literature is necessarily self-reflexive of the
highly contentious debates regarding the methodologies of translation and interpretation because the conventions of this scholarship requires scholars to justify their methodology. In the important opening chapters where this work in done, classical scholars explain their own methods by countering it to the methods employed by other scholars. I felt it was germane to the purpose of this study to explain my understanding of the controversies over interpretation in these fields, but have provided this material as an appendix in order to avoid breaking up the continuity of the text (See Appendix A).

My interest in pre-Socratic philosophers differs from that of classicists and philologists. I am interested in reading these texts politically, as part of the complex web of social contradictions and antagonisms circulating in the political economies of ancient Greek poleis.

By identifying the wide range of diverse antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions in these poleis, I will offer a beginning account of what I call “the political economy of logos,” that is, my first attempts to explain the development of two radically oppositional rational world views, and the rules of logical argument that emerged from them in philosophy and rhetoric, by sorting out the winners and losers in the struggles over the production, circulation, and distribution of value among the various strata of these poleis. I contend that the Eleatic/Aristotelian logic that came to dominate Greek philosophy, politics, and rhetoric, the logic of non-contradiction, has provided the regimes of rational thinking that also suits the capitalist political economy of the modern,
democratic state. Recovering the logic of contradiction, however, suggests a model of rational dialectic that neither succumbs to Aristotelian positivism nor poststructuralist abandonment of reason.

Anaximander's Logic of Opposition

The doxology from which the ideas of Anaximander have been gleaned is scarce. Aristotle and his pupil/successor at the Lyceum, Theophrastus, both discuss him and probably had access to some of his writing (Kahn 11). Subsequent writers, such as Simplicius and Hippolytus, who also discuss Anaximander, may have relied heavily on Theophrastus' extensive history of science as their source, through the books of Theophrastus have been lost, and have themselves been reconstructed through doxology. Kahn has written one of few book length accounts of Anaximander’s thought. His account assumes that Anaximenes, for whom the doxology is considerably greater, probably relied heavily on the physics developed by Anaximander, thereby offering us the best understanding of his model of the kosmos. In Kahn’s study, Anaximenes, the younger Milesian who had what the ancient Greeks called a “teacher-pupil” relationship with Anaximander, provides us with rational model of the universe that was actually developed by Anaximander.13

There is only one fragment from the body of doxology on Anaximander about which some scholars are willing to argue is ipsissima verba (in his own words). That fragment is found in Simplicius, which I reproduce below.14 I have underscored the
section that Kahn claims is *ipsissima verba.* I have also transliterated from the original Greek the terms Simplicius uses to discuss Anaximander’s principles and have placed them in italics as they are pertinent to my discussion, as well as italicized Simplicius’ parenthetical remark:

Anaximander . . . declared the Boundless (*apeiron*) to be the principle (*arche*) and element of existing things, having been the first to introduce this very term of “principle” (*arche*); He says that it is neither water nor any other of the so-called elements, but some different, boundless nature, from which all the heavens arise and the *kosmos* within them: out of those things whence is the generation for existing things, into these again does their destruction take place, according to what must needs be: for they make amends and give reparation to one another for their offense, according to the ordinance of time, *speaking of them thus in rather poetical terms.* It is clear that having observed the change of the four elements into one another, he did not think fit to make any one of these the material substratus, but something else besides these. (quoted in Kahn *Anaximander* 166)

The fragment comes from a section of Simplicius in which he is discussing Aristotle’s *Physics.* Kahn explains that because Simplicius argues for a certain view of Anaximander, he must also be arguing against another view, most likely Aristotle’s. The controversy seems to revolve around two questions: first, did Anaximander invent the notion of *arche* (principle) and second, if so, did Anaximander equate his *arche*, (*aperion*, the boundless)
with any one of the four elements. Simplicius argues that Anaximander indeed invented the abstract concept of **principle** (*arche*), and also conceived of it as **apeiron**, the boundless, a concept that not only exists as a principle (*arche*) but also exists in a physical form. Furthermore, Simplicius argues, Anaximander did not choose any one of the four elements to be the basic material out of which all the others are made.

Kahn approaches the fragment from Simplicius by looking for an “intrinsic continuity in Greek thought concerning the natural world” because there is a common body of ideas running through presocratic philosophy (*Anaximander 5*). This continuity is not present in writings of ancient historians of philosophy because the earliest historians of science, such as Theophrastus, depicted philosophy as the “personal innovations” of each thinker (4). Kahn argues that before we begin to make sense of the only fragment that comes to us in the form of *ipsissima verba*, the doxology must be read in the spirit of Anaximander’s times, according to what ideas were circulating during his life.

For Kahn, it is important to understand that the texts circulating among the intelligentsia in Miletus during Anaximander’s life (c. 611- c. 545, Kirk et al 101) conform to the genre that Hesiod wrote in, *theogony*, the genre that portended to relate the story of the birth of the gods in order to interpret what virtues they embodied and how those virtues affected human beings. The natural philosophers make use of the thematic content of the genre of *theogony* to invent an entirely new world view -- cosmology --
that is, an explanation of why the universe is and always has been a certain way. Importantly, they also introduce a new form of writing into public discourse -- prose.

Before Anaximander’s radical invention of the concept of the *kosmos*, theogonists had already described the earth as a space in relation to what was above and below it, but, Kahn states, their ordering of the above and the below indicates that they were not motivated by scientific intent, but rather, the ethical intent to explain how the gods and men fit into a hierarchical order. He explains: “The Iliad speaks of the Titans seated in the darkness of Tartarus ‘at the limits of earth and sea.’ This ‘deepest pit under the earth’ is as far below Hades as heaven is from the earth” (81). This arrangement can certainly be envisioned or reproduced pictorially, but, given the lack of measurements and proportions, Homer’s view of the universe cannot be charted on a map which would require details from empirical observation and geometric principals of arrangement.

Anaximander’s *kosmos*, in contrast, is motivated by a scientific intent. He utilizes existent geometrical rules, such as the description of a circle, as well as Egyptian, Babylonian and Mesopotamian speculations on astronomical motion, and turns them into a model of the *kosmos*, a “geocentric sphere” that, given his profound empiricist method, stood the test of inquiry until the middle ages (92). In Anaximander’s *kosmos*, the earth rests at the center of the universe, a point described as equidistant from every point on its periphery. The *kosmos*, therefore, is spherical, and the position of the earth explains why it remains at rest -- it is in cosmic harmony with its limits, as every point on a circle
is in harmony with every point of its circumference. Equilibrium, equality, and symmetry, Kahn argues, are the geometrical laws governing Anaximander’s kosmos. The earth, perfectly suspended in the kosmos, if drawn, resembles a fat cylinder, “with a depth one third of its width” (81). Every point on the top is antipodal to a point on the bottom. Anaximander, in Kahn’s reading, also rejects the notion of absolute up or down. The heavens are arranged above the earth spherically in concentric circles with the stars, the moon, and the sun occupying different rings. The distinctions in the intensity of the light seen on earth, including eclipses, can be explained this way. The fire they are all composed of and are moved by escapes through vents at different points along the circumference of the rings.

There is certainly a mythic aspect to Anaximander’s astronomy, just as there is a scientific aspect to much of the mythic speculations. For example, Kahn states, “the world measured by the Vedic god” presents the scientific principle that the sun’s disappearance at night does not mean that it ceases to exist; it merely passes to the other side of the earth (96). This is a rational explanation. Anaximander’s rational view, with its commitment to a systematic “mathematical physics” (97), held that the world can be explained in terms other than arbitrary divine whims, and that, by observation, men can come to understand why things act the way they do. The rational world view separates the concerns of men from the concerns of gods. Rational thinking belongs to the human world. It is an empirical process that creates two types of abstractions: abstract
categories that identity the things observed, and abstract principles that account for their causes.

It is likely that Anaximander first used the word *kosmos* as an abstract category, even though there is no evidence in the doxology that he uttered the term. Kahn points out that it is unlikely that Anaximander would be able to develop the idea of the *kosmos* without designating a category for the idea, or "that Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and the rest," who all used the word, "received their terminology from another source" (Anaximander 219). Furthermore, in fifth and fourth century texts, the word only appears in lectures on natural philosophy, indicating that by that time "*kosmos*" had been firmly established as category of *physics*. In Homer and other pre-sixth century works, the word does not denote a philosophical category. Rather Homer uses it to specify a group of everyday objects that have been arranged well. Based on Kahn's philological analysis of the word, *kosmos*, we can conclude that it was most likely Anaximander who introduced *kosmos* into the Greek lexicon as an abstract category denoting the geometric "arrangement of all things" in the sky held together as a "systematic unity" (222).

Based on his empirical observations and geometrical accounting of the order of the things in the sky, Anaximander also developed an abstract principle that had not previously been a part of geometry. This principle accounts for the movement and change in the astronomical *kosmos*, and the meteorological atmosphere closest to the earth. The
geometry of the *kosmos* is made possible because all cosmic phenomena conform to a single form of motion. He understands the movement and change in the cosmic order as an exchange of hot and cold: the heat from the fire in the concentric rings rises up toward the outer limit of the *kosmos* even as the fire’s heat moves through the vents to the earth below. This movement, a cosmic breathing he called *pneuma*, connects the stuff of the heavens to the stuff of the air near the earth. *Pneuma* is the agent of change in Anaximander’s *kosmos*; as the *kosmos* breaths, the *pneuma* causes a “separating off” (*apokrisis*) of the finer vapors (the dry or rarefied) from the heavier vapors (the wet or condensed) in the air, creating two oppositional products -- wind and rain (100-1). The primary opposition of hot and cold and their exchange through *pneuma*, an “action of the sun” pervading the *kosmos*, is the agent in the processes of *apokrisis* (100). Lightening and thunder, for Anaximander, is not produced by Zeus who throws thunderbolts, but is a separating off caused by cosmic breathing. For Anaximander, any two things produced through the process of *apokrisis* are not only oppositional, Kahn argues, but mutually identifying in that they reflect the constant interchange of heat (light) and cold (darkness) astronomically, and heat (the dry) and cold (the moist) meteorologically. This exchange is at once a process of breathing (*pneuma*) and a process of creation (coming into and going out of). *Pneuma* creates rainstorms, shorelines, stars, eclipses, and all the different forms of animal life. All things come into being through this exchange of forces captured by the first principle (*archon*) Anaximander called *aperion*, “the boundless.”
The doxology provides evidence that all of these ideas had been developed by the early fifth century, Kahn argues. Anaximander's physics, according to Kahn, is built on a view of the universe as rule-bound, in which the constant exchange of forces and elements renders the universe and everything in it an oppositional symmetry. Each individual thing contains this oppositional symmetry as does the arrangement or order of all the things (the *kosmos*). *Aperion* is not only a principle, a veridical cause of existence (what is), the principle is also materially embodied in all phenomena as the opposition between the presence and absence of heat. Although Anaximander did not think of it in this way, his principle also acts as a premise in that it allows for the production of predicated statements about each physical instantiation of the principle based on the particular material form it assumes at a given particular moment. Neither the principle nor its physical embodiment exist without the other because if they do, their motion, the *pneuma*, would stop. It cannot stop, however, because if it did, the universe would disappear.

Miletus, and what converged there in the early sixth century, is as much of a player in the kind of model of a rational universe developed by Anaximenes as were the particular minds of those who first articulated it. His model reflects the dynamism and cosmopolitanism of the commercially-oriented Milesian aristocracy. Miletus' prosperity came from a long-sustained, colonial network obtained by war and settlement and its diplomatic ability to avoid war with the empires with which it traded and intermixed.
Anaximander's rational model of movement, becoming, and oppositional exchange reflects the dynamism of its commercial exchange activity: he gathered the popular, technical knowledges of those engaged in the work of interacting with natural forces as the empirical evidence needed to support the universal constructs suggested by the aristocratic religious notions of mathematical harmony and hierarchy he exchanged with other empires.

Heraclitus

Scholars of Heraclitean philosophy do not agree about what Heraclitus' primary concern might have been, even at the most general level. Heraclitus' project, Barnes argues, has three concerns: natural philosophy, the "epistemology which underlies it," and "the rudimentary ethical theory it suggests" (59). As a natural philosopher, Heraclitus invents the theory of flux "about the nature of reality, founded upon and supported by a series of empirical observations," the logical procedure of which "establish(es) a certain rationality" (67). Barnes does not ascribe any metaphysical import to Heraclitus' use of the word logos: there is no "Logos-doctrine"; Heraclitus uses the word simply to express that his "general law of nature" is merely his account (59). His theory is rational, but logically unsound because his insistence on the "unity of opposites" dooms it "to the fires of contradiction" (80-81). This is why his theory sounds "silly" to contemporary thinkers, for whom it has no value; however, it is of historical importance in that it influenced Aristotle's formulation of the "doctrine of real
essence” (81).

In contrast to Barnes, Kirk, Raven, and Schofield are proponents of what Barnes referred to above as “the logos-doctrine.” When Heraclitus uses the word “logos,” they argue, he is referring to a “unifying formula or proportionate method of arrangement of things, what might almost be termed their structural plan” of both individual things and all things in sum (187). In this view, Heraclitus deployed the word “logos” to stand in for a single, universal principle, an ontological, universally veridical statement, from which an infinite amount of predications about specific phenomena may be made. In his monograph on the cosmic fragments of Heraclitus, Kirk holds that logos is a metaphysical principle that Heraclitus applies to a number of inquiries: first, cosmic concern for the world without men, and second, “anthropocentric” concerns for “religion... god in relation to man... the nature of the soul... epistemology... ethics... (and) politics” (“Preface” Cosmic Fragments xii). Johansen, another proponent of the “logos doctrine,” finds that Heraclitus’ project, because it is primarily a logic, had no “need of a cosmology” (34); rather, he approaches the “edge” of theory by using comparisons, simple analogies, and complex analogies containing antithetical statements that point to, but do not succeed at formulating, a universal logic applicable to all things. In Johansen’s view, Heraclitus generated numerous predications about the material relationships of many things, including human thinking, but failed to articulate a single logical principle of existence (30-1). Such a logical principle, nevertheless, can be discerned from Heraclitus,
a principle Johansen identifies as "the unity and struggle of opposites." The mirror opposite view is held by G.T.W. Patrick, a late nineteenth century scholar who sees Heraclitus as solely a philosopher of the physical, whose "rich and suggestive philosophy" has been turned into "a wretched mouthful of Hegelian phrases" by those who claim him to be a logician (11). David H. Degrood sees Heraclitus' philosophy as profoundly aristocratic commentary on the his socio-historic moment, Joel Wilcox as an epistemology, and Catherine Osborne as a deeply religious and democratic treatise. Heraclitus' project, in sum, is seen by his most recent interpreters as primarily, though not solely, the work of either natural philosophy, epistemology, theology, or logic.

Such "a wretched mouthful of Hegelian phrases" may be useful here, however. I will make that case by concerning myself with how his treatise and memories of his treatise have inspired other thinkers to challenge the Parmenidean/Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction. I will demonstrate that there is ample evidence in the fragments of a view that suggests that contradiction, rather than non-contradiction, constitutes the essence (or "logos") of the natural world, that this essence is neither god-made nor man-made, but "is" (exists) nonetheless, that man's thinking is capable of understanding phenomena according to the rational of this logos, and that to do so, man must be able to articulate statements that explain things according to this logic of contradiction. This logic is non-Aristotelian when it is stripped down to its most basic distinction: the notion that opposition is the essence of phenomena. As such, this logic has inspired theory that
assumes that because any object of inquiry "divides into two," it must be analyzed as a process that is always in flux (or is changing) based on the measure of its oppositional aspects. While this logic resembles Anaximandriean cosmology, it also supersedes it in that Heraclitus is concerned with epistemology and ethics, as well as ontology. For Heraclitus, the mathematical concept of measure provides the rational basis upon which to generate a truth statement. But measure for Heraclitus does not signify balance; rather, his representations of oppositions indicates that he understood measure to mean the constant struggle between more and less, consonance and dissidence, war and peace.

Kahn argues that Heraclitus does not seem to have any interest in interrogating the empirical data Anaximander had relied upon, nor the principles he developed based on that data. In many of the fragments, Heraclitus is saying nothing new about cosmology that had not already become standard among the Ionian thinkers. For example, Heraclitus says that: "The Kosmos, the same for all, no god nor man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire everlasting, kindled in measures and in measures going out" (Kahn The Art and Thought 45).

Heraclitus follows Anaximander's cosmology here. He represents the kosmos as an infinite, but knowable and measurable universe that always moves according to the principle and element of heat. The cosmic order is unbound to any creator, and therefore, is infinite rather than temporal. It is fire that is omnipresent, that is, both universal and ubiquitous. Also, following Anaximander, this principle exists as embodied
measurements of heat that move oppositionally.

But, Kahn argues, there is no indication in the fragments that have been collected that he ever attempted to represent Anaximander's cosmology in detail or in toto. Heraclitus merely chooses certain particular precepts from the cosmology and presents them as received knowledge. For example, fire is both element (a thing) and principle in Fragment XLII: "The sun is overseer and sentinel of cycles, for determining the changes and the seasons which bring all things to birth" (49). As with Anaximander, the principle (here represented by "sun") does not stand outside of nature but moves in it. Heat always appears in exchange with its opposite, cold. This idea is represented in Fragment XLIX, "Cold warms up, warm cools off, moist parches, dry dampens" (53). Opposites therefore identify each other and there is nothing that does not exist outside of an identity with its opposite. Also in keeping with the Anaximandean kosmos principle and element do not only mutually identify each other, however. They also mutually struggle with each other in ways that are measured; for example, in Fragment XLIV, Heraclitus states that "the sun will not transgress his measures. If he does, the Furies, ministers of Justice, will find him out" (49).

However, Heraclitus also expands Anaximander's principle of natural philosophy by applying it to the human representation of things. In this sense, his concern is epistemological, as well as ontological. An example of this expanded concern is in Fragment CXXIV in which Heraclitus discusses "grasping" (or understanding):
"Graspings: wholes and not wholes, convergent divergent, consonant dissonant, from all things one and from one thing all" (85). This fragment suggests that good understanding anticipates, seeks out, and finds the interpenetration of opposites of a thing by considering its forms of motion (its totality and its partiality, its coming together and its separating out, and its harmony and chaos).

Heraclitus accepts Anaximander's cosmic system and uses it to think through a different question, the question of the truth and falsity of human knowledge, or, in his words quoted above, "graspings." For Heraclitus, if the world is a unified system in which all its elements are in a state of constant flux, then men and gods alike, and all of their activities, including thinking, also move according to that same principle, the oppositional motion of identity and struggle. He was inspired by natural philosophy, just as Anaximander was inspired by geometry, to apply the concept of a law-governed kosmos to the human condition in the kosmos to see how humans too are governed by this law. Heraclitus is not trying to fully rehearse Anaximandrean cosmology, but uses its known precepts to carry out his own objective: he seeks to understand why some human beings seem to be oblivious to the cosmic principles, even though these principles live in and around them.

In this respect, Heraclitus' project is not confined to "what is," but to reasoning, and, therefore, introduces a new paradigm -- the process of thinking must be identical to the processes at work in the kosmos. This paradigm is introduced in what is widely
agreed to be the opening of Heraclitus treatise:

Of the *logos* which is as I describe it men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it. For although all things happen according to this *logos*, they are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain, when I distinguish each thing according to its constitution (*phusis*) and declare how it is; but the rest of men fail to notice what they do after they wake up just as they forget what they do when asleep. (Kirk *Cosmic Fragments* 33)

The focus of this opening passage is man's reception of *logos*, not an explication of *logos* itself. Man should be able to know *logos* because his entire experience is in accordance with it, yet he doesn't know *logos*.

The passage, it seems to me, identifies an epistemological problematic: the contradictory process of thinking itself. To pursue his problematic, Heraclitus, just as Anaximander before him, required new conceptual terms; in his case, that term is *logos*. As stated above, some scholars argue that Heraclitus means nothing more by this word than his “account” of natural philosophy, or, in other fragments, another of the numerous denotations of *logos*: “saying, speech, discourse, statement, report, account, explanation, reason, principle, esteem, reputation, collection, enumeration, ratio, proportion” (see Kahn's notes for Fragment I 29). However, there are many fragments which suggest to me that the word “*logos*” is Heraclitus' concept of the universal principle. Furthermore,
it is quite possible, given his masterful ability to play with puns and analogies and syntax, that Heraclitus chose *logos* as the name of his principle precisely because this word already denoted two oppositional processes: mathematical processes (collection, enumeration, ratio, and proportion) and human processes (saying, speech, discourse, statement, report, account, explanation, reason, principle, esteem, and reputation). The human processes denoted by *logos* further identify another opposition: the epistemological (saying, speech, discourse, statement, report, account, explanation, reason, principle) and the ethical (esteem, reputation). This indicates to me that Heraclitus was not only concerned with knowledge, but a standard by which to judge the goodness of knowledge. This reading implies that Heraclitus understands *logos* as a universal principle that explains two oppositions which identify each other by struggling with each other: the relationship between the human and the non-human worlds and the relationship between the thinking and the ethical processes in the human world.

There is evidence that Heraclitus indeed conceived of these dialectical relationships in other fragments in which he uses the term “*logos*.” In the first example from Kahn’s translations, it can be argued that Heraclitus uses *logos* to represent the universal principle of the non-human world: “Sea pours out <from earth>, and it measures up to the same amount (*logos*) it was before becoming earth” (47). Kahn chooses “amount,” what I am categorizing as a mathematical denotation, as his translation of “*logos*.” Kahn’s translation notes for this fragment explains the connotative
complexities of the fragment and suggests to me that Heraclitus here explains how *logos* is a universal principle of the non-human world (the ontological world of “what is”). Kahn loosely translates the verb, “*diacheetai*” as “pours out”; however, the verb denotes spreading apart or dissolving. This denotation evokes Anaximander’s notion of *apokrasis*, “separating out.” When Kahn translates *diacheetai* as “pouring out” the word connotes a force, but not a force that is simultaneously divisional. The more precise translation, then, “Sea spreads apart from earth” takes on a very Anaximandrean cast. In this sense, sea and earth are mutually identifying opposites that are in struggle with other. Kahn also explains that the more precise translation of the second part of the fragment is “and it measures up to the same amount (*logos*) as was there in the first place.” Although in his translation Kahn uses one of the multiple meanings of “*logos*” -- the mathematical concept, “amount,” -- it is just as possible to interpret the more precise translation as denoting a universal principle, rather than a quantity. The word “earth” appears in the first part, but does not appear in the second part of the fragment. An alternative translation of the entire fragment, then, would read: “Sea spreads apart from earth and it measures up to the same *logos* as was there in the first place.” In this revised translation, the first part is an example of *logos* as a concrete embodiment of the cosmic order that corresponds to Anaximander’s model of motion as *apokrasis*; the second part designates the name “*logos*” as the principle this particular example is obeying. Here, the presence of *logos* is being assigned to the non-human world. *Logos* runs through and determines
the shape of the non-human world.

In the next example, Heraclitus uses *logos* as the universal principle that also governs the human world: "You will not find out the limits of the *psyche* ("soul" in Kahn's translation) by going, even if you travel over every way, so deep is its *logos* ("report" in Kahn's translation)" (Fragment XXXV). Kahn's translation of *logos* here, "report," falls into the category I have designated as the epistemological human world. In this fragment, Heraclitus explains the relationship between a human phenomenon, the *psyche*, and the universal principle. If we try to find evidence that the *psyche*, a human phenomenon, has limits, we will not be successful because the *psyche* is so deep, it has no limits. Again, this statement evokes Anaximander's notion of *aperion*, "the boundless."

In this case, a human phenomenon, the *psyche* embodies the principle of the boundless in that it is without limits. But the word "*psyche,*" which Kahn translates as "soul," also connotes "life-breath," as Kahn points out in his translations notes (45). In this sense of the word, *psyche*, also evokes Anaximander's notion of the *pneuma*, the form of motion he associates with the opposition between coming into and out of being. Here, Heraclitus' depiction of the human phenomenon, the *psyche*, collapses Anaximander's principle (*aperion*, the boundless) and form of motion (*pneuma*, breathing in and out) into one universal principle, *logos*, that is, both a universal principle and an embodiment of that principle. *Logos* runs through and determines the human thinking.

Finally, in the following fragment, Heraclitus discusses *logos* as a relationship
between the epistemological and ethical aspects of the human world, Kahn's Fragment XXXVI: “It is wise, not listening to me but to the report (logos), to agree that all things are one” (43). Here, Heraclitus distinguishes between his own account (“listening to me”) and the “logos” to which one would be wise to listen to. The “report,” (Kahn’s translation of logos), therefore, is distinguished from his own human account, but at the same time, is the same as his account (thus knowable by humans, himself and the people he addresses). In this sense, the universal principle, logos, is knowable in the human world. There is also an ethical designation (“it is wise”) to the method of knowing that follows the logos implied by the word sophron. In his translation notes, Kahn notes that sophron is the Greek term meaning “sound thinking, good sense, moderation, self-restraint” (41) In this sense, sophron indicates that the thinker has a good character.

Phronesis, on the other hand, a close cognate that Heraclitus sometimes uses, has a more practical and immediate connotation in that its emphasis is upon acting with intelligence.

In sum, I find a clear distinction between Anaximander’s and Heraclitus’ universal principles. Anaximander’s principle (aperion) is both the governing universal principle and the elements which embody this principle. For Anaximander, the form of motion this principle takes, a cosmic breathing (pneuma) that separates out (apokrisis) the stuff of the kosmos and brings new forms of stuff back together again, differs from “the Boundless principle,” aperion. Heraclitus’ logos, in contrast, is both universal principle (that which makes all things the same because they are governed by the same principle)
and the rules of motion which, when followed, will allow men to know and speak the truth about things (logos as logical reasoning about things). Logos, in this sense, is a method as well as a principle. Through this method, humans can gain knowledge of the way everything is (both human and the non-human phenomena) by seeking out the measures of the oppositional aspects struggling in that phenomenon. Men are thinking well when they can identify the opposition and the measures of each aspect involved in the struggle, that is, when they realize that logos is ubiquitous and is one and the same for all. Furthermore, logos is the standard by which men’s thinking can be judged as either true or false.

In this sense, Heraclitus invented, but did not formulate, rules of logic that can generate unlimited statements of truth that can also be judged. As a logic, Heraclitus’s logos, had he mapped it, would look like this:

**Definition of Terms**

- X is any phenomenon
- A implies the total presence of A or “what is”
- A~ implies the total absence of A or “what is not”

**The Grammar of Heraclitus’s Logic**

- Because all X = A and A~
- X must contain some measure of A~
- and X must contain some measure of A;
Therefore, all X embody the mutual identity and struggle of opposites.

This logic, when applied to any concrete phenomenon, would only authorize essentializing statements or predications about a phenomenon that explain X as a process in constant flux: First, the thinker must identity the opposition in X (the A and the A~); Second, the thinker must determine the status of the struggle in X by investigating the measure of both A and A~.

In the following fragment (Kahn's LXXVIII) Heraclitus discusses the logic that is required in order to make true statements by pointing out the error of those who do not think according to this logic: "They do not comprehend how a thing agrees at variance with itself; it is an attunement turning back on itself, like that of the bow and the lyre" (65). Here, any "thing" agrees (homologiei, is one with, is homologos) with itself in a way that is at variance (differs from, quarrels with itself, or

\[ X \text{ (phenomenon)} = \]

A (a measure of what it is) and A~ (a measure of what it is not).

To have an identity X, the A aspect "what is" must turn back, in some measure, upon its opposite, A~, "what is not."

Throughout the fragments, there are many statements that follow this logic. For example, Heraclitus states that:

It is not better for human beings to get all they want. It is disease that makes health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest. (Kahn, Art and Thought 59)
Here, Heraclitus formulates an ethical statement regarding what is the better (kretton, more powerful, superior, preferable) way for man to understand his desires. It is better for men to know that his desires are neither one thing nor another (neither A nor A~), but a measure of each, that is, a measure of A (disease, hunger, weariness) and a measure of A~ (health, satiety, rest). The experience of desire is best understood by man if he sees at a unity and struggle of opposites. But this is often not seen by man:

Most men do not think things in the way they encounter them, nor do they recognize what they experience, but believe their own opinions. (29)

It would be anachronistic to understand this fragment, and others that refer to the five senses, as being concerned with the unreliability of perception. This question did not develop until a later period in Greek thinking. In his footnotes explaining the translation, Kahn explains that he has chosen the word “recognize” to stand in for Heraclitus’ ginoskousi, but also points out that ginoskousi implies knowledge of a recurrent theme, a meaning which is not implied in the English “recognize.” Also, he translates “heoutoisi dokeousi” as “believe their own opinions,” but Heraclitus’ phrase neither contains the verb “to believe” nor the noun “opinions”; rather Heraclitus’ phrase has the reflexive meaning “seem to themselves” (29). Finally, Kahn translates the verb, phroneousi, as “think” but explains that this particular verb for “think” primarily denotes good thinking that is carried over into practice. In the interest of trying to represent Heraclitus’ meaning then, I would translate the fragment as:
Most men do not think and act intelligently with what they encounter, nor do they grasp the common pattern in what they experience, but only grasp what their experience seems to be to themselves.

In this more precise translation, the pattern men encounter is *logos*, the unity and struggle of opposites in all things, but what men grasp and what men experience reveals that the *logos* can also be hidden from men. This point is made in a series of fragments that explain Heraclitus' discussion of the river. In fragments L and LI, Heraclitus points out that a river is not a single unity of water, even though it seems to men to be. Rather, in L he states: "As they step into the same river, other and still other waters flow upon them." The one river is many because it is constantly changing. In this way, the river follows the universal pattern that everything changes because of its internal contradiction (it is one, it is many). In this case, that contradiction is existential; it discusses what is. But, he says, a man's concept of the river is counter to its existential contradiction. In LI, Heraclitus offers us a number of contradictory motions that are at work in all substances that place them in a state of constant flux: "One cannot step into the same river twice, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs" (53). Although Heraclitus reveals that there is a conflict between two things: the river and man's thinking about the river, the conflict stems from man's erroneous experience as much as it is stems from the river's *phusis* (natural processes) which both reveals and hides. The concept of one river is revealed,
but so is its opposite, many rivers, which is hidden. The river itself is in a state of constant flux, exchange, and struggle, as is our thinking. The river is neither all scattered nor all gathered together; it is neither all formed nor all dissolved; it neither completely approaches nor completely departs. It is the struggle of coming to be scattered and going from being gathered. The river is absolutely oppositional within itself. Its internal reason for being is oppositional. But its particular form of oppositional struggle is constant reciprocity and interpenetration. This nature affects and is embodied in our thinking.

Men can think both ways: what seems obvious to themselves, (either A or A~), binary thinking in which opposites contain no measure of each other, or what they really encounter (a struggle between measures of A and A~). Heraclitus applies this logic to many everyday experiences in the life of the polis: religious, political, economic practices. This logic can be obtained and used by all people. And yet, “Although the logos is shared, most men live as though their thinking were a private possession” (Fragment III, 29).

In certainly the most unique direction taken in Ionian philosophy, Heraclitus explores the conflict between good and bad understanding through another opposition: the obvious and the hidden. He establishes that the hidden and the obvious are in themselves an opposition associated with phusis (nature’s processes). In fragment X, Heraclitus says, “Nature (phusis) loves to hide” (33). But phusis is only hidden from those “who
hear like the deaf,” or who are “absent while present” (fragment II 29). Men’s hearing contains both sounds and silences, but men who don’t understand the *logos* experience only silences. Men encounter *phusis* as both an absence and a presence, but men may experience any “mortal substance” only as an absence.

Understanding *phusis* requires a struggle between minds about many things: “Men who love wisdom must be good inquirers into many things” (fragment IX), “Let us not concur casually about the most important matters” (fragment XI 33), and, “He who does not expect will not find out the unexpected, for it (the unexpected, the hidden) is trackless and unexplored” (Fragment VII, 31) Heraclitus, therefore, does not blame human perception for the failures of human reasoning since nature, itself, “loves to hide.” Day seems to be distinct from night; music appears to be either consonant or dissonant: this is the experience of men, but men also have another experience which is contrary. A man’s understanding may be contradictory because nature itself is contradictory.

For Heraclitus opposition is permanent. Sometimes he explains the motion of the *logos* as the exchange of opposites; but at other times, *logos* is explained through the metaphor of strife (*eris*):

One must realize that war is shared and *Eris* is Justice, and that all things come to pass (and are ordained?) in accordance with *eris*. (Fragment LXXXII, 67, parenthetical question in original)

In Aristotelian terms, which are not the terms Heraclitus used, the “essence” of all things
is oppositional in that each thing is at war with itself. In this sense, essence is permanent impermanence, change, motion, and struggle. The principle cannot exist outside of the thing and the thing cannot exist outside of the principle. This logic, as a statement of universal truth, is always predicated, that is, embodied, and articulated as a statement about a temporary condition.

Anaximander's cosmos is dynamic; Heraclitus epistemology is just as dynamic. It bids men to seek out the hidden (the negative) and be confident that they can find it and to assume that man's thinking is a process of negating the obvious, (rest and unity) in order to discover the hidden attunement. Like Anaximander, Heraclitus aligned himself with the rational world. But unlike him, to borrow Jaspers' phrase, Heraclitus was extremely polemical (polemos, war). He disassociates himself from Hesiod, Homer, Pythagoras, Xenophanes (a student of Anaximander), and Hecataeus (see fragments XVIII - XXI, Kahn 37). In Fragment XXII, Heraclitus says that Homer was a man who was "deceived in the recognition of what is obvious" (Kahn 39). Heraclitus accuses Pythagoras of pursuing "a wisdom of his own" which he dispensed with "artful knavery" (Fragment XXV 39). In opposition to Pythagoras' knowledge of the world, which he identified as the divine and private knowledge of his sect, Heraclitus disdains the proliferation of the sects in the sixth century. In Fragments CXV to CXVII, Heraclitus accuses the mystery cults of defeating their own purpose of displaying piety to god by engaging in blood purification rituals and celebrations of the phallus (81). These practices
are the "perfumes" that "alter" the unity of god, naming gods of "night and day, winter
and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger," (that is, either the God of night or the
God of day, etc.) according to "the pleasure of each" cult (fragment CXXIII 85). Of
Hesiod, Heraclitus says, he "did not recognize day and night: they are one" (that is, a
unity of opposites) (Kahn 37). This is why "Hesiod counted some days as good, others
as bad, because he did not recognize that the nature of every day is one and the same,"
that is, both good and bad (fragment XX).

Kirk et al suggest that Heraclitus's animosity towards these renowned figures
indicates that he felt that they "pursued the wrong kind of knowledge" or merely
collected disparate and unrelated facts (188 n1). I read the aphorisms as Heraclitus's use
of the best rational philosophy known to him, that of Anaximander, in order to
understand why his world had fallen apart and why, if any man can gain understanding of
the world if he opens himself up to the universal logos, man also has the capacity to be
blind to logos. Aristotle reports him to have said:

Homer was wrong when he said, "Would that Eris (strife, conflict) might vanish
from among gods and men!" (Iliad XVIII.107). For there would be no attunement
without high and low notes nor any animals without male and female, both of
which are opposites. (Fragment LXXI, 67)

In the context of the Persian War, it is hard for me to read Heraclitus as a thinker who
promotes the relativity of all things and has abandoned a commitment to the rationalism.
His aphorisms show him to be a determined defender of the idea that humans are capable of thinking in accordance with the universal principle of all phenomena -- that all things are at war within themselves. His concern was epistemology and the standards of judgement to determine correct knowledge. *Logos* is not divinity itself; it is an embodied, divisional, struggle through motion that defies unity. "What is" is always in struggle with what is not. The path to understanding the world rationally, as it is, is through a process of finding the hidden by negating what is obvious, the positive.

As I am about to show, however, Parmenides, Heraclitus' foil, is a staunch positivist who rejects the idea that there is a "hidden" or that people should pursue knowledge by attempting to find the "hidden."

**Parmenides**

Parmenides is known as the first philosopher of being, a concept captured in his term *estin* ("what is"). He is seen as the central figure of what is called Eleatic philosophy, a philosophy named for the small village of Elea founded around 540 on the southwestern coast of Italy (Kirk et al 240). Elea itself holds an insignificant place in the archeological record. Most attention has been paid to Elea's more active neighbors, Poisidion to the north, Pompeii, just north of Poisidion, and Croton, one of the most significant sites on the Southeastern coast of Italy. Croton is located directly across the peninsula from Elea and was the refuge of Pythagoras who migrated there from Samos in order to avoid persecution by the tyrant, Polycrates. Parmenides was certainly affected
by the thinking of the Pythagoreans, followers of his socio-religious cult who spread across souther Italy during Parmenides’ time.

Elea was completely protected from land invasion by mountains. Were it not for the fact that a school of thought came to be associated with it, Elea would find no mention in many archeological texts at all. Dubabin, for example, muses in his single paragraph about Elea that its isolation from the rest of the world must have offered the Eleatics a peaceful place for contemplation. This can hardly be the case. Presocratic philosophy migrated from Ionia to Italy during the political *stasis* of the latter half of the sixth century, *stasis* brought about by aristocratic alliances and intrigues associated with the Persian invasions of the islands and coastal cities along of the eastern Aegean region. Philosophers, like all aristocrats, were all deeply involved and affected by the radical shifts in loyalties, alliances, and intrigues that had characterized their strata’s experiences since its earliest development in the Dark Age. Parmenides, unlike Pythagoras and Xenophanes who both migrated from the east, was born in *Magna Graecia* around 470 (Kirk et al), the Greek’s western colonial territory located in Sicily and southern Italy, and was most likely a member of one of the founding families of Elea, possibly the family of the *oikiste*.

He is almost always seen as the strongest voice against the Heraclitean idea of the permanence of flux and pervasiveness of polar opposition. He is known as the first philosopher to write a philosophy of *being* into the philosophical record. Unlike all
philosophers before him, what has been preserved *ipsissima verba* from Parmenides’ text, is over one hundred lines of nearly continuous verse, one quite difficult to interpret given that Parmenides, like Heraclitus before him, attempts to invent an entirely new paradigm.

Parmenides’ poem has been put together primarily from the texts of Sextus and Simplicius. The controversy over *ipsissima verba* among philologists is minimal regarding Parmenides’ poem because the nineteen fragments are widely accepted to have been handed down as copies of his original text, rather than written from memory. The poem is written in hexameter and its style, form, and themes follow the conventions of the Greek epic and religious traditions. The poem depicts a youth who is led on a journey to the divine realm. He rides in a chariot he has no control over: the mares are not attentive to him but to two maidens, “daughters of the Sun,” who lead him to “shining gates filled with huge doors, whose keys of retribution are held by much-avenging Justice.” Inside the gates, the youth meets the Goddess who tells him that “Fate” has taken him along the path of “Rightness and Justice,” and he must now:

> learn everything, both the unshaking temper of persuasive truth and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true trust. (159).

But he soon learns that there are three paths, only one of which is the human path. The goddess explains the two non-human paths as:

> the one, that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be, is the route of Persuasion (for she accompanies Truth); the other, that it is not and that it is right
for it not to be, this I point out to you as a completely uninformative track. For neither could you get to know what-is-not (for it cannot be accomplished) nor could you point it out. (Austin 159)

In this section, Scott Austin explains, Parmenides introduces a new opposition into the western philosophical record: the first, “that it is” (estin) is the concept of being; the second, “that it is not” (ouk estin) is the concept of nothingness. For the Goddess, being is all that is possible and is the route of persuasive truth because it is not possible for it not to be. Nothingness is not possible because it is not right for it not to be: nothingness can not be known (“neither could you get to know what-is-not”), realized (“for it cannot be accomplished”), nor spoken (“nor could you point it out”). In this regard, Parmenides invents the terms for ontological argumentation. Most importantly, Parmenides defines the two paths as absolute affirmation (“that it is”) and absolute negation (“that it is not”). The Goddess forbids the youth from inquiring into nothingness, and it becomes evident that “it is not and it is right for it not to be” is not the path taken by mortals:

    I bar you from this route of inquiry (nothingness), but also from the one on which mortals wander, knowing nothing, double-headed. (161)

Here, the Goddess reveals that mortals follow a third path. The youth, to whom the Goddess’ comments are addressed, now having been told of nothingness, is barred from pursuing that path of inquiry; but the path of nothingness only becomes an option to the youth because the Goddess has revealed it to him. As a human having never met the
Goddess, it is implied, the youth would have only had access to the third path, "the one on which mortals wander." Mortals, the goddess states, follow a third, "double-headed" path, which is neither the path of absolute being nor the path of absolute nothingness. We now have three paths, argue: the path of being (that it is), the path of nothingness (that it is not), and the path that humans take (that things both are and are not, exist and don’t exist). The human path, Austin points out, attempts "to mix the two routes" and for this is condemned by the Goddess (4). This path in some way resembles Heraclitus'; however, as I will show in the conclusion, the path of human opinion is defined by Parmenides as one in which mortals conceive of opposition as equivalent measure (relativity) not measures in flux (in dynamic struggle).

If mortals are to know the truth, they must follow the Goddess' path which, she claims, restricts itself to positive statements about "what-is" and denies the mortal to speak of "what-is-not," as she states in Fragment Six:

> It is fitting to say and to think this: that what-is is. For it can be, whereas nothing cannot. These things I bid you ponder. . . They [double-headed mortals] are tossed about, as much deaf as blind, an undiscerning horde, by whom to be and not to be are considered the same and not the same — and the route of all is backward-turning.

Austin explains that a significant contradiction in Parmenides' language becomes apparent. If Parmenides can only positively define being by placing it in opposition to
nothingness, how is it that he can claim that nothingness is not knowable, realizable, or articulatable? Furthermore, if humans err in their inquiry by mixing being and nothingness, how can they conceive of nothingness, if it is not? Austin suggests that the way to approach this conundrum is to analyze the three paths as logics, and to identify the grammar of each that Parmenides either authorizes or does not authorize.

It is precisely these kinds of form and content ambiguities in a language that skillful writers may turn into ironic or paradoxical word plays when they wish to draw attention to what they consider to be a new way of looking something. Parmenides text is a minefield of veridical and predicative ambiguities. Interpreting these ambiguities is inescapable for any Parmenides scholar. Some scholars have concluded that Parmenides is not attentive to these differences and his struggle for meaning resulted in the failure of confusion.

Many scholars have argued that in this fragment, Parmenides establishes a positivist ontology in which only positive, existential uses of the verb “to be” are authorized. For example, Barnes finds Parmenides’ use of “esti” (is) to be “felicitous(ly)” existential (161). Parmenides intends to say that “whatever we inquire into exists” and represents nothing less than “the starting-point” of “the possibility, not exactly of rational thought, but of scientific research” (163). Barnes view here is consistent with his reading of Heraclitus in that he sees these thinkers as precursors of Aristotle, thinkers who approach true rational thinking, but who were not able to discover and engage in true
rational thinking themselves. Other scholars, however, recognize that Parmenides is a logician in his own right; they argue that his poem establishes a logic in that it establishes rules through which positive predications can be made and judged. For example, Kirk et al argue, “Parmenides’ use of estin is simultaneously existential and predicative” and therefore is concerned with epistemological production as well as ontological truth. All epistemologies must be bound to a set of logical rules through which knowledge can be judged as true or false. Both of these views share the common idea that Parmenides is primarily concerned with de-authorizing statements of negation and contradiction.

Austin, however, argues that “[a]ny interpretation of Parmenides which says that the reason for his view was that he did not like negative predications or existence-assertions ought to be confronted first of all with the fact that Parmenidean discourse about Truth is full of precisely those predications and assertions” (15).

The language that Austin refers to is found in Fragment 8, a few passages from which I reproduce here. In this section, the goddess sets down a series of rules that the youth must follow when he speaks in order that he may follow “the route, ‘that it is’:

Along it there are very many signposts that what-is is ungenerable, and unperishing, a whole of a single kind, unmoving, and perfect. Nor was it, nor will it be, since it is now altogether one, cohesive. For what birth would you seek for it? Which way, from what did it grow? Nor will I allow you to say or think: out of what-is-not. For it cannot be said or thought that it is not. And what need
urged it on to grow later or earlier, starting from nothing? So it must either be completely or not at all. . . . Because of this, neither to come to be nor to perish did Justice allow, releasing her bonds, instead she holds. The decision in these matters lies in this: it is or it is not. For it has been decided, as it must, to leave the latter unthinkable and nameless . . . and to leave the former to be and to be true. . . . Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike. Nor is it here somewhat more, which might prevent it from cohering, nor somewhat less, but all of it is full of what-is. . . . For it is not lacking; what-is-not would lack everything. . . . The same thing is for thinking. . . . For without what-is, you will not find thinking. . . . Wherefore it has been named all things that mortals have established, persuaded that they were true: “to come to be” and “to perish”; “to be” and “not at all”; “change of place” and “exchange of bright color.” (163, 165)

In this passage, the Goddess sets out to offer an account of the true route, “that it is.” The logical rules she authorizes commands the thinker to make only positive statements. As Austin points out, however, it is hard not to notice that in order to describe this route, the Goddess makes statements almost entirely composed of “negative elenchus” (refutation), for example, her statement that the path of “what-is . . . is not lacking,” or the statement that “without what-is” you will not find thinking.” The Goddess, therefore, seems to be violating her own rules regarding the production of statement. The question that must be addressed, according the Austin, is this: Does the Goddess violate her own
laws of thinking and speaking by explaining “what is” in terms of “what it-is-not?”

Barnes, Taran, and Gallop take the position that Parmenides does not contradict himself because all of his statements are existential, that is, ontological assertions: They either state that “that which is” exists or that “that which is not” does not exist. Parmenides is not interested in working out a set of logic rules which men should follow if they want to make predications that are true; he is merely interested in distinguishing what is (true) from what is not (true). Because this intention is continued throughout the poem, Parmenides is not violating the goddess’ rule against thinking or saying negative predications about specific phenomenon. While this argument has the advantage of simplicity and economy, Austin argues, it fails to take into account that Parmenides’ poem is a carefully crafted argument, full of predications, and that he “designed his argument to show how being is by denying how it is not” (16).

Many scholars besides Austin have acknowledged that Parmenides attempts to make predications according to the logic of positivism; however, Austin points out, because Parmenides can only operate within the paradoxes of language, his use of negative predications illustrates the failure of his positivist logic. This critique, for example, is made by Plato and Aristotle: because Parmenides was blind to the distinction between the metalanguage of existential statements and the object-language of predication, his argument fails. Others, however, argue that Parmenides self-reverentially flaunts the paradox of negation in order to emphasize its untrustworthiness. For example, Kirk et al
argue that "Parmenides' use of estin is simultaneously existential and predicative. . . but not therefore. . . confused" (246). Parmenides, by this account, creates a coherent world view by skillfully overlaying the existential and the predicative denotations of the verb "to be," forcing the ambiguity to the surface so that his readers cannot overlook it.

Austin finds both arguments unconvincing; rather, he contends, "that the goddess's direct, assertoric negative language about being is not meant to be inconsistent merely on the grounds that it is negative" (18). Instead, Parmenides sets out to invent a logic according to which men must think and speak, a logic, in other words, that defines what rational thinking is and what the rules of argumentation are. He finds that Parmenides produces an intricate system of rules governing the formation of predications that do not contradict his prohibition on negative existential statements.

The key to this understanding lies in Parmenides' carefully wrought grammatical rules regarding the construction of negation in existential and predicative statements. Austin claims that Parmenides constructs negation differently depending upon whether he is making an existential statement or a predication. In existential statements, Parmenides only uses "esti" or "ouk esti," a grammatical construction in which the negative marker, ouk, is a part of the verb, esti. He only uses this construction when referring to the two paths, the true path of "what is" truth and the false path of "what is not." This does not violate the goddess' rules for thinking and speaking because she merely identifies what the paths are (ontologically) and then says that although the second path can be described, it
must not be spoken.

However, when Parmenides compares the true path with the many paths of mortal opinion, Austin asserts that the Goddess' grammar models the positive grammar she orders the youth to use. She does this, Austin argues, by never attaching the negative marker directly to the main verb; rather, in the series of predicated statements that explain how mortal thought and speech deviate from the true logic, the Goddess consistently constructs a grammar in which the negative marker is consistently formed by using an alpha privative\(^{17}\) or a negative modal. An example of the first negative formation, the alpha privatize, is found in the predicative statement, “there are very many signposts that what-is is ungenerable and unperishing, a whole of a single kind, unmoving, and perfect” (163). Parmenides uses alpha privatives to define what “what-is” is. The verb “is” in this statement does not violate the goddess's rule for correct grammatical logic because it is a positive formation (is, “estí”) not a negative formation (isn’t, “ouk estí”). The negation is not attached to the verb; it is attached to the predicated adjectives in the form of the alpha privatize, “ageneton (ungenerable), anolethron (unperishing), and atremes (unmoving)” (12).

The same grammatical positivism is achieved in the second way, through the use of negative modals. An example of modal negation in a predicative statement is the following: “Nor was it nor will it be, since it is now altogether one, cohesive.” In this case, Parmenides' uses “nor” (oude), a modal, to argue that “what-is” (being) has neither a
beginning (nor will it be, *oud' estai*) nor an end (nor was it, *oude pot'en*). Through the use of modals, therefore, the Goddess succeeds in using a grammar that does not violate her command to "keep your thought away from this route, "that it is not" (163). The Goddess indeed makes negative predications (negative *elenchus*) by using modals and alpha privatives in order to abide by her rule "to think and say what-is," but she is not violating her own rule. By modeling the kinds of statements that conform to her rule that commands speakers to think and speak "what-is," Austin argues, she allows statements that either affirm or negate, as long as the veridical or copulative verb states a positive, not a negative "existence assertion" (22). Therefore, Austin concludes, Parmenides text provides a grammar for logic, a universal rule for making true predications. This is significant, Austin states, not only to secure Parmenides' place in the history of philosophy as a serious thinker, rather than a confused thinker, but also to see why his thinking was taken so seriously by his contemporaries, including, Austin claims, some of the sophists, and Plato and Aristotle as well.

**Conclusion**

By the early fourth century, Plato and Aristotle formulated their theories of knowledge in the *Dialogues* and the *Organon* by inquiring into and polemizing about the logic of contradiction and non-contradiction. Both philosophers, attracted to the Eleatic view, determine that knowledge falls within reason when it follows the dialectic that resolves itself in a statement that discovers and represents the non-contradictory
essence of a phenomenon. As Edward Schiappa and many other scholars have pointed out, Plato’s theory of Forms and Aristotle’s Law of Non-Contradiction are derivative of Eleatic philosophy. These forms of rational inquiry drive the inquirer inexorably towards a form of resolution that favors the authority of what is already seemingly existent, dominant, and exigent. This form of rationalism, motivated by the teleological desire for a final cause, blinds itself from what it is excluding, particularly to knowledge which challenges or antagonistically opposes the statement of final cause. The desire that drives this form of rationalism is both ethical and ideological. Its ethic holds that thinking reflects the good when it produces a unitary account that is beyond challenge. This ethic, in turn, naturalizes the notion that knowledge that contradicts finality falls outside of the rational; the ethic, therefore, promotes an ideology, a closed system of belief impervious to challenge.

In contrast, rational inquiry that follows the Ionian view tended to lay dormant in the history of logic in the Western tradition until it vigorously reasserted itself in Hegel. Hegel was particularly impressed with Heraclitus’ theory that every “thing” exists in flux because within it, oppositional forces that mutually identify and struggle with each other define the essence of that thing and that humans understand the world well when they think according to this “logos.” Heraclitus suggested to Hegel that knowledge is inescapably a struggle between contradictory aspects, such as the interchangeability of universality and particularity of knowledge, and the interpenetration of “Notion” and
“Judgement” in statements claiming to produce knowledge. For example, Hegel critiques Aristotle's syllogism as a system of producing ideas that does not allow the inquirer to understand the living nature of the Notion, nor its formation as a "necessary standpoint" (Science of Logic 580). The Hegelian moment in philosophy, therefore, initiates a form of inquiry that abandons the Aristotelian method, and introduces a non-Aristotelian logical method (dialectic). At the same time, Hegel's dialectic is no less rational in that its goal is to establish universal rules of logic through which knowledge can be produced by uncovering the ontological essence of a phenomenon. The product of Hegel's dialectic, however, is particular and incomplete, contingent and finite (Phenomenology), unlike Aristotle’s which holds that the particular product of reasoning is absolute and final, being qua being (Metaphysics). The desire that drives Hegel's form of rationalism also has an ethical foundation. Its ethic holds that thinking is part of the good when it understands phenomena as subject to change because all phenomena exist in complex relationships with other phenomena.

Rational thinking based on this ethic has the potential to recognize its own ideological pitfalls in that it promotes suspicion of any closed system of belief impervious to challenge. When Aristotle bifurcated knowledge into the absolute and the probable, he understood them as a binary opposition in which each has a life of its own. He failed to understand the two concepts, the absolute and the probable, as a dialectical opposition, that is, as mutually identifying and in struggle. In the Hegelian dialectic all
knowledge necessarily represents the opposition of the absolute and the contingent, that is, all absolute claims remain in struggle with claims that pose another probability and all probabilities exist in struggle with absolutes. In this sense, a new probability can not appear if there is no absolute to which it is opposed. The appearance of new a concept of the probable necessarily reflects new material conditions that have also given rise to a new concept of the absolute. If this new opposition develops into a principle contradiction, it harbingers a potential challenge to currently held notions of absolute.

At the same time, Hegel sees all finite statements as partial truths that, nevertheless, lead to "Absolute Knowledge," which, in the final instant, never comes (Phenomenology). Marx, to whom I will turn in Chapter Five, challenges this idealism by accusing Hegel of violating his own dialectic (1848 Notebooks on Philosophy). In all of his treatises, Marx practices a Hegelian form of dialectic that fully matures by the time the first volume of Capital was published in 1867. Marx's dialectic allows for statements to be judged for their truth value; some statements, in Marx's scheme can be judged to be false, that is, so committed to a teleology of final, rather than contradictory determination, as to be an illicit, illogical, irrational determination.
CHAPTER FIVE:
DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF LOGOS

In the last two chapters, I have argued that the history of rational argumentation in Western philosophy and rhetoric has been primarily dominated by a dialectic wedded to the logic of non-contradiction. In Chapter Three I argued that although such scholars as Corbett follow the Aristotelian dialectic, which conceives of three types of knowledge production, the scientific, the philosophical, and the rhetorical, each type is determined by its desire for non-contradiction, a positivist dialectic. In Chapter Four, I argued that Heraclitus' dialectic conceives of one type of knowledge production, the *logos*, that is inscribed by its desire for contradiction. The Heraclitean dialectic has no need to bifurcate types of knowledge into two categories, the absolute and the probable. This dialectic privileges the negative in that it requires the thinker to look for the hidden opposition in all statements of the obvious. All knowledge, therefore, including knowledge that lays claim to universal truth, also contains the possibility of its undoing.

I have also argued that in spite of the two oppositional logics undergirding each model of dialectic (the logic of non-contradiction and the logic of contradiction), modern and contemporary rhetorics share the democratic assumption, an assumption bound to the ideology of "democracy hope," that rhetoric is a process of opening up. This open hand view, I argued, obscures rhetoric's coercive aspect and has influenced rhetoricians to
denigrate and delegitimize arguments that are openly coercive, rhetorics I have called antagonistic rhetorics. This delegitimization is particularly a problem because it tends to be applied to those sections of people who, because they are challenging the rationality of certain social configurations, appear to be speaking “a closed world” rhetoric.

In this chapter, I present a materialist dialectical method that is based on the logic of contradiction which avoids this pitfall because it was developed and has been practiced and further developed for the specific purpose of combatting oppression. Here, I am interested in recapturing the term “dialectical materialism” by revisiting Marx’s dialectical method and analyzing the dialectical method of Mao Tsetung, a figure who is routinely omitted in almost all of Western Marxist literature. I will argue that Mao’s Eastern critique of Western Marxism’s dialectical materialism offers rhetoricians a methodology that is an antidote to the Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction as well as a challenge to contemporary theory that shuns logos.

Dialectical Materialism and the Marxist Model of Political Economy

Marx’s theory of dialectic was never written out in the form of an organon. Understanding Marx’s dialectic, his method of reasoning, requires the reader to glean his principles from his analyses of phenomena. As David Harvey has pointed out, one discovers that for Marx,

[t]he dialectic is a process and not a thing and it is, furthermore, a process in which the Cartesian separations between mind and matter, between thought and
action, between consciousness and materiality, between theory and practice have no purchase . . . . The debate over what constitutes a “dialectical mode of argumentation” is, Ollman argues, a debate over how to abstract from the phenomena we encounter in everyday life. (48)

Rather than begin with the assumption that natural truth exists and that human knowledge is separated from the truth that lies within things, as Aristotle does, Marx assumes that it is pointless to discuss truth as any thing outside of human experience. In the German Ideology and the Theses on Feuerbach, Marx argues that truth itself is a human phenomenon; therefore, arguments over methods of knowledge production must consider how human beings become conscious about things and each other. Human beings become conscious through their active engagement in the world; they create themselves by creating their means of their survival. Dialectic is the process of analyzing the circumstances they find themselves in and changing them. In this way, nature and man define each other in that they are inextricably linked to each other.

Marx’s theory that knowledge is produced through a dialectical process of affirmation and negation follows Hegel’s notion, from the Phenomenology of the Spirit, that the struggle over “finite” knowledge is tied to man’s historical experience. However, Marx departs from Hegel’s notion of absolute knowledge). In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx states that man “duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates
himself in a world that he has created” (76). Although Hegel’s philosophy also suggests such a view, Hegel also argues that this process of affirmation and negation between nature and man is the source of his alienation. This alienation is overcome for Hegel by “the negation of the negation” through which, Marx states, the inextricable relationship between nature and man dissolves into pure abstraction, or in Hegel’s words, “the establishing of nature as the mind’s world — an establishing which at the same time, being reflection, is a presupposing of the world as independently existing nature” (quoted in Manuscripts 125). Alienation, for Hegel, is overcome at the moment of absolute knowledge.

This treatment of alienation, Marx argues, obscures the real source of alienation — the estrangement of man from the product of his labor that occurs when labor is driven by exploitative practices. The exploitation of labor turns his experiences into something that is:

external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not a home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a
need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. (74)

For Marx, the handling of nature, or “labour,” defines man as a species. It is in this sense, that man is able to “contemplate himself in a world he has created.” Man is alienated when property relations interfere with the constant unfolding of this process, severing the inextricable relationship between man and nature. Hegel’s absolute knowledge, in Marx’s view, celebrates the severing of man and nature by turning both into independently existing entities.

Marx’s break with Hegel over absolute knowledge led him away from the traditional subjects of philosophical polemics to the polemics over political economy. Knowledge of the state and the productive life of the society must begin by identifying the contradictions inherent in the particular subject of the inquiry. We cannot understand the whole unless we identify the oppositional forces at work in it and understand them as inextricably related. Ideas are always locked in mutual identity and struggle with the material conditions of human beings. In this dialectical relationship, material conditions primarily determine ideas because they set the historical limits of which ideas can be generated. Ideas may seem to dominate the material relationships between humans, for example, the ethical standards of equality, liberty, and fraternity may seem to dominate the bourgeois society, but this is an illusion (what has come to called an ideology) because all knowledge production must begin its inquiry from the “lives of real men.” If inequality is a staple of a certain society, that is, if one person’s political influence over policy
counts more than another's or one group of people have more control over the
distribution of wealth than other groups, it is not possible to argue "truthfully" or
"rationally" that the value of equality dominates that society. This materialist, dialectical
theory of knowledge production challenges Mouffe and Laclau's view of radical
democracy. By centering the struggle on the goal of gaining hegemony in the battle to
interpret the liberal values of democracy, Mouffe and Laclau separate the political from
its actual circulation in the political economy. Their non-dialectical process constitutes
what Marx calls "fighting against phrases" and is similar to the view of the Young
Hegelians who

forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other
phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world. . . . It has
not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of
German Philosophy with German reality, the relations of their criticism to their
own material surroundings. (German Ideology 41)

It is in the course of struggle over the conditions of life where ideas are formed.

The bourgeois revolution, as Marx pointed out in the Eighteenth Brumaire, was
fought by different classes, each propelled into struggle by complex and contradictory
processes. The arguments over freedom in that revolution served to suppress the
production of multiple knowledges and obfuscate the class interests at work. As Marx
points out in his analysis of the rhetoric of the French Constitution of 1848, the struggle
over the idea of liberty is a battle that will always be won in the political sphere by the class who dominates in the economic sphere. After he enumerates the "unrestricted liberties" guaranteed in the French constitution, "personal liberty, liberty of the press, of speech, of association, of education and religion," Marx explains:

For each of these liberties is proclaimed as the *absolute* right of the French *citoyen*, but always with the marginal note that it is unlimited so far as it is not limited by the "*equal rights of others* and the *public safety*" or by the "*laws*" which are intended to mediate just this harmony of the individual liberties with one another and with the public safety. For example, "The citizens have the right of association, of peaceful and unarmed assembly, of petition and of expressing their opinions, whether in the press or in any other way. *The enjoyment of these rights has no limit save the rights of others and the public safety.*" (Chapter II of the French Constitution, §8)... Later, these organic laws were brought into being by the friends of order and all those liberties related in such manner that the bourgeoisie in its *enjoyment* of them finds itself unhindered by the equal rights of the other classes. 29-30

Democratic constitutions, Marx argues, use abstractions such as "liberty" to obfuscate class antagonisms. The language of abstract ideas such as "liberty" is a mechanism through which the class that is privileged in the economic sphere will also control the interpretations of that abstract idea in laws that regulate which liberties are interfering
with whom. Thus, the material social relations between the classes becomes rationalized in the constitution and laws. In his Capital, Marx uses dialectical materialism to analyze the contradictions of bourgeois society. However, as stated above, he never wrote an organon in which his theory of knowledge is worked through. Mao Tse-tung, on the other hand, did write down his theory of dialectics, and it is to that theory I now turn.

Dialectics, the Maoist Model of Political Economy

At the time of the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s, as well as in his writings and speeches that served as an all too inadequate criticism of Stalin, Mao Tsetung explained that China's revolution against its “semi-feudal, semi-colonial” condition could not have been continued without a painstaking struggle among the tens of thousands of revolutionaries over theories of dialectics and the applications of those theories in the analysis of the “twists and turns” of the revolution (“Why Is It That Red Political Power Can Exist in China?”). Furthermore, in everyday, revolutionary practice, the cadre of the party must also teach dialectics to the populace engaged in the revolution with the party (“On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party”). These kinds of philosophical struggles among proponents of proletarian revolution often denigrated in treatments of the Chinese Revolution as endless polemics that disguise personal power plays among the Communist Party elites. This depiction requires a great deal of forgetfulness on the part of these critics. Bourgeois democratic states were only consolidated by means of the same kind of polemics which caused blood to flow throughout the development of every nation-state.
The different democratic systems that emerged from these struggles, Eric Hobsbawm, suggests, determined the ethical differences in the state structures in Europe once these states matured. The French Revolution may only be the most extreme of these bloody polemics; Hobsbawm argues, because this revolution, precisely because of its radical mission to destroy feudalism throughout Europe, marshalled the bourgeois strata in ways without which the thorough dedication of the Western states to liberal politics and markets could not have been established.

The first set of polemics over the shape of dialectical analysis and argument occurred in the 1930's during the stage of China's revolution defined by the war against Japanese imperialism. During this period, Mao wrote two of his most recognized works on philosophy, "On Practice" and "On Contradiction." Throughout these texts, as well as in other writings from the same period, Mao explains how philosophy was used to deal with the class contradictions between the various sections of the Chinese people and imperialism, as well as contradictions among the Chinese people. I will now offer a detailed reading of "On Contradiction."

Mao explains that the backdrop of this text is the struggle in the 1930s over the course of the Chinese Revolution. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, by then directed by Mao, determined that they needed to deploy their troops to fight the Japanese, and limit attacks on feudal lords, concentrating primarily on those who colluded with the Japanese. Unless the Japanese were routed from China, Mao argued in the
Central Committee, the revolution had no chance of winning ("On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism"). The Central Committee also determined that this effort to rout the Japanese from China required the Communist Party to form a temporary alliance with the Kuomintang Party, headed by Chiang Kai-shek ("A Statement on Chiang.Kai-shek’s Statement"). Red Army brigades were ordered to join forces or at least make truces with Chiang’s armies. These policies threatened to alienate the Party’s cadre and supporters. The Communists had gained support among the peasantry particularly because of its policy to focus the revolution around freeing the peasants through the armed seizure of land from the landlords ("The Struggle in the Chingkang Mountains"). It was highly likely that large numbers of the peasants, who during the thirties had begun to very enthusiastically wage war against the owners of estates to which they were bound, may not support the Party’s change in war fighting strategy. The directive to join forces with the Kuomintang also threatened the internal cohesion with the Party itself because in the 1920s, Chiang had led a number of massacres against Communist led working class movements in Shanghai (Shram 99-103). Mao saw that the struggle over philosophy was an integral part of winning over cadre and peasants to uniting against Japan. This meant a struggle over dialectics, the methodology that had come to define proletarian philosophy.

While "On Contradiction" is a polemic against the Soviet philosopher, Deborin, in light of much later works in which Mao discusses the history of the revolution, "On Contradiction" should also be read as a polemic against the Comintern and the political
orientation of Stalin which guided it. During the thirties, Stalin’s bloody polemics
targeted those who understood the process of revolution and socialism in terms
differently from himself. Stalin correctly foresaw a second world war on the horizon and
also correctly predicted that the imperialist states, while warring against each other,
would also conspire to destroy the USSR. The staggering differentials in war dead
between the Soviet theater and all the other nations combined attests to the efficacy of
Stalin’s understanding. Large numbers of Russian communists and supporters of
socialism agreed with this assessment, but differed with Stalin over the way the USSR
should prepare for the coming assault. Stalin’s program had two focuses: first, the entire
country should be geared to the production of weapons and the strengthening of industrial
production in general; and, second, every other Communist Party throughout the world
must subordinate the interests of their revolutions to the needs of the Soviet Revolution.
In the countryside, the peasantry were effectively milked dry under Stalin’s policy (Peck
8-18).

These policies resulted in the executions of those who opposed Stalin, of course,
but they also dashed any hope that the industrial workers or peasants would ever become
active agents in deciding the constitution of Soviet of society. As Miklós Haraszti has
argued in “A Worker in a Worker’s State,” Stalin enforced a culture that deepened the
division of mental and manual labor. This culture was extended into his native Hungary
following World War II where he joined a movement against it that was inspired by the
Chinese Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. The contradiction between mental and manual labor that Marx considered to be key to alienation of the working class and the most pernicious (*German Ideology* 51), Haraszri suggests, allows for the notion that the Party has sovereignty over the people because knowledge is concentrated there.¹⁸

This culture insured that any movement among proletarians to destroy capitalism such as fighting against the commodification of their labor power or breaking down the division between mental and manual labor was crushed. Extreme opposition to Stalin's policy, therefore, spread throughout the USSR. Abroad, however, most of the Communist Parties agreed to subordinate their own revolutionary aspirations to the dictates coming from the Comintern. Once Mao became the Chairman of the Central Committee, China became one of the few communist revolutionary movements to disobey the Comintern's directives (Shram 146-189). As stated above, Mao decided that the philosophical struggle over dialectical reasoning needed to be waged because the cadre and the populace had to reason through, analyze, and argue over the course of the Chinese Revolution.

"On Contradiction" is a work produced for the same purposes as Aristotle's *Organon*; it is a treatise on logic and a presentation of a method of producing knowledge and determining the truth value of that knowledge. As I present the precepts of his dialectics, I will also contrast them to Aristotelian precepts as well as Marx's thinking on various questions regarding method.
The first precept of Mao's treatise on dialectics, "the universality of contradiction" has a primarily ontological character. All things exist as a process, a coming in and out of being, and this process is marked from the beginning to the end of the existence of a thing by the struggle of the oppositional forces internal to it. Thus, the universality of contradiction means that nothing escapes having a contradictory nature, essence, or cause. This precept restates Heraclitus' construction of *logos*; it is the universal principle that all \( X = A + A \) governs the motion of all things. The Maoist ontological notion of cause differs from Aristotle's ontological principle of *telos* in which final or fundamental cause can only be established at the moment that the non-contradictory essence of a thing has been reached, as he lays it out in the *Metaphysics*:

[T]he same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect; we must presuppose, in face of any dialectical objections, any further qualifications which might be added. . . . If it is impossible that contrary attributes should belong at the same time to the same subject . . . and if an opinion which contradicts another is contrary to it, obviously it is impossible for the same man and at the same time to believe the same thing to be and not to be; for if a man were mistaken in this point he would have contrary opinions at the same time. It is for this reason that all who are carrying out a demonstration refer it to this as an ultimate belief; for this is naturally the starting-point even for all the other axioms. (1588)
For Aristotle, cause must be universal and unitary, both ontologically and epistemologically: as to discovering the ontological cause of the thing itself, the moment of truth is reached when our statements about that thing no longer contain "contrary attributes"; as to epistemological demonstration (or argument) about a thing, one must begin or "refer" to a non-contradictory or "ultimate belief" as the natural "starting point" for generating new knowledge. This statement is universal in that it is always able to provide the foundation from which other knowledge, or predications, may be discovered. The statement is unitary in that it cannot be contradicted.

For Mao, on the other hand, knowledge of things can only be generated if statements made about them recognize their contradictory essence and their temporality or historicity. Unitary statements are unauthorized in Maoist dialectics. Any existential statement of "what is," must include "what is not." War, Mao explains, cannot be identified as only defensive because to do so would exclude the non-defensive or offensive aspect of war (Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War”). The foundation of our knowledge about war, in other words, a complex process, must be articulated in terms of the multiple contradictions it contains: "offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat" (93). As a theory of knowledge and knowledge production, Maoist dialectics would not authorize statements by any military that weapons, such as those being designed for the U.S.'s Strategic Defense Initiative, are only defensive. By the same token, this dialectic would also not authorize the claim of the Black Panther Party that it
armed itself for only "self-defense."

Before moving on to Mao's second principle of dialectics, I want to point out a serious problem in Mao's theory that reflects his failure to break with non-dialectical thinking. Mao's writings on dialectics are highly influenced by Lenin's essay "On the Question of Dialects" in which Lenin relies upon the two works by Engels, *Anti-Dühring* and the *Dialectics of Nature*, works that many Marxists, including myself, consider to attribute to Marx a mechanical, dialectical method which, in my estimation, is only occasionally evident in Marx's writing, but does not dominate it. Often quoting from Lenin's notebooks on philosophy in which Lenin frequently relies upon Engels, Mao tends to discuss certain oppositions, such as man and nature, or matter and consciousness, non-dialectically, that is, as binary opposites. If conscious man and unconscious nature form a dialectical opposition, according to the rules of dialectics, it would be impossible to consider the two as having separate existences. Without the presence of conscious man, in other words, unconscious nature would not exist. The distinction between man and nature and the problems of resolving that distinction has been at the heart of Western theories of knowledge since such inquiry began. It has asserted itself as a relational question from which a broad range of ontological and epistemological theory has developed. Mao tends to follow Engels rather than Marx in his view of this particular dialectic. He tends to discuss conscious man and unconscious nature as if each could exist without the presence of the other. Marx, on the other hand,
confines his investigation to the interpenetration, the mutual identity and struggle, of man and nature in which at no time does the one exist without the other. The identification of this opposition, Marx suggests, comes out of philosophy’s historical concern for the “reality” or “unreality” of man’s knowledge: this concern is “purely scholastic” for Marx (“Theses on Feuerbach” 121).

Mao’s second precept, the “particularity of contradiction,” explains the myriad forms of motion that distinct processes take. If the universality of contradiction explains the contradictory foundation of all existence, the particularity of contradiction explains the qualitative (or essential) differences between one phenomenon and another. The universality of contradiction, in other words, exists only in particular forms; these particular forms define the particular aspects in any single contradiction as well as the many particular contradictions at work in a complex process. Furthermore, universality and particularity themselves form a contradiction for epistemology or “processes of cognition” (97). For example, what is particular in one context, may be universal in other; accordingly, we may proceed with an inquiry by going from the universal to the particular or the particular to the universal. But, Mao warns, to engage in one process of investigation without then returning to the other will end dialectical inquiry and lead to dogmatic, or one-sided thinking.

For Mao, unless we understand the particularity of contradiction, we will not be able to act as historical agents in ways that resolve contradictions. One example that Mao
offers, regards the particularity of contradiction in the Chinese Revolution. During the
1920s, some members of the Communist Party of China, following the Comintern, argued
that the cadre should confine their revolutionary work to the city because the particular
contradiction of China's revolution was the struggle of its industrial working class against
imperialism. Mao rejected this view as dogmatically following the path of the revolution
in the western industrialized countries. He posed that there were many particular
contradictory processes at work in China, and that each process must be attended to. In
1926-27 in two political analyses, "An Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan"
and "An Analysis of Classes in China," he argued that imperialism had not only changed
China into a colonized country that subjected the forces of industrial production to the
interests of the western powers, but that imperialism had also changed the feudal, social
relations of the country. The contradiction between the peasants and the feudal landlords
had been exacerbated by imperialism, old class relationships had become less stable as a
result of China's colonial status, and this instability was asserting itself in the increasingly
resistant activity of the peasants. Therefore, Mao argued, the revolutionaries needed to
pay attention to bringing the peasants into the revolutionary war. In other words, it is
incorrect to think of peasants solely in terms of their class contradiction with landlords.
The universal contradiction between imperialism and China must continually be
reassessed by investigating the particularity of the new contradictions produced by
China's colonized conditions. Once this view of the contradictions of Chinese society
was embraced, large numbers of peasants joined the revolution, as Mao anticipated. Mao explains, in his typical style of the understatement, that “[t]he principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe” (99). As Mao later wrote in his critiques of Stalin’s understanding of political economy: “It is not concerned with people; it considers things, not people. . . . Stalin’s point of view in his last letter is altogether wrong. The basic error is mistrust of the peasants” (Critique 135).

The third precept of dialectics, Mao states, is that throughout the entire life of a contradiction, oppositional aspects are in constant flux. Therefore, at any given moment, one aspect of a contradiction will be principle over the other, reminiscent of Heraclitus’ notion of measure as struggle, as well as his example of the river. Contradictions, Mao states, may appear at certain times to be at rest, but they are only seemingly at rest. This is because all contradictions exist, according to the fourth precept of Maoist dialectics, in both unity (the aspects mutually identify each other) and struggle (one aspect must principle over the other). These same precepts hold true for the large numbers of contradictions that assert themselves in any complex process. At any given time, one contradiction will be principle over the others. In the overall motion of things, however, contradictions or aspects of contradictions are always subject to changing power relationships.

These precepts of Maoist dialectics allowed Mao to overturn a prevalent belief in
twentieth century Western Marxism that socialism could not be reversed. In 1962, in a speech delivered to the leading bodies of the Communist Party, Mao redefined socialism as the contradiction between “the socialist road and the capitalist road” because in socialism, “there are still classes, class struggle, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration” (quoted in Avakian 117). He went on to say that if party cadre continued to fail to distinguish “between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people . . . . a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place.” First, Mao’s understanding that contradiction is universal undergirded his argument that socialism is not only a period in which class contradictions gradually die out, but also a period in which class contradictions struggle to remain alive. The particularities of how this universal contradiction are articulated are numerous and pervade all of economic, political, and cultural life. One of the problems with Stalin’s leadership that led to the restoration of capitalism there, Mao argued, was to one-sidedly attend to economics and not to politics. In his campaign prior to World War II to increase production, the output, the products themselves, was primary over the people who produced them. For Mao, people and their conscious participation in the movement of society must be primary over economic development in order to keep socialist relations primary over capitalist relations. In this regard, Mao brought back a very basic idea from Marx into Marxist revolutionary practice that had disappeared in the Soviet Union, the need to combat the alienation in capitalist commodity production in which the worker can
no longer see himself or herself in the product of his or her labor. It is only when this labor is recognized that workers will see themselves as the makers of history, that is, as a dynamic force for changing the capitalist ways of doing things.

Mao's final precept of dialectics is that there are two forms of struggle between opposite aspects of a contradiction: antagonistic and non-antagonistic. Although all the previous precepts can be found in Marx, indeed, they can be found in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, albeit using a different philosophical vocabulary, Mao's understanding of antagonism is the most developed in all the treatises on dialectics written in the Marxist tradition. Most contradictions are not antagonistic, that is, the mutual exclusivity that identifies the opposition in a contradiction never reaches the point which necessitates the absolute transformation of the contradiction through mutual destruction. In fact, Mao states, a contradiction only requires antagonistic struggle at certain moments during the course of its existence. Therefore, it would not be good materialist dialectical analysis, according to Mao's principles, to refer to a contradiction as antagonistic until the form of struggle of the opposition reaches that moment. While this notion is evident in some of Marx's and Lenin's analyses, this particular precept of dialectics is never consistently followed in any previous works on dialectics that I know of. In *The Communist Manifesto*, it may have been correct of Marx to refer to the social antagonisms of 1848 as antagonistic. Marx was speaking in the midst of one of Europe's most vibrant moments of class struggle. However, Mao's precept would not authorize the statement that the
contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class is, in and of itself, antagonistic. Antagonism, as a form of motion, only develops during the life of a contradiction.

This understanding of antagonism would have taken the left in Western countries a long way in dealing with the obvious fact that the contradiction between many sections of the industrial working class and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist core had become primarily non-antagonistic throughout many periods of the twentieth century, as indeed, Lenin and Gramsci pointed out (The State and Revolution, "Americanism and Fordism"). During the Great Depression, these contradiction again became antagonistic, just as the contradiction between the black working class and the U.S. Government became antagonistic in the post World War II period. Although some Marxists recognized that a new antagonism between colonized people and imperialist countries had asserted itself after World War II with a ferocity not previously seen, the policies of most Communist Parties in the industrial countries did not focus their attention on this new antagonism. The popular uprising against the war against the Vietnamese people, itself an indication of the antagonistic nature of the contradiction between imperialism and the neo-colonies, took the majority of Stalinist parties by surprise.

The effects of Stalinism and the refusal of most of the left in the West to criticize Soviet state capitalism can be explained, partially at least, by their failure to participate in the struggle over theories of knowledge. Instead, "correct" knowledge had become so
identified with the state, and worse, with the individual leaders of the state (in this regard, China had serious problems), the pernicious division of mental and manual labor was not being combatted at any level.
EPILOGUE:

LESSONS FOR OUR FIELD

I am proposing that rhetoricians who want to promote ways of analyzing antagonistic arguments made by oppressed people would do well to consider Mao's dialectics. His logical method of analysis and argument follows the dialectical method that Marx used to critique political economy. I have also proposed that materialist dialectics is tied to rationalism in that it binds itself to a set of logical principles according to which human agents must adhere to interpret the world well or effectively. But this rationalism is distinct from the Aristotelian form of rationalism in that human reason is seen, at least by Marx and Mao, as always contradictory, inherently in flux because all inquiry, not just philosophical and rhetorical dialectic, proceed through the struggle of oppositional aspects. These processes are historically contingent on the material and social conditions in which human knowledges are produced. Determinations made along the way can correctly or incorrectly assess the measure of the struggle between the oppositional aspects of the phenomenon under consideration.

Most importantly, however, is that the ethics and purpose that drives dialectical materialism also drives its commitment to rationalism. Materialist dialectics was not only proposed by Marx in his critique of Hegel in order to find a logic through which historically sound knowledge of the world could be produced; also, Marx criticized Hegelian dialectics because its idealist tendency allowed for a patience with exploitative
practices that Marx did not share. For Marx, if reasoning and knowledge making could not address the social need to do away with exploitation and human degradation, particularly at a time when the material forces of production suggested such a possibility, it lacked efficacy. In this sense, materialist dialectics is an interested rationalism grounded in the view that human history proceeds through the struggle both to impose and oppose exploitation. Materialist dialectics is a form of knowledge making, therefore, that serves the particular circumstances of exploited people. It is a universal set of logical precepts for those who conceive of historical purpose as a struggle against exploitation. It conceives of itself as both interested and true. In this view, those who do not recognize the universality of contradiction and the antagonistic form of motion do not see history both as it is (a process of struggle against exploitation) and as it should be (driven forward by an ethic that values the struggles of exploited people). The failure to seek out historical contradictions results in thinking that is incomplete or undialectical, and therefore, inevitably skewed by false logical premises. In Marxist scholarship, such knowledge is broadly referred to as ideology. Furthermore, the undialectical thinking that produces ideology is ethically suspect in that its purpose is not to struggle against exploitation, but rather, to accommodate exploitation.

Materialist dialectic offers a method of rational inquiry, analysis, proof, and argument that challenges the rationalizing logic in Aristotle's dialectics that is just as politically motivated as the Marxist/Maoist dialectic. Aristotelian dialectics suits a
society that can tolerate a certain amount of dissent, but in no way tolerates arguments that expose the contradictions most essential to the logic of the political economy. Aristotelian dialectics well suits democracy when democracy is defined through the binary which allows the political to be conceived of as having a separate life from the economic. Unlike much contemporary postmodernist and post-structuralist theory, dialectical materialism refuses to give up logos. Rather, it offers a different model of the rational which allows for inquiry, legitimizes the knowledges of the oppressed, and provides a method for making both antagonistic and non-antagonistic arguments.
METHODS OF READING THE PERSOCRATICS

Scholars have provided translations and critical commentary of ancient texts through the disciplinary regimes of philology. Philological scholars analyze the linguistic conventions of these texts to determine the authenticity of authorship, date, and meaning. Through comparative analyses of texts, philologists make claims about what a word or sentence would have meant at the time in which it was produced, what the purpose of the text might have been, and whether the text is ipsissima verba, that is, whether the historical figure to whom it is attributed could have actually written or said those words. This kind of philological work allows interpreters of ancient texts to determine whether a certain meaning we may ascribe to an author is anachronistic.

With the rhetorical or cultural turn in contemporary theory, however, some of the underlying assumptions of the philological method have been problematized. Scholars such as Earnest Cassiere, Claude Levi-Strauss, Eric Havelock, and Walter Ong, have enriched our understanding of how to read ancient texts by investigating the epistemological and/or psychological affects of the transition from oral (mythic-poetic) culture to the literate (scientific-rational) culture in ancient Greece (Johansen 11-19, Prier 1-26, Schiappa 20-38). According to these views, interpretations of ancient Greek texts must move beyond purely linguistic and philological concerns by taking into consideration how either an archaic or classical Greek worldview also affects
sociologically constructed meaning (Bryant 120-25). Given the limitations of orality, mytho-poetic culture utilizes the rapsodic genres of poetry, drama, and aphorism which function mimetically allowing cultural memory to be passed down from one generation to another. The return of writing in ninth century Greece, on the other hand, allows for the slow development of prose, a form that supports the breaking up of thoughts into hierarchical relationships and the insertion of new material into a text. Therefore, oral texts are characterized by parataxical structures (juxtapositioning of thoughts) as opposed to the hypotaxical structures (subordination of thoughts) found in written texts. Given these cultural and structural differences, Prier has argued that the mytho-poetic mind conceptualizes through the logic of *agon* (a contest), a method of finding oppositional pairs which account for the existence of each other (the identity of opposites) while the classical mind conceptualizes teleologically (9-11). Bryant adds that there is also a socio-political aspect to the agonal underpinnings of Greek logics. These logics are formed through the experience of the aristocracy following the destruction of the Mycanean palaces around 1200 BC. In his view, because *agon* is an aristocratic virtue tied to warfare, it pervades the regimes of thought throughout the history of ancient Greece given the dominant role of military regimes in this history. These views indicate that the interpretation of ancient texts requires an understanding of the epistemes at work in them and have added a hermeneutical richness that the philological approach lacks.

A challenge to both of these approaches comes from Catherine Osborne in her
influential study, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy*. Osborne objects to the idea that any ancient text can be read outside of the doxology in which we find it. As Osborne explains: “A large proportion of the works of the Presocratic philosophers is lost. We are left with a rag-bag. To fill this rag-bag scholars have proceeded to extract ‘fragments’ from the quotations of later writers” (*Rethinking* 1). She explains that the collection that results from this kind of extraction presents the problem that the context and purpose of “the later writers” (from the fifth century B.C. to the sixth century A.D.) who cite a presocratic thinker will vary from the presocratic’s original context and purpose, and thus, significantly change the meaning. She also challenges the practice of many contemporary translators who put the fragments collected from scattered places into some kind of coherent order. This ordering of the fragments further imposes meaning on them. As an antidote, she proposes a method of interpretation in which the “embedded texts” of the presocratic thinker are analyzed in the context of the project of the writer who cites him.

By way of example, Osborne offers us a reading of Heraclitus’ sayings that appear in *Refutatio*, a text that was written by Hippolytus’ to make a case against Callistus, the head of the Roman church. She examines Hippolytus’ interpretation of Heraclitus by considering Hippolytus’s purpose first. Hippolytus wanted to expose Callistus’ indifference to the distinction between good and evil. In his argument, Hippolytus constructs Heraclitus as a philosopher who is disinterested in distinguishing
good from evil. Osborne hopes that a comparative study of how later writers interpreted Heraclitus for their own purposes may open up new ways of understanding Heraclitus’ own meaning. This method is particularly important in the case of Heraclitus, she argues, because, unlike some other presocratics, there are no sources other than the doxology (“Heraclitus” 88-89). Once Osborne uncovers the way Heraclitus is cast by Hippolytus as disinterested in questions of good and evil, she is able to find meanings in his texts that defy that view.

Joel Wilcox, however, points out that Osborne’s method, which “promises to have a considerable influence on presocratic studies” (14), is too extreme in its assertion that “text and interpretation cannot be distinguished” (15). Wilcox contends that it is possible to look at the fragments themselves to discern Heraclitus’ thinking and the influence of others on Heraclitus because some of the citations of Heraclitus can be philologically proven as ipsissima verba. He argues that Heraclitus’ fragments are early attempts at epistemology, and this can be discerned by examining the fragments themselves. Wilcox’s critique of Osborne’s method also points out that it allows too much room for speculative inventions rather than close and historically contextualized readings. By reading the fragments primarily in the context of their appropriated meanings, Osborne places the material and historical realities of the philosophers’ lives in a subordinate position. Wilcox’s argument is compelling. One of Osborne’s claims in the article I cited above, that Heraclitus argued for a democratic rhetoric, I find to be a
speculation for which there is no textual evidence.

Most contemporary historians of ancient texts, including Osborne, actually employ a number of hermeneutical methods. Schiappa's study of Protagoras, for example, uses the techniques of philology to argue that the Protagorean fragments represent his "response to influential writers and thinkers of his time" (Protagoras and Logos 21), particularly Heraclitus. In this way, he looks at Protagoras as someone who both interprets and appropriates previous thinkers as well as someone whose words are appropriated by subsequent thinkers. This investigation leads him to conclude that Protagoras represents a transitional way of thinking in the shift from oral to literate (mythos to logos) culture, and the importance of this context in the interpretation of the fragments. For Schiappa, Heraclitus is what Aristotle called a physician, a natural philosopher who does not concern himself with the human condition. Protagoras, in Schiappa's view, applies Heraclitus' logic of oppositional natural forces, a logic still bound to mytho-poetic language, to the human world of politics, a ground-breaking moment in the history of philosophy and rhetoric in that Protagoras is the first philosopher to apply logical principles to human knowledge. Importantly, for Schiappa, democratic Periclean Athens provides the historical socio-political context for Protagoras' innovations. In the case of Protagoras, Schiappa recognizes the pitfalls of imposing the modern categories of mytho-poetic and rational thinking onto the sophists who did not theorize these categories themselves; nevertheless, he stresses "the importance of growing
literate habits during the fifth century” as an unavoidable context in which to read Protagoras (30). He also interprets the Protagorean fragments by taking into account Osborne’s concern for understanding how later writers interpreted the fragments. For example, Plato and Aristotle cited Protagoras in order to prove him guilty of ethical and metaphysical relativity. Schiappa argues that Plato’s and Aristotle’s readings of Protagoras distort the contribution Protagoras made to ancient Greek thought.

In the same vein, Schiappa argues that the fragments preserved from Gorgias’ teachings on philosophy should be seen as complex engagements with the philosophy of Parmenides. For Schiappa, therefore, Socratic philosophy was produced in the rich, two century-long tradition of the presocratic inquiry that preceded them (21). Schiappa’s approach is typical of the multiple methods utilized in writing the history of ideas. The history of ideas involves historically locating a thinker’s ideas by identifying who and what influenced him or her and how that thinker influenced others. There is a rich body of this kind of work in the history of the presocratic philosophers. According to Kirk, Raven and Schofield, the presocratic thinkers were influential for about one-thousand years, having been cited as expert theorists by scholars from the Classical to the Early Christian periods. References to their ideas do not diminish until after Simplicius, who lived in sixth century A.D. Interest in the Presocratics was again revived, Gadamer argues, in the eighteenth century as a result of the Romantics’ “preoccupation with original texts.” By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hegel initiated the
"philosophical dialogue with the Presocratics" that vigorously, and for Gadamer, lamentably continues up until today (Gadamer 11).

Charles Kahn's three separate histories of Anaximander, Heraclitus and Pythagoras are written as histories of ideas. Kahn considers Anaximander of Miletus to be the first great natural philosopher. He denies the title, therefore, to Thales who preceded him and to Anaximenes who followed him. Anaximander originates philosophy because he is the first to explain the cosmic order from his empirical observation of phusis, a term often translated as "nature" but, Kahn argues, is better understood in presocratic usage as "natural development" or "growth" (Anaximander 75). Although his predecessor, Thales, was also interested in the laws governing phusis, there is no evidence that he ever produced a rational system; this is Anaximander's contribution to philosophy. Furthermore, Kahn argues, there is quite a bit of evidence in the doxological record that Anaximenes, was merely reproducing Anaximander’s model of a rational universe, not inventing it, even though the body of doxology for Anaximander pales in comparison to that of Anaximenes. Kahn argues that Anaximander’s rational break with the popular tradition in the early sixth century created "a highly cultivated milieu of philosophical discussion" (3). The notion of phusis, Kahn explains, "of which there is hardly any trace in the older Greek literature, is taken for granted by both Heraclitus and Parmenides," whose thinking had clearly become habituated to the laws of the cosmos espoused by the Anaximander. Philosophy quickly moved towards the creation of the
Heraclitean and Parmenidean metaphysical paradigms precisely because Anaximander's notion of cosmic law powerfully suggested such a move.

Kahn's view of Heraclitus differs from Schiappa's in that Schiappa holds that Heraclitus is a natural philosopher, not the first metaphysician, as Kahn claims. Like Kahn however, Schiappa states that sociological and political context should also be considered when reconstructing a history of ideas. For example, according to Schiappa, Protagoras' affiliation with the court of Pericles' and the historical placement of that court between two significant conflicts, the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, should be seen as having influenced Protagorean thinking. This socio-political view is shared by Kahn who argues that the cosmological theories of the natural philosophers, Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes are rooted in the practices of the sailor-merchants and soldiers who struggled to understand astronomy and meteorology for navigational purposes. In Kahn's view, there had to have been a large body of popular and practical knowledges circulating in the public sphere out of which philosophy developed.

Although both Schiappa and Kahn mention the sociological approach to interpreting ancient texts, neither pursue it at any length. Indeed, in my review of the literature, I have found very few attempts at writing a sociological history of the ideas of the presocratic philosophers. David Degrood, a Dutch scholar, provides a brief sociological reading Heraclitean logic in his 1969 series, *Dialectics and Revolution*. Edwin L. Minar wrote a sociological study of Pythagoras and his followers. But the brief
attempts at this kind of analysis are few and far between. By the time we reach the
Socratics, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, however, we are more likely to encounter
sociological treatments of the history of philosophy and rhetoric. Bryant’s history of
Ancient Greek moral codes, for example, includes reviews of a number of sociological
critical histories of Plato and Aristotle, as well as the Stoics, the Cynics, and the
Epicureans. He also suggests that the origins of rhetoric are more attached to persuasive
methods developed in intertribal war councils than in emerging democratic institutions.
As mentioned earlier, James Berlin has suggested the need for more sociological history to
be written in Rhetoric, a task Jasper Neel takes up in *Aristotle’s Voice*. However, a strong
scholarship of socio-political analysis of presocratic philosophy is yet to take shape.
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1. Marx defines this relationship in Chapter One, Volume One of *Capital*. There are hundreds of secondary sources on this. David Harvey’s *Limits to Capital* is considered to be a particularly authoritative secondary source. However, I find that no account of capital as a social relation that enforces the commodification or “thingafication” of human beings is as well-argued as Marx’s account.

2. A very insightful recent treatment of this tendency is offered by Nick Dyer-Witheford’s *Cyber-Marx*.

3. The Ten Point Program can be found on a number of web sites, such as the one I have listed in the bibliography.

4. One of the best accounts of the FBI’s campaign against the Panthers can be found in Churchill and Vander Wall book, *Agents of Repression*.

5. See Earnest Mandel’s study, *The Second Slump*.

7. For a good survey of the wide range of social movements that are now challenging globalization, see Wallach and Sforza's *The WTO: Five Years of Reasons to Resist Corporate Globalization*.

8. For purposes of readability, I will drop the designation of B.C. from all dates since all are from that period. Any exception will be designated by A.D.

9. Ancient Economy was first written in 1973. A new edition has just been published, indicating, as Ian Morris, states in his Preface, that this continues to offer students of ancient history valuable insights into these societies. Morris argues that Finley has not been sufficiently studied by American scholars. Finley was a member of the group of ancient historians who introduced a paradigm shift in the writing of Graeco-Roman history in the twentieth century. Morris explains that these scholars, inspired by the Frankfurt School, Weber, and Marx, were the first historians of ancient Greece and Rome to challenge the philological method of interpreting ancient history. This group asked social and political questions, rather than philological questions, in approaching ancient history. The socio-political approach had already been firmly established among historians in general, but not ancient historians. Finley originally played a marginal role in this work, but by the 70s, the "Finley model" of the ancient economy had gained broad
respect among European scholars (Foreword xi). American scholars of ancient history, however, skipped this paradigm shift and continued to work within philological categories until the 1980s, when questions regarding the discursive formation of culture began to undergird their approach. For Morris, American scholarship has suffered from having made the leap to the study of culture without having first engaged in serious work on the political economy. For example, as an American scholar, Finley was only able to continue this kind of work, which he had begun in New York during the 30s, after he expatriated to Britain from the United States in 1954, a time when the U.S. Government was successfully coercing scholars into avoiding "unamerican" activities. Morris calls on American scholars to seriously engage Finley, as European ancient historians also influenced by "the cultural turn" have done. Morris suggests to me that American scholars who base their work on literary theory without engaging the social theory that made such work possible should consider the political implications of overlooking sociopolitical interpretations of ancient history, a setting-aside that was, in large part, forced upon American scholarship by cold war ideology and outright repression.

10. All references to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* will be taken from George A. Kennedy's 1991 translation. All other references to Aristotle's texts are taken from the 1982 Princeton edition of the *Complete Works of Aristotle* edited by Jonathan Barnes.

11. The writings of the Presocratics come down to us through doxology, that is,
through the work of later writers who report what their ideas were. Although all of the Presocratics are supposed to have written books, none of these texts survived antiquity. Sometimes these ideas are presented as exact quotes taken from the books themselves or as precepts or aphorisms of a thinker that have been passed down by word of mouth. The scholars I rely on in this chapter employ different methods of reading the doxology, and their interpretative methods, in turn, have affected my own thinking on the subject. Therefore, some general comments on the hermeneutics of Presocratic scholarship is in order; however, I have chosen to place there comments in an appendix so as to preserve the continuity of my argument.

12. See Burstein’s treatment of Heraclea, a Milesian colony located on the northern coast of the Black Sea.

13. See Appendix A for an explanation of other scholars’ critiques of Kahn’s method. These critiques revolve around the philologist’s concern for determining who said what, a concern that I do not share. Rather, I am interested in uncovering the most accurate view of the rational model that was being circulating among the aristocratic intelligentsia. It matters little to me who “authored” the model.

14. Kahn argues that this fragment is most likely *ipsissima verba*. He points out that the
fragment follows the conventions used in antiquity to indicate an exact quotation. In ancient texts, the beginning of an exact quote is introduced by the conventional phrase, "he says that." Simplicius follows this convention. In his reference to Anaximander, he first paraphrases Anaximander's claim, and then quotes Anaximander's own representation of the claim. Locating the end of the quote in ancient texts is often more difficult because there is no single conventional marker for this. In Simplicius' text, finding the end of the quote is not a problem because Simplicius indicates that he has reached the end of Anaximander's own words when he makes a parenthetical remark about Anaximander's poetic language.

15. Mao popularized this phrase throughout China to offer all of the strata in Chinese society a dialectical method: "Everything divides into two."

16. This fragment is taken from Plutarch. While "sun" may not be ipsissima verba, Plutarch here includes it in his attempt to be true to Heraclitus' insistence that heat/sun is the primary principle/element for Heraclitus. (Kahn Art and Thought 49).

17. The alpha privative in Greek refers to the form of making a negative by placing the letter "a" in front of a word.
18. In one passage, Haraszti points out how this division of mental and manual labor is carried out through even the most intimate forms of alienation. Describing a factory rule that ordered the workers to ask the foreman’s permission to enter the changing room, he comments: “Those who thought up this rule (and who really knows that?) must believe that, without it, the workers would be dashing into the changing room without the slightest need to do so. The foreman is the one who is allowed to judge which of my needs are legitimate and which are not. His authority derives from such prohibitions. Which is why, in addition, he prevents all ‘unnecessary’ individual disruption of work. For example, in summer a worker may want to take a shower during working hours — a perfectly reasonable thing to do when one is sweating it out at 40 degrees centigrade, in stinking clothes, dripping with perspiration, with hands so clammy that they slide off the levers. Refusal is justified with these words: “If I let you take a shower, I would have to let everyone do so just when they felt like it” (87).