Oppression, emotions, and the institutional definition of critical thinking

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INTRODUCTION

In required first-year composition (FYC) courses, entering students at Iowa State University and in most other universities in the United States may be asked to read a lot, to summarize the readings, to analyze the claims and supports of those readings, and to write papers in which they make and support interesting and intelligent claims (make informed arguments). In other words, students practice thinking critically: they do not accept claims without carefully—critically—evaluating the support.

In this document, I argue that the institutional definition of critical thinking (IDCT)—the skills of summarizing, analyzing claims and supports, and making informed arguments—neglects a key skill: imagining the emotional consequences of ideas and ensuing actions on the lives of people affected by those ideas.

Without that key skill, what passes as critical thinking (IDCT) fails systematically at achieving adequately its declared goal of evaluating claims and their support because it assumes—accepts without examination—the cultural biases of the thinker and dismisses by default the weight of counter-arguments held by people who are affected and involved by the claims the thinker is advancing. This is a form of stacking the deck that goes undetected by IDCT and leads systematically to dogma, injustice, and oppression.

Current rhetoric textbooks neglect this key skill because the rhetorical definitions and distinctions in these books are extensions of an unrecognized, obsolete, and thoroughly discredited epistemology. These implications remain hidden in our commonsense and unexamined assumptions about society, ethics, and reasoning. With IDCT skills, these implications manifest themselves in IDCT's marginalization (a) of the communicative and critical activities of the community of inquirers in knowledge production, (b) of the importance of values and emotional commitments of inquirers and of the people involved and affected by inquiry, and (c) of the importance of the audience as contributors of invaluable perspectives to activities involved in knowledge production.

Plato and more specifically Aristotle, the philosophers who formulated the old epistemology, intended to find a basis for organizing social relations that was immune from
what they considered to be the emotion-based, capriciousness of humans. The social stability
for which Aristotle argued was based on the claim that the dominance of certain segments of
nature and society over other segments—of men over women, of citizens over slaves, of
Greeks over barbarians, of humans over animals, of soul over body, and so on—is natural
and therefore just. In order to support that claim, he argued for a source of value outside of
humans. He argued that it is not ultimately humans who reason to solve problems on their
way to achieving the emotion-sanctioned “goods” that they themselves formulate or discover,
but rather it is the universe itself that has values and “goods” (and ultimately one “Good”)
that it pursues.

Having dismissed human “goods” from extra-human or divine “goods” of the
universe, Aristotle marginalized and confused the role of emotions in reasoning and critical
thinking. Since for him, examining the “goods” towards which the universe moves was
outside the scope of practical reasoning, his formulation of practical reasoning skills
dismissed the importance of human values, their formation, and the centrality of emotions to
this formation. This marginalization has two drastic consequences that I explore in this
document: First, IDCT becomes a perfect tool for applying a narrow form of reasoning from
within the confines of the values of institutions. The broader values that these institutions
hold may be questionable or unethical, but thinkers using IDCT skills will not have the tools
to examine those values. Thus, IDCT has proved to be of great use to hierarchical and
potentially oppressive social structures.

For example, on the surface, research in universities seems to proceed according to
straightforward and value-free or emotionally neutral guidelines. But this surface belies the
ubiquitous presence of emotions in all areas of study, for, in all fields, people are conducting
research or holding competing positions. And not only do they want to find the right answers
and are thus involved emotionally with their work, but perhaps more important, they are
working from within institutions that are ultimately tied to political interests of society, and
“political interests” is shorthand for people who have particular interests. Thus, merely
answering the question of: why do these researchers engage in this particular research?” or
“why does this institution work on these questions?” raises emotionally charged issues of
value and ideology, for any purpose can be envisioned for research. The purpose can be to solve the problem of unsafe car airbags for parents with very small children or it can be to solve the "Jewish Problem." Calamities have occurred, tyrannies have been created, and atrocities have been committed when the centrality of the importance of values and emotions in general and of the emotional basis of thinking has not been properly recognized.

Second, IDCT skills are inadequate to the task of helping thinkers examine the underlying assumptions—their emotion-infused values and goals—that they themselves bring to their examinations of any given problem. In other words, being an inadequate tool for examining values and the emotional commitments that those values represent, IDCT skills allow a great source of bias enter thinking. For example, in discussions of social policy—abortion, gun-control, electoral reform, welfare reform, racial profiling, foreign policy, freedom of speech, etc., staples of rhetoric textbooks—the issues involved all revolve around values, that is, how the emotional commitments of various people—formed through their cultural experiences and observations in families, schools, neighborhoods, places of worship and work, cities, countries, etc.—underlie their positions on social issues. Without understanding how these values are formed and how emotional commitments to these positions come about, the issues involved cannot be properly examined.

Specifically, this lack of attention to the emotional commitments that various positions are associated with leads systematically to dogma. For example, IDCT skills allow us to dismiss by default the claims and support offered by people who hold positions opposing ours, and whom we consider, consciously or unconsciously, unimportant, subhuman, or incapable of feeling as well or as much as we can. A re-definition of critical thinking that is based on an unambiguous rejection of Aristotelian epistemology and on a recognition of this potential source of bias takes into account the cultural biases of critical thinkers and demands that they go out of their way to understand the emotional consequences of their ideas on the involved and affected people.² In fact, as I will attempt to show in Chapter 3, long-standing oppressive social arrangements are results of routine applications of IDCT skills. And the presence of oppression in a social arrangement is a sign of the widespread use of such thinking.
The layout of my argument is as follows.

In Chapter 1, I outline the elements of IDCT skills taught in argumentation and rhetoric textbooks and make a cursory reference to theoretical affinity of those skills with, and their roots in, Aristotle’s formulation of rhetoric. And in a brief but necessary detour, I point out the inadequacy of Toulmin’s model in my arguments.

In Chapter 2, I illustrate the fundamental problem with IDCT skills by examining two documents that use such skills to the letter. Both documents deal with a politically unjust act, the American- and British-sponsored and -organized coup d’état of 1953 against the democratically elected government of Iran. The 1953 coup led, among other negative consequences, to a quarter century of oppression in Iran. My goal is to show that the moral bankruptcy of the arguments in the two documents stems not from misapplying IDCT but from applying that thinking too faithfully.

In Chapter 3, I use the extended illustration from Chapter 2 to argue that injustice and oppression are problems that are at their very roots related to thinking. They occur when thinking, or specifically thinking critically, fails. An important and systematic source of failure is when the function and definition of critical thinking has been unjustifiably narrowed. I argue that valuing human life—considering the feelings, values, and therefore the views of people with whom we are interacting or about whom we are making decisions—is the sine qua non of critical thinking.

In this chapter, I also attempt to foreground the basic assumptions that underlie the views I express in this document. I argue that proper starting places for thinking critically about life are the facts that we as humans can and do suffer, that the ubiquitous backdrop of human activities is suffering, and that we have a human capacity to feel something of the suffering of others. These starting places are all rooted in emotions, and my support for them are personal and experiential and can therefore be considered intuitive. But they are not recondite. In other words, I expect my audience to check my claims against their experiences and their understandings of life. From those starting places, I argue further that—among the most important things that they do—humans in general aim to eliminate, alleviate the effects of, prevent, or if at all possible avoid suffering. And the most urgent function of thinking
therefore is the furthering of that aim. Since humans live in groups and since our thinking is inextricably linguistic and communicative, the problem of suffering has to be considered primarily social. At the two most important ends of the spectrum of the causes of suffering are human activities and natural events. If suffering is of a kind that anything at all can be done about it and given that suffering—whatever the cause—can be avoided, prevented, or eliminated by humans alone, then injustice can be said to have two causes: (1) people who actively cause such suffering and (2), people who can do something about this suffering but who contribute to such suffering through inaction. Cause (2) covers all suffering—natural and artificial—about which anything whatever can be done. If one of the main goals of thinking is to avoid, prevent, eliminate, and alleviate the effects of all suffering about which anything whatever can be done, I argue that there is a close connection between justice and critical thinking. Specifically, injustice and oppression occur as a consequence of the absence of the key element in IDCT: the requirement that critical thinkers imagine and care about the consequences of their thoughts on the emotion-infused experiences of people affected by those thoughts. I explore these ideas by looking at several definitions of oppression and by examining the inadequate common solutions to the problem of oppression, offering examples from my experiences and that of Henry David Thoreau. I identify the root cause of oppression in a phenomenon that I call emotional compartmentalization. Since this emotional compartmentalization leads to such a massive failure of the working of critical thinking, I explore and adopt the epistemological explanation that a line of inquiry in feminist philosophy has offered for the unquestioned presence and influence of this pre-critical-thinking compartmentalization of emotions. Feminist epistemologists Sandra Harding and Elisabeth Lloyd trace the problem to the objectivist standard of objectivity in science, a standard that demands that knowledge be value-free.

In Chapter 4, having foregrounded and argued for my assumptions about the connection between critical thinking and justice, I argue that IDCT, which unjustifiably narrows the definition of critical thinking in order to exclude the emotional basis of all thinking, comes from Aristotle's formulation of rhetoric, which relies on a metaphysics and that in turn rests on an epistemology supported by what can at best be described a form of
abstract—and allegedly intuitive—dogma. In this chapter, I will show that Aristotle claimed to have found an extra-human source of absolute value, which has the sanction of reason, of the very order and structure of the universe. I will point out that Aristotle’s beliefs in the inferiority of slaves, women, and barbarians were direct results of his objectivist thinking. He identified more form with greater good and discovered a hierarchy or evolutionary ladder of form, and he placed inanimate objects, plants, animals, and humans in that hierarchy. Having identified the good in the world, he concluded that all lower forms serve higher forms. He used these conceptions to underpin a theory of knowledge that aims for aperspectival, absolute knowledge, a type of knowledge that is free of humans, their emotions, and values (what humans like or dislike, consider good or bad). He then extended his epistemological and metaphysical concepts to a great many lines of inquiry: physics, biology, politics, ethics, and rhetoric among others. Aristotle’s philosophy provided justifications for his political and moral alignments with the authoritarian forces of his day that worked to bring about the demise of Greek political and intellectual freedom. Aristotle formulated an intellectual framework fit to be used by the powerful for subjugating, organizing, and managing resisting subjects.

Aristotle conceptualized rhetoric as an art that would allow a person already in possession of his epistemological, metaphysical, political, and ethical knowledge to move the powerful, but uneducated demos incapable of understanding to see the truth of his views. To understand the real reasons for Aristotle’s positions on political or ethical issues, the audience would have to learn Aristotle’s philosophy. Among other things, they would have to agree that the real, worthwhile source of value is outside of what humans think and feel that they want. Without such learning, however, Aristotle believed that the audience could only be manipulated to think the right thoughts even if despite themselves. Aristotle did assume that the audience of rhetoric was incapable of such learning and that the rhetor had already learned and agreed with Aristotle’s philosophy. Thus, the communicative and critical activities of inquirers towards discovery or creation of knowledge or truth preceding this possession were not part of his conceptualization of rhetoric. Moreover, an examination of values or the emotional commitments of the people holding different positions on an issue
was outside the scope of his conceptualization. In effect, the audience of rhetoric was not considered a worthy partner in knowledge production. Because of its roots in Aristotle’s rhetoric, IDCT skills (a) de-emphasize the communicative and critical activities of the community of inquirers in knowledge production, (b) dismiss the importance of examining the values and emotional commitments of inquirers, cultural institutions, and the people involved and affected, and (c) neglect the importance of the audience as contributors of indispensable perspectives to activities involved in knowledge production.

Since Aristotle’s epistemology and metaphysics are universally rejected, however, IDCT has no epistemological support, and its widespread use is more out of habit and a perceived belief in the absence of alternatives than a clear understanding of its epistemological roots. A rejection of Aristotle’s epistemology demands a thorough rejection of the formulation of Aristotle’s rhetoric and IDCT. Communication and rhetoric have to be redefined away from conveying already formed ideas and forms to a lay or ignorant audience (or worse, from attempting to sway a lay audience to believe in certain positions without seeking its understanding) towards a much greater project involving what a community needs to do collaboratively to understand problems, suggest solutions, and examine and critique suggested solutions. This greater project recognizes that inquiry is a communal and communicative activity and that it is through welcoming and encouraging different perspectives that an issue can be best understood and solved. This recognition in turn requires a careful examination of situatedness, the humanity, emotional commitments, and value systems of the holders (including the institutions) of various perspectives, positions, etc. At the very least, this redefinition re-instates the examination of values and their ties to emotions to the center of critical thinking.
CHAPTER 1. “CRITICAL THINKING”

Definition

*Critical thinking skills*—which in composition include reading and writing—are commonly or institutionally defined as summarizing, analyzing claims and supports, and making informed arguments. According to *Student’s Guide to English 104—105*, a document prepared by the First-Year Composition Committee at Iowa State University (ISU), entering students in FYC courses will learn “to read analytically” and develop “a critical awareness about language” for achieving “university level skills in reading and writing” (2). In English 104, students will learn two sets of goals: (a) they will develop the writing processes students use to write (revising, adapting writing to “specific purposes and audience,” using sources and organizational strategies, and avoiding grammar errors) and (b) they will acquire “academic writing skills” (observation, summary, analysis and evaluation, and citation usage). In English 105, the academic writing skills are further developed: students learn “to summarize, analyze, and evaluate essays and then to use those reading skills in four kinds of writing assignment: summaries, rhetorical analyses, persuasive and argumentative essays, and documented research papers” (3). These instructional goals—which in effect describe critical thinking skills—are developed further in *The Instructor’s Manual for English for English 104—105*. The Manual states,

English 105 focuses on the most intense forms of rhetoric—argument and persuasion—as a way of preparing students to participate in the academic life of the university. Students analyze arguments, they respond to arguments, and they construct their own arguments. As such, the course is aimed at enabling students (1) to improve their critical reading skills by summarizing texts and by analyzing and evaluating the appropriateness of texts for particular audiences, and (2) to improve their written communication skills by constructing persuasive texts and using sources to support the arguments in these texts. (4)

In this manual, the key term in critical thinking is argument, or persuasion. It involves looking at communication in terms of argument: claims offered in support of other claims to make the latter acceptable to the audience. Critical thinking is described similarly
in the rhetoric textbooks recommended by the ISU English department under the heading "105 Rhetorics." Recommended books include *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument* by Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau; *Elements of Argument* by Annette T. Rottenberg; *The Genre of Argument* by Irene L. Clark; *The Informed Argument: A Multidisciplinary Reader and Guide* by Robert K. Miller; *The Informed Writer* by Charles Bazerman; *Perspectives on Argument* by Nancy W. Woods; *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* by Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen; *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings* by John D. Ramage and John C. Bean; and *Writing in the Liberal Arts Tradition* by James L. Kinneavy, William J. McCleary, and Neil Nakadate.

I will offer two typical formulations of critical thinking offered by these textbook authors. Barnet and Bedau describe critical thinking as follows:

> In thinking critically about a topic, we try to see it from all sides before we come to our conclusion. We conduct an argument with ourselves, advancing and then questioning opinions. What can be said for the proposition, and what can be said against it . . . . One can almost say that the heart of critical thinking is a willingness to face objections to one's own beliefs, a willingness to adopt a skeptical attitude not only toward authority and toward views opposed to our own, but also toward common sense, that is, toward the views that seem obviously right to us. (4)

They write that "along with imagination," critical thinking involves analysis, "separating the parts of the problem, trying to see how things fit together," and evaluation, "judging the merit of our assumptions and the weight of the evidence in their favor."

That critical thinking and argumentation are considered roughly synonymous is much more explicitly stated by Rottenberg, who explains that all types of claims require argumentation for their establishment and use the same "kinds of analysis, research techniques, and evaluation" (7). Her text uses

the term *argument* to represent forms of discourse that attempt to persuade readers or listeners to accept a claim, whether acceptance is based on logical or on emotional appeals or, as is usually the case, on both . . . . an argument is a statement or statements offering support for a claim. (9,10, emphasis mine)
To learn to think critically (or to learn argumentation), students learn how (a) to avoid accepting claims without first evaluating the support and (b) to write papers in which they come up with carefully thought-out claims and support.

**Application in Textbooks**

One of my claims in this document is that these formulations of institutionally defined critical thinking (which I call IDCT) are—perhaps unwitting—descendents of not only Aristotle’s rhetoric but his broader philosophical project. Aristotelian rhetoric, however, contains elements that militate against the stated goal of IDCT, evaluating claims or as Barnet and Bedau write, “seeing a topic from all sides” (4). In this subsection, I merely point out key terms used rhetoric textbooks that have obvious Aristotelian connections. In Chapter 4, I will establish the philosophical connections and implications of these terms.

The influence of Aristotle on logic and rhetoric has been enormous. Will Durant attributes the creation of the science of logic to Aristotle. Durant writes, “The first great distinction of Aristotle is that almost without predecessors, almost entirely by his own hard thinking, he created a new science—Logic” (58, *Story*). And Bertrand Russell writes of Aristotle that “ever since the beginning of the seventeenth century, almost every serious intellectual advance has had to begin with an attack on some Aristotelian doctrine; in logic, this is still true at the present day” (160). Perhaps not surprisingly, the textbooks on the list, regardless of their commitment to Toulmin’s model of argumentation, use some of the key Aristotelian terminology in logic: *logos, ethos, pathos, enthymeme, syllogism, deduction, induction*, etc. So under the Argument Synthesis heading of their textbook, Behrens and Rosen present the three subheadings: “The Elements of Argument: Claim, Support, Assumption;” “The Three Appeals of Argument: Logos, Ethos, Pathos;” and “Developing and Argument Thesis” (127). Under logos, Behrens and Rosen discuss deductive and inductive logic. Kinneavy, McCleary, and Nakadate discuss emotional, ethical, and logical appeals (72-76) and in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 examine deductive and inductive reasoning (204-287). In Chapter 3, Clark discusses argument (71); logos, ethos, and pathos (73); and inductive and deductive reasoning with some attention paid to enthymemes (74-81). Barnet
and Bedau’s discussion of Aristotelian rhetoric includes deduction (58, 260), syllogisms (58), induction (62, 271), and emotional appeals (73) among others. Finally, Bazerman, in his very brief review of argument, discusses logos, ethos, pathos, deduction, induction, and enthymeme (119-122).

These terms and the embedded theories that go with them represent a particular philosophical tradition with a perspective that emphasizes certain aspects of critical thinking and rhetoric and de-emphasizes others. In other words, the Aristotelian terminology and theoretical framework represent a scale of values. Durant writes that Aristotle “built the terminology of science and philosophy” and that his coinages “lie like fossils in the substrata of our speech” (56, Story). The presence of these fossils would not be a problem if they did not also represent a certain worldview, but as I will attempt to show in Chapter 4, the values that Aristotelian philosophy emphasizes are deeply unbeneﬁcial to critical thinking.

**Aristotelian Despite Widespread Mention of Toulmin**

Toulmin’s model of argumentation is a radical departure from Aristotle’s, and many textbooks use—or at least make a passing reference to—his formulations and terminology. Towards the end of this chapter, I will briefly discuss the uses that rhetoric textbooks make of Toulmin’s model. But my claim here, which I will try to establish ﬁrst, is that Toulmin’s model does not quite address the fundamental shortcomings of Aristotle’s model of reasoning.

Instead of adopting a mathematical model of argumentation, Toulmin uses a model of “generalized jurisprudence” (7). He notes that the standards of logical adequacy from formal logic inherited from Aristotle are simply inapplicable in daily uses of reason. Traditional philosophers like Hume and formal logicians admit the inapplicability of the rules of formal logic to, say, moral or political judgments. But the solution of those philosophers has been to remove, strictly speaking, such judgments from the realm of rational discussion, rather than to re-evaluate the theoretical framework of their definitions of reasoning. Toulmin’s position, according to which formal logic becomes greatly reduced to the ﬁelds of pure logic
and mathematics, is a reversing of the traditional solution. Toulmin’s view of logic is as follows:

Logic is concerned with the soundness of the claims we make—with the solidity of the grounds we produce to support them, the firmness of the backing we provide for them—or, to change the metaphor, with the sort of case we present in defence of our claims. (7)

Toulmin rejects the usefulness of the formal elements of assessment of claims (except in pure logic and mathematics) and argues that the only useful standards of assessment depend on the store of agreed upon information in a particular field (175) or given topic of discussion.

There are two points I would like to make about Toulmin’s model.

First, although Toulmin’s model is radically different from the Aristotelian model of reasoning, the full import of the former is not adequately recognized in rhetoric textbooks. Among the many implications of Toulmin’s model is a thoroughgoing rejection of the possibility of explaining the activity of human reasoning from within Aristotle’s model. The positions I take towards critical thinking agree with Toulmin’s model of reasoning since there is nothing in his model that precludes the admission of emotion to reasoning and the conclusions I draw from that admission. In fact, since he posits that in addition to the explicit datum supporting a claim, a warrant—the agreed upon standard of judgment in the field—must be present in an argument, he leaves the door open for the possibility that the shared set of emotional background of claims and arguments be formally discussed in evaluating arguments. Toulmin writes that “in logic as in morals, the real problem of rational assessment—telling sound arguments from untrustworthy ones . . .—requires experience, insight and judgement” (188). In perhaps his clearest statement about his model, Toulmin writes,

The logical criticism of claims to knowledge is . . . a special case of practical argument-criticism—namely, its most stringent form. A man who puts forward some proposition, with a claim to know that it is true, implies that the grounds which he could produce in support of the proposition are of the highest relevance and cogency: without the assurance of such grounds, he has no right to make any
claim to knowledge. The question, when if ever the grounds on which we base our claims to knowledge are really adequate, may therefore be read as meaning, "Can the arguments by which we would back up our assertions ever reach the highest relevant standards?"; and the general problem of comparative applied logic will be to decide what, in any particular field of argument, the highest relevant standards will be. (218)

Clearly, a model such as this requires a focused analysis of "the highest relevant standards" in each field. But although an in-depth application of Toulmin's model leaves the door open for the recognition of the emotion-infused experiences of people in the arguments they make, the textbooks do not appreciate the full import of Toulmin's model. And Toulmin's own treatment of the subject does not extend to examining those standards. At most, he uses examples from law and science to support his claims that legal professionals and scientists in practice abandon the analytical model of argumentation in favor of the field-dependent standards of their disciplines. He describes but does not evaluate the activities of, say, the scientists. And this omission has significant consequences for his analysis. Of particular importance to my claim in this document is that since he does not adequately address the relevance of emotions and values to critical thinking and arguments, the dominant predisposition of his model remains Aristotelian. 6

The second point I would like to make about Toulmin is that—perhaps as a result of the shortcomings mentioned in Toulmin's model—the rhetoric textbooks on the list, do not draw any of the rather radical implications that can be inferred from his model. Thus, the mention of his model in the textbooks does not change their Aristotelian outlook.

Specifically, all textbooks on the list, except Kinneavy et al.'s, offer at least a passing mention of the Toulmin model. Some do not go beyond cursory references. For example, Barnet and Bedau's Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing, Clark's The Genre of Argument, and Bazerman's The Informed Writer offer short descriptions of the model. For the most part, Toulmin's model is offered as an alternative or complement to Aristotle's. Some of the textbook sections introducing the model are along the following lines (taken from Miller's The Informed Argument: A Multidisciplinary Reader and Guide):
Although both inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning suggest useful strategies for writers of argument, they also have their limitations. Many writers prefer not to be bound by a predetermined method of organization and regard the syllogism, in particular, as unnecessarily rigid. To make their case, some writers choose to combine inductive and deductive reasoning within a single essay. (35)

Here Toulmins’ model is introduced from an Aristotelian perspective although in Toulmin’s treatment of argumentation, the distinction between deductive and inductive is rejected as inadequate because the terms “conflate five different distinctions into one” (195). In brief, the importance of Toulmin’s attempt at thoroughly rejecting Aristotle and Plato’s modeling of all arguments on analytical (mathematical) arguments is not really reflected in these textbooks.7

Some of the other textbooks, however, do offer much more substantive treatments of the Toulmin model. For example, Rottenberg’s entire Elements of Argument is cast in terms of the Toulmin Model. Woods’ Perspectives on Argument also uses a consistent Toulmin terminology. And Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings by Ramage and Bean uses the Toulmin terminology throughout (the word deductive does not appear in the index).

Aristotle’s influence, however, is clearly evident even with these textbooks. For example, among the textbooks that adopt the Toulmin model, Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings by Ramage and Bean admits that the textbook uses a system that “combines Toulmin’s system with Aristotle’s concept of the enthymeme” (99) and that it discusses the structure of the argument in terms of the rhetorical triangle, which separates logos from ethos and pathos (83).8 The textbook also devotes Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 to appeals to authority and emotion (145-188). Rottenberg’s Elements of Argument also discusses deduction and induction in Chapter 8 (283-302) although, as mentioned, this distinction is rejected as confusing and inadequate in Toulmin’s model. And in Chapter 5, there is a section on appeals to needs and values and an evaluation of appeals to Needs and Values (168, 174). The needs Rottenberg lists are physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs. This section in effect discusses the material usually covered under appeals to emotions although in a way that is much more respectful of the
importance of emotions in argument than is the norm. But the discussion of values as a self-
contained category implies that arguments on value are merely one among many other types
of arguments, arguments which presumably do not deal with values. Finally although Wood
in Perspective on Argument is careful about making distinctions between Toulmin and
Aristotle’s models (for example, her discussion of deductive argument takes into account
some of Toulmin’s reservations and distinctions), she still uses the deductive and inductive
distinctions and discusses ethos- and pathos-based arguments in subchapters.

In this paper, my focus is on the standards. One formulation of my thesis in terms of
Toulmin’s model is that Plato’s and Aristotle’s work in epistemology was a concerted
attempt at discarding emotions as a standard of judgment in reasoning. Toulmin sometimes
seems to imply that logicians have been “excessively impressed” with analytic syllogism
(149) because of its simplicity and because of its promise of providing certain conclusions.
But I argue that the reasons for that tendency in the theory of logic is political and rather
sinister. Plato and Aristotle were interested in their formulations of logic because of the
extreme political exigencies of the times in which they lived and because of their political
alignments. They were interested in grounding their value judgments in a source other than
volatile, unpredictable and emotional humans. In other words, they set out to find a standard
of judgment completely free from human pollution. I have set aside Chapter 4 to support the
claims I make here.

In summary, in this chapter I enumerated the elements of the institutionally defined
critical thinking skills, noted their widespread presence in argumentation and rhetoric
textbooks, and made a cursory reference to the theoretical affinity of those skills with, and
their roots in, Aristotle’s rhetorical terminology and formulations. Finally, I identified
Toulmin’s model, which is also mentioned and used widely in rhetoric textbooks as a radical
departure from Aristotle’s model of reasoning. But I pointed out two major limitations of his
model. First, the model itself leaves out a careful study of the standards of evaluation. This
omission and the facts that society’s adopted theory of reasoning remains Aristotelian and
that the emotional basis of the standards of evaluation are left unexamined render Toulmin’s
model vulnerable to being framed in terms of (i.e. the model’s being absorbed in) Aristotle’s
model of argumentation. Second, perhaps because of those shortcomings, the textbooks have not really appreciated and applied the full import of the model.

In the next chapter, I illustrate the fundamental problem with IDCT skills by examining two documents that use such skills to the letter. The goal is to highlight the intellectual blind spots of IDCT. Both documents deal with a politically unjust act, the American- and British-sponsored and –organized coup d'état of 1953 against the democratically elected government of Iran. My goal is to show that the moral bankruptcy of the arguments in the two documents stems not from misapplying IDCT but from applying it too faithfully.
CHAPTER 2. TWO EXTENDED EXAMPLES

In this chapter, I will examine two documents written by a government official and a journalist dealing with an unjust act that led to widespread oppression in an entire country for a quarter of a century. My goal is to show that the use of IDCT did not give the authors the minimal tools they needed for seeing the atrocity they helped perpetrate and condoned. In my examination, I will have to look at several issues: the institutional definition of journalistic integrity and its connection to IDCT, a preliminary definition of oppression, and the identification of the 1953 coup in Iran as an unjust act that led to widespread suffering. To explain what exactly it was that the authors missed taking into account in their critical treatments of the subject of the coup, I will not only have to provide a historical overview from various angles but also a brief personal narrative. I offer the personal narrative to point out that the two documents do have emotional contents but that the emotion-infused experiences of the Iranians is markedly absent from them. The observations and conclusions of the two documents are selected and presented because of the emotional commitments of the two authors. As I will show, with a different emotional commitment, completely different observations and conclusions can be drawn.

All along, my strategy will be to point out obvious areas that should have been investigated but which the authors chose not to investigate because their definitions of critical thinking did not require them to do so. For them to include those areas, they would have had to evince an inordinate degree of humanity, an extra-critical thinking (as institutionally defined) characteristic.

Finally, I will argue that without such degree of humanity, IDCT can in fact help those treated unjustly in a certain context to analyze and evaluate their condition (as I claim I have done in this chapter). But IDCT cannot help thinkers who themselves are not directly mistreated in a given context to see whether their thinking is contributing (a) to propagating misinformation and manipulation and (b) to injustice and oppression through their unexamined emotional commitments as embedded in their value systems.
The First Document

In this section, I analyze a journalistic document. Journalism has had a fascinating history of dealing with the same issues I am raising in this thesis. I will first describe the document and then mention the conflicts that journalists have faced in discharging their professional responsibilities when they have tried to apply IDCT too narrowly.

The first document is a seven-part New York Times (NYT) article posted on the Web on June 16, 2000, by James Risen, who reports that the NYT has obtained a copy of “The Clandestine History of the Overthrow of Premier Mossadegh of Iran” written by Donald Wilber, one of the coup’s chief architects in 1954, one year after the American and British organized and financed coup.

Since the publication of Risen’s NYT article, the entire secret history of the coup has been published on the Web. Neither Risen’s article nor Wilber’s history reveal much new information about the coup. The details of the coup have been widely known in Iran since shortly after the coup. I know this from personal experience of listening to grown-ups discussing it in subdued tones during my childhood years before the 1979 Revolution in Iran. And more than two decades ago, the British government released much of its official correspondence regarding its role in the coup. The news in Risen’s article about the clandestine history is the operational detail (also known for the most part) from the American perspective. So in the article, under the heading, “Secrets of history: The C.I.A. in Iran,” the attention-grabbing passage quoted from the clandestine history is as follows:

“... the Shah requires special preparation. By nature a creature of indecision, beset by formless doubts and fears, he must be induced to play his role. . .” - TPAJAX Plan

And the first section of the article presents the highlights:

- that the history offers “an inside look at how the agency stumbled into success, despite a series of mishaps that derailed its original plans,”
- that the “handpicked Gen. Fazlollah Zahedi” was “covertly funneled $5 million” two days after the coup,
- that “Britain, fearful of Iran’s plan to nationalize its oil industry, came up with the idea for the coup in 1952,”
- that “the Shah’s cowardice nearly killed the C.I.A. operation,” and
that the Iranian agents of C.I.A. “posing as Communists harassed religious leaders and staged the bombing of one cleric’s home.”

Another historical note in the section is that Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, “the father of the Desert Storm commander,” tried to keep the Shah “from wilting under pressure.”

Emphasizing the news in the history, the article offers both an accurate summary of the history and an account of the coup that corresponds in some key areas with other historical information. Risen’s expert summary highlights how the idea of the coup was conceived, in what stages it was planned, who approved it, and how the operation was implemented.  

The article also contains contextual information to help readers evaluate the material, and in presenting this material, Risen clearly tries to be fair. For example, he mentions that “the coup was a turning point in modern Iranian history and remains a persistent irritant in Tehran-Washington relations. It consolidated the power of the Shah, who ruled with an iron hand for 26 more years in close contact with the United States.” Risen also quotes the recent admission of Madeleine K. Albright, the second Secretary of State of the Clinton administration, that “the coup was clearly a setback for Iran’s political development. And it is easy to see now why many Iranians continue to resent this intervention by America in their internal affairs.” The seven parts of the article detail, among others, the “Roots” of the problem, how the “Pressure” mounted, and the operational background. And there is a section for both the Iranian prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, and the CIA agent who wrote CIA’s history of the coup, Donald Wilber.

Journalistic “Statement of Principles”

I consider Risen’s article to be a model of “good” journalistic work and to comply with the standards of IDCT. In his survey of the state of ethics in journalism H. Eugene Goodwin in *Groping for Ethics in Journalism*, 12 writes that as of 1987 the NYT “news department . . . has relied on memos and word of mouth rather than a more formal code for communicating its ethical standards” (16), but the NYT’s reason, according to Goodwin, has been that the national journalism codes are “too easy.”
Nevertheless, the NYT’s standards of quality can be easily recognized. For one thing, the paper is the standard bearer of American journalism. According to Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., Chairman and Publisher of the NYT, “When you buy the Times you get a guide, you get judgment, you get credibility and you get the finest talent in the news industry” (“Introduction”). The NYT’s official Web page claims that the paper and “members of its staff have won more prestigious journalism awards for excellence in reporting, editing, photography and design than any other newspaper in the world” (“NYT Factbook”). The Web page boasts of 74 Pulitzer Prizes among many other awards. According to the brief official history of the paper (“Brief History”), the “Publishers, editors and reporters of The Times have striven to adhere to” the principles that Ochs, one of the publishers of the paper, stated in his will:

The Times . . . should be operated as “an independent newspaper, entirely fearless, devoted to the public welfare without regard to individual advantage or ambition, the claims of part politics or personal prejudice or predilection.

Journalists have had great difficulties in achieving the objectives of editors and publishers such as Ochs, and their difficulties are related to my argument. In their efforts to come up with well delineated standards, Goodwin writes that journalists have set up professional organizations that often attempt to formulate professional codes of ethics. One of these codes is the “Statement of Principles,” formerly “Canons of Journalism,” of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. A close look at the “Statement” shows that journalists are members of a professional community dedicated to the practice of critical thinking as institutionally defined.

The six principles the “Statement” cites are (1) being responsible, (2) protecting freedom of the press, (3) maintaining independence, (4) pursuing truth and accuracy, (5) remaining impartial, and (6) playing fair. Under responsibility, the Statement reads, “The primary purpose of gathering and distributing news and opinion is to serve the general welfare by informing the people and enabling them to make judgments on the issues of the time.” Under truth and accuracy, the “Statement” reads, "Good faith with the reader is the foundation of good journalism. Every effort must be made to assure that the news content is
accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly."

The "Statement" ends as follows: "These principles are intended to preserve, protect and
strengthen the bond of trust and respect between American journalists and the American
people, a bond that is essential to sustain the grant of freedom entrusted to both by the
nation's founders." According to the "Statement," therefore, journalists are to inform the
public so that the latter can "make judgment." Clearly, because the public cannot make such
judgment if the information is inaccurate or biased or out of context, in a sense, journalism
plays a summarizing and evaluative function in society. It selects (involves evaluation)
information considered important, presents the information and the issues fairly (involves
evaluation), and in editorials evaluates that information (involves explicit evaluation and
argumentation). Thus, the professional responsibilities of journalists involve skills required
of institutionally defined critical thinkers—summarizing, analyzing or evaluating claims and
supports made by various people regarding actions or positions, and making informed
arguments.

The "Statement" is very much addressing the same issues that Ochs does in his will.
According to both documents, journalists are to be fair, impartial, and unprejudiced and to
provide "the best informed thought" by recognizing opposing views. Goodwin’s treatment of
the standards is similar to the principles in the "Statement." He writes that "Although
American journalists have a hard time agreeing on many things, virtually all of them have
come to accept accuracy and fairness as the most important of their professional standards"
(10).

According to Goodwin, the accuracy standard means "being truthful both in the
gathering and presentation of facts and information; not lying, not plagiarizing" (11). The
standard of fairness, Goodwin writes, "is an offspring of objective reporting" (11), which
"with all of its imperfections, has been a kind of ethic for U.S. journalists" (14). He writes
that the roots of objective reporting are attributed to either "the growth of cooperative news
gathering through the AP" in the nineteenth century or journalistic imitation of the "scientific
methods of natural science" in the twentieth century (11,12).
In his brief discussion of the history of the standard of objective reporting, Goodwin writes that the standard has been severely criticized and modified since the 1950s (13) for various reasons. "Newsroom bosses," Goodwin writes, had narrowly defined the standard of objectivity to mean "just report what important people say and do; don’t bother about the why’s and don’t worry about explaining anything; let the readers figure things out for themselves" (12). This narrow definition had resulted in stories journalists had discovered but had not been able to attribute to “important people” to go unreported. The definition, Goodwin writes, was also responsible for “demagogues” taking advantage of journalists. For example, Senator Joseph McCarthy had been able to “distribute his unsubstantiated charges about the large numbers of Communists who had supposedly infiltrated the government” because McCarthy had understood that “almost anything a U.S. senator said was news.” A further blow to the objectivity standard came during the Vietnam War, when “critics blamed objectivity for journalism’s failure to break out of the news management increasingly practiced by generals, presidents, and others in control of American life and institutions” (13). Finally, Goodwin writes that objectivity was blamed for producing “a bland, almost ignorant, kind of news reporting that gives all facts and all views equal weight to the point of distortion.”

Nevertheless, although critics of objectivity claim that “the complexities in the world today require not neutral observers but journalists who educate themselves in the subjects they report so that they can interpret them from a point of view;” the standard is still considered important since many journalists “insist . . . that it is desirable and possible for reporters to be reasonably unbiased and to keep their own views out of their news stories.” Over all, however, Goodwin writes that “many of today’s journalists prefer the simpler standard of fairness.” Goodwin believes that this standard of fairness is of significance when it is taken to mean that journalists “should be fair and honest in news reporting, that they should not judge others prematurely and should instead exercise a bit of compassion” (14).

The issue of the place of emotions (and in particular compassion) in critical thinking is of central importance to my argument in this study. Goodwin discusses the issue of the dispassion of objectivity in his book. His treatment of the subject is very interesting in that
he recognizes the connection of compassion to definitions and standards of objectivity, but he
doesn't quite appreciate the central importance of compassion in the definitions and
standards. Thus, although he discusses the compassion/dispassion issues, he does so in
Chapter 12 even though the link between bias in reporting and emotional predilections for or
against groups and individuals is at the core of every other chapter in the book. For example,
Chapter 3 is about conflicts of interest, which arise when the arguer identifies with a group of
people and presents their views much more thoroughly than those of other groups. Or
Chapter 4 is about freebies and perquisites offered journalists to win their goodwill towards
the giving individuals and groups. Other chapters about fabricating news, privacy,
sensationalism, etc. all relate one way or another with issues of compassion/dispassion. At
any rate, in Chapter 12, Goodwin writes, a definition of objective reporting

—which most journalists still try to practice despite widespread
doubts in the field about its achievability—is that the reporter is a
spectator and not a participant in what he or she covers. The
discipline of objective reporting, it is said, requires a dispassionate
approach to the gathering and presentation of facts. (302)

Goodwin then gives a long list of complications and moral dilemmas that occur when
journalists ignore their humanity. He cites the example of photojournalists who did or did
not help people who committed suicide in front of them. He describes the case of journalists
who collaborated with police. Some journalists believe that their professional responsibilities
do not leave room for compassion. Goodwin gives the example of Peter Arnett, an AP
reporter who witnessed a monk's setting himself on fire in protest during the Vietnam War.
Arnett, Goodwin writes, “admitted in 1971 that he ‘could have prevented that immolation by
rushing at him and kicking the gasoline away,’ but he added, ‘As a human being I wanted to,
as a reporter I couldn’t’” (318). But another reporter who saved “the life of a burning man in
Middletown, Ohio” (317), is quoted as having said afterwards that “I don’t know how you
could continue filming . . . . That's what ethics are—you don’t just stand by.” And others
like Louis D. Boccardi, the president of the AP, affirm with jarring understatement that
“journalists should ‘have a regard for human life’” (304). Goodwin’s conclusion is that
“Slowly, American journalism is moving away from pure dispassion to an admission of
compassion as a basis of journalistic behavior” (318). But unfortunately, by the examples he offers, he circumscribes the scope of this basis. He also notes that the national ethical codes have “virtually ignored” the issue of compassion in journalism. He finds two reasons: compassion is a word that “many macho journalists don’t want to hear,” and (2) “it is hard to legislate a human emotion like compassion.” Goodwin argues that journalism should perhaps “start honoring compassion more” if for no other reason than for removing the image of journalists as “a privileged class . . . [who] do not really care about anyone or anything as they get their stories and move on” (319).

Goodwin’s discussion suggests a real degree of confusion among journalists about the place and function of compassion in their work. In the context of the present study, they have standards of intellectual integrity and critical thinking that in practice they cannot fully follow because their humanity gets in the way of what they are supposed to be doing professionally. In resolving this conflict, some journalists seem to be of the view that the humane side should give way to the professional side. Goodwin’s position—and that of a growing number of journalists—is that the humanity of journalists should be incorporated into the professionalism expected of them. But the scope of the conflict has not been recognized because—as I will show in my chapter on Aristotle—the framework for understanding the conflict is designed to undermine the importance and centrality of compassion in thinking.16 Journalism has been in a long process of addressing this issue, but the conflict has not been resolved. I will wrap up this discussion by emphasizing that the ethical questions Goodwin raises relate directly to the issue of journalistic professional responsibility. In other words, Goodwin is claiming that if the standards all journalists agree on are accuracy and fairness, the absence of compassion in journalism often seems to disserve the achievement of those standards. His position is closer to mine than Toulmin’s is. But his, too, as I will show, does not go nearly far enough.

The Second Document

The second document, Donald Wilber’s history of the CIA’s coup in Iran in 1953, is a technical, scholarly work, an exemplary product of academic IDCT. The stated goal of the
history is to be an aid to future coup operations. The history explains that policy makers had presented the CIA a problem: how to overthrow the government of the democratically elected and popular prime minister of Iran. The history offers a concise summary of the views of several parties and officials. It analyzes those views and explains the synthesis of ideas that became the operational plan for the coup. It then details the events that led to the coup in a straightforward and evenhanded way, pointing out not only successes but also failures, positive developments for which the CIA could or could not take credit, or significant events whose causes could or could not be determined. It concludes with a series of recommendations for future coups d'état. In five appendices, Wilber offers primary documents on which the accounts of the history rest.

Here is the table of contents to the Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran (November 1952-August 1953) without the page numbers (all references to this history are from different sources on the Web):

Historian's Note (by Dean L. Dodge of the NE Division, Historical Office March 1969)

Summary
I. Preliminary Steps
II. Drafting the Plan
III. Consolidating the Operational Plan
IV. The Decisions Are Made: Activity Begins
V. Mounting Pressure Against the Shah
VI. The First Try
VII. Apparent Failure
VIII. “The Shah Is Victorious”
IX. Report to London
X. What Was Learned in the Operation

Appendices
A. Initial Operation Plan for TPAJAX, as Cabled from Nicosia to Headquarters on 1 June 1953
B. “London” Draft of the TPAJAX Operational Plan
C. Foreign Office Memorandum of 23 July 1953 from British Ambassador Wakins to under [sic] Secretary of State Smith
D. Report on Military Planning Aspect of TPAJAX
E. Military Critique—Lessons Learned from TPAJAX re Military Planning Aspect of Coup d'Etat
The history is a thorough and useful manual for overthrowing governments of Third World countries working on industrialization and democratization while fighting abject poverty, widespread illiteracy, and other ills. The coup Wilber describes was an awe-inspiring undertaking given its scope in terms of the complexity of the operations and the mentality of the people involved. The coup involved the coordination of hundreds of experts, evaluation of large quantities of information, detailed planning, decisive but choreographed actions, and risk taking. By all accounts (see Introduction and Chapter 1 of this document), the culmination of institutionally defined critical thinking (rhetoric and argumentation) courses taught in FYC is to give students skills they will need for solving problems at school, on the job, and in polity. Wilber's history exemplifies such culmination to the letter.

As mentioned, the government of Winston Churchill in 1953 suggested and the administration of Dwight Eisenhower accepted a proposal to overthrow the government of Mohammad Mossadegh, the democratically elected prime minister of Iran, through a clandestine operation. The history and the article show that the American and British governments knew that Mossadegh was a popular, elected prime minister during Iran's second precarious attempt at democratic self-government.

All three countries were charter members of the United Nations. And the Preamble to Charter of the United Nations reads in part that member countries are determined "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" and "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained."

Article 1 Section 2 cites the following reason for establishing the United Nations:

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

The Preamble and Sections 1, 3, and 4 of Article 2 read
The Organization [United Nations] and its Members [member countries], in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following Principles.

1. The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

3. All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, justice, are not endangered.

4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

The coup disrespected "the principle of equal rights" of a relatively small nation by undermining the "self-determination of" Iranians, the "political independence of" Iran, and "the conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained." In other words, the coup forced a set of conditions on Iranians without their knowledge and against their will and interests and was thus a blatant act of injustice.

Nevertheless, Wilber’s history offers the following brief rationalizations for the necessity of carrying out the coup:

By the end of 1952, it had become clear that the Mossadeq government in Iran was incapable of reaching an oil settlement with interested western countries; was reaching a dangerous and advanced stage of illegal, deficit financing; was disregarding the Iranian constitution in prolonging Premier Mohammed Mossadeq’s tenure of office; was motivated mainly by Mossadeq’s desire for personal power; was governed by irresponsible policies based on emotion; had weakened the Shah and the Iranian Army to a dangerous degree; and had cooperated closely with the Tudeh (Communist) Party of Iran. (emphases mine)

The quotation lists a long series of wrongs committed by Mossadeh’s government, wrongs that qualified his government for a coup attempt. The quotation is important because it is part of an internal history. In other words, Wilber is speaking to colleagues, and it is perhaps safe to assume that he is not manipulating (using propaganda against) them. In this objective- and disinterested-sounding assessment, the history argues in effect that Mossadegh could not be reached through persuasion because his positions were "irresponsible" and
“based on emotion” and that therefore CIA had no choice but to resort to force. As I will show, however, this assessment of Mossadegh is in fundamental agreement with Wilber’s assessment of Iranians in general when for example he points out that Iranians are known for acting “illogically” for making irrational decisions.

In this chapter, I will refer to the reasons that Wilber and Risen offer for the coup as rationalizations because although their documents are indeed exemplary products of IDCT, I believe that both documents represent the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of their authors. Therefore, I cannot call the support they offer to prop up their preposterous claims as bona fide “reasons.” What the history describes is a gross act of injustice, a trampling on international laws, principles of democracy, and the lives and feelings of two generations of Iranians. Risen’s article—while conforming to the journalists’ “Statement of Principles” and IDCT skills—presents Wilber’s history without recognizing its sinister and immoral nature. Wilber’s “rational” worldview is terrifyingly close to that held by German officials responsible for the Holocaust. And, regrettably, Risen’s article, despite its immaculate observance of the “Statement,” fails to recognize the moral bankruptcy of Wilber’s history for the same reasons that keep Wilber from recognizing the implications of his own ideas. Both authors—despite Wilber’s self-proclaimed “intensive knowledge of the country” and Risen’s attempts at responsible reportage—fail to imagine the lives of the affected people.

That Wilber’s history is brimful with enormous, barely concealed prejudices, gaping omissions, and misrepresentations is a reflection of the vested interests of the political and governmental organizations for which he worked. British documents—as cited by Mark Curtis in “A ‘great venture’: overthrowing the government of Iran” published in issue number 30 of *Lobster: The Journal of Parapolitics*—are also full of rationalizations for the coup:

Britain’s Ambassador in Tehran commented that ‘it is so important to prevent the Persians from destroying their main source of revenue... by trying to run it themselves... The need for Persia is not to run the industry for herself (which she cannot do) but to profit from the technical ability of the West’. . . . The British Minister of Fuel and Power explained that ‘in the case of a mineral like oil [the Iranians] are of course morally entitled to a royalty’ but to say ‘that
morally they are entitled to 50%, or... even more of the profits of enterprises to which they have made no contribution whatever, is bunk, and ought to be shown to be bunk'.18

A large part of this section will be dedicated to exposing the biases from which the documents I am examining suffer. My goal in doing so is not to prove that what the British or the American governments did was wrong. Doing so is too easy, and besides, has already been done comprehensively in Farhad Diba’s *Mohammad Mossadegh: A Political Biography*, Sepehr Zabih’s *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution*, Homa Katouzian’s *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, and James Bill and William Rogers’s *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil*, among others, in English. What is more, the American and, even more so, the British governments have been rather candid about their activities. The British government officials of the time displayed a kind of brazen openness about their contempt for other countries that would be worth studying in its own right. For example, after Iran had nationalized the oil industry, Curtis writes, “the Chiefs of Staff [British] observed that ‘the simplest method of bringing the Persians to heel might well be simply to stop the production and export of oil,’” and Curtis describes Winston Churchill’s shift “only a few months into his term” from urging military action against Iran to a more patient policy by quoting Churchill as having said, “‘by sitting still on the safety valve and showing no weariness we are gradually getting them [Iranians] into submission.’” From the very outset for the British, the goal of installing “a more reasonable government” (Curtis quotes the British Foreign Secretary Eden) in Iran from the very beginning had meant quite openly an authoritarian regime:

With 1952 came the British preference for 'a non-communist coup d'etat preferably in the name of the Shah. This would mean an authoritarian regime', the embassy in Tehran noted. On 28 January the Foreign Office declared that 'the only hope of getting rid of Dr. Mussadiq lies in a coup d'etat, provided always a strong man can be found equal to the task'. It also observed that the Ambassador in Iran believed that this 'strong man' would 'rule in the name of the Shah'. 'Such a dictator', the Foreign Office continued, expressing the Ambassador's preference, 'would carry out the necessary administrative and economic reforms and settle the oil question on reasonable terms'. In fact, the Ambassador 'seems to favour the
authoritarian coup d'etat'. 'An oil settlement to have any chance of acceptance by Dr. Musaddiq would no doubt mean an appreciable departure from our principles', the Foreign Office noted. It then stated who such a reasonable new leader might be: General Zahidi, who was to become the Prime Minister after the coup.

In these secret communications among colleagues, the British government is prepared to install an authoritarian government in Iran, "a strongman," but of course this change of government should come about for the good of Iranians (so that Iran can carry out the "necessary administrative and economic reforms"). It will be one of the goals of this chapter to show the source of error in IDCT that permits such crass rationalizations by first foregrounding the glaring countervailing evidence against the claims made in the history so as to argue that the absence of this evidence in Risen's document (also in Wilber's) indicates deeper problems with the very intellectual tool used: critical thinking as institutionally defined.

A Glance at the Glare

In the following sections, I will look at three areas in which the countervailing evidence against the claims made by Wilber and Risen is glaring. At every step I will point out the easy availability of such evidence. My aim is not to argue against those claims but to examine why such glaring errors were not seen.  

Iran’s Anti-colonialism Drive or Decline of the British Empire?

Both the article by Risen and the history by Wilber claim that Mossadegh and Iran failed to reach an oil settlement with Great Britain. In the summary preceding the history, Wilber writes,

By the end of 1952, it had become clear that the Mossadeq government in Iran was incapable of reaching an oil settlement with interested Western countries.

And Risen writes in his article that Mossadegh was

An ardent nationalist... hailed as a hero for his fiery speeches on the evils of British control of Iran’s oil industry... [who] became a prisoner of his own nationalism, unable to reach an oil compromise [with Britain]...
Risen’s reporting implicitly takes for granted the reasonableness and fair-mindedness of the British with whom Iranians, in throes of anti-colonialism and nationalism, were “incapable of reaching an oil settlement.” Without even getting into the complex details of the negotiations between Great Britain and Iran, a cursory look at the history of the political and economic conditions in Great Britain at the time shows that perhaps it was Great Britain that was unable to reach a settlement.

Hall and Albion in *A History of England and the British Empire* write that soon after the Potsdam Conference, “A sombre realization came over Englishmen . . . [namely, that] London was now overshadowed in influence by both Washington and Moscow” (1005). According to Hall and Albion, victory in the war had brought such “stress and strain to Britain” that “The years following the defeat of Napoleon in 1915 and of the Germans in 1918 were, at their worst, but mild previews of the sheer dreariness that had to be endured after World War II” (1009).

During World War II, Britain was running into deficits, and by 1945, it owed other countries—inside and outside the Commonwealth—more than they owed it (1010). One debilitating consequence of the financial burdens of World War II was the liquidation of the Victorian heritage—the return on overseas investments made during the height of the British Empire—which had for years made up the difference between imports and exports. Because of this financial strain the British had to dispense with large parts of their military including the symbol of British world dominance, the Royal Navy. To pay for its imports, the government had to take extreme measures, such as attempting to export “at 175 percent of the 1938 rate,” devaluing the pound against the dollar in 1949, helping farmers with domestic food production, continuing war-time food and clothing rationing, heavily taxing luxury items, curtailing the amount of money travelers could take out of the country, and repeatedly appealing to Washington for money (1018). “During these dismal postwar years,” Hall and Albion write, the governing Labor Party undertook and continued an “ambitious nationalization program, which took over finance, coal, steel” (1019), and “the overseas communication field and transportation” (1020). These extremely difficult economic times
coincided with the full disintegration of the British Empire, a disintegration that entailed a serious blow to British identity. Hall and Albion write,

Britain found that now she had to be content with second place among the democratic nations arrayed against these Communist threats. Leadership had definitely passed to the United States, which alone had the wealth and power to face the Russians on something like equal terms. It was not easy for a nation like Britain to accept that secondary role, especially when her leaders could remember when she herself had so recently exercised commanding influence. (1039)

It was in this context that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company owning some of the “greatest refineries in the world” was running into difficulties with the Iranian government, which demanded that the company pay royalties comparable to those paid by American companies in Saudi Arabia (1047). The oil nationalization movement in Iran was one of “Britain’s worst difficulties” (1046) and along with British troubles in Egypt over Suez Canal led to a conservative backlash that returned Winston Churchill to power in 1951 (1052).

The point of this exercise in explaining the historical circumstances surrounding the coup is not to refute Risen and Wilber’s claim that it was the irrational nationalist and anticolonial mood in Iran that prevented the reaching of an agreement with the British government. Nor is my goal to point out that the evidence overwhelmingly supports the explanation that it was the financial hardships of post-War Britain and the post-imperialist anxieties of the British—if not their inferiority complexes—that prevented the governments of Churchill and Attlee to reach a settlement with Iran. Rather, I wish to show that Risen and Wilber’s claim is blatantly false. Hall and Albion’s history was written in 1953, the year of the coup. Contemporary histories of the United Kingdom are far more critical of the imperialistic policies of the British government of the time. This information is widely available. In fact, it is standard.

Had Risen examined his assumption of the Iranian intransigence, he would have had to examine the details of the negotiations, and he would have discovered that the American government itself believed the original oil concession was extremely unfair, that Iran had offered to compensate the British for their investments and equipment (according to the
norms adopted by European governments such as that in Britain itself when nationalizing industries), that the British had pressed a lawsuit against Iran in the International Court of Justice and lost the suit, that the explicit position of the British government in its discussions with Iran was that Britain should be compensated for the lost potential revenues from oil (that is, for the unextracted oil), etc. 23

Mossadegh’s Depiction by Risen and Wilber

The next erroneous assumption I will examine is Mossadegh’s depiction by both Wilber and Risen. Again, the point of this analysis is not that an error in judgment was made but that this error in judgment is glaring. As mentioned, in the summary preceding his history, Wilber describes Mossadegh’s faults:

By the end of 1952, it had become clear that the Mossadeq government in Iran was incapable of reaching an oil settlement with interested Western countries; was reaching a dangerous and advanced stage of illegal deficit financing; was disregarding the Iranian constitution in prolonging Premier Mohammed Mossadeq’s tenure of office; was motivated mainly by Mossadeq’s desire for personal power; was governed by irresponsible policies based on emotion; had weakened the Shah and the Iranian Army to a dangerous degree; and had cooperated closely with the Tudeh (Communist) Party of Iran.

Risen’s article agrees with Wilber’s assessment of Mossadegh’s faults. Mossadegh, Risen’s article reports, was

An ardent nationalist . . . an eccentric European-educated lawyer in his early 70’s, prone to tears and outbursts . . . . was hailed as a hero for his fiery speeches on the evils of British control of Iran’s oil industry . . . . became a prisoner of his own nationalism, unable to reach an oil compromise [with Britain] . . . . was revered despite his odd mannerisms, which included conducting business in bed in gray woolen pajamas, weeping publicly and complaining perpetually of poor health . . . . amassed power . . . . displayed a streak of authoritarianism . . . . [and] By the time the royalist coup overthrew him after a few chaotic days, he had alienated many landowners, clerics, and merchants.

Although one conducted by a respected scholar of Iranian culture and the other by a journalist working for the NYT, the standard-bearer of American journalism, both documents
offer assessments that are singularly flawed. Mossadegh, as might be guessed, is a major political figure in the recent history of Iran. Because of the censorship before and after the 1979 revolution in Iran, many books on Mossadegh and the oil-nationalization movements have been published outside Iran. More recently there have been several books published on the subject in English (see the partial list under The Second Document in this chapter). In addition, the exiled members of the National Front of Iran, a once-powerful grouping of political parties supporting Mossadegh in Iran, are present on the Web with information on Mossadegh (see for example “The Biography of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh by P. Kian). A brief look at any of those sources would have given Risen a very different picture. Those sources depict Mossadegh as a prodemocratic politician working under brutal dictatorships that posed immediate dangers to proponents of views such as his. Those sources would also have revealed his life-long stomach ulcer and lung cancer, his record of probity, his popularity, his tolerance of views critical of him even in times of crisis (say, while foreign powers were actively trying to overthrow his government), his insistence that the military be at the service of the civil authorities, his sense of responsibility and commitment to the public, etc. Homa Katouzian in Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran draws the gruesome political landscape in which Mossadegh worked and gives the names of the long list of politicians—many of them Mossadegh’s relatives and close friends—who were intimidated, assassinated, exiled, imprisoned, tortured, or executed. Mossadegh himself was imprisoned, exiled, and put under house arrest. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a biography of Mossadegh. But speaking to power with courage, especially when that power is absolute, invites respect, but speaking of democracy, tolerance, and integrity to that absolute power should really invoke admiration, not ridicule.

In contrast to the way it characterizes Mossadegh, Risen’s article contains a photograph of a bearded Wilber in Arab headcover—suggesting Laurence of Arabia and describes Wilber as “old-school C.I.A., a Princetonian and a Middle East architecture expert. .. the ‘gentleman spy’.” The article says of Wilber that “although he would excel in academia, at the agency being part-time was a handicap.” Wilber was thus promoted only once after the coup. On his last day, Risen quotes Wilber as saying, “I was ushered down to
the lobby by a young secretary, turned over my badge to her and left.” The article hints not so subtly that Wilber had died (1997) unappreciated. The glaring irony of this position is entirely missed on Risen. Mossadegh was the legal and democratically elected prime minister of Iran, who like Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi worked and suffered in the cause of helping free his tyrannized and poverty-stricken people. Wilber was a CIA officer who helped the American government commit an atrocious international crime and whose actions led to systematic oppression of Iranians.

Manipulation of the Media

The last glaring preconception is about Risen’s characterization of the efforts of the CIA to manipulate the American media. Risen dedicates a section to examining whether those efforts were successful. He writes that the CIA used “contacts at The Associated Press to put on the news wire a statement from Tehran about royal decrees that the CIA itself had written,” “placed a CIA study in Newsweek, ‘using the normal channel of desk officer to journalist’,” and “drove two American reporters to a house outside Tehran where they were shown the Shah’s decrees dismissing the prime minister.” He recognizes that “Western correspondents in Iran and Washington never reported that some of the unrest had been stage-managed by CIA agents posing as Communists,” in effect acknowledging that the CIA was creating the news events to be covered by reporters. And finally, he accepts that the journalists of the time “gave little emphasis to accurate contemporaneous reports in Iranian newspapers and on the Moscow radio asserting that Western powers were secretly arranging the Shah’s return to power” because

It was just eight years after the end of World War II, which left American journalists with a sense of national interest framed by six years of confrontation between the Allies and the Axis. The front pages of Western newspapers were dominated by articles about the new global confrontation with the Soviet Union, about Moscow’s prowess in developing nuclear weapons and about Congressional allegations of ‘Red’ influence in Washington.

Yet after mentioning this array of distressing facts Risen concludes that “An analysis of the press coverage shows that American journalists filed straightforward, factual
dispatches that prominently mentioned the role of Iran’s Communists in street violence leading up to the coup.” And his evidence is Wilber’s stated belief in the history that “the Iran operation exposed the agency’s shortcomings in manipulating the American press. The C.I.A. ‘lacked contacts capable of placing material so that the American publisher was unwitting as to its source’.” For Risen in other words, the fact that CIA was creating news at the source, that is, persuading journalists to believe that the conditions in Iran were other than they actually were does not count as manipulating the media. But there are rather glaring pieces of evidence of even the type of manipulation that Risen considers genuine. For example, Newsweek articles of the time about Iran—with titles such as “Powerful ‘Imbecile’,” “Iran: Reds . . . . . . Taking Over,” and “Crackdown in the Middle East: Red-Inspired Iranians Retreat”—caricaturing “Old Mossy” and his government—are crude propaganda pieces (see next endnote28). And Risen really should have looked at some other news outlets of the time if for no other reason than for the fact that the years 1950-1953 are among the worst years of American journalism, which was pressured by the U.S. government during the heyday of McCarthyism to defame hundreds of innocent citizens who were stripped of citizenship, deported, imprisoned, or barred from leaving the country.

Who Cares about Iranians

A closer look at any of the three preconceptions underlying the claims in the two documents would have pointed to a historical background radically different from the one they actually used.29 For example, Risen might have come to see that 1953 coup ended Iran’s second experiment with democracy. The first experiment—the long and bloody Constitutional Revolution of 1906 which forced the absolute ruler of the time to grant Iranians a constitution and a parliament—was ended with a coup in 1921 by Reza Shah, who was handpicked by the British government to protect its oil and mercantile interests in southern Iran. Reza Shah suppressed the media and the parliament and initiated a series of reforms to industrialize Iran. But during World War II, although he declared neutrality, the Allies invaded Iran to build “the Victory Bridge” for carrying war materiel to the Soviet Union. The invasion—despite the ensuing massive famine that my parents remember
vividly—brought about an end to the rule of Reza Shah, who, although having come to power with the help of Britain, had developed pro-German sentiments and had hired German consultants. His forced abdication and exile in 1941 brought about a measure of democracy to Iran. The next king, Mohammad Reza Shah, was young and somewhat open to democracy. But having been freed from an oppressive government, Iranians had to learn how to rule themselves again, and the pre-coup democracy was extremely fragile.

The effects of the coup were horrendous, and since the involvement of the U.S. government in the 1953 coup was long known in Iran, hatred against the United States not only for being involved in the coup but also for its continued support of the Shah’s repressive regime for the next 26 years was so deep that by 1979 the greatest credential any political group could bring to the people was its degree of anti-Americanism. Aside from the atrocities committed between 1953 and 1979, perhaps the worst effect of the coup and the ensuing government of the Shah was that yet another generation of Iranians was deprived of experience in democracy. Political groupings distrusted each other. And democratic institutions were not in place to safeguard freedoms. During the American-hostage crisis—which brought down the provisional government in Iran—and after Iraq attacked Iran in 1980, the political struggle within Iran became extremely violent. The president was impeached and ousted by the parliament. His supporters were arrested; many were executed. The supporters fought back, killing the new president, his prime minister, almost all of his cabinet, and the top layer of generals. The government then began a type of thorough sweep of the opposition that people had not seen even during the Shah’s government. The need to mobilize for war and the growing knowledge that the United States was helping Iraq’s rearmament—including but by no means limited to chemical weapons30—gave the government a sweeping mandate for suppressing dissent. People were urged to watch and to report on each other’s activities. All dissenting parties were banned. Newspapers were closed. In short, oppression resettled in Iran. And this renewed oppression resulted in the exodus of more than three million Iranians, among them my family.

But all this and a great deal more are completely absent from Risen’s and Wilber’s documents. Risen, in particular, would have found strong evidence against the basic
assumptions of the history. But he never looked. Why? Issues involving justice or the rights of Iranians to democracy, independence, and freedom from foreign interference in their internal affair must be known to Risen from his high school readings in American history of the revolutionary period. In fact, his analysis shows his familiarity with such issues. For example, he writes that the coup “set the stage for the Islamic revolution in 1979” and that similar coups in other places have “led to . . . long-term animosity toward the United States,” or that “Iran was restive under decades of near-colonial British domination.” But, clearly, Risen does not see Wilbur’s history as depicting a criminal worldview. In other words, Risen offers reasons in support of the conclusions he draws. But there is another set of conclusions supported by different reasons whose weight he markedly fails to recognize. Since he cannot claim that the other set of conclusions were unavailable to him and since he seems to be applying IDCT skills, which are requiring him to be fair, then what is the source of this failure to take into account the weight of the countervailing evidence, a failure that biases his thinking?

My explanation for the source of bias in the article and the history is Risen’s and Wilber’s failure or inability to imagine the consequences of the coup in terms of the emotional experiences of the people affected by the coup, that is, the Iranians. An alternative history and the evidence against the basic assumptions of the history and the article were left unknown to Risen and Wilber because neither really cared about Iran and Iranians.

In the following sections, I will first show that the article and the history both ignore the thoughts and feelings of Iranians. Then I will point out the two documents’ emotional centers of gravity, which I will show to be with the CIA agents. Finally, I will offer another emotional center of gravity for the events that the two documents describe.

The Coup’s Importance to Us, Who Are Separate from Them

The Shah’s restoration to power and the ensuing oppression caused tremendous suffering and despair among Iranians. Risen mentions that Mohammad Reza Shah ruled with an iron hand after the 1953 coup. That iron hand involved the activities of SAVAK, the Shah’s internal intelligence apparatus. According to the Library of Congress Area Studies -
Iran, SAVAK was “Founded under the guidance of U.S. and Israeli intelligence officers in 1957” and had “more than 15,000 full-time personnel and thousands of part-time informants.” The activities of SAVAK included “neutralizing the regime’s opponents” (emphasis mine). SAVAK established “a censorship office ... to monitor journalists, literary figures, and academics throughout the country; it took appropriate measures against those who fell out of line” (emphases mine). “Over the years,” the report goes on,

SAVAK became a law unto itself, having legal authority to arrest and detain suspected persons indefinitely . . . operated its own prisons in Tehran . . . Many of [its] activities were carried out without any institutional checks.

These statements are euphemisms for the oppression—which involved intimidating, threatening, humiliating, imprisoning, torturing, kidnapping, murdering people—that settled on Iran after the coup, and which resulted in a deep hatred of the government and finally ended abruptly in a massive explosion in 1979.

For Risen, Iranians and their actions matter only in so far as they affect the audience, which is considered very different from the Iranians, or Them. Consider the reasons that Risen offers to persuade the audience that the coup is important:

- The coup was the C.I.A.’s “first successful overthrow of a foreign government”;
- “it set the stage for the Islamic revolution of 1979, and for a generation of anti-American hatred in one of the middle east’s most powerful countries”;
- more specifically, the coup had been on the minds of marchers who “went to the American Embassy, took diplomats hostage and declared that they had unmasked a ‘nest of spies’ who had been manipulating Iran for decades”;
- the government of Iran “supported terrorist attacks against American interests largely because of the long American history of supporting the Shah”; and finally,
- the coup had been “the blueprint for a succession of C.I.A. plots to foment coups, and destabilize governments during the cold war.”

All these explanations see the events surrounding the coup strictly in terms of their effect on specific members of the American audience, people who matter. Iran and Iranians have any value whatever only in as far as they affect Americans, in this instance, adversely. Thus Risen

- does not declare with an exclamation that the coup was an illegal and immoral act committed by government officials who are responsible for meeting their
international and moral obligations. Instead, it offers a historical memorabilia: The coup was CIA’s “first successful overthrow of a foreign government.”

- does not say that the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran was against oppressive and tyrannical policies of the United States, policies that if another state had imposed on Americans would have outraged Americans. (That a group of fellow humans were treated by Americans as Iranians were is unimportant if the latter are not part of the former, people with whom we can identify.)
- fails to note that the marchers were probably also thinking about the 26 years of oppression Iranians suffered between the 1953 coup and the 1979 revolution.
- forgets that the long American history of supporting the Shah meant sponsorship of state terrorism on an entire population. And
- uses euphemisms to refer to criminal interference in other countries that invariably led to atrocities—including genocide—like those in Indonesia. 31

In Risen’s article, Iranians are presented as “mobs,” “a crowd of Iranians,” “demonstrators,” or they are presented even more abstractly as “the mood on the streets.” They do show signs of life in the article when it describes the initial failure of the coup. The article faithfully reports Wilber’s admission that the agents were startled when “pro-Shah crowds” took to the streets and that “things were now moving far too quickly for the agency to manage.” But there is a tone of surprise evident in both the article and the history: the Iranians were showing signs of volition.

If Risen’s disregard of Iranians is indirect and veiled, Wilber’s contempt is direct and clearly articulated. In Section III. ESTIMATE OF CHANCES OF SUCCESS OF OPERATIONAL PLAN, which is part of APPENDIX B or “London” Draft of the TPAJAX Operational Plan in the history, the authors offer a brief view of the “Orientals” and the local “assets”:

The preceding material presents a Western-type plan offered for execution by Orientals. However, it was drafted by authors with an intensive knowledge of the country and its people who endeavored to examine and evaluate all the details from the Iranian point of view. Given the recognized incapacity of Iranians to plan or act in a thoroughly logical manner, we would never expect such a plan to be restudied and executed in the local atmosphere like a Western staff operation.
In the same section, the authors lament the problem of security which is a "weakness inherent in the Persian character." And under IV. THE DECISIONS ARE MADE: ACTIVITY BEGINS of the history itself, Wilber writes,

It was felt that every effort should be made to bring the rather long-winded and often illogical Persians into a position where each one knew exactly what specific action was required of him. The soundness of this feeling was demonstrated when the failure of the Persians to maintain security resulted in the initial breakdown.

But the history and the article are not about Iranians at all. As I will show in the next section, the Iranians are the foil for the real heroes of the two narratives, the CIA agents.

The Center of Gravity of the History and the Article

Wilber’s history is written in the distant, objective-sounding language of science. For example, Wilber never refers to himself as “I” or “me” but in the third person as Dr. Donald N. Wilber or Dr. Wilber. And Risen uses the professional language of journalism. But the emotional center of gravity of both documents is with the C.I.A. agents. At the heart of both documents is a dramatic narrative. There is some information on the scene (which includes the Iranians), but the excitement in both the article and the history comes when the planning and implementation stages of the coup are described.

The article and the history narrate that the organizers had to, among other things, conduct a preliminary study, coordinate the works of the British and American planners, persuade the American government, select the Western agents, make persistent, repeated attempts at persuading the Shah, and secure and pay Iranian operatives. The events of the coup are narrated in great detail as well: the first move by the plotters, its initial failure, unsuccessful attempts at regrouping and salvaging the operation, and finally the “startling” news both of the unplanned competence of the Iranian operatives and of the signs of seemingly impromptu support for the coup on the streets. In fact, the documents describe not only the drama (the hard work, failures, and successes of the plotters) but also the feelings of the agents in the headquarters in Tehran. When the coup seemed to be failing, the article quotes from the history: “Headquarters spent a day featured by depression and despair.” And when against their expectations, “news of the coup’s success arrived,” the report quotes the
history, it "seemed like a bad joke, in view of the depression that still hung on from the day before." And the high point, ending section IV: THE SUCCESS, reads:

"It was a day that should never have ended," the C.I.A.'s secret history said, describing Aug. 19, 1953. "For it carried with it such a sense of excitement, of satisfaction and of jubilation that it is doubtful whether any other can come up to it."

Both documents, thus, are interested in the feelings and activities of the operators. Iranians enter the scene only in terms of how they fulfilled the predictions made about them or the dangers to which they could have exposed the operators.

Being an Interested Party

Using IDCT skills, I have questioned the assumptions of the two documents and discovered glaring biases in both documents. But my success in using such thinking is due to my being anything but a disinterested third party. I am deeply interested in the events that the two documents describe because my life was affected by those events. I already knew the inaccuracy of some of the statements, the absence of some other pieces of key information, etc. in the two documents. And as I read them, I feel very angry, frustrated, and somewhat despondent (as I will explain towards the end of this chapter). The historical and political events that Risen and Wilber describe and those events I have described to contextualize their writings had very real effects on my life and the lives of the members of my family.

During Reza Shah's government, my grandfather, who had a small cobbler's shop and died before I was born, spent several months in prison in the early 1940s for having posted tangentially political fliers. Reza Shah's prisons were infamous. I recall having nightmares as a child after being told by relatives that inmates used to be injected with air or mock executed. I was also told that my grandmother, an illiterate woman away from her relatives and her province and raising five children, would go daily to the prison and entreat the officials to release my grandfather. It is something of a legend in my family that my grandmother had, on one occasion out of sheer desperation, threatened to kill my father if my grandfather was not released.32 Once released, my grandfather was a broken man suffering from epilepsy. He died at 40 in his cobbler's shop. Iran is a patriarchal society. My
grandmother never remarried, and her family lived in abject poverty till all the children were married. When the British decided to bring Reza Shah to power and to support his brutalities, I am confident that they did not give any thought to the experiences of my grandmother or grandfather or the countless others who were to suffer under a politically repressive regime.

After the American-organized and -sponsored 1953 coup, the Iranian army, which then had many idealistic officers, was soon after the coup cowed into submission. All during my childhood, my father, an army officer, had stomach ulcers. And for years after the 1979 revolution in Iran, even though his ulcer improved, he suffered from depression. The family knew of course for years, but he told me recently he believes the depression came from years of living in fear of being discovered by SAVAK for his left-leaning sympathies. I remember my mother telling me not to talk in public about what we talked about at home and my father telling me that a certain person coming to our house as a friend of the family was really a government agent sent to check on us. As I got older, I began to notice that on certain topics adults spoke in hushed tones, that my parents were silent when I mentioned what I had learned at school about the Shah’s accomplishments for Iran. No one told me till the 1979 revolution what the source of all the fear was. But I do remember that the silence was a silence of unspeakable horrors (Iranian poets have written about this fear extensively). Only after the revolution did I understand the character of the horror. During the 26 years after the coup, tens of thousands of people had been exiled, imprisoned, tortured, and executed. A great number had simply disappeared. During the revolution, friends and relatives recounted their experiences with the government. A lawyer friend of the family was summoned to SAVAK to be told to stop his activities or have his wife raped. Right around the revolution, an illegal copy of the experiences of Ashraf Dehghan, a member of an underground militant group, circulated in the country. The book, written after her daring escape from prison, described the prison conditions and the brutality of the torture that she and other inmates suffered. After the revolution and after SAVAK as an organization had ceased to function, my parents bought a house near one of the expansive compounds of former SAVAK.
house was two buildings away from the compound, and from the roof I could see the two windowless five-story-high concrete buildings. ³³

The 1979 revolution happened when I was 13, and I remember it well. Despite curfews and martial laws, people continued to demonstrate. And after months of demonstrations in which thousands of people were killed, the Shah left and Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile. Monarchy finally collapsed a few weeks after Khomeini’s return in bloody street battles with the military. During the repression shortly after the revolution, I remember, on my way to school, walking by the demolished houses of families of opposition groups. Beaten and tortured heads of various parties—some of them old men from Mossadegh’s time who had survived the Shah—were forced to recant their political views on television before being executed. My family knows some families who were imprisoned and executed during that time.

The war with Iraq, which followed immediately after the 1979 revolution, touched the lives of all Iranians. In my own family, four of my cousins, one uncle, a great many other more distant relatives took part in the war. One of my close cousins was killed, and two other cousins were wounded in the war. The son of one of my cousins, who was wounded in the war, lost two uncles and a grandfather in the war. And during the war millions of Iranian, including my family, left Iran.

The post-revolution oppression that Iranians endured had very real consequences. I come from a middle-class, well-educated Iranian family. My parents used to have several friends outside Iran. So in a sense, my circumstances are privileged compared with the circumstances of hundreds of thousands of other Iranians whose lives were directly affected by oppression. But the price that even my family paid was extremely heavy. My parents lost a house they had bought as investment, and they sold their remaining house to send me out of Iran. I was lucky in the I was able to use a loophole in the new constitution to get out of Iran legally. Two of my cousins had been smuggled out of Iran into Pakistan, and then smuggled again to Spain, then to Mexico, and finally to the U.S. I was seventeen; my departure from Iran was a heart-wrenching but definite divorce from my larger family, and from my parents
for several years. And in the long run my leaving Iran meant leaving my parents behind in extreme necessity and danger.

My father accompanied me to West Germany. There he tried to get a visa for me from the American consulate in Stuttgart. He was—I found out many years later—on the verge of a nervous breakdown, which occurred not long after. Because of the hostage crisis and because the United States was by then supporting Iraq in war against Iran, it was extremely difficult for Iranians to get visas. And my father was not really in a shape to negotiate with consulate officials. Finally, he left me with a relative of a friend and went back to my mother in Iran.

I stayed two years in West Germany, all the time fighting the West German government, which wanted to deport me to keep the number of immigrants in the country within quota. I didn’t want to apply for asylum so that I didn’t have to burn my bridges in case I wanted to go back to Iran. Eventually, it became clear, however, that I either had to go back to Iran or come to the United States as a refugee. Going back to Iran was unacceptable to my parents, so I applied for asylum to the United States. Again, unlike many other Iranians I was lucky in that my sister was a permanent resident of the United States. And after some haggling, right before my legal options for residency in West Germany were about to be exhausted, I was granted political asylum by the United States. In my letter of application for asylum, I made a point of writing that my family and I were in some trouble in Iran because of our prodemocratic political outlooks and activities. During my two years of stay in West Germany, I had run some roots. And accepting the grant of asylum meant I had to leave my girlfriend. There was no point in arguing with German or American governments. In the bigger scheme of things—for example, West Germany’s quota policies and the United States’s policy of not giving unskilled workers like my girlfriend employment visas—my or my girlfriend’s feelings didn’t matter. I left her—feeling a good measure deader as a result—because my parents were in danger.

I had my most painful experiences after I arrived in Ames in November of 1985, especially after I enrolled at Iowa State University in 1986. Unlike the buildings of Tehran University, the buildings at ISU had no bullet holes in them. Unlike the campus of Goethe
University in Frankfurt, no students were handing out alternative newspapers or addressing students from benches and podiums. My dorm-floor friends couldn’t wait to drink themselves sick over the weekend. And music in the bars was so loud that only the healthy and the vigorous could get a few words across the table. Overall, my fellow freshmen were young and careless. Most didn’t know where Iran was; they didn’t know that United States and Iran were at war, that the United States was helping Iraq and allowing it to arm itself with chemical and biological weapons. They didn’t know about the American hostage crisis in Tehran a few years back, let alone the 1953 coup against Mossadegh. They didn’t know much about the American history or about certain not-so-minute details of their own government. In fact, they weren’t interested in politics, world or national affairs, or the affairs of the State of Iowa or of Iowa State University. They had little interest in reading or discussing books. From what I could gather, they were interested in sex, parties, alcohol, sports, movies, arcade games, TV shows, and perhaps their future jobs in that order.

With few exceptions, the faculty members I met were also in the dark about the goings-on in Iran. Again, no one knew that Iraq was using chemical weapons on Iranian soldiers, that the United States was involved in the rearmament of Iraq, that Iraq had attacked Iran, or that in general a huge war of attrition reminiscent of World War I involving millions of soldiers was going on between Iran and Iraq. Even fewer knew about the American-staged 1953 coup in Iran.

American media had been nearly silent about the Iran-Iraq War and the extent of American involvement. In the “Chronology of State Use and Biological and Chemical Weapons Control,” the Center for Nonproliferation Studies of Monterey Institute of International Studies registers the following uses of chemical weapons between 1983 and 1988:

- August, 1983 – Iraq begins using chemical weapons (mustard gas), in Iran-Iraq War.
- 1984 – First ever use of nerve agent tabun on the battlefield, by Iraq during Iran-Iraq War.

Anthony H. Cordesman in “Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq” reports that Iraq used chemical weapons on Iranian soldiers and Kurdish civilians on August 1983, October-November 1983, and March 1988. Iraq used chemical weapons on Iranian soldiers on February-March 1984, March 1984, March 1985, February 1986, December 1986, April 1987, and October 1987. The report also estimates that the use of chemical weapons resulted in at least 25,000 casualties (Center for Strategic and International Studies). The year 1987 was the year in which Iraq began extensive use of chemical weapons on Iranian soldiers and intensified its targeting of Iranian cities with Scud missiles. I was learning from the foreign news media that Iraq had made veiled threats to use unconventional weapons on Iranian cities.

Iran was doing extremely poorly in the war. The extensive use of chemical weapons had severely demoralized the army. The conditions in Iran seemed hopelessly dangerous. My relatives in Iran and Iranians in the United States were telling me that Tehran had on several occasions come to a complete standstill and that people had taken to the hills and plains around the city to escape missile attacks.

In this narrative, I have left out many important events. And of course the consequences of the coup and the revolution have not ended; they are daily lived by me, my family, and millions of Iranians in and outside Iran. My purpose in presenting this section is to offer an emotional center of gravity that is absent from Risen’s and Wilber’s documents. The absence of that emotional center in the document—which is similar to the blank wall of incomprehension I have encountered in many of my professors and fellow students at Iowa State—angers me because that absence is a dismissal of my value as a human being.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I examined two documents that I think exemplify the problem I find in the institutional definition of critical thinking. Wilber’s history reports that the British and American governments had policy objectives that were against the wishes of Iranians and
their government. He presents the views of the American and British governments thoroughly. The views of the Iranian government are presented only in so far as they affect the policy goals of the British and American governments. And almost five decades later, Risen of the NYT adopts the same framework from which to view the coup. His article selects an aspect of an issue of importance to Americans—the roots of U.S.-Iran Relations as described in Wilber’s history of the 1953 coup—offers a fair summary of the key points of the history, and provides a context for readers that adopts the basic assumptions of Wilber’s history.

I showed some of the glaring countervailing evidence against the basic assumptions of the two documents. In my examinations of the documents, I tried to keep my focus on the out-and-out obviousness of that countervailing evidence. Aside from questions such as the implications of the coup in terms of the Charter of the United Nations, Wilber’s and Risen’s documents are based on key assumptions that I argued were either supported by extremely flimsy evidence or not supported at all. Some of those key assumptions were (a) Risen and Wilber’s unquestioned claim that Iran’s government was unable to reach a settlement with the British government, (b) Risen and Wilber’s claim that the Shah had a purported pathological fear of British intrigue, (c) Risen and Wilber’s depictions of Mossadegh, and (d) Risen and Wilber’s claim that the media was not manipulated by the CIA during the events surrounding the coup.

Since the countervailing evidence against those assumptions is not only all too obvious but also readily available, I contend that the absence of such evidence in the documents is not by accident. At least behind Risen’s article stands the weight and credibility of the NYT, whose editors had cleared the article for publication.

Risen’s article does try to keep a distance (that is, not taking sides) from Wilber’s history and tries to keep Risen’s prejudices of the coup historian (Wilber) at bay. It also tries to pay attention to the many sides of the issue. Nevertheless, the article fails almost entirely to give the public the bare minimum it needs to evaluate the significance of the history, and Risen ends up presenting the history as an entertaining spy novel. The reason for this failure is that one set of views—that of the Iranian public—receives short shrift because Risen either
refuses or is unable to imagine and value the emotion-infused experiences of the Iranians who were directly affected by what the history and the article describe. Instead, his review of the real-life “spy novel” describes the emotional experiences of the perpetrators of an international crime, which resulted in indescribable pain and suffering for millions of Iranians.

Wilber’s reasoning suffers from the same ill as Risen’s does; it is only through failing to imagine the lived experiences of the people affected by the coup that the idea of the coup could have even been entertained by him. Of course, it can be argued that Wilber was merely a planner and implementer. The policy decisions were made by American elected officials. In other words, there is a division of labor at work here that seems to relieve Wilber of the responsibility for making “good” moral and intellectual choices. In Chapter 4, I will argue that one of the main characteristics of IDCT is that it is designed to relieve the thinker of empathizing with humans marked as inferior.

Applying IDCT excuses and even permits Risen and Wilber not to care about Iranians. Not caring about Iranians, Risen and Wilber fail to give the proper weight to the views of Iranians. With that failure, the deck cannot but be stacked. With the emotional experiences of the people already out of the picture, any atrocity can be justified and made palatable to the reader, whether efforts at explaining it away are made or not. The other side, say, the views of Iranians, cannot even begin to be entered in the evaluation because the Iranians are not alive, their experiences and feelings do not matter, and thus their counter arguments carry no weight.

As I pointed out before, IDCT has in fact helped me identify and explore the unexamined assumptions of the two documents. But this helpfulness raises an important issue. Critical thinking as institutionally defined was helpful to me only because I am an interested party; that is, I am someone who (a) was at the receiving end of the effects of the coup and (b) cares about what happened to Iranians. Being emotionally involved, I am motivated not only to learn more about the coup but to right the wrong done to Iranians. The important issue is that this definition seems to be a strong argument for the presence of the
wronged, oppressed, dispossessed, and marginalized people in forums of discussion (personal, national, worldwide, academic, etc.). If these people study critical thinking and are allowed in to the forums, then they can drive their countervailing evidence home forcefully so that their views are not dismissed out of hand.

But there are two problems with this arrangement. First, these people are nowhere near adequately represented at the forums of discussion. Second, the arrangement says nothing about how people in positions of power can understand the views of other people. In other words, is there anything that people who want to understand an issue do to be fair in terms of the incorporation and evaluation of the relevant evidence? Can people be intellectually honest when the “other” side(s) of an issue are not immediately and unignorably present?

Paulo Freire’s response in Pedagogy of the Oppressed is in the negative. Freire’s project does have a place for the anguished oppressor who has acknowledged being an oppressor. The oppressor, Freire writes, should attempt to be in solidarity with the oppressed by refusing to regard “the oppressed as an abstract category” but rather to see the oppressed “as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor” (32). Freire goes on to claim that it is only through risking an act of love that the oppressor can be in solidarity with the oppressed. The oppressor must work with the oppressed to solve the problem of oppression. But in the end, Freire believes that it is the oppressed who can change oppression. He writes,

This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (26)

The oppressor-oppressed duality posited by Freire is problematic, for, although I acknowledge the presence of oppression and of oppressors and of the oppressed, the categories of oppressors and oppressed are too clear-cut to be useful. People’s relationship to society is multilayered. Male workers and their families may be oppressed by the owners of
capital. But such male workers may be oppressors to their wives and children. The oppressors—among whom Freire includes the educated elite—may themselves be at the receiving ends of oppressive policies in their homes, schools, or jobs. I believe that it is possible to evaluate levels of suffering, and I believe further that a term like oppression cannot be applied to, say, members of privileged and wealthy Western societies working in unjust social environments without significant qualifications, given the widespread, abject poverty and misery of multitudes of people elsewhere. But identifying a fully (and unambiguously) oppressed person with whom the anguished oppressor can be in solidarity is a more daunting task than Freire’s simple duality admits. Nel Noddings in Women and Evil offers a similar criticism of Freire’s. She writes,

But even these powerful pedagogies [of the oppressed, among them Freire’s] reflect the traditional views of good and evil in that they divide the world into oppressed and oppressor and counsel that one group must act as “savior” to the other as well as to themselves. These poignant and potentially powerful pedagogies enervate themselves by ignoring the potential positive role of a well-intentioned and reeducated oppressor. (176)

The heart of Noddings’s criticism is that Freire offers no guidance about how the oppressed are supposed to observe his caution that they not “mimic the oppressor as they move toward liberation” (162). As Noddings points out, Freire “does not consider the role of the oppressor in his pedagogy” (162) and thus “cannot suggest positive measures to prevent” the tragic result of the oppressed mimicking the oppressor. Noddings concludes that “there must be a pedagogy of the oppressor as well as a pedagogy of the oppressed” if we want to move beyond simplistic dualisms. And a characteristic of such a pedagogy will be work “with all people of moderate goodwill who have a natural interest in their own well-being” (164).

Drawing on the standpoint of women who have had “responsibility for caring, maintaining, and nurturing” (2), Noddings suggests that the “pedagogy of the oppressor must include at least lessons in mediation, moderation, and sharing” (173).

The institutional definition of critical thinking has helped me identify evidence in support of my claim that Wilber’s history recounts an atrocity and that Risen’s article fails to
recognize this atrocity for what it is. But are people like Wilber and Risen condemned to their prejudices unless they come face to face with an incensed Iranian? More important, given that Freire's simple duality cannot be rejected, I find myself implicated in webs of oppression. At various stages in my life and for various reasons, my family and I made conscious decisions that I should leave Iran and come to the United States, the very country that had been instrumental in creating the political and social conditions in Iran that led to the 1979 revolution.

I consider myself a person of "moderate good will," and yet I find myself implicated. Since I cannot divide the world unambiguously between oppressors and the oppressed, I cannot adopt Freire's solutions to the problem of oppression. In Chapter 3, I will inquire deeper into oppression: its general characteristics, the characteristics of its presence in me, and my relationship to it. My goal will be to tease out the connection between oppression and critical thinking by examining the close connection between the intellectual concept of fairness (or its less popular relative objectivity) and the moral concept of justice. Placing my work within the framework of a version of feminist epistemology theorized by Sandra Harding, I will point out the intellectual aspect of the problem of injustice (and its more drastic form, oppression).
CHAPTER 3. SUFFERING AND OPPRESSION

Review of Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, to illustrate and establish my claims that IDCT not only cannot avoid, prevent, eliminate, or alleviate the effects of oppression but can justify its perpetration, I discussed an unjust act—the 1953 American- and British-sponsored and -organized coup d’état that overthrew the popular and democratically elected prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh, and which restored Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi to dictatorship and widespread oppression. I centered my analysis on two documents: (1) David Risen’s June 18, 2000 NYT article describing and contextualizing the contents of (2) a recently published secret history of the 1953 coup d’état written by Donald N. Wilber—an agent involved in the coup as one of its chief architects—for the internal use of the American Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), the American organization responsible for the coup.

My reasoning was along the following lines.

(a) Both David Risen’s NYT article and Donald Wilber’s CIA history and some of the appendices describing the coup at various stages of planning use IDCT.

(b) Although a disinterested third-party can use IDCT skills to identify and expose the glaring rationalizations riddling the two documents,

(c) such skills could not have possibly helped the NYT journalist, the CIA operational architect, the disinterested third-party to begin to look for the countervailing evidence if none cared about the Iranians in the first place.

(d) Risen and Wilber in fact did not care about Iranians, and their emotional commitment is with the operators, journalists, and the American and British governments or audiences.

(e) I was able to use IDCT skills to point out unexamined prejudices and preconceptions of the two documents. However, I already care about Iranians, having been born in Iran; in other words; IDCT skills were useful to me because I already bring a certain emotional commitment to the issues the documents address.

(f) Thus, I identify the key source of the many errors in the history of the coup by Wilber and the history’s journalistic presentation by Risen is not the standards within IDCT but a key standard left out. With these documents, the source of error is the failure of the authors to imagine the emotional consequences of the coup on the Iranians.

(g) Furthermore, although IDCT skills were useful to me—a member of an oppressed group in the specific context of the U.S.-Iran relations—identifying
both oppressors and the causes and workings of oppression and although perhaps the single most effective check on oppression is the access of the oppressed to venues and discourses of oppressors and the powerful, such skills have the fatal flaw of doing nothing—in the absence of oppressed groups from seats of power—to help oppressors, or those committing unjust acts, _themselves_ have an inkling of the possibility that they oppress. Likewise, such skills cannot help keep those who are oppressed in one context from oppressing others either in other contexts marked by power disparities in which they have power over others or in time when they become freed from being at the receiving end of an oppressive relationship (as happens in revolutions).

So far, I have argued that once the emotion-infused experiences—the humanity—of a party to a dispute are disregarded, it becomes easy to dismiss the views of that party as irrational. Without a commitment to understanding the emotional consequences of ideas on people affected by the ideas, the feelings of people cannot be taken seriously, and the views of those people can simply not be understood or presented. Thus, argumentation and critical thinking become an elaborate—and sometimes not so elaborate—exercise in rationalizing dogma. This observation points to the need for an amendment to IDCT that requires critical thinkers to go out of their way to try to imagine the consequences of their thoughts on the emotion-infused experiences of the people affected by those thoughts.

**Road Map to Chapter 3**

By default, IDCT ignores the views, which are rooted in feelings and values, of certain people. Furthermore it claims that, otherwise, its conclusions will be biased. In this chapter, I will explore the epistemological justifications for IDCT. I will argue that these justifications, as well as the standard of objectivity journalists attempt to follow, is a version of objectivism, a standard of scientific objectivity that among other things requires value-neutrality, and which is discredited and considered obsolete by the major schools of philosophy, continental as well as analytic. Despite its theoretical debunking by philosophers, objectivism has a pervasive and pernicious influence in all fields of knowledge because it remains the commonplace or default epistemological framework. Objectivism is the lens through which schools have taught us to view the world. Its distorting effects can be recognized only with the greatest of efforts but even then perhaps inadequately.
Objectivism and mCT are closely associated with injustice in that objectivism and injustice are closely related epistemological problems. In support of this claim I will (a) offer a philosophical argument for the connection between injustice and thinking, (b) examine several definitions and characteristics of oppression to point out the key characteristic, which has important epistemological implications, and (c) try to show the problems one encounters when one tries to solve the problem of oppression without examining the epistemological issues involved.

Finally, I will review one line of inquiry in the on-going feminist epistemological critique of objectivism. My aim will be (a) to outline the theoretical reasons for the debunking of objectivism as a legitimate standard of knowledge and (b) to point out the most likely reasons for its continued use and presence in science and philosophy despite its philosophical debunking. This critique of objectivism finds the reason for the longevity of objectivism in its suitability for serving the ruling classes in a hierarchical society with embedded age-old oppressive institutions.

In Chapter 4, I will argue that objectivism was designed to help monarchs and aristocrats build and maintain empires abroad and rule disenfranchised subjects at home.

Injustice, Suffering, and Critical Thinking

Suffering and Six Observations About Life

Certain assumptions have been implicit in my arguments against IDCT so far. What follows is my attempt at making some of the key assumptions informing my arguments explicit. I begin with six observations or truisms about life.

First, I do not like to suffer and I avoid experiencing suffering when I can. By suffering I mean experiences of pain or sadness or fear or discomfort.

Second, other beings and specifically, other humans suffer as well, and the causes of their suffering may be identifiable. With that statement, I am committing myself to an external realist position. Without a forthright acceptance of the claims that other humans, too, suffer and that the causes of their suffering may be identifiable objectively, there is no basis whatever for any theory of justice or—as I will explain in the next section—of
knowledge. I believe my knowledge of the fact of the suffering of other beings is in part intuitive, in part experiential. When I accidentally step on my dog's paw, my dog yelps. Does the yelp signify anything? At the sound of the yelp, I cringe, and I look at my dog and apologize. I do the things I do because I believe that my stepping on my dog's paw was painful to my dog and that the yelp was an expression of that pain. I react the way I do because I love my dog and its suffering pains me. But if I didn't believe that my dog is capable of feeling pain or pleasure and that there was no way for me to understand the significance of the yelp, then my motions after hearing the yelp make little sense. And I would have to look for explanations that in effect say I have been conditioned by society to react mechanically in a certain way. But that explanation makes sense only if the much more readily explanatory fact that I reacted in a certain way because I felt—even if the feeling is conditioned—is ignored.

Third, in the presence of the suffering of other living beings, and in particular of humans, I feel moved and impelled to do something about their suffering. I cannot quite explain the causes of that feeling. I do not know, for example, if the feelings I have are biological or cultural, whether they are the results of millions of years of development or evolution of life on earth or the heritage of millennia of the development or evolution of humans. But I know that my ability to imagine the feelings (in general) and the sufferings (in particular) of other beings is at the very root of my humanity—what makes my participation in the society of humans possible—and my most precious characteristic. I can support the claim that I do in fact feel moved and impelled to do something about the suffering of fellow beings with examples only. For example, I recall my feelings when I observed my grandfather's hugging my grandmother's gravestone during her funeral. Or I can cautiously summon the memory of my aunt and her family the night of the news of my cousin's death during the Iran-Iraq War. I consider it as given that all people feel the same way as I do about the suffering of at least some people. I base my assumption on a great number of observations about the tremendous sacrifices that I have seen—and I have read—people make on behalf of at least some people (their children, relatives, friends, and sometimes strangers) to alleviate their suffering.
Fourth, the causes of suffering are not always immediately obvious often because they are outside my immediate presence in terms of either time or location. People enter and exit my life with my knowing very little about them. Some exhibit signs of great distress and unhappiness. I recognize the signs but am ignorant of the causes. Sometimes people’s choices, personal or social, cause suffering for people who do not live where we are. Reza Shah of Iran committed a great many atrocities on various segments of the population to attain and consolidate his power, but for a long time, most Iranians did not mind, appreciating the security he had achieved. A similar example can be said of Germans in their election of Hitler to power. Or of a majority of Americans who elected presidents with clear imperialistic tendencies, which they realized in their relations towards Native Americans and later on towards poorer countries like Iran.

Fifth, the world seems to be infused and saturated with suffering. Here, I will briefly survey the landscape. I believe that a similar survey by anyone will result in similar observations. So looking around me I see that death is, as ever, rampant. My two grandmothers, to both of whom I was close, have died. I never met my father’s father who died when my father was ten. Several of both of my parents’ siblings died in infancy in Iran, and I am aware of the high rate of child mortality in many countries. Disease is widespread as well. My father’s father died of epilepsy. My father suffered of chronic ulcer when I was a child. My father-in-law died of the complications of diabetes. An infant of one of my cousins is born with a congenital condition that prevents him from lifting his head, so he has to lie flat on his back. We have friends and acquaintances who suffer from Parkinson’s, diabetes, various forms of cancer, etc. And as of this writing, AIDS is a major epidemic in many parts of the world, but particularly in Africa. Poverty and starvation are widespread as well although not in my vicinity. My elder relatives remember the World-War-II famine that swept over Iran. And I have seen the images of starving children in parts of Africa and Asia. And as for human-made suffering, the variety is so great that I only mention what occurs to me now and can be mentioned in a short space. Iran and Iraq poured millions of tons of bombs and shells on each other’s soldiers during the Iran-Iraq War. The government of Iraq used chemical weapons on Kurdish villagers and Iranian soldiers. American merchants and
farmers kidnapped, imported, and forced to labor on plantations millions of Africans. Brazilian police have killed “stray” children in urban centers. Historically, billions of people have been forced to make a living by doing monotonous work under unhealthy conditions. Etc.

Last, although it is possible to ignore the immeasurable suffering of others or to arrange life to minimize contact with so much suffering endured by others or to rationalize inaction in the presence of so much suffering, such attitudes and conduct do not eliminate the suffering. The people suffering continue to suffer. For example, regardless of whether we think of it, thousands of children die daily of malnutrition all over the world. I consider this last observation of particular importance in the discussion that follows, because I argue that refusing to see suffering is refusing to think critically.

Assumptions about Thinking and Justice

According to John Dewey in *How We Think*, a problem in the lives of humans, that is, a disharmony with the environment marked by discomfort (72), is the origin of thinking. Dewey writes that humans think reflectively (critically) in order to solve problems. The world, of course, is so full of problems that humans cannot solve all. They cannot even begin to think about solving them all. They can only prioritize and solve the worst. Worse problems are those that are more immediate, certain, and painful. Because the worst, the most urgent problem humans face is suffering, I believe that the most basic and urgent purpose of thinking is to avoid, prevent, remove, or alleviate the consequences of suffering.

In agreement with mainstream historians, I believe humans live communally also in order to increase their chances of survival by avoiding, preventing, eliminating, and alleviating the effects of suffering. Because humans think collaboratively—that is, thinking among humans is linguistic and *communicative*—the goals of critical thinking, communicating, and living communally converge and coincide. This point deserves further elaboration. The background or tacit acknowledgement of the presence and significance of suffering is the underlying assumption of society and collaborative (communicative) thinking. Society presupposes a (perhaps pre-cultural) commitment to solving the problem of
suffering collaboratively. Communal, critical thinking—communicating and reasoning—
aims to solve the suffering of the members of the community.

I will argue shortly that, in this context, injustice is an epistemological problem and
represents a massive failure of critical thinking. Since suffering can be avoided, prevented,
etc. by humans, injustice can be said to have two causes: (1) people who create such
suffering and (2) people who contribute to such suffering through inaction. Cause (2)
includes cause (1) and covers all suffering—natural and human causes—about which
anything whatever can be done. Cause (2) thus indicates a breach of the commitment
underpinning society, but it also implies a failure of the most urgent function of thinking.
Here are some parameters of suffering that may be helpful in illustrating my contentions
here:

A. Some suffering is human-made.
B. Suffering of type A can be self-caused.
C. Suffering of type A can be other-caused.
D. Some suffering of type B can be helped by others (is avoidable, preventable,
removable, mitigable, etc.).
E. Some suffering of type B cannot be helped by others (is not avoidable,
preventable, removable, mitigable, etc.).
F. Some suffering of type C can be helped by others (is avoidable, preventable,
removable, mitigable, etc.).
G. Some suffering of type C cannot be helped by others (is not avoidable,
preventable, removable, mitigable, etc.).
H. Some suffering is non-human-made.
I. Some suffering of type H can be helped by self (is avoidable, preventable,
removable, mitigable, etc.).
J. Some suffering of type H can be helped by others (is avoidable, preventable,
removable, mitigable, etc.).
K. Some suffering of type H cannot be helped (is not avoidable, preventable,
removable, mitigable, etc.).

In this document, I am interested in examining the relationship of thinking to
suffering of type F or J, which can be helped by other humans. When other humans do not
help (avoid, prevent, remove, mitigate, etc.) people who are suffering, the justification is that
the suffering is not of type F or J. When people causing or witnessing suffering recognize
that such suffering is of type F or J but still do not help, they acknowledge that they are
acting unjustly towards those suffering. When the former do not recognize suffering to be of
type F or J, they also do not believe that they are acting unjustly. If we recognize the suffering to be of type F or J, however, we believe that people causing or witnessing the suffering are acting unjustly. Here are some examples of types of suffering that could potentially be categorized as type F or J:

- A people are going hungry, and there is plenty of food that could be distributed but is not being distributed.
- A group of people are forced to accept the burdens of war far more than some other group for no other reason than that the latter have the power and resources to avoid carrying the burden.
- A convicted robber is imprisoned and suffers in prison.
- Some poor people from developing countries who wish to but cannot get an education while there is enough money in the world to educate them.
- Millions of people in Rwanda were slaughtered because they were of a certain height or ethnic background while people in other countries had the military and economic resources to prevent the genocide.
- People in Africa are dying of the AIDS pandemic while people in other countries could have wiped this pandemic by donating a fraction of the money they spend for their conspicuous consumption.
- A woman voluntarily ends her relationship with a man, and the man suffers as a result of this severance.
- Earthquake kills tens of thousands of people in Peru and orphans thousands of children, while people in other parts of the world can send enough supplies and resources to help but they do not.

In a sense, all these types of suffering _can_ be helped. The robber can be freed; money can be sent to developing countries to educate the population; efforts could have been made to prevent the genocide of Rwandans; the woman can volunteer to stay with the man. But when we withhold help, we say that we _cannot_ help. We cannot free the robber because if we don’t punish robbers, we encourage other robbers; we cannot help all people in all places because we have to take care of our own or because we have more urgent uses for our money and medicine or because ultimately Africans should take care of themselves; and the woman cannot stay with the man because by making him happy she makes herself unhappy.

Injustice happens when we refuse to acknowledge that a particular case of suffering is that of type F or J. Once that refusal is made, we withhold help. Each community has a set of stock answers to questions regarding whether particular instances of suffering _can_ be helped (whether such suffering is of type F or J). Those answers constitute the values of that
community and include the rights and responsibilities of its members. Sometimes those answers account for a particular case of suffering, and sometimes they do not. Those answers, however, are also judgements arrived at through collaborative and communal thinking, judgements that are confirmed and reconfirmed through each application of the values to a particular case. My interest in this document is in examining how those judgements are arrived at. Specifically, when suffering of type F or J is judged to be of the other types, critical thinking has failed to do its most urgent job, and I am interested in identifying and examining the source of that failure. In other words, justice and critical thinking (the process of justification) are complementary. To attribute injustice to an act is to attribute poor thinking to people who have committed that act; it is to accuse a group of people of causing or tolerating the suffering of others without justification. In the following sections, in order to find out how obvious forms of gross injustice, say, slavery (but also others), are "justified" in a community (how critical thinking fails to do its job), I will look at several definitions and well-known instances of oppression—a sustained and institutionalized form of injustice. My aim will be to show that sustained and institutionalized forms of injustice—types of oppression—reflect an institutionalized form of critical thinking that routinely fails to do its most urgent job. This institutional form has historical and cultural roots in age-old prejudices of humanity, but it also has epistemological justifications that need to be understood.

**Oppression and Intellect**

Definitions and General Characteristics of *Oppression*

In this section, I will first present several definitions of oppression in *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, a collection of essays that the editors Thomas Mappes and Jane Zembaty maintain are written by "some of the most respected contemporary writers and thinkers." Then, I will try to point out characteristics of oppression that will be important in my explanation of the relationship between injustice and IDCT and my claim that injustice can occur only as a result of the failure of the intellect to do its job, that is, as a result of a lack of intellectual integrity.
Power Disparity

Obviously, one of the marks of oppression\textsuperscript{41} is power disparity. In oppression, one person or group has to have the power to do the oppressing. For example, the Shahs of Iran have always had access to concentrated military power they could use to impose their will on others. The calm social climate of Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign, which I remember from my childhood, was achieved because people were given to understand the implied threat of violence against them. And behind the exploitative colonial policies of western powers, there always existed the threat of brutal military engagements. But power disparity does not define oppression. In other words, it is possible for power disparity to exist unaccompanied by oppression. There are power disparities between parents and children, teachers and students, police officers and civilians, employers and employees, and these relationships are not necessarily oppressive.

Inhibition of Abilities—Young and Frye

In “Five Faces of Oppression,” Iris M. Young, professor of public policy and international affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, notes that “In the most general sense, all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings” (274). And a similar definition is offered in “Oppression” by Marilyn Frye, professor of philosophy at Michigan State University. Frye writes,

\ldots The root of the word ‘oppression’ is the element ‘press’. The press of the crowd; pressed into military service; to press a pair of pants; printing press; press the button. Presses are used to mold things or flatten them or reduce them in bulk, sometimes to reduce them by squeezing out the gasses or liquids in them. Something pressed is something caught between or among forces or barriers which are so related to each other that jointly they restrain, restrict or prevent the thing’s motion or mobility. Mold. Immobilize. Reduce. (270)

The emphasis in both definitions is on the limiting aspect of oppression. Oppression, according to Frye, “is the experience of being caged in” (271). Limitation is another
necessary—but as Kenneth Clatterbaugh argues below, still not sufficient—condition of oppression.

*Mistreatment—Frye*

To the “experience of being caged in” (271, Frye) as a characterizing feature of oppression, Frye adds the criterion of mistreatment, which implies the suffering of those mistreated, to her definition. In exploring the meaning of the seemingly harmless, cultural “ritual” of men opening doors for women, Frye notes that men freely offer the “unneeded or even noisome ‘help’” (272) of opening doors, whereas real help when such help is urgently or clearly needed is not offered. Frye points out that the symbolic value of services such as opening doors—since there is no practical value to be discerned—is revealed when one considers that such services are really

needed by people who are for one reason or another incapacitated—unwell, burdened with parcels, etc. So the message is that women are incapable. The detachment of the acts from the concrete realities of what women need and do not need is a vehicle for the message that women’s actual needs and interests are unimportant or irrelevant. . . . The message of the false helpfulness of male gallantry is female dependence, the invisibility or insignificance of women, and contempt for women. (272)

Thus, according to Frye, oppression of women is a form of mistreatment or unjust treatment—which as in the door-opening ritual can be implied symbolically.

*Systematic Dehumanization—Yamato, Clatterbaugh, and Freire*

In “Something about the Subject Makes It Hard to Name,” Gloria Yamato, a visual/performance/martial artist, notes that oppression is also systematic. She defines oppression as “the systematic, institutionalized mistreatment of one group of people by another for whatever reason” (265). Frye observes that male gallantry towards women implies contempt. Agreeing with Frye and Yamato and relying heavily on Paulo Freire’s views in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Kenneth Clatterbaugh, associate professor of philosophy at the University of Washington, argues in “The Oppression Debate in Sexual Politics” that the limitation-focused definition of oppression should be expanded to include
“the systematic dehumanization of an identifiable target human group” (288, Clatterbaugh’s italics). Freire’s own definition is that “Any situation in which ‘A’ objectively exploits ‘B’ or hinders his or her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression” (37). In oppression, Freire explains further, the oppressed are dehumanized and exploited, or more explicitly, they are not recognized as “persons” (37). Clatterbaugh explains that “to dehumanize a group is to deny that the members of that group possess the complete range of human abilities, needs, wants, and achievements that are valued at that time as important to being a human being” (289). This dehumanization is perhaps best illustrated in the treatment black slaves received during and after the American Revolution. Since the slaves were in fact not freed nationally after the American Revolution despite the unambiguous language of the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the revolution, the slaves were clearly not considered human in the sense of Clatterbaugh. Clatterbaugh argues further that what it means to be human is culturally, socially, and historically defined. In other words, regardless of how being human is defined at a particular historical period in a given culture or society, when a group of people is considered not to fit the definition, that group has been dehumanized.

Forcing People to Do Things Against Their Wishes

Freire’s definition uses the word exploit partly as a synonym for mistreat. But the word exploit denotes further that the oppressed are used for the benefit and advantage of the oppressor. All definitions seem to agree that in oppressive relationships a person or a group of people can—passively or actively, but at any rate systematically, which often means institutionally—compel other people through actual or implied force or violence to do what the former want regardless of the informed wishes of the latter as the latter define those wishes. For example, Ataturk of Turkey and Reza Shah of Iran forcefully removed the headcovers of traditional Moslem women against the explicit wishes of these women. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the clergy forced Westernized women to cover their heads with head scarves against the explicit wishes of many Western educated Iranian women.
The Issue of Suffering

Again, it is a basic (truistic) assumption of all theories of oppression presented and of my argument here that humans do not like to suffer. Definitions of oppression have any meaning if that assumption is kept firmly in mind.

All the definitions of oppression and injustice assume or state that each community or society has an understanding of what humans should be able to and allowed to do—their rights—to avoid unnecessary suffering. Injustice happens when some people by virtue of their greater power deprive some other people of those rights. In the definitions of oppression, mistreatment, limitation, dehumanization of the oppressed all imply disregard for the facts that humans have feelings, desires, and drives; that they are agents, alive, feeling, and autonomous; and that as a result of this disregard and disrespect, the oppressed suffer.

Because of their suffering, the oppressed feel a good deal of resentment and anger towards the oppressor. This anger may be repressed because of fear. And it may explode. For example, despite the Shah of Iran’s huge and brutal secret police, by 1978, many Iranians in Tehran were on the streets facing soldiers with shoot-to-kill orders, chanting songs, in which blood was prominently mentioned. I remember parts of some of the songs and chants. 43

Song 1
Bloodied tulip lying in the dirt
The horizon is howling for your blood.
...
Till from the rage of the masses
From the black night, it rains blood.
...

Song 2
Who is willing to bleed
To get it over with the enemy?
...

Song 3
Martyr! Martyr! Martyr!
...
Your red blood has outraged the world.
Your sadness is forever in the lover's heart.
Spring will bloom because of your blood.
...

Song 4
When I set on the road to freedom
I washed my hands of my life
For freedom
So that I may get to touch
Its gown
So I ran head over heel
In hopes of freedom
...
The shroud of love
Is steeped in blood
You could say
To welcome freedom
...

Song 5
...
The mischief of the wrongdoer
The outrage of the bloodthirsty
Made you turbulent
It is fire that stirs the blood.
...
Blood simmers in the heart
From the outrage of the wrongdoer
Roars the sea of the masses.
...
Martyrs lying in blood
...
forerunners of the dawn.
hail,
Countless hails
from us
forever
To your soil [i.e. grave]
To your clean souls.
The letter of the world
Wrote in blood
Blessed is your name, admired, your memory
Everywhere, forever.

Song 6
Tulip fell to the rock.
What happened?
Tulip turned into blood.
What happened to blood?
It turned insane.
Bloodied tulip,
Insane blood,
This throne will fall.

Thousands of people were killed on the streets before the Shah’s government was deposed. On two occasions, the revolutionary leaders called for mass demonstrations, and in Tehran millions of people attended. The longest and broadest boulevard of Tehran crossing the city from the east to the west was brimful of people. I attended one of the demonstrations and saw an endless wave of humanity streaming by for hours. I came away from that demonstration convinced of many things, among them, of people’s infinite anger towards the Shah, whom they referred to as the tyrant, despot, dictator, oppressor, etc. in their chants because of the suffering he had caused them.

Indirection in Oppression

Exploitation as a characteristic of oppression points to another characteristic: indirection. Oppression is a by-product of other activities and other goals. I cannot think of a single instance of oppression for the sake of oppressing. People are oppressed for reasons outside the act of oppression, as a means of reaching a goal, of achieving something. For example, the colonizing drive in the West did not come out of a desire to oppress but out of a desire to find raw materials and markets for products. Stalin did not move the Chechens to Siberia for the sake of seeing them suffer, but to stabilize his country. The 1953 coup in Iran was not done for the purpose of oppressing Iranians. By instigating the coup, the British and American governments believed that they were weakening the influence of the Soviet Union in Iran, safeguarding the investment of the British Oil Company in Iranian oil, and a host of
other reasons. And the Shah of Iran oppressed the masses of Iranians not to see them suffer but because he was convinced that he needed stability to be able to modernize and industrialize Iran.

Even in the most obvious and personal form of oppression, sadistic drive, indirection is evident. According to Eric Fromm in *Escape from Freedom*, “The pleasure in the complete domination over another person (or other animate objects) is the very essence of the sadistic drive” (155-156). This domination, Fromm writes, can take the forms of wanting to make the dominated person “a helpless object of our will,” “to humiliate him, to enslave him . . . to make him suffer” (156). But Fromm writes further that the sadistic drive does not seek the suffering of the dominated person as an end in itself.44

Rather, sadism, like masochism, represents an approach towards removing the unbearable anxiety (unremitting fear) from a sense of one’s loneliness and powerlessness. According to Fromm (and as I will point out, also according to Freire), the sado-masochistic drive is much more widespread in society than the psychosexual terminology may suggest. Fromm finds sado-masochism at work in authoritarian societies45 in which superiority of a group of people is the condition for the exploitation of another group (163).

Oppression occurs on a spectrum. At one end, the goals and purposes of the powerful people, which contradict those of weaker people, are prominent. In that case, the powerful will simply pursue their goals, letting the weak suffer the consequences as a by product of the pursuit of that goal. At the other end of the spectrum (and from a psychological standpoint), the powerful explicitly seek to inflict—because they enjoy inflicting—suffering. But Fromm argues that the sado-masochistic drive is itself prompted by other strivings rooted in a sustained fear (anxiety) caused by an overwhelming sense of powerlessness and disconnection from the larger society. Fromm argues that people with sado-masochistic tendencies have internalized the “authoritarian character” (162), which is submissive to the powerful oppressive centers of power in society and at the same time domineering towards weaker people.

Paulo Freire, whose *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* relies on the framework of Fromm’s theories, argues that the sado-masochistic tendencies in people with authoritarian characters
are results of oppressive social structures. Basing his views on this premise, Freire concludes that oppression (and by extension, sado-masochistic tendencies) cannot be eliminated without significant changes in society. In other words, oppressive social structures create the conditions in which groups of people feel powerless and disconnected from others (i.e. dehumanized). Fromm’s move in psychology towards looking for some of the causes of human experience and behavior in the larger social context is in keeping with this document’s basic assumptions that such aspects of human life such as thinking and suffering (emotion) cannot be removed (subtracted) from the fact that humans live communally. At the very least, Fromm’s and Freire’s analyses of the problem of oppression and sadomasochism support the claim that people do not engage in oppressing (causing suffering) in others for the sheer, biological pleasure derived from inflicting pain and suffering on others. Thus, indirection is at the very heart of oppression. And it is this indirection that renders a solution to the problem of oppression so complicated and that points to the epistemological aspects of the problem of oppression.

Inadequate Solutions to Oppression

The commonly offered solutions to the problem of oppression are, for the oppressed, notoriously inadequate. These solutions are overthrowing, aligning with, or escaping oppressors. The problem of oppression involves the very patterns of thinking we engage when facing the world. In this section, I will examine the three inadequate common solutions to highlight the place of the missing element that would be necessary for formulating an adequate solution. In all three solutions, the pattern of thinking that allows the inadequate solutions to be considered as viable involves (perhaps at best) IDCT. The missing element in all solutions is the absence or rather the curtailment of empathy, the capacity to imagine the suffering of others.

*Removing the Oppressor*

Examples of the inadequacy of overthrowing oppressors are historically plentiful. Although there are examples of successful revolutions as well, that so many removals of oppressive governments failed to solve the problem of oppression clearly points to the
inadequacy of removal in itself as a solution. The government in Russia after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution managed to be as oppressive as those during the Czars’ reigns—if not more so. Closer to my experience, the 1906 Iranian constitutional revolution, which instituted a relatively peaceful transfer of power, resulted in a limited democratic government curbing the Shah’s absolute power. But the democracy in Iran ended within 19 years, in the dictatorial rule of Reza Shah. Iranians were complicit in his rise to power, for democracy had brought with it a great deal of confusion and instability in Iran, characteristics of inchoate democracy that alarmed Iranians. When finally, in 1941, the Allies invaded Iran and forced Reza Shah to abdicate and flee, it took the democratic government of Iran some ten years to find its footing again. Even then the democracy that emerged was extremely precarious before, as mentioned, Iran’s democratic government was replaced, this time, with Mohammad Reza Shah’s dictatorial rule through the efforts of the British and American governments. Finally, although the 1979 revolution in Iran toppled the government of the Shah, the popular, post-revolutionary governments behaved atrociously against large segments of the population, as the Shah’s regime had done before. For example, people were urged to—and all too many did—report on each other; innocent children and adults were executed. And for some 20 years after the revolution, Iran was governed dictatorially although the government enjoyed popular support. Iran’s recent history shows that merely removing despotic rulers is not sufficient to remove the causes of oppression. Of course, foreign powers intervened in the first two attempts in Iran towards democracy, but those attempts took advantage of traits and weaknesses within Iranians. We will never know how Iranians would have conducted themselves had they been left to themselves in 1929 (when Reza Shah was brought to power by the British) or in 1953 (when Mohammad Reza Shah was restored to power). But at least in 1979, many Iranians removed those they identified as oppressors, took power, and re-instituted policies that had made the previous rulers oppressive.

In all instances, the oppressor is removed, but the patterns of thinking and behavior that permit oppression are left untouched. In every change of government and system in Iran, perhaps with the notable exception of the nationalist political grouping that Mossadegh came
to represent, each group that came to power divided society into friends (in-groups) and enemies. The in-groups before the 1906 constitutional revolution were the aristocracy and landed gentry of the Ghajar Dynasty. The in-group after the coup by Reza Shah were the members of the royal family, the upper echelons of the military, and the carefully pruned bureaucracy. The in-group after the 1953 coup was the royal family, the court, the upper military cadre, the petrodollar middle class business class, and parts of the bureaucracy. And the in-groups after the 1979 Islamic revolution were the clergy, the traditional business class (the bazaris), and the religious peasants and the urban working classes. During each period, the “enemies” were brutally repressed, exiled, or otherwise marginalized. The various groups in power had various levels of support from the majority of the population at different times, but the patterns of thinking by the ruling classes remained the same. The “enemies” were spies and traitors, or they were naïve and duped. In other words, in each example, empathy was methodically withheld from some groups.

_Escaping Oppression—Thoreau’s Experiment_

The solution of escaping oppression is also deeply flawed, for a moving away from human society Thoreau-like is a form of alignment with oppression (see next section), which is in fact allowed and promoted by IDCT and entails a form of intellectual dishonesty accompanied by callousness and apathy. I read _Walden_ in 1987 at the height of the Iran-Iraq War while Iraq, financed, supplied, and otherwise encouraged by the West and the United States, was dumping chemical weapons on Iranian soldiers and using Scud missiles to hit Iranian cities where my parents and other relatives lived. While confronted with the overwhelming apathy of the faculty at Iowa State University and my fellow students about political events even in this country, let alone those going on in Iran, I would read in _Walden_ that Thoreau was sure he “never read any memorable news in a newspaper” and that foreign news is mostly like reports of “a bull-fight when other entertainments fail” (175).46

Since my reading of _Walden_, I have come to believe that Thoreau-like escape is impossible for me, nor was it possible for Thoreau, who—despite his grave flaws in many respects—made great efforts to be honest intellectually.47 It is true, of course, that in a sense
I fled oppression when I left Iran in 1983, but it is really more accurate to say that my escape merely saved me from some of the more brutal aspects of oppression. In a deeper sense, I realized that not only have I never been able to escape the web of oppression but also I could not have escaped. I believe my realization parallels Thoreau’s, and I will explain that realization through an examination of Thoreau’s Walden experiment and its aftermath.

Leo Stoller in *After Walden, Thoreau’s Changing Views on Economic Man* writes that Thoreau moved to Walden Pond not because he was unaware of the events surrounding him but because he was aware of the exploitative and destructive character of modern industrial society that was fueling the events of his time. Stoller writes that “It seemed to Thoreau that the factory system, erecting a new world before his eyes, operated against the interests of both nature and man” (5). Moreover, before moving to Walden and during the eight years after his graduation from Harvard, Thoreau had “sought in vain for an occupation which would not conflict with the activities that yielded his poems and essays” (6). Thoreau moved to Walden Pond to see if it was possible to avoid (i.e. escape) being entrapped in the destructive cycle of exploitation in a society governed by the rules of commerce.

Thoreau talks at great length about his reasons for going to Walden Pond, but his reasons for leaving the woods is surprisingly short and unenlightening. He writes that he “had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one” (343 in *Walden* edited by Joseph Wood Krutch). Any mention of themes that disrupt the main—in retrospect, deeply inadequate—argument of the book have been excised carefully.

Nevertheless, traces of the disrupting themes do occasionally emerge. For example, in a description of the types of people who visited him at his cabin, there is an extremely important mention of slaves:

> runaway slaves with plantation manners, who listened from time to time, like the fox in the fable, as if they heard the hounds a-baying on their track, and looked at me beseeingly, as much as to say,— ‘*O Christian, will you send me back?*’ One real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I helped to forward toward the northstar.

(217-218)

An important event that does not find a place in *Walden*, but about which Thoreau wrote at some length elsewhere and for which he is world famous, was the night he spent in
jail. The event occurred in 1846, a year before he left Walden Pond. And he was jailed because of his refusal to pay taxes in order to protest U.S. government’s domestic and foreign policies. According to Meltzer and Harding, “The War with Mexico was beginning, a war Thoreau believed to be started by the United States on behalf of slaveholders who wished to extend their slave territory” (163). Thoreau left Walden Pond in 1847, and the book was published in 1854. But by 1854, Walden clearly did not reflect his current views. A dramatic shift in Thoreau’s worldview had taken place by the time he left Walden Pond. According to Stoller, the Walden experiment showed Thoreau that “the success of the single man in his private life was dependent on the success of the community of men in their social life” (128-129). In “On Civil Disobedience” published in 1849, Thoreau offers glimpses of this shift in worldview:

It is not a man’s duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even to most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man’s shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. (90)

Other evidence of this shift can be gathered from biographical information. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act had passed Congress. In 1851, a fugitive Virginia slave arrested by a federal marshal in Boston was freed by black activists and then taken via Cambridge and Concord to Canada. In April of the same year, despite widespread popular opposition, another fugitive slave was arrested, chained, and marched from his cell in Boston to slavery in Virginia. Meltzer and Harding write that Thoreau was “to despair of finding men ready to go to war in behalf of another race in their midst” (252). In October of the same year, he helped a fugitive slave reach Canada. The next year, a visitor to Thoreau’s father’s house notes the excitement in the house on account of the help being given another fugitive slave to reach Canada. And in 1854, the very year of the publication of Walden, he participated in an abolitionist rally on the Fourth of July and made a speech (“Slavery in Massachusetts” published the same year), in which he took a “radical: anti-slavery position” condemning
the apathy of Northerners and likening his modified position to waking up from a dream and seeing that his "small library . . . [with] a garden laid out around . . . is located in hell."50 From 1854 till his death in 1862, Thoreau’s position towards slavery in the South became only more radical.51

I believe Thoreau had to reject the escapist impetus behind his early philosophy of the Walden Pond experiment because he came to accept both his inextricable connection to the society around him and the emotional weight of the views of slaves, who wanted freedom. Escape from oppression is another name for shutting out a group of people from one’s heart. No real escape is possible if one values one’s humanity and sense of fellow feeling. But for the purposes of this study, I would like to emphasize the intellectual aspect: this escape is possible only through rejecting an earnest commitment to basing our “knowledge” and decisions on all the available evidence, that is, only through neglecting the emotion-infused experiences of the affected and involved people. The escapist route requires selective and unquestioned rejection of (a) some people by default from our sympathies and (b) consequently their views from our intellects.

**Aligning with Oppression**

Of the three types of commonplace solutions to the problem of oppression, alignment with oppression or complicity with the oppressor is so commonplace and naturalized as to be considered the default solution. The other two solutions presuppose that the withdrawn (retiring) or revolutionary person has at least come to acknowledge the presence of oppression. No such presupposition is necessary about the complicit person. Although it is possible and quite common to be proactively aligned with oppressors (as were, for example, some of the Jewish inmates described in Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* who collaborated with Nazi wardens in World War II concentration camps), such proactiveness is not necessary.

The problems with this solution are multilayered. At one level, they are the same as the problems associated with being oppressed, for the complicit person is aligning with more powerful people. This alignment does not relieve the aligned person’s sense of oppression.
And as mentioned, oppression involves suffering. At another level, the complicit person is the oppressor, and being an oppressor has its problems, which I will analyze shortly.

As mentioned, Erich Fromm argues that sadism and masochism are different sides of the same approach to solving the problem of aloneness and powerlessness. Fromm uses the term *sadomasochism*, or *symbiosis*, to describe the psychological aspect of this approach. But in the context of the larger society, the person who has the authoritarian character (has sadomasochistic tendencies) is also dominant in some relationships and dominated in others. Fromm argues that to zero in strictly on the psychological aspects of, say, sadism, ignores the significance of the sadistic behavior in the broader social context. *Alignment* is a term I have adopted that roughly corresponds to sadomasochism. The person aligned to oppression is oppressive in some contexts and oppressed in others.

This observation seems to dilute the definition of oppression. This seeming dilution, as Kenneth Clatterbaugh explains, opens the door for arguments by some profeminist men, theorists of the men’s movement, “and even some feminist women” (295) to the effect that men—who have historically oppressed women and assumed positions of power and privilege—can also be considered oppressed for being men. According to Clatterbaugh, these theorists have advanced the position not only that men, too, are oppressed but also, and more radically, that that it is men—not women—who are oppressed. There are three arguments to which Clatterbaugh responds. I will briefly review them and Clatterbaugh’s response to prepare the ground for my own argument that oppression is not a linear phenomenon, but multilayered and complex and has its roots in thinking. One argument is that men, like women, have been socialized to assume roles defined by gender. If the socialization that has created the “feminine mystique” has been oppressive to women, then the argument goes, the socialization that has created the “masculine mystique” is also oppressive. Both genders have been socialized, “forced to conform to the narrow and lonely roles” (290). Another argument is that it is actually men who have been oppressed by women and that women benefit from the oppression of women. This reversal argument points out the “costs of masculinity” (293)—Clatterbaugh cites, as examples of these costs, “shorter life expectancy, access to drugs, fear of failure, and disorders due to competitive
activities.” The third and last argument is that men are oppressed because their lives are valued less than women’s. Because men are valued less, they are considered expendable in society. Men are valued less, the argument goes, because only men “are drafted, only men can service in combat in a war, men are ‘killed’ much more regularly in television and movies, and domestic violence against men is not treated as the serious problem that domestic violence against women is” (294).

Clatterbaugh’s response to the socialization argument is that the roles assigned to men and women are fundamentally different. Men, for example, are not encouraged to be nurses, not because there are financial, social, educational obstacles to their wanting to be nurses but because being a nurse is not as prestigious and lucrative as being a physician. Moreover, if a man who can be a physician, aims to be a nurse, he is considered to be wasting his potential. The situation for women is different because the social expectation for a women pursuing nursing is that she in fact is fulfilling her potential. Thus, though men are clearly socialized, they are socialized to assume positions of power and domination. And since the standard of being human is male, and men are groomed for positions of power (the normal expectation is for them to assume those positions), men cannot be considered dehumanized for being constrained by socialization in the sense that women are dehumanized through social expectations and through socialization in general. In response to the reversal argument, Clatterbaugh points out “the elementary points in feminist theory” that women have historically not been given a choice as to their vocations and that they do not benefit from being provided for by men. And regarding the costs of masculinity—“shorter life expectancy, access to drugs, fear of failure, and disorders due to competitive activities”—Clatterbaugh points out that profeminist male writers have noted all those costs and harms, but “found them to be due to the competitive roles that dominant persons play in society” (293). In other words, Clatterbaugh argues that just because trying to maintain dominance has negative side effects for the dominating person, it does not follow that such a person is oppressed. Finally, Clatterbaugh’s response to the expendability argument is first to dispute the factual basis of some of the claims (for example, that men and women are equally violent) and second to note the historical roots of the reasons for men’s being given soldierly
and combat roles in society. He maintains that the reasons have less to do with society’s considering men’s lives of little worth and more to do with “a patriarchal society that through its institutions holds that only men are capable of being soldiers; only men have the courage, strength, and military intelligence to defend their country” (294).

Clatterbaugh disputes the claim that men “as men” (295, emphasis his) are oppressed in society. Two paragraphs before, I agreed with Fromm that the authoritarian character is dominant in some contexts and subservient in others or that such a person fulfills a symbiotic (or sado-masochistic, or oppressive-oppressed) role in society. But to make that statement is not to say that men as men both oppress women and are in turn oppressed by women. Humans fill many roles in society, and they have many characteristics. They have different genders, ethnicities, nationalities, educational levels, sexual preferences, etc. They may be parents or spouses. They probably have jobs. And in those jobs, they hold certain levels of authority. They may be wealthy or poor or middle class. They may be immigrants or born citizens. Thus, a human as belonging to the social group of men can contribute to the oppression of women in general and of the women in his family in particular. The same human as belonging to the social group of workers in general and of temporary factory-floor workers in particular can be at the receiving end of the oppressive practices of corporations. The same human as belonging to the social group of Americans can actively or tacitly contribute to the subjugation of other humans in industrializing countries. And again, the same human as a son could have been at the receiving end of oppressive practices of his parents, of his schools, or of the political organization of his society.

Thus, alignment with oppression is a viable and in fact widespread strategy for dealing with oppression in society. In fact, it is the most common strategy. But of course, although commonplace, alignment cannot be considered a solution to the problem of oppression in the positive sense of the word solution, for to align with oppression means to be complicit in oppressing others and in making others suffer, for alignment depends on accepting oppression—that is, the systematic dehumanization of oneself and others—as normal.
But this acceptance of oppression and systematic dehumanization as normal has an intellectual component. It involves a radical curtailing of the scope of the definition of intellection. Consider, for an example, my experiences. My readings in Iranian, American, and world histories teach me that the West has been oppressing the preindustrial and recently industrializing nations of the world since the industrial revolution in England. This oppression has been perpetrated for profit taking. Western countries have pursued deliberate policies of exploiting the natural resources of unindustrialized nations, of forcing open the markets of unindustrialized countries for the value-added products of the industrial countries, of keeping the unindustrialized countries in a state of economic and political dependence and servitude, and of committing a great variety of atrocities—often absent from or treated dismissively or marginally in history books written in the West—to maintain the exploitative relationship between industrial and unindustrial countries. But perhaps of more immediate importance to me as someone born in Iran is that the United States, as I mentioned in Chapter 2, is greatly responsible for the 1953-1979 oppression in Iran in which a generation of Iranians lived and in which I spent most of my childhood. Moreover, because of the active support of the United States for Iraq’s military buildup, and of Iraq’s use of chemical weapons on Iranian soldiers, and of Iraq’s extensive bombing of Iranian civilians by rockets, I cannot but consider my coming to the West in general and to the United States in particular a painful act of alignment with oppressors. Of course, one’s alignment can be quite proactive. For example, many of my fellow expatriate Iranians in the United States contribute money to the campaigns of American senators and representatives in order to urge them to pass legislation such as the Helms-Burton act, to destabilize the government of Iran, a common practice in this country. But even one is not proactive, it is still a form of alignment when one continues to work and live within sociopolitical structures that one way or another support oppressive policies, for example, by becoming an educator who trains students to function effectively in corporate and governmental organizations whose policies in broad outline are oppressive towards poorer industrializing countries. For me, my alignment with oppression has constituted a painful moral and intellectual dilemma that I have tried to solve, among other activities, through my studies.
Alignment as a solution is attractive but ultimately unsatisfactory. It is attractive because its application will mean a focusing of my emotional, mental, and physical resources for narrowly defined goals, such as providing for my family more effectively and pursuing success in my career unimpeded by complicated considerations. It is also attractive because it permits for a greater level of adjustment and adaptation to, i.e., *functionality* in, one’s environment. To cite an example from my own history, again, it was the government of the United States that finally granted me asylum. Certainly, at some level, the government of the United States is a strong upholder of the standards of human rights in the world. When communicating with born Americans, the best and easiest way for appealing to their sympathies is to talk in a rather one-sided way about being an immigrant grateful for the humanitarianism of the American public and government. It is always tempting and attractive to want to belong and to align than to take half an hour or more to explain my broader understanding of my complicated relationship with this country and in the process to arouse the antipathy of my listeners.

Alignment as a solution, however, is, ultimately, deeply unsatisfactory because of my attachment to my roots (the feelings of affection I have for those roots). Caring about Iranians, I cannot forget their suffering. In other words, I can only be comfortable in my alignment when I forget the information stored in my memory about my own experiences and the experiences of my relatives, friends, and acquaintances. I can be comfortable only by ignoring reasons for being uncomfortable. To put this more forcefully, my alignment as a desirable solution succeeds to the extent I can benumb and deaden myself emotionally and intellectually.

More generally, alignment is a viable solution—a solution with which people can live in peace and comfort—when empathy is drastically and successfully curtailed. I do not claim that alignment can be completely successful. It cannot, for our capacity for empathy is tied to our need to survive and to the original reasons for forming communities. At best, we sublimate the deadening of our capacity to empathize and our own suffering through behaviors tinged with sado-masochistic tendencies. But alignment permits society to operate (no matter how dysfunctionally). Goals become formulated, and resources coordinated. The
arrangement succeeds in systematically helping certain groups of people escape war, disease, early death, repetitious work, poverty-stricken old age, abusive family environments, dangerous urban areas, etc. But on the other hand, the arrangement does nothing systematically to alleviate these calamities, or in fact it actively and systematically exacerbates them for certain other groups.

In summery, overthrowing and escaping from oppression—in and of themselves—end up being nothing more than various thinly disguised forms of alignment with oppression. Thus we find ourselves implicated in complex webs of oppression and at various stages of alignment with it. This alignment entails curtailing our capacity to empathize, which I discuss in the next section.

Emotional Compartmentalization—Pahlavi.com and Bombers

Although the oppressed have strong negative feelings about oppressors, oppressors do not usually reciprocate the feeling in quite the same way. At some level—and this level should be understood carefully—oppressors need not know that they oppress. Specifically, oppressors may know that they are forcing the oppressed to do something against the latter’s wishes but at the same time be unable to imagine the significance or the emotional cost of the oppression to the oppressed. Unlike what popular movies depict, widespread, system-wide evil is seldom committed by people who understand at a deep personal level the evil they cause. This is not to say that they do not make others suffer intentionally and consciously, but they are emotionally disengaged from those they oppress. I believe this last statement to be true to a great extent even with people engaged in sadistic activities—torturers, interrogators, rapists, etc. They do not feel the suffering they cause. That is, they withhold empathy. Oppressors compartmentalize their emotions and empathies. That this oppression involves emotional compartmentalization I can support with historical examples.

Example 1—The Coup, Risen, and the Pahlavis

In Chapter 2, I showed that the emotional commitment of Risen’s article is to Wilber and the CIA agents who took part in the coup. Mossadegh, though impeccable in his courage, credentials, probity, etc., was described as idiosyncratic and volatile. The Iranian
public was practically absent from the history and the article. During the very days in which the 1953 coup was taking place, my uncle, then a high school student, walked into Mossadegh’s house shortly after its doors and windows had been shattered—as CIA’s history points out—by hired thugs and its furniture had been hauled off. What Risen and Wilber cannot imagine is the experiences and wishes of people like my uncle, who would have liked to be able to live and grow in an environment free from state terror.

I am purposely focusing on an altogether too obvious phenomenon: the emotional compartmentalization that accompanies oppression. In a famous interview with the Shah of Iran at the height of his power sometime in early 1970s, Oriana Fallaci asks him, “when I try to talk about you, here in Teheran, people lock themselves in a fearful silence. They don’t even dare pronounce your name, Majesty, why is that?” (272-273). Fallaci refers to the fact that the Shah’s prisons were brimful of political prisoners and that thousands of intellectuals were in exile. The Shah’s response to Fallaci’s question about people’s fearful silence in early 1970s was “Out of an excess of respect, I suppose” (273). Being distrustful of all his underlings and in control of all the security apparatuses of the government, the Shah knew of the presence of the opposition. But when Fallaci presses the point by asking about “the repression carried out against students and intellectuals” and about the political prisoners, the Shah admits only two types of political prisoners: the communists, whom he doesn’t “consider political prisoners because it’s forbidden by law to be a communist” or “those whose actions result in the death of old people, women, innocent children” (276). Both groups are criminals, and he has “no pity for those criminals you call guerrillas or for traitors to the country.” His political prisoners remain criminals who do not enjoy his empathy. As he himself says, he is emotionally closed to them.

Even after the 1979 revolution and the massive demonstrations, the family of the Shah has continued to display the same complete lack of empathy, which is a prerequisite for understanding. The Web pages of the former queen and of the heir apparent of Iran (Empress Farah Pahlavi—Iran and Content table [sic] to the Pahlavi Era of Iran56) offer a picture of Iran in which the Shah was doing a great deal of good in the country. Surely, one would think after the revolution, the family would have learned of the events during the reign of the
Shah: the daily, bloody mass demonstrations against them, or of the western news reports of tens of thousands of political prisoners mistreated brutally, or of the nightly routine of chants and slogans from the rooftops towards the end of the revolution. But the Web sites show several family photo albums in which the Shah of Iran is shown smiling and playing with his children. And then there are short passages like the following referring to the revolution (Foreword to Pahlavi Era of Iran):

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the last ShahanShah of Iran, through resolute leadership restored a sense of confidence in his countrymen and initiated a series of radical and far-reaching reforms which transformed every aspect of Iran's national life. As a result, the country was rapidly approaching an era where it was about to enter the ranks of the world's most progressive and developed nations. In 1979 a monkey wrench was thrown into the turning wheels of development and progress came to an abrupt stop for a long time.

My point in presenting these observations is not that complete absence of empathy in people like the former Shah of Iran or the present exiled royal family of Iran is shocking. It is not shocking in the least. In fact I mean to point out how commonplace it is. The exiled royal family and the Shah dismiss their intellectual opponents sweepingly, without the slightest flinch. It mattered little that the opponents happened to represent the best intellectuals of Iran at the time. I am merely pointing out that the oppression was accompanied by a drastic—and, more important, invisible or naturalized—curtailment of empathy for certain groups of people.

Example 2—Bombing Pilots in Vietnam

A more drastic manifestation of this emotional compartmentalization, which involves withholding empathy, can be seen in the daily routines of military pilots, for they rarely ever know about the lived experiences and the emotional effects of their bombings. In Vietnam Home Movies, The True Story of Captain James "Bob" Powell and "The Gunslingers," Captain Powell, a helicopter pilot who survived the war, presents home movies he had made for his parents back home, capturing some of his daily routines and experiences during the war. The video tape shows him talking with his friends, eating, and relaxing. But there is
also some footage of dangerous missions in territories occupied by the Vietcong. The tape shows the tactical procedures of spraying the landing sites with bullets before dropping off the infantry. Occasionally, the voiceover of Captain Powell points out that a fellow pilot, a good friend, had died in cross fire or in other circumstances. The tapes do draw a poignant portrayal of Captain Powell’s concern with the dangers facing him and the other pilots.

Again, my aim here is to point out—because it is in the background of our understanding and because while there, it cannot be adequately appreciated—the emotional compartmentalization at work. Captain Powell is presented as a hero on the tape. Of all other types of military pilots, helicopter pilots may be considered closest to fighting on the ground because the flight altitude is lower than that of fighter and bomber planes and because they have to transport troops in their crafts to the middle of enemy territories. But even in the work of Captain Powell, what is happening on the ground is hardly distinguishable. One of the highlights of the videotape is when the narrator replays in slow motion the tape of a low flight over a field to point out some American soldiers under fire on the ground. The voiceover admits that he noticed the Americans under fire only after many viewings of that particular footage. The Vietnamese and the Vietcong, as human beings, are completely absent from the tape. And Captain Powell can be considered a hero only while the Vietnamese remain small specks on the tape.

As soon as the humanity of the Vietnamese is recognized, other facts have to be admitted, and the actions of Captain Powell in Vietnam take different meanings. In “The Case Against Henry Kissinger,” Christopher Hitchens writes that just between 1968 and 1972, “The United States dropped almost 4,500,000 tons of high explosive on Indochina. (The Pentagon’s estimated total for the amount dropped in the entire Second World War is 2,044,000)” (52). Noam Chomsky in Problems of Knowledge and Freedom offers a tiny glimpse of the experiences of the Vietnamese by quoting the following passage from Doug Hostetter—“a religious pacifist [who] worked as a volunteer from 1966 to 1969 in Quang Tin province”:

They [American bombers in Vietnam] would defoliate the rice crops. They’ve been bombing these areas heavily for at least five years, and hitting the land with H + I fire, which is ‘harassment
and interdiction'—that's just firing at random all over the country side—no aim at all. When the situation gets bad enough that you can’t eat, then you’ll move, or starve.

I know from friends that people who live in the western part of these provinces have to live in caves and bunkers, and come up during the night to grow vegetables in the bomb craters. They’ve learned that certain sorts of plants grow very well in phosphorus bomb craters; and the TNT-type bomb has a lot of nitrogen in it, which is very good for growing other types of plants. This is how they survive. [They grow vegetables in bomb craters] because there’s not much left but bomb craters. (90-91; the brackets are Chomsky’s)

Millions of Vietnamese were killed and wounded as a result of indiscriminate and criminal bombing of a pre-industrial, poverty-stricken country of 30 million. I can easily imagine a home movie of the experiences of civilians in Vietnam whose families and livelihood were shattered by American military operations. Again, the point is not that Captain Powell’s tapes of Vietnam seek to misrepresented or that the tapes are shocking. On the contrary, my goal is to point out the normalcy or rather the invisibility of the emotional compartmentalization Captain Powell engaged in his work as a military pilot, a compartmentalization that is faithfully reflected in the home movies he sent to his parents.

*Back to Emotional Compartmentalization*

Without the emotional compartmentalization explanation, important historical events such as the failure of the American revolutionaries to free the black slaves throughout the newly formed United States cannot be understood. I have met women who hold racist or ethnocentric views, African Americans who hold sexist or ethnocentric views, and at least one Native American who held ethnocentric views. I have heard Turkish nationals complain about the highhanded way in which the European Union treats Turkey while they defend the oppressive policies of the Turkish government against the Kurdish minority in Turkey. Some Iranian immigrants in the United States, though themselves at the receiving ends of various forms of discrimination at work and in their neighborhoods, are prejudiced against people of other ethnic and racial backgrounds. Jehovah’s Witnesses, who are strict pacifists and were sent to concentration camps by the Nazi’s, will keep billions of people out of their paradise
earth when it comes. The compartmentalization of empathies is widespread and so naturalized as to be nearly invisible.

This compartmentalization has a pivotal intellectual aspect. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, thinking is supposed to help us solve problems. One of the functions of thinking in its job of solving problems is to gather reliable information, information that is not merely imagined. The compartmentalization of empathies results in the removal of the views of various groups of people by default, that is, without exposing their views to critical examination (without evaluating their views). Thus compartmentalization cannot but be a significant source of error in thinking. It undercuts the work of thinking before the work begins. It stacks the deck.

**Feminism and Objectivism**

In the discussions that follow, I will rely on some of the key assumptions of certain strands in feminist epistemology to support my claim that the pre-existing source of error coming from emotional compartmentalization was not acknowledged in classical epistemology. Classical epistemology codified emotional compartmentalization into general epistemology, of which IDCT is one manifestation. My argument in this document has been that IDCT not only results in various forms of oppression but also fails to fulfill even its epistemological goal of being a reliable tool for examining the support for claims that it produces. In other words, IDCT promotes an intellectually dishonest pattern of thinking because it fails to require as a precondition for thinking that the views of all affected by the ideas produced by such thinking be examined. This failure is due to IDCT’s inadequate attention to and appreciation of the emotional aspects of thinking. The aim of IDCT is supposed to be production of unbiased findings and claims, but some people’s views, no matter how important and relevant, are simply excluded.

The term I will use for the epistemological concept that justifies IDCT is “objectivism.” Objectivism, which has been thoroughly repudiated in modern continental and analytic philosophies, is used to provide the epistemological grounds for the best kind of objectivity (and reliability) of knowledge achievable in any field. For example, in Chapter 2,
when H. Eugene Goodwin discusses standards of objectivity in journalism, he is really talking about objectivism. And when he points out that the standards of objectivity have been subjected to severe criticism within the journalistic community, he is very much discussing problems that feminists have identified in popular formulations of scientific activity in which objectivism is held up as the standard of the reliability of knowledge.

Objectivism has been a concept that has been of particular importance for feminists to repudiate, for although objectivism can be challenged from several angles, some of which have little to do with emancipatory goals, the objection of feminism to objectivism is similar to my objections to IDCT. In this subsection, I will first briefly outline the stages that feminism traversed to identify objectivism as a major stumbling block to eradicating sexism. I will then outline a set of objections raised against objectivism by Sandra Harding, a leading contemporary feminist epistemologist.

Feminist arguments against objectivism can be understood in light of the fact that although women’s movement has resulted in greater economic, political, and professional freedoms for women, sexism persists in society. And it seems increasingly plausible that the dismantling of the economic and legal frameworks of sexism has merely removed the symptoms of a phenomenon that has deeper roots. These considerations have prompted feminists to look for the causes of sexism in our very patterns of thinking and social practices. In Feminist Methods in Social Research, Shulamit Reinharz writes that “In the so-called second wave [of feminism], women strove for additional goals related to education: the right to criticize the accepted body of knowledge, the right to create knowledge, and the right to be educators and educational administrators” (11). Thus, the second wave feminism was not merely concerned with the outward manifestations of the oppression against women—such as legal impediments to voting and owning property—but with the intellectual root causes of oppression, causes that did not merely affect general society—home, government, church, school, workplace, etc.—but knowledge-creating practices such as art and science themselves.

This new direction in feminism was prompted by historical and philosophical analyses of gender relations in society. For example, Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex,
an incisive examination of the complex historical, philosophical, and mythical roots of sexism in society, exhaustively documents the claim that men have—"since the days of the patriarchate" (139)—objectified women, treating them as the Other. The otherness of woman in contemporary society, de Beauvoir argues, is not just an idea, but a worldview embedded in the very mythos of society, a worldview that selects what is viewed and how it is viewed:

Man never thinks of himself without thinking of the Other; he views the world under the sign of duality, which is not in the first place sexual in character. But being different from man, who sets himself up as the same, it is naturally to the category of the Other that woman is consigned; the Other includes woman. (69)

The consignment of women to the category of the other, instead of the norm (or the same), has radical implications for justifying the oppression of women philosophically (or pre-philosophically). But this categorization has perhaps greater implications for the goals and practices of people engaged in the production of knowledge. As a result of considerations such as de Beauvoir’s, feminists have been investigating the effects of such pre-historical myths embedded in men’s (and women’s) knowledge-producing patterns of thinking on the goals, values, practices, and findings of science and art. The presence of sexism in knowledge production in general and in science in particular, the very tool feminist researchers used to work on the problem of the oppression of women in society, prompted feminists to undertake the enormous task of critiquing all the important cultural assumptions that are invisible and taken for granted by contemporary thinkers, including the epistemological (and the related methodological) assumptions of science. As a result, feminism has examined, proposed, discarded, and assimilated a vast array of methods, methodologies, and epistemologies. The theoretical positions adopted range from radical anti-realism, to social constructionism and phenomenology, to current trends in analytic philosophy, and to logical positivism. Documenting the vast array of methods adopted by researchers who identify themselves as feminists, Reinharz can only summarize their work along the following lines:
feminist researchers develop ideas by criticizing the status quo, then criticize the critique, then criticize that critique, or search for a synthesis that will itself be criticized. (240-241)

The list of methods Reinharz presents and the open-ended approach to methodology she mentions point to an overwhelmingly earnest commitment to understanding the lives of women and the sources and consequences of oppression in ways that, at the very least, do not perpetuate the sexist assumptions underlying sciences, assumptions that have traditional epistemological justifications.

In this broad critical examination, feminist epistemologists have identified the objectivist theoretical justifications for objectivity as what ultimately excuses the philosophical opponents of feminism from acknowledging the presence, appreciating the implications, and examining the roots of sexism in scientific disciplines.

Pervasiveness of Objectivism

Alessandra Tanesini in *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies* characterizes objectivism as the “traditional approach” to defining the objectivity required in scientific research, an approach that involves the view that science must not be influenced by “any subjective input” (175). More specifically, according to objectivism, “objectivity is a matter of impartial, value-free and dispassionate research” (174). Tanesini points out that continental philosophy has long accepted—since Hegel and Marx—that knowledge is “historically contingent” and has explored “in depth the relevance of interests and desires to human knowledge” (20-21). So by traditional, Tanesini refers to the residual traces of objectivism in analytic philosophy, which as she points out “is usually practiced in philosophy departments in the English-speaking world . . . [and] has developed out of the logical positivist movement based in Vienna at the beginning of this century” (4).

Objectivism occupies a fascinating place in contemporary epistemology in the “English-speaking world.” On one hand, the inadequacies of objectivism have been repeatedly and unambiguously revealed and understood in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. On the other hand, it is so deeply embedded in the values of Western societies that its presence seems invisible.
The position of objectivism in contemporary (Anglo-American or analytic) philosophy is important to my argument and parallels Elisabeth Lloyd’s “Objectivity and the Double Standard for Feminist Epistemologies.” Lloyd writes that mainstream analytic philosophers have “caricatured” feminists for their supposed disregard of “objectivity” in feminist epistemology (375). Lloyd argues, however, that the traditional definition of “objectivity” to which feminists are accused of not subscribing is really “objectivism,” a philosophical position that requires knowledge to be value neutral. Objectivism, Lloyd first points out, is in disrepute among analytic philosophers themselves because its grounds are theological (dogmatic) and because “mainstream contemporary epistemologists and metaphysicians” acknowledge that “‘pure epistemology’, ‘value-free inquiry’, and ‘disinterested knowledge’” are oxymorons (374).

Lloyd then asks if value enters inquiry, that is, if knowledge is context-based, and if the crucial importance of sex and gender is one of the few things that “contemporary social scientists” all agree on (352), then why do mainstream epistemologists question the objectivity of feminists’ research? Lloyd’s conclusion is that such epistemologists are applying a double standard unless they wish to provide positive arguments against the claims of feminists (for example, about the widespread presence of sexism in the very assumptions and processes of scientific inquiry). In short, traditionalists accuse feminists of disregarding objectivist ideas that the traditionalists themselves reject.

In the forthcoming subsection devoted to Sandra Harding’s epistemology, I will explore the connection between the value-ladenness of inquiry and my claim that the emotional experiences of people affected by inquiry and its ensuing ideas should be formally included in any intellectual activity worthy of the qualifier “critical” or any activity that aspires to result in knowledge claims. But first I am going to summarize parts of Lloyd’s observations and arguments because she draws attention to the fact that although objectivist thinking has been repudiated by, among others, analytic philosophers, nevertheless, the momentum of such thinking in our time is still strong. Lloyd argues that despite all the epistemological work of modern philosophers and scientists, objectivism remains the default
standard of objectivity, a standard that as Lloyd shows, leads to gross inconsistencies and errors when traditional epistemologists are not careful.

Lloyd highlights the persistence of objectivism among traditionalists by identifying what she calls "the philosophical folk story about objectivity" (353), a folk story based on what she aptly calls "ontological tyranny" (356). According to ontological tyranny, "objective knowledge of reality is identified as knowledge of independent existences, and knowledge of independent existences requires the knower's independence from those existences" (356). Thus detachment becomes "a methodological virtue" (356).

Lloyd traces the historical roots of the ontological tyranny to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The philosophers of the time characterized "the differences between Primary and Secondary Qualities... in pursuit of the physical sciences (357). Primary Qualities, Lloyd writes were considered mathematical and certain and not merely true but also Real. The Secondary Qualities only appeared to our sense; they were considered inconstant and relative and not real objects of knowledge (357-358). Lloyd points out that although the doctrines involving Primary and Secondary Qualities are not longer used, they are nevertheless "embalmed... into a standard for knowledge itself (357)."

According to Lloyd, the distinction between Primary and Secondary Qualities was motivated by the prior ontological commitment to the idea that "The Reality of the physical world is geometrical" (358). In thinking of the physical world in terms of geometry, Primary Qualities become important because they were considered unchanging and constant and could thus be represented mathematically. Lloyd concludes that natural sciences in the West have been developed by individuals who had "prior ontological commitments" that were "fundamentally religious" or dogmatic.

Lloyd's essay proposes that there is no reliable intellectual basis for objectivism, that analytic philosophers themselves (as represented by some of the key figures in the tradition) have repudiated objectivism, and that analytic philosophers thus object to feminist rejection of objectivism unjustifiably. But ultimately, Lloyd's explanation for the persistence of objectivism in epistemological discourse is that "old habits die hard." Sandra Harding, whose views I examine in the next section, offers a less forgivable reason for the persistence
of objectivism. Harding claims that objectivism is useful to oppressors because it helps maintain oppressive hierarchies.

Harding’s Objections to Objectivism

In three key works, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is ‘Strong Objectivity?’” “Does Objectivity in Social Science Require Value-Neutrality?” and “Strong Objectivity: A Response to the New Objectivity Question,” Sandra Harding outlines her critique of objectivism. In this subsection, I will try to offer an accurate picture of Harding’s critique of objectivism, which has two complementary parts. The first is an argument for the impossibility of value-free knowledge when it is acknowledged that all knowledge is situated. The second part comes from an examination of the hierarchical and limiting social “situation” in which knowledge is created. Harding’s treatment of the two aspects gives her the tools she needs for outlining a standard of objectivity that she names strong objectivity, and which is radically different from objectivism.

Harding begins the first part of her argument by agreeing with the position that claims and evidence in science should not “depend upon who makes them” (“Value-Neutrality” 362). Rather, the claims and the evidence should be available for all to examine (362). Objectivism, Harding argues, fails to provide this broad examination. The “systematically distorted results of research” that feminist, anti-racist, postcolonial, environmental, and other social movements have identified and documented are not only due to carelessness and “inadequate rigor” in following “existing methods and norms for maximizing objectivity” (“Response” 333) but also due to the way those methods and norms have been conceptualized. In other words, the problem with objectivism is that it is not “rigorous or objectifying enough” (“Rethinking” 237) and cannot do what it is supposed to be doing let alone what “feminisms and other new social movements” require it to do (237).

This failure is due to objectivism’s inability to resist the production of one set of systematic distortions in research: culturewide biases. In objectivism, the usual procedure for obtaining objectivity is to apply rigorous “methods,” which Harding writes, are “supposed to ‘operationalize’ neutrality and thus achieve objectivist standards” (“Response”
338). But at its best, the method in objectivism may be able to counter distortions and other sources of error and bias that are *individual*. Research, however, is conducted in scientific communities, which like all communities, have a set of shared values and vested interests (338). The biases to which feminists have drawn attention have not been idiosyncratic (339). Rather, Harding writes,

they have been widely held androcentric, Eurocentric and bourgeois assumptions that have been virtually culture-wide across the culture of science. . . . Assumptions that women’s biology, moral reason, intelligence, contributions to human evolution, or to history or present day social relations are inferior to men’s are not idiosyncratically held beliefs of individual “subjects” but widespread assumptions of entire cultures. These assumptions have constituted whole fields of study, selecting their preoccupying problems, favored concepts, hypotheses and research designs; these fields have in turn lent support to male supremacist assumptions in other fields. The issue is not that individual men (and women) hold false beliefs, but that the conceptual structures of disciplines, their institutions, and related social policies make less than maximally objective assumptions. (“Response” 339)

Harding’s solution to the problems that objectivism poses are standpoint and strong objectivity theories, which rest on her study of the presence of the culturewide biases—critically unexamined or unsupported beliefs—in research. These culturewide biases take various forms that are often difficult to detect. Harding offers a taxonomy of the sources of culturewide biases. I will outline her exhaustive taxonomic overview because these sources of bias are hidden in the background of all scholarly and scientific discourse and without foregrounding them the full implications of the reasons for the feminist rejection of objectivism and my rejection of IDCT cannot be fully appreciated.

Harding’s taxonomy takes the form of an enumeration of the types of values that enter inquiry. Some of the types Harding outlines apply to social sciences and some to both social and natural sciences. To begin with, she writes, if social sciences aim to characterize a form of social life that is located historically and to find the underlying determinants of this society, inquirers have to acknowledge that not only the subject matter but the beliefs and actions of inquirers themselves are value laden (“Value-Neutrality” 353).
Values enter into the social sciences in particular when inquirers operate under the assumptions that methodological controls—whose job it is to ensure that the produced claims meet the agreements of "all relevantly situated observers—contribute no "social values to the results of research" (354-355). Harding argues that if methods of inquiry are there to "maximize understanding of the rules of a society and of the institutions structured by these rules within which individual behavior occurs" (355), then social scientists have to try to see and understand those rules as if they were natives to the society. Of course, this approach requires attempts at identification and understanding that are the exact opposites of detachment—the value-neutrality goal of objectivism—from people being studied.

But Harding goes further, arguing that the methodological controls are not sufficient—even in natural sciences—to screen out "from the results of scientific inquiry the home values of the scientist and his community" because there are currently no "method or logic of confirmation" that can force "nature to choose decisively between our hypotheses about nature’s regularities" (355). In short, Harding writes, scientists cannot but choose their theories "on some basis other than observed closeness of fit with nature" (356).67

Harding has so far offered support for her claim that even in the natural sciences, method cannot ensure value-neutrality. Stepping back from that conclusion, she notes that current assumptions behind method itself seem to "contribute metaphysical and epistemological norms to the results of the research, norms which cast representations of fact in such a focus that some social policies tend to be favored over others and some not considered at all" ("Value-Neutrality?” 357-358). For example, the conceptualization of nature as composed of discrete manipulable units has in fact obscured the complex web of relations between humans and nature. This conceptualization has had several detrimental consequences. For example, it has made "it difficult to imagine why we should not do with nature what we can and will—not just in the laboratory, but anywhere and everywhere.” But perhaps worse, according to this conceptualization, “the subjects of research are seen as inherently structureless and passive creatures, as 'blank tablets’ upon which heredity and environment have imprinted and reinforced whatever they will.” This conceptualization,
Harding argues, seems to excuse the drastic changes that humans can make on other humans and on nature.

Harding’s conclusion is that if social values enter even scientific descriptions of nature, then the boundary between fact and value must begin to blur. And thus “it is not the case that value-freedom in the conduct of inquiry is the mark of maximal objectivity in inquiry” (359).

Once value-neutrality as a methodological virtue is discarded, however, the job of researchers becomes significantly more difficult. Then the questions that a scientist who has rejected objectivism has to try to answer become What method for maximizing objectivity can help scientists “detect (a) values and interests that constitute scientific projects, (b) ones that do not vary between legitimated observers, and (c) the difference between those values and interests that enlarge and those that limit our images of nature and social relations?” (“Response” 341)

Harding has outlined a tentative solution in her version of standpoint theory. At the very least, she argues, we need a way for detecting nearly invisible culturewide beliefs in inquiry because such beliefs enter inquiry at every stage. That value enters inquiry is of course another way of saying that there is no such thing as disembodied knowledge. All knowledge is embodied human knowledge. And it is humans who have values. The debunking of the requirement of value neutrality in knowledge is thus an acknowledgement of the situatedness and incompleteness (partiality) of knowledge.

The second part of Harding’s argument begins with a look at the “situation” of inquirers. Harding’s standpoint theory sees social reality as being “stratified by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, or some other such politics” (“Rethinking” 240). If knowledge is situated and incomplete and if our societies are hierarchically organized (“Response” 341), Harding argues, then the “activities of those at the top both organize and set limits on what persons who perform such activities can understand about themselves and the world around them” (“Rethinking” 240). Harding argues that inquirers occupy positions of power and privilege towards the top of social hierarchies. Thus, science is a form of
administrative-managerial rule in modern societies ("Response" 341). In other words, standpoint theory is concerned with countering "the problem of sciences that have been constituted by the values and interests of the most powerful social groups" ("Response" 346).

Given the value-ladenness of inquiry and given the perspective-limiting quality of the hierarchical structure of society preventing thoroughgoing examination of claims, Harding argues that one of the important values that research should adopt is egalitarianism ("Value Neutrality" 361, 363). This value, which Harding calls **Equalization of Political Advantage Thesis**, should be adopted for scientific and epistemological reasons (361). The point of adopting that thesis is that scientists and inquirers in general will have "a more adequate, more objective, more scientific view of social regularities and their underlying determinants" (360). The thesis explicitly requires that

> When choosing between alternative and very general explanatory theories of human conduct, it is legitimate to predict as the more likely to be plausible the one which, if widely believed, would cast representations of fact in such a focus that egalitarian social policies would be favored over oligarchic ones. ("Value-Neutrality?" 360)

In particular the policy means that "a maximally critical study of scientists and their communities can be done only from the perspective of those whose lives have been marginalized by such communities" ("Rethinking" 244-245). Put differently,

> In order to gain a causal critical view of the interests and values that constitute the dominant conceptual projects, one must start one's thought, one's research project, from outside those conceptual schemes and the activities that generate them; one must start from the lives excluded as origins of their design—from "marginal lives" ("Response" 341-342).

Another way of understanding Harding's position would be to imagine a social arrangement in which no group is dehumanized. All groups would be in the category of the "norm." All would be considered sovereign and valuable, not just in principle but in practice. In such a society, an objectivist standard of objectivity and reliance on careful methodologies might produce maximally objective knowledge (findings) because no views would be systematically and unjustifiably excluded from considerations of the epistemological value of the findings of research. In such a society, thinkers trained in IDCT might be considered to
have the tools they need to avoid undercutting their own efforts at thinking critically (or at not fooling themselves). Moreover, the relative powers of inquirers and of people would not be allowed to affect the epistemological value of their respective views. But in the absence of such a society, reliance on the objectivist standard of objectivity will leave unexamined the issue of who is allowed to participate in knowledge-producing practices. The objectivist standard assumes that those actually participating are those who count and that those who are not participating should not be there anyway. Thus, the net effect of objectivism is not only a confirmation and implicit acceptance of unjust social hierarchies and oppressive social arrangements but also skewed findings about the workings of society.

Superficially, Harding’s solution that inquirers purposely and actively try to ground their inquiry with people living on the margins of society may suggest that she merely has a strong political commitment to equality, a commitment that is for its part motivated by sympathy for the oppressed but not for epistemological reasons. Harding’s response would be that her solution is really a commitment to hearing the views of those who have not been powerful enough to be included in deliberations involved in inquiry. But it is true that by arguing compellingly against the objectivist requirement of value-neutrality, Harding has indirectly shifted the epistemological ground such that the accusation that her sympathy motivates her solution becomes meaningless. This is so because she has implicitly exposed the gross inadequacies of dispassionate, distanced, and impersonal research. Having dismantled the epistemological justifications for objectivism, Harding has no reason to apologize for her sympathies. With objectivism out of the way, it is no longer permissible to discard inquiry simply because it is motivated by sympathy. A challenger to such inquiry has to argue why sympathy in this instance is resulting in unobjective or unreliable knowledge.

This commitment to include the powerless in deliberations is motivated by sympathy and by a desire not to push the powerless into the category of the “other,” withhold empathy, and dismiss their views. As a feminist whose work is in part motivated by her concern for the condition of women, Harding is indirectly arguing for the importance of seeing as people those who traditionally have been brushed aside. But this sympathy, far from distorting her
inquiries on social phenomena, introduces honesty, consistency, and above all, objectivity to her work.

Ultimately, the ability to understand and feel something of the emotional experiences of the people involved and affected by inquiry, Harding implies, is of greater importance to epistemology than the unexamined acceptance of unjust hierarchies and power disparities. I have argued that IDCT does not give the thinker the minimum set of skills needed to avoid gross prejudices against people affected by or involved in a process of thinking. I have further argued that the primary cause of this failure of IDCT is that no demand is made of the thinkers to imagine the emotional experiences of those affected or involved. The failure of IDCT is a failure of empathy. People trained in IDCT are not trained to imagine the emotional experiences of the people affected or involved (they are not taught to empathize). Thus those practicing IDCT go about their deliberations emotionally compartmentalized because of the unexamined, prior culturewide assumptions that they bring to their deliberations. Harding’s strong objectivity for achieving maximal reliability in knowledge production recognizes the importance of empathy in thinking and can provide the missing element in IDCT because strong objectivity (a) presupposes an appreciation for the importance of empathy, (b) insists that IDCT practitioners look at knowledge as human and situated, (c) insists that IDCT practitioners go out of their way to consider the views of those on the margins, and (d) insists that IDCT practitioners consider their own positions in relation to those being studied or affected by the study.

In Chapter 4, I am going to examine the historical roots of objectivism. My main argument is going to be that there are strong historical and philosophical reasons to believe that objectivism as the standard underpinning of IDCT was in fact designed as a tool for thinkers who welcome and accept certain forms of oppression in society.
CHAPTER 4. ARISTOTELIAN LOGIC OF POWER

Introduction and Road Map

I began this document by claiming that IDCT ignores a key intellectual skill: the ability to imagine the consequences of carrying out thoughts on the involved and affected people. In Chapter 1, I pointed out that critical thinking, as currently taught by rhetoric textbooks, is heavily influenced by Aristotelian terminology and rhetorical theory. In Chapter 2, I offered an extended illustration of the atrocities that can be committed with IDCT. In Chapter 3, I pointed out the serious epistemological shortcomings of objectivism, which is the standard of objectivity underlying IDCT. In this chapter, I am going to look at the historical context in which Aristotle formulated his rhetorical theory and the epistemological and metaphysical justifications for that theory.

With IDCT, some people are by default marginalized and removed from discussion. As a result, they—considered powerless or distant and thus unimportant—can be oppressed, but just as important, the knowledge gained through such marginalization and removal is biased and inadequate. Since objectivism or the standard of objectivity justifying IDCT does not account for—and in effect excuses, ignores, or even encourages—this source of bias in inquiry, objectivism, according to Harding, is perfect for maintaining oppressive social structures. Systematically, the views of the powerful are considered; the needs of the powerful are accommodated, and the views of the powerless, the marginalized, the stigmatized and otherwise dehumanized are neglected by finding no place for their views in the critical evaluation of the findings of inquiry. This neglect is considered perfectly acceptable.

The roots of IDCT can be found in Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*. In other words, behind *On Rhetoric* stands a worldview based on a certain set of values that direct Aristotle to identify a set of problems and also to conceptualize a set of solutions for those problems. The terminology of IDCT and the distinctions and conceptualizations that they imply—for example, the distinction between logos and pathos and the relationship between the author and the audience—reflect the deeper conceptualizations of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*. In this
chapter, I will examine those conceptualizations and the values they reflect and point out their grave shortcomings.

Specifically, I will first briefly establish the claim that Aristotle holds explicit and philosophically justified sexist, racist, and imperialistic views. Then I will explore the connections between epistemology and his justifications for the oppression of various groupings of humans (women, slaves, and barbarians). Having explained my position in Chapter 3, I should mention that I do not enter my exploration of Aristotelian epistemology and metaphysics as a disinterested party. I was and remain extremely suspicious of anyone—such as Aristotle—who claims some people are by nature slaves. I already outlined the grounds for my beliefs regarding the intellectual implications of the presence of oppression in society. Briefly, I oppose oppression because it causes suffering. Thinking critically is a communal, collaborative, communicative, language-centered activity geared towards solving urgent problems, problems that if left unsolved lead to suffering. To fail to solve preventable suffering is thus to fail to think critically. This failure to think critically is due to a deeper failure to imagine the lived, emotion-infused experiences of people affected by our thoughts and decisions. Moreover, I agree with Harding's assessment that the objectivist standard of objectivity is suited to the functioning of an oppressive/hierarchical society. Given this background, which I established in Chapter 3, I enter this exploration of Aristotelian philosophy as a critic who throughout my investigation demands that he show me why I should abandon or modify my beliefs about suffering, thinking, and oppression. As I will show, however, Aristotelian epistemology and metaphysics are an extended argument for the rationality of power. Aristotle explicitly and unapologetically identifies right with might. He bases this equation on a philosophical system that purports to explain the purpose and final cause of the order of the universe. I will point out that there are no currently acceptable philosophical justifications for the key assumptions and conclusions of such a philosophy. In drawing these conclusions, I will provide a historical and philosophical background for Aristotle's work to argue that his philosophy was designed to justify the interests of a special group of people—the oligarchic, pro-Macedonian-occupation party in Athens of the time.
Finally, I will argue that the key concepts of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* and his divisions and definitions are destructive of efforts to teach students critical thinking based on a recognition that knowledge is human, perspectival, limited, uncertain, growing, unpredicted, and communal. Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* has to be abandoned as a model manual of rhetoric so that long-neglected aspects of human knowledge can be re-introduced to reasoning.

I will argue further that to teach the key concepts of *On Rhetoric* while providing the justificatory background of Aristotle’s oracular philosophy would be deeply problematic because such justifications have long been superceded and refuted. Such justifications, which are embedded in the definitions and divisions of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, include the hierarchical power-rationality of the world, the natural inferiority and superiority of people based on their positions and levels of power in society, the mystical foundations of abstract knowledge, the hierarchical and theological definition of knowledge, the inferiority and baseness of the public, the proportional definition of justice, and a host of others. But to teach key concepts of *On Rhetoric* without providing the Aristotelian justificatory background is a rather straightforward and uncomplicated form of inculcating dogma, which passively condones and encourages biased thinking and unjust treatment of various “unworthy” out-groups. A rejection of the key concepts and the background should result in a rather different conceptualization of rhetoric. At the very least, the new conceptualization of rhetoric should (a) reinstate emotions and empathy to the very center of critical thinking and (b) include a formal requirement that those affected or involved in any deliberation be actively and aggressively identified and their views actively and aggressively sought and incorporated in critical examination of any knowledge claim that purports to benefit from the backing of the best standards of objectivity. Consequently, students of rhetoric should receive education in imagining the lived experiences of other people and in resisting unexamined (blind) culturally determined group identifications that eliminate, in subtle and often invisible ways, involved and affected groups from the category *human*. This reconceptualization places art and literature at the center of human knowledge and recognizes
science “as a branch of literature” (185, Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge, an Evolutionary Approach*).

I pose my argument in this chapter as follows: In Chapter 3, I explained the connection between oppression and knowledge. Oppression causes preventable suffering. It is actively or passively created by humans. The urgent goal of thinking is solving urgent problems like preventable suffering. But thinking is also collaborative, communal, and communicative. As Popper claims, thought and language are by-products of other human activities, here, activities involved in solving problems of survival (117, *Objective*). Thus the presence of settled or institutionalized injustice—oppression—indicates some form of the compartmentalization of emotions and thus the presence of systematic bias in thinking. We study critical thinking and reasoning to avoid such intellectual failures.

Aristotle, however, who is the “founder of the science of logic” and the author of *On Rhetoric* and whose conceptualization of rhetoric is widely taught in rhetoric textbooks, believes in oppression. I quote several passages from Aristotle’s *Politics*:

A slave is a sort of living piece of property. (64,65)

The slave, a servant, is one of the tools that minister to action. (65)

Indeed some things are so divided right from birth, some to rule, some to be ruled. (67)

This is also true as between man and the other animals; for tame animals are by nature better than wild, and it is better for them all to be ruled by men, because it secures their safety. Again, as between male and female the former is by nature superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject. And this must hold good of mankind in general. (68)

Large portions of the text from which these passages have been extracted are devoted to explaining slavery through warfare or the enslavement of people who have all the characteristics of the natural ruler.

Aristotle’s position on slavery and the subjugation of women cannot be forgiven on historical grounds. In other words, he cannot be considered historically naïve. His views are shocking, not just by the standards of our time but by those of his. The ideas of the injustice or unnaturalness of slavery or of the subjugation of women were not unknown to him.
Durant writes that “within the patriarchal framework the position of woman is far higher in Homeric than it will be in Periclean Greece [the generation right before Aristotle]” (50). But even after the Periclean Greece, Aristotle could not have been ignorant of someone like Aspasia, who about 450 BC “opened a school of rhetoric and philosophy, and boldly encouraged the public emergence and higher education of women” (253). According to Durant, “Socrates said that he had learned from her the art of eloquence” (253). Moreover, as Popper in *Open Society and Its Enemies* writes, there is a good deal of textual evidence from Aristotle and Plato themselves about the intellectual and political atmosphere of their times. Popper writes for example that Athenian democracy of Plato’s and Aristotle’s time came “very close to abolishing slavery” (43). Moreover, Aristotle and his teacher and mentor Plato made great efforts to refute emancipatory and egalitarian ideas. That some people in Aristotle’s time thought that slavery should be abolished can be seen, for example, from passages in Plato’s *Republic*. In one passage, Plato offers a glimpse of the status of women and slaves in ancient Greece when he rails against democracies such as that of Athens. He writes “the purchased slaves, male and female, are not less free than the owners who paid for them. And I almost forgot to mention the spirit of freedom and equal rights in the relation of men to women and women to men” (page 791 section 536b).

So specifically, this chapter tries to answer two sets of questions. The first question is “are Aristotle’s ideas on slavery, the subjugation of women and barbarians misapplications of Aristotle’s ideas of logic and reasoning?” My attempt to investigate this question took this thesis through a long detour to Aristotle’s epistemology and metaphysics. My answer is “no, Aristotle is applying his ideas on knowledge and reasoning consistently. The problem is with his formulation of his ideas of reasoning and knowledge.” The second question is “does Aristotle’s formulation of epistemology and metaphysics affect his conceptualization of rhetoric?” My answer is “yes, his formulation of epistemology is a justification for IDCT and renders his conceptualization of rhetoric unsuitable for teaching critical thinking.”
Aristotle’s Philosophy

I believe that understanding Aristotle’s worldview would be extremely difficult and time consuming for any modern scholar. I have several reasons for this belief. First, although Aristotle uses terms that are deceptively similar to what we use, his definitions of those terms are so different as to be unrecognizable. For example, what Aristotle means by cause, causality, science, and demonstration have little resemblance to what is meant by those terms in our time. Perhaps more important, as I will show through my study of his philosophy, what Aristotle means by rationality and reasoning are practically foreign to us. Finally, Bertrand Russell explains a third difficulty. He writes, “Aristotle’s metaphysics, roughly speaking, may be described as Plato diluted by common sense. He [Aristotle] is difficult because Plato and common sense do not mix easily” (162).

But by far the greatest difficulty in understanding Aristotle arises from his strategy of reasoning. I am interested in knowing how he can justify the oppression of women, slaves, and barbarians because—for the purposes of this study—such oppression has devastating epistemological costs. The difficulty in understanding Aristotle’s endorsement of oppression comes from the fact that he changes the grounds of reasoning. In other words, before reasoning with me, he claims that reasoning has to be properly understood because it is reasoning itself—or the very rationality of the universe—that endorses oppression. Thus, to understand him, he demands that the universe be studied; to understand the universe, his methodology for this study must be learned; to learn the methodology a review of syllogism is necessary; and all this from his frame of reference, not ours; otherwise because of the shift in the meaning of terms, his views become incomprehensible. In the following sections, I will explain his position as I think it can best be described, keeping in mind that Aristotle’s broader philosophical framework can be understood only as a whole. Read in parts, one can find any and all opinions justifying or rejecting just about any claim.

Metaphysics

In this section, I will first offer an overview of the broad outlines of Aristotle’s metaphysics. Aristotle claims that some people are born to be slaves, that some people are
slaves "by nature." What he means by "nature" is part of his general description of the nature of the world and reality and is a very complex concept because this nature has something to do with reasoning itself. In other words, as David Charles in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* writes, "Aristotle’s logical project was directly connected with his metaphysical goals" (54). This position is radically different from even the most conservative, contemporary views of reasoning, and the position will be clearer towards the end of my treatment of Aristotle’s project.

In the following subsections (through "Epistemology"), I will take Aristotle’s word for granted and merely try to describe the nature of the world as he sees it. I will try to keep my focus on ideas that connect to his views on the hierarchical nature of the universe. In T. A. Sinclair’s translation of *Politics*, Aristotle writes that “The living creature consists in the first place of mind and body, and of these the former is ruler by nature, the latter ruled” (68). The distinction between *mind* and *body* is key, and this passage can serve as an entrance into Aristotelian metaphysics. According to D. J. O’Connor in *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, Aristotle was looking for "an answer to a general question, ‘Why are things as they are in general?’" (50). Aristotle offers three sets of doctrines in formulating an answer: *matter* and *form*, *potentiality* and *actuality*, and *causality*.

**Matter and Form**

Aristotle believed that everything in the world consists of matter and form. O’Connor gives the example of a silversmith forming silver into a bowl. Bertrand Russell’s explanation of the relation between matter and form is that “What Aristotle means seems to be plain common sense: a ‘thing’ must be bounded, and the boundary constitutes its form” (165). Aristotle sees matter and form everywhere. And things in the world are on a hierarchy of being more or less formed. Thus at one end of the hierarchy there is something called “prime matter” (*Critical*, 50), which is “entirely featureless and structureless,” but prime matter forms the “two pairs of contrary qualities, hot-cold, dry-wet,” which combine in pairs to form “the four elements” of fire, earth, air, and water, from which all else in the world is formed.
According to Aristotle, all things are made up of form and matter, or form and matter constitute the substance of a thing. Of form and matter, however, form is the essence. The concept of essence will play a central role in Aristotle’s epistemology because when Aristotle talks about knowing something he means knowing the essence of that thing.

The technicalities involved in the definitions of form (or essence), matter, and substance and of how from prime matter all things are formed have contributed to the writing of many a book. I will skip the entire debate by merely pointing out that according to Aristotle from prime matter all is formed. Prime matter is indefinite and cannot be really talked about.

**Actuality and Potentiality**

The concept of form and matter, however, is very fertile, for Aristotle also looks at the relationship between form and matter in terms of processes. O’Connor writes that Aristotle developed “the concept of matter and form to account for the fact of change” (51). Thus a piece of silver has the potential to become a bowl of silver, whereas a piece of silver does not have the potential to become a living a bird. O’Connor writes,

> Nature works in a certain order and within certain limits. Only those changes can take place in a thing for which the potentiality exists there. Apples become red or yellow but not blue or white. Tadpoles develop into frogs and not into crocodiles. Stones fall downward and not upward. The form that supersedes another in a process of change is called the actuality (energeia) of the previous potency (dynamis). Thus matter and form regarded as factors in a process of change become potentiality and actuality (or potency and act). (50)

The view is teleological. As Russell puts it, for Aristotle, “the universe and everything in it is developing towards something continually better than what went before” (167). The world is slowly forming and in the process actualizing its potentiality, becoming what it is meant to be. Already, in this picture, Aristotle is finding better and worse elements. He believes that formed matter—more organized or structured matter—is “better” than less organized and structured matter. Later in the chapter, I will return to this attribution of intrinsic value to nature. But for now a preliminary question to answer is “where does
Aristotle get his ideas on the goodness or badness of form and matter? Aristotle was one of the greatest biologists of all time, and Durant’s explanation is that Aristotle’s metaphysics has roots in his biological observations and theories:

Everything in the world is moved by an inner urge to become something greater than it is. Everything is both the form or reality which has grown out of something which was its matter or raw material; and it may in its turn be the matter out of which still higher forms will grow. So the man is the form of which the child was the matter; the child is the form and its embryo the matter; the embryo the form, the ovum the matter; and so back till we reach in a vague way the conception of matter without form at all. But such a formless matter would be no-thing, for every thing has a form. Matter, in its widest sense, is the possibility of form; form is the actuality, the finished reality, of matter. (Story 69-70)

In conceptualizing form and matter and the nature of the world, Aristotle claims to know nothing less than the ultimate purpose of the world. In terms of human life and history, the Aristotelian position leads to historicism, “the doctrine that history is controlled by specific historical and evolutionary laws whose discovery would enable us to prophesy the destiny of man” (Open Society by Popper, 8). But more on this later.

Causality
This process of change from matter to form can be explained by the concept of causality. Aristotle believes that there are four types of necessary causes, which together are sufficient to account for a “thing being in a certain state” (51): material, formal, efficient, and final causes. O’Connor expands on Aristotle’s example of house-building to explain what Aristotle means by the four causes:

The bricks, mortar, glass, tiles, and so on which go to make a house are its material cause. The craftsmen who put this material together are the efficient cause. The formal cause lies in the plans of the architect, and the final cause is the purpose for which the house was built, that of providing comfort and shelter. (52)

Of the four causes, only various formulations of efficient cause are used by contemporary scientists to explain events. For Aristotle, however, efficient cause is of marginal value. By far the most important cause for Aristotle—and which is at the center of
his metaphysics—is the final cause. O’Connor points out that the final cause (the end in view, the purpose, or the teleological cause) and Aristotle’s “reading of purpose into nature was an unexorcized residue of the magical animistic thinking with which Greek philosophy was infected” (52). The idea of the final cause leads the way to Aristotle’s conception of God. As there is a completely unformed prime matter in Aristotle’s cosmos, there is also a completely formed God. For Aristotle, “The world is continually evolving towards a greater degree of form, and thus becoming progressively more like God,” God being the ultimate final cause (Russell 169). The concept of God is of central importance to Aristotle’s philosophy. Aristotle called his work in metaphysics theology, which was at the basis of his other writings. Because of the importance of this concept in explaining other Aristotelian ideas later on, I quote the following passage from Durant:

[In Aristotle, God] is the final cause of nature, the drive and purpose of things, the form of the world; the principle of its life, the sum of its vital processes and powers, the inherent goal of its growth, the energizing entelechy of the whole . . . . God never does anything; he has no desires, no will, no purpose; he is activity so pure that he never acts. He is absolutely perfect; therefore he cannot desire anything; therefore he does nothing. His only occupation is to contemplate the essence of things; and since he himself is the essence of all things, the form of all forms, his sole employment is the contemplation of himself. (Story 71,72)

The God Aristotle envisions is without emotions and at rest. The concept of God almost completes Aristotle’s depiction of the hierarchical nature of the universe. In the next section, I will show the place of humans in this hierarchy. What are humans themselves made of? And how does Aristotle know the things he does about the world and humans?

Living Beings: Body, Soul, and Mind

The position of humans in the natural world order is consistent with the rest of the description of the world that Aristotle offers. For Aristotle, when it comes to living beings, the concepts of matter and form become body and soul. He believes that all living matter has body and soul. By soul he means “life principle” (Critical 51), that is, the body’s “nature,
organization, and manner of working” (Critical 52). Different living beings have different types of souls in a sort of hierarchy or evolutionary ladder:

Thus, the ‘souls’ of plants are manifest in their powers of nutrition and reproduction; those of animals in their powers of sensation in addition to those of the ‘nutritive’ souls of plants. The sensitive stage of psyche is shown in the functions of sense perception (at least at the primitive level of touch), instinctive desire, and, in some animals at least, locomotion. Lastly, we have, at the human level, intelligence (nous). (52)

This evolutionary hierarchy or ladder is one in which the higher living beings have “a higher ratio of form to matter than the lower” (53). Or put differently the higher organisms not only have the functions of those lower on the ladder but also have additional functions.”

So far Aristotle has presented a seemingly coherent picture of the world. All of the world—the living and nonliving part—is made up of matter and form in a hierarchy. At the bottom is prime matter and on top God. Prime matter is formless, and God all form. Form is superior to matter because form is actualized potentiality and closer to God. Aristotelian metaphysics is teleological in that change occurs in matter as if matter had an end in view (an acorn does not become an elephant but an oak; the acorn becomes what it has a potential for). As form is superior to matter, so, from Aristotle’s standpoint, living beings that have more soul are superior to those that have less.

But of great importance to this overview of Aristotle’s philosophy is that even in the soul itself, there is a hierarchy of values. The better part of the soul is what Aristotle calls the rational part. Russell writes that Aristotle distinguishes between ‘soul’ and ‘mind,’ making mind higher than soul, and less bound to the body. . . . The mind is the part of us that understands mathematics and philosophy; its objects are timeless, and therefore it is regarded as itself timeless. The soul is what moves the body and perceives sensible objects; it is characterized by self-nutrition, sensation, thinking and motivity (413b); but the mind has the higher function of thinking, which has no relation to the body or to the senses. (170)73

The conceptualization of “mind” is what ties Aristotle’s epistemology to his metaphysics. Living beings are more formed than inanimate objects. Of living beings
animals are formed more than plants. And of animals, humans are more formed than other animals. In humans, the form and matter principles become the soul and body. The soul is the form of the body. And in the soul, the mind is the form of the soul. The mind, however, Aristotle points out, is rational and therefore closest to God. In the next section, I will try to explain what Aristotle says is the connection between God and rationality.

Epistemology

As I will show in the next section, Aristotle's belief in oppression comes from his metaphysics, but Aristotle has to explain how he knows what he claims to know. An important feature of this explanation is that it not only fits but completes his metaphysical descriptions. The goal of Aristotle's epistemology is to give him tools that allow him to know the world as it is. He wants a kind of truth that corresponds exactly to the real, and rational explanations that correspond exactly to causality. On his way to this absolute, certain knowledge, he offers the original justifications for objectivism.

*Aristotelian Epistemology Is Existential*

Before entering into the details of Aristotle's epistemology, I should mention in passing that without Aristotle's metaphysics the epistemology of Aristotle seems meaningless even from within the framework of his own philosophy, for his metaphysics is meant to underpin his epistemology. According to *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*,

> Aristotle's logical system . . . required a metaphysical underpinning—an account of species, substances, and essences—to underwrite his treatment of logical necessity and demonstration . . . . Aristotle was faced with two problems: he required a metaphysical account of substances, species and essence to sustain this view, and psychological account of how we grasp these substances and kinds. (55)

Since, as I have shown, Aristotle has already made a great many extremely broad claims about the world (He has, for example, identified and defined causality, form, matter, and God, among others), it would make sense for us to expect him to have made all these discoveries about the world with the help of reliable epistemological tools. As *Companion* says, however, it turns out that, at least from our contemporary viewpoint, Aristotle's
epistemological tools are really the consequences of his metaphysical speculations. If a statement like the Companion's is correct—that is if Aristotle made his claims about the world in order to underpin his epistemology—then Aristotle has been begging the question all along. He is making the claims about the world to justify his reasoning for making those same claims about the world.

Aristotle's solution, as I will explain, will by no means extricate him from the charge of being circular (and thus ultimately dogmatic). But he does have a solution, which is based on a worldview that seems utterly foreign to us and from which he draws far-reaching conclusions about not only knowledge but also ethics, politics, and rhetoric.

The worldview that allows Aristotle to justify the relationship between his metaphysics and epistemology, and which seems utterly foreign to us, is that, for him, epistemology is existential. In other words, knowledge is not merely an activity, product, condition, or state of the mind. It is not a mental activity along the lines of, say, representation of what is real out there in the world. For Aristotle, knowledge is real; it is not knowledge of reality or knowledge about reality. It is part of reality. Or rather it is reality. In a way, he doesn’t make the sharp distinction assumed in our time between the knower and the known. This characteristic (which I will explain further) is perhaps best explained by a passage that Karl Popper quotes from Aristotle's On the Soul: “Actual Knowledge is identical with its object” (685).75

Platonic Theory of Knowledge (Reminiscences)

To explain Aristotle’s understanding of the relationship between knowledge and reality, I will first explore the Platonic and mathematical roots of Aristotle’s ideas in epistemology and then discuss Aristotle’s modifications and extensions of those ideas.

In Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, John Dewey writes that the ultimate problem of ancient philosophy was “the distinction and relation of the permanent, the fixed, from and to the variable and changing” (83). Thus, the philosophy of Aristotle can be considered a systematic attempt at solving this problem through all areas of inquiry of Aristotle’s time.
The idea of change was discovered by Heraclitus (born about 540 B.C.E.). Before his time Greek philosophers followed the oriental ideas of viewing the world as a structure built of material things. This pre-Heraclitan “cosmos (which originally seems to have been an oriental tent or mantle” (Book 1, 11, Popper’s *Open Society*) of course recognized the presence of change but saw the processes of change “as going on within the edifice, or else as constructing or maintaining it, disturbing and restoring the stability or balance of a structure which was considered to be fundamentally static” (11-12). Heraclitus changed all that. He claimed that all is in flux and that there is no container, structure, or edifice within which things change.

As for ancient philosophers of Plato’s and Aristotle’s time, Dewey writes, “Change as such escapes intellectual apprehension” (85). Plato’s solution to the problem of the impermanence in the world was that the world of flux and change is not real. Rather, the changing world is merely a mask keeping us from seeing the real, permanent world. Behind the phenomena of the changing world are unchanging, stable, and true natures, or essences. And Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg in *The Rhetorical Tradition* write that “Plato defines the philosopher’s task as aiding others to remember by clearing away the worldly debris that obscures the truth” (55). This truth is considered transcendental but accessible to humans because “we somehow ‘knew’ it before our birth, when our souls were with the Divine.” This view of knowledge leads to Plato’s reminiscence theory of knowledge. The unknown is already present in the world but we do not see it because we have forgotten that we know it. And his philosophy (and his dialectic) was aimed at clearing all the obstacles in our way of seeing the truth that our currently confused preoccupation with the changing world of the senses is obscuring. Aristotle’s view is somewhat but not entirely different.

Mathematics, during the time of Plato and Aristotle, was the paradigm of the best type of knowledge available. In *The Life of Greece*, Will Durant writes that over the portal to Plato’s Academy “was a warning inscription—medeis ageometretos esito—‘Let no one without geometry enter here’” (511). In fact, Plato’s and Aristotle’s epistemologies can be understood in terms of their attempting to extend the methodology for attaining mathematical knowledge to other areas, such as physics, biology, politics, ethics, and rhetoric.
Plato identified the real, unchanging reality, hidden behind the changing world of the senses, with ideas and concepts. The connection between Plato's reminiscence theory and mathematics may be illustrated by an algebraic equation (though there was no algebra during his time), for example: $2(x + 4) = 12$. When solved, the equation will be $x = 2$. Plato believed that in the unsolved equation, $x$ is already, and has always been, equal to 2 but that this knowledge was obscured by the complexity of the original formula. To Plato, the changing world of the senses is like the unsolved formula, baffling and unclear. The real world (the permanent, "transcendental truth") is like the solved equation. Just as in the equation, the real world (the meaning of $x$), though always already present, is hidden or obscured by the world of the senses (what the eyes see as the complex equation).

Beginning from such considerations, Plato tried to work out the relationship between the real world and the world of the senses. He postulated that only the permanent world of concepts or ideas was real and that the world of the senses was unreal; that the latter was a pale, imperfect, or corrupted reflection of the former. Given this Platonic background, I can begin to explain Aristotle's epistemology, which in key areas concurs with Plato's although this closeness of views may not seem obvious because, as many historians point out, Aristotle often emphasized his differences with Plato (451, Woozley's "Theory of Knowledge"). In the following sections, I will focus on explaining Aristotle's epistemology, occasionally pointing out important differences and similarities with Plato's.

Plato believed that "it is the task of pure knowledge or 'science' to discover and to describe the true nature of things, i.e. their hidden reality or essence" (Book 1, 31, Open Society). Aristotle agreed with that position. Thus, like Plato, Aristotle distinguishes between knowledge and opinion. But Aristotle conceptualizes the "the true nature of things" or concepts somewhat differently from the way Plato does. Aristotle's theory of forms rejects the Platonic notion that only forms (ideas) are real. Form and matter are both real, and together they constitute the substance of a thing. But form is more important than matter because without it matter remains indefinite and incapable of being comprehended by humans, and it is form that, to use Aristotle's words, causes a thing into being (452, "Theory of Knowledge"). Dewey explains these characteristics of Aristotelian essence as follows:
“When Aristotle talks about the nature of a thing, he is referring to the unchanging aspect of "substances with their fixed essential characters" (83). According to Dewey, Aristotle’s idea was that subjects of apprehension

or subjects, are substances having design and form in an objective sense. Change and susceptibility to variation lack, on the other hand, measure. They are marks of the presence of the indefinite; the finite, finished and complete are such because of fixed limits and measure. Change as such escapes intellectual apprehension. It can be known only in so far as it can be included within fixed boundaries which mark its beginning and its objective end or close; that is, as far as change tends to move toward a final and unchanging limit. (85)

Dewey, in this passage is not merely referring to what we do intellectually to comprehend change. As mentioned, Aristotle’s epistemology is existential. In other words, Dewey is describing Aristotle’s understanding of the workings of the world. Aristotle is not merely claiming that when a thing is changing, it cannot be comprehended; he is saying that when a thing is changing, then it is in an existential or real sense indefinite, incomplete. It is not formed or caused. It is mixed in with other things. It has not come into being although he does not go so far as to say (as Plato would) that the indefinite thing is unreal. 78

What Can Be Known

Thus, to know for Aristotle means to know the essence or form of substances (essence being that quality of a substance without which the substance would be something else). And a thing can be known either by name, or indirectly through definitions, or directly through intuitive grasp (51, O’Conner; Book 1, 31, Open Society). 79

As I will show, demonstrative, (or in Aristotle’s terminology) scientific knowledge, or episteme, is ultimately legitimated by an appeal to intuition. As Aristotle and Plato use mathematical knowledge as a pattern for epistemology, this epistemology is in turn the pattern Aristotle uses for “knowledge” (opinion) gained through dialectic and rhetoric. An explanation of the details of Aristotle’s epistemology will later help with understanding what Aristotle is really claiming in On Rhetoric.
Scientific Demonstration and Mathematics

For Aristotle, the job of epistemology (or "pure knowledge") was "the discovery of the hidden nature or Form or essence of things" (Book 1, 31, Open Society). Of the three things that can be known, the naming of the essence is merely a guide to its discovery; the goal of scientific demonstration is verbal description of the essence; and the discovery itself is an intellectual intuition. Aristotle called a description of the essence of a thing . . . a 'definition'" (Book 1, 31). Dewey connects Aristotle’s use of definition with his metaphysics:

That which belongs inherently and necessarily to a species is its nature or essence. Definition is the form which essence takes qua known. Far from being verbal or even a convenient process or product of 'thought,' definition is cognitive grasp of that which defines (marks out) ontological substance. It marks it off from everything else and grasps its eternal self-same character. (86)80

The idea behind Aristotle’s epistemology is to place things, not to deduce or infer. "In Greek science," Dewey writes, "Nature [essence or Form] was a qualitative, a bounded and closed, whole. To know any special subject was to know it as a whole in its proper place in the comprehensively inclusive whole, Nature." (93). Thus, rational knowledge, in the Aristotelian system is exclusively that arising from definition and classification (87). And these processes are not merely mental.81 The work of defining parallels (and is in fact considered the same as) the state of affairs in the world where indefinite things come to be made definite and bounded and to take form. Definition is to express (not merely to represent) in words the exact state of affairs in the world.

To define a thing—to see the essence or form of a thing—is to see the cause of a thing (see explanations on form in section on metaphysics). The form of a thing is its final (sometimes mixed in with formal) cause. Thus, Aristotle, like Plato, considered scientific—that is, true—knowledge (episteme) as "knowledge not merely that something is so, but also why it is so" (452, "Theory of Knowledge").

Moreover, Aristotle also required that the knowledge attained be demonstrable. When Aristotle talks about demonstration, he has in mind something like mathematical
demonstration. 82 To use the example from algebra again. To demonstrate that in the equation
\[ 2(x+4) = 12 \]
x is equal to 2, we can of course try different numbers for x to see if both sides of the equation become equal. The number for x (here 2) that makes both sides of the equation equal is the correct number. But solving the problem that way would not be *demonstrating* that x is in fact 2, it would be a lucky guess. A shorthand demonstration of x being equal to 2 would be something like the following:

1) \[ 2(x+4) = 12 \]
2) \[ 2 \frac{(x+4)}{2} = \frac{12}{2} \]
3) \[ x + 4 = 6 \]
4) \[ x + 4 - 4 = 6 - 4 \]
5) \[ x = 2 \]

Many equations can be solved that way. The reasons for every step in the equation are previously established. For example, in step 2, both sides of the equation can be divided by the same number without the value of x changing. And the justification for such divisions has been established (proved). 83 The knowledge gained will be certain. Mathematicians can thus say that given the original equation, x is demonstrably, or by necessity, 2.

**Syllogism**

In Chapter 1, I pointed out that Toulmin’s model is an attempt at moving away from mathematics as a model for reasoning. Instead of mathematics, Toulmin uses a “jurisprudential” model. Aristotle’s concept of syllogism goes in exactly the opposite direction and can be viewed as a systematic attempt on Aristotle’s part to extend the reach of demonstrations from the mathematical sciences of arithmetic and geometry to other fields of inquiry. In Aristotle’s system, syllogism is meant to fix the boundaries of substance, or express its substance. Dewey writes that “the syllogism in the original logic was in no way a form of inferring or reasoning. It was immediate apprehension or vision of the relations of inclusion and exclusion that belong to real wholes in Nature” (88). The job of syllogism was to make definite what is undefined and indefinite. To mark off the essence of a substance in a syllogism, Dewey writes,
The so-called major and minor propositions respectively set forth the including and included ‘subjects,’ while the ‘middle term’ is the ratio or logos, reason, the principle of measure and limit, which is the ground of inclusion or exclusion. It is indispensable in reasoning not because of any peculiar property of ‘thought’ but because of the inherent connections in nature which bind ‘subjects’ together and prevent their mingling. Since the middle term represents the principle of inclusion and exclusion in nature, it expresses a universal or whole. If it represented that which is particular (broken and partial) it could not be the ground or reason of that conclusion which is the exhibition in knowledge of exclusions and inclusions in Nature.

The knowledge obtained through the operations of authentic Aristotelian syllogism is unqualifiedly real and complete. There is no element of uncertainty or perspective in such knowledge. Being complete and self-contained, it is not just true but real. Aristotelian syllogism deals strictly with universal statements, not with particular things or proper nouns. And as Dewey points out, Aristotelian syllogism does not aim at argument or inference but at entailment or implication. In an entailment “if certain premises are true, then a certain conclusion necessarily follows” (O’Conner 40). Again, Aristotle’s epistemology does not aim at knowledge of particular things but of the essence or form of those things. But for the type of knowledge that it seeks, Aristotelian science has reduced its job significantly. As Popper notes, “If we take for granted the methods by which we derive conclusions from these basic premises, then we could say that, according to Aristotle, the whole of scientific knowledge is contained in the basic premises, and that it would all be ours if only we could obtain an encyclopaedic list of the basic premises” (Book 2, 10, Open Society).

Axioms

The question for Aristotle, however, was how to obtain the basic premises. Syllogism and deductive sciences rely on strictly true premises. So for example, in the algebraic example, Aristotle has to prove that in step (4) taking away 4 from both sides does not change the value of x. In algebra, detailed reasons are offered for every step. Likewise, every premise of Aristotelian syllogism requires justifications. And in justifications for each premise, other justifications are required. At some point in mathematics and in any deductive
system, there are no more justifications. The starting point of any chain of reasoning in mathematics is called axioms.\textsuperscript{86}

Axioms take a very special place in Aristotle's metaphysics. Aristotle believed that axioms must "be known immediately and not by inference" (452, "Theory of Knowledge"). Aristotle, like Plato, thought that ultimately knowledge is obtained through "an intuitive grasp of the essences of things" (Book 2, 10, \textit{Open Society}). The details of this intuitive grasp are somewhat complicated.\textsuperscript{87} But clearly, the idea of intuition, as described and understood by Aristotle, is central to his philosophy, and not just when it comes to axioms, for verbal definition ultimately expresses intuitive grasp of essence.\textsuperscript{88}

Having extended the idea of mathematical reasoning to all other areas of knowledge, Aristotle has the tools to confer certainty to his metaphysical claims. And once his epistemological and metaphysical descriptions are established, his ideas on the naturalness of various forms of oppression can be seen as simple extensions of those descriptions. In the next section, I will examine how he uses his ideas on form, matter, causality, God, and rationality to argue that oppression is part of the very natural order of the universe.

**How Aristotle Justifies Oppression**

cf. the Rational Order of the Universe

In summary, what are some of the most important things that Aristotle claims to know? Aristotle claims that the world is made up of matter and form, matter being potential form and form actualized matter. The final cause of matter is form. Matter is indefinite and incomprehensible. Matter and form make up substances. But it is form that makes things definite. Form is the essence or idea of the substance of things. God is the ultimate form, the final cause for the sake of which all else exists and towards which all else moves.\textsuperscript{89} With living beings, the soul is the form or essence of the body, and the mind the form or essence of the soul.

Knowledge is ultimately the intuitive grasp of the essence of things. This intuitive grasp can be expressed in words, through definitions. The essence of things, however, is the form or the final cause of things (matter when defined and bounded). Demonstrative science,
which uses syllogisms, demarcates or defines what is essential about things and excludes what is accidental or unessential. Thus, demonstrative science or true knowledge expresses our intuitive grasp of the causes of things. It is not so that beings are caused in the world and that we humans try to explain what those causes are. Rather, knowledge is existential. What is known is. Thus, there is no point in separating causality in the world from rationality of minds. Mind is the faculty of the soul that is in touch with or intuits the essences of things. Causality and rationality, cause and reason, coincide. Mind can thus be called the rational faculty of the soul. Also, we may as well say the world is rational in that all matter is being formed. G. E. R. Lloyd in Aristotle: The Growth & Structure of His Thought writes that “Aristotle’s thought is dominated by the twin ideas (1) of the rationality of the universe, and (2) of the ability of the human reason to comprehend it” (304, emphasis mine). This is another way of saying that the purpose (the reason or cause) of the world is to be formed.90

There are three important characteristics of Aristotle’s philosophy that need to be highlighted to understand his justifications for oppressive social hierarchies. First, Aristotle is able to do his philosophizing from great, ethereal heights. He knows, for example, the grand purpose of the universe. The inescapable implication of his sweeping knowledge is that he views the world as it would be viewed were God to view it. This God’s-eyes-view plays a significant role when Aristotle considers mundane matters such as justice, sympathy, or the purpose and definition of rhetoric, for in his philosophical treatment of these subjects he always aims at consistency with his loftier views. Aristotle backs up his claims about the world in its true features by claiming further that he has access to knowledge—not corroborated, tested opinion as modern science conceives of knowledge but—certain and absolute knowledge through an infallible system of reasoning that is for all intents and purposes something like a snapshot of the very rational nature of the universe itself (except that as Dewey puts it, the snapshot analogy—or the intuitive grasp—implies verisimilitude, whereas for Aristotle the intuitive grasp is knowledge and reality—it is an unqualified converging of cause and reason).

Second, for Aristotle the form (end, essence, being, or final and formal cause) is good. Louis Ropes Loomis in Aristotle On Man in the Universe writes that “The form in
nature is what gives pattern and character to everything” (xxiii). And the world is on a hierarchy or evolutionary ladder of form and matter. Loomis writes that “All lesser things in their degree aspire . . . to realize their potentialities” (xxv). In On the Soul, Aristotle writes, “For nature, like thought, always does whatever it does for the sake of something, which something is its end. To that something corresponds in the case of animals the soul and in this it follows the order of nature” (661). And in On Generation of and Corruption, he writes, “In all things. . . nature always strikes after the better” (551). In Parts of Animals, Aristotle writes that “in the works of nature the good end and the final cause is still more important than in works of art” (43, Loomis, editor). And Loomis explains this identification of the end of nature with the good by quoting the following from Aristotle, “To be is better than not to be; to live than not to live; things with a soul than things without; the soul itself than the body” (xxx).

According to Loomis, for Aristotle, “nature . . . works ever in the best possible way with the elements she has to bring about the best possible world” (xxvii). It is in the context of the form being the aim or purpose of the matter, the good towards which matter aspires that God in Aristotelian philosophy is considered the “highest and best of forms” (Loomis, xxv). For God is the highest form, the sum total of all final causes, which is thought and reasoning as Aristotle understands those terms. Aristotle writes,

> God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are . . And God is in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and God’s essential actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good. (1695, Metaphysics)

Aristotle’s attribution of value to his metaphysical hierarchy has far-reaching implications. John Dewey in “The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy” writes that for Aristotle, the “ultimate fulfillment” (309) of purpose (the final cause) had two functions. First, it explained the “intelligibility of nature and the possibility of science,” and, second, the purposefulness of nature “gave sanction and worth to the moral and religious endeavors of man.” In other words, in reading Aristotle, the same set of ideas underpinning his epistemology (intuition or definition of final causes) and his metaphysics (substances
constituted of form and matter) also underpin his ethics and politics. Another tremendously important implication of the position is that what is truly good is determined by the very order and structure of the world, and a sharp distinction has to be made between what people think is good for them and what is actually (given the nature of the world) is good for them. It is this conceptualization of value—along with the characteristic I will describe next—that justifies slavery and oppression.

Third, the relationship between form and matter is such that matter resists form. In fact, Durant goes so far as to say that for Aristotle, "Nature is the conquest of matter by form, the constant progression and victory of life" (Story 70). The metaphor that Aristotle offers for nature of the "good" is that of a general or leader:

We must consider also in what way the nature of the universe contains the good and the supreme good, whether as something existing apart and by itself or as the order in Nature. Perhaps in both ways, as an army does. For the excellence of an army lies both in its order and in its general, but principally in him, since he is not dependent on the order but the order depends on him. (Metaphysics in Chapter 10, Aristotle on Man in the Universe, 36)\textsuperscript{92}

This characterization of the relationship between form and matter as one ruling and being ruled is important to Aristotle's philosophy because with it Aristotle can explain not only the good ends towards which reality strives but also instances of corruption, decay, and destruction, in other words, movement away from perfection and the good. For Aristotle, Durant Writes

The mistakes and futilities of nature are due to the inertia of matter resisting the forming force of purpose—hence the abortions and monsters that mar the panorama of life. (70-71)\textsuperscript{93}

This view encompasses all of Aristotle's writings on nature and is used to explain all sorts of phenomena. And there are a great number of examples to draw on. For example, according to Aristotle, the difference between a boy and a man is that "A boy is like a woman in form" and "the woman is as it were an impotent male, for it is through a certain incapacity that the female is female" (268, Metaphysics, in Ross's translation). With women, Aristotle believes, the perfect form of man has not been able to overcome the resistant matter completely.
Aristotle, Authoritarianism, and History

In this section, I will attempt to put all of this material together to show the close connection between Aristotle’s justifications for slavery and oppression of various people with his metaphysical and epistemological formulations. Aristotle’s characterization of slavery can be summarized as follows. People are “marked, immediately at birth” to rule or to be ruled, and this state of affairs is both “necessary” and “expedient” (12, Politics, Ernest Barker’s translation). The ruler/ruled relationship can be seen in the relationship between soul and the body and between the mind and the soul. In all cases, the part that is more formed, the more rational part (13) should rule. The relationship between nature, reason, and rule is clearly stated in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter: “For the ‘slave by nature’ is he that can and therefore does belong to another and he that participates in reason so far as to recognize it but not so as to possess it (where as the other animals obey not reason but emotions)” (69, Politics from T. A. Sinclair’s translation). The slave by nature is so important to Aristotle that he spends a chapter describing the difference between natural and conventional slaves. He wants to explain how it is that sometimes people who don’t have the characteristics of natural slaves are nevertheless enslaved. Aristotle writes,

On this point, one side holds that justice is a relation of mutual goodwill [and is therefore incompatible with slavery imposed by convention]; the other side holds that the rule of a superior is in itself, and by itself, justice [and is therefore a justification of such slavery. But the ambiguity of the idea which is common ground for both sides obscures the whole issue.] If the divergent views are pitted separately against one another [i.e. deprived of their common ground], neither view has any cogency, or even plausibility, against the view that the superior in goodness ought to rule over, and be the master of, his inferiors. (15, Politics, Barker’s translation)

Barker’s interpretation of this passage, with which I agree, is that Aristotle is expressing the view that he disagrees with both the people who say enslaving others is always unjust and those who say enslaving others is always just (the latter view says in effect that whoever is enslaved is by nature slave). Rather, as Barker explains, Aristotle’s considered view is that
superiority in goodness alone justifies its possessor in being a master of slaves. On this view it follows that a victor may justly enslave the vanquished if he possesses such superiority—but only on that condition. The convention will accordingly sometimes be just, and sometimes unjust; it cannot be always either the one of the other. (15)

And indeed, without keeping in mind Aristotle’s metaphysical and epistemological ideas, the passage does seem to say, to use Trevor J. Saunders’ words, that Aristotle’s “sympathies are not with the defenders of the doctrine that ‘might is right’” (70). But even Saund’r’s admits that although Aristotle’s view seems to be that “forcible enslavement is just, presumably, if and only if imposed by the morally superior,” Aristotle remains “teasingly vague” (71).

The vagueness vanishes entirely, however, when Aristotle’s metaphysical and epistemological system is brought to mind. Enslavement in war is a special instance of slavery in general. And the key, the criterion of the justice of slavery, is that both the slave and the master have to be slave and master by nature. To determine who is by nature a slave is difficult only because as Aristotle says, “in respect of superiority of soul; . . . it is much more difficult to see beauty of soul than it is to see beauty of body” (Sinclair’s Politics 69). What is morally and politically just is what is natural. If some people are slaves by nature, it is just that they be enslaved. Thus Aristotle pushes back the standard of the justice of slavery one step. When explaining what in the nature of a person makes that person a slave, he identifies the aspect of nature justifying slavery with reason.

“A man,” Aristotle writes, “is by nature a slave . . . if he participates in reason to the extent of apprehending it in another, though destitute of it himself” (13). Barker writes that according to Aristotle “There is a principle of rule and subordination in nature at large” that allows the soul to rule the body and the master to rule the natural slave because the natural master “possesses the rational faculty of the soul” (11). In fact, Aristotle’s ordering of the comparative worth of slaves, women, and children revolves around the concept of reason, for he writes, “The slave is entire without the faculty of deliberation; the female indeed possesses it, but in a form which remains inconclusive; and if children also possess it, it is only in an
immature form” (35). The notion of rationality is at the very heart of Aristotle’s explanation of slavery.

**In Nature, Might Is Right**

Might is not right, Aristotle claims. Only people who are by nature slaves can be enslaved. It is unjust to enslave naturally free people. When Aristotle is pressed to explain what in the nature of slaves condemns them to enslavement, he gives two reasons: (1) the fact that they have been enslaved and (2) the inability of natural slaves to reason. Point (1) he reduces to point (2), for he has to admit that occasionally people who by nature are not slaves are in fact enslaved. And he grants that it is difficult to see “the superiority of the soul” in people. But point (2) remains. What does he mean by the claim that people who are destitute of reason are by nature slaves?

The answer is in Aristotle’s definition of reason. Reason is the intuitive apprehension of the rational order of the universe, and the rational order of the universe is a hierarchy of various levels of form and matter. Plants have more form than do inanimate beings. Animals have more form than plants. Humans have more form than all other beings. Animate beings themselves have two parts, soul and body, of which the former rules the latter, and both of which are manifestations of a world of matter, form (and final causes), and in this world, form is progressively molding the passive if not resistant matter into what matter has the potentiality of becoming. In the soul of humans, the soul proper is the matter and the mind is the form. The mind is the site of reason, the faculty of reason, the non-physical organ that grasps or sees the abstract forms of the universe as the eye sees the objects of the sense. And in this hierarchy, God is all form and all reason. Not only is this hierarchy of rule of form over matter real, but it is also good. Form is closer to completion, superior, and more powerful. Form means shape and it also means the end of a process, the end towards which matter is pulled.

Aristotle’s position comes into focus when his characterization of the relationship between form and matter is brought to mind. The hierarchical nature of the universe implies *rule* and domination. The dichotomy is that between form and matter. Aristotle writes,
In all cases where there is a compound, constituted of more than one part but forming one common entity—whether the parts be continuous [as in the body of a man] or discrete [as in the relation of master and slave]—a ruling element and a ruled can always be traced. This characteristic [i.e. the presence of ruled and ruling elements] is present in animate beings by virtue of the whole constitution of nature, inanimate as well as animate; for even in things which are inanimate there is a sort of ruling principle. (Barker’s Politics 12)

Since in Aristotle’s metaphysics, substance is a compound of form and matter, Aristotle is covering the entire range of reality (excepting prime matter and God, which are not compounds). Examples of ruler/ruled relationships that Aristotle gives are man/wife, soul/body, mind/soul, man/animal, Greek/barbarian, and father/child. Saunders offers a similar list: “better/worse, male/female, man/beast, mind/body, rational/irrational, ruler/ruled” (66). Aristotle’s reasoning faculty (the mind) intuits (literally grasps or converges with) this hierarchical, ruler/ruled structure or nature of the world.

His explanation of the naturalness of slavery in effect says enslaving people merely because we can enslave them would be wrong. The master is not justified in enslaving another human merely because the master is more powerful. The master must have some justifying goodness on his side, a “superiority of the soul,” a greatness of mind. That justifying goodness is reason. But reason is a grasp (intuition) of the actual nature of the world. The nature of the world, however, is one of the rule of form over matter, reason being defined as the actualization of matter in form. In this scheme, to have reason is to understand, grasp, or see the hierarchy of form and matter—the ruler/ruled structure of the world—and to be able to explain why this domination occurs, why it is justified. Might, Aristotle says, is not right. Rather justice makes right, and justice can be achieved through reason. Reason, however, is an understanding of the rule of form over matter, soul over body, and the more rational over the less rational. In short, might, after all and after a very long detour, is right. The person who has the clearest picture of this inherent nature of the world is best qualified to rule over others. Aristotle is siding firmly with might-is-right proponents through circular reasoning. But the concepts completing the circularity are lodged deep inside the edifice of Aristotle’s metaphysical and epistemological system. 

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To accomplish the circular reasoning, Aristotle has to reconceptualize reasoning and justice. I have explained what Aristotle means by reasoning. I will extend my explanation briefly to discuss his conceptualization of justice. Aristotle’s idea of justice, which is an extension and modification of Plato’s ideas, has been irremediably confounded because of the identification of the final cause or of the end with the good and in the purported finding of the ultimate source of a moral standard in the very order of the universe.

For Plato, political justice was not equality before the law as equality before the law is understood in our time. Popper points to several passages in Republic where Plato unambiguously argues that each person in a just state should do “one social service in the state for which his nature [is] best adapted” (674, 433a, Republic). If people start changing their positions—if for example, shoemakers begin to meddle in the affairs of merchants—Plato claims that the state will collapse. One of Plato’s conclusion is that classes within the city should mind their own business and that the mixing of classes will lead to injustice (Book 1, 90, Open). Thus, according to Plato, “The proper functioning of the money-makers, the helpers, and the guardians, each doing his own work in the state . . . would be justice and would render the city just” (676, 434c, Republic). Popper’s blunt summary of Plato’s view is that a state will be just “if the ruler rules, if the worker works, and if the slave slaves” (Book 1, Open). Aristotle’s views on political justice are in fundamental agreement with Plato’s. Russell writes that Aristotle took it as just that “some men, in virtue of their character and aptitude, have a wider sphere than others, [and] enjoy a greater share of happiness” (183, History). Like Plato, Aristotle believes in proportional justice, a form of justice that aims to help everyone enjoying their own (191, History), that is, according to the place everyone occupies on some sort of natural scale of value. It is nature again that ends up playing the key role even in the association of non-slaves (Slaves, according to Aristotle in Poetics, are completely “worthless.”). The proportional justice principle, of course, excludes women and slaves from citizenship. But Aristotle (like Plato) also excludes farmers, artisans, and tradesmen because their lives are incompatible “with the best life which depends on the leisure necessary for the development and practice of moral and intellectual virtue” (262, Lloyd’s Aristotle). Citizenship is to be granted to soldiers and priests, but only
citizens are allowed to own property. Thus, in practice, citizens come from the powerful, wealthy class, and in early, middle, and old ages, they will perform the functions of soldier, ruler, and priest, respectively (262).

So here, again, Aristotle has found a justification for the rule of the powerful elite. But what is his justification? Again, the answer comes from the implications and extrapolations of his broader metaphysical and epistemological ideas. I will explain this answer from only one of the many angles that can be adopted. The state, Aristotle maintains along with Plato (though by different routes), exists for what is “good.” But we know that as Aristotle writes in *Politics*, “what is inferior is always for the sake of what is superior; this is equally clear both in matters of skill and in those of nature; and the superior is that which is possessed of reason” (433, Sinclair’s translation). We also know, to use Lloyd’s summary that Aristotle

believes the distinction between ruler and ruled, and between superior and inferior, to be part of the natural order of things. He arranges the species of living beings in a hierarchical structure according to the faculties of soul they possess, and he expresses the view that plants exist for the sake of animals, and animals in turn for the sake of man (*Pol. 1256b 15 ff.*). And he considers it valid to draw similar distinctions between ruler and ruled within the human species itself, first between male and female, secondly between the mature man and the child, and thirdly between the freeman and the slave. (265)

In other words, in humans, the body is at the service of the soul and the soul at the service of the mind. In the state, all exist for the sake of the “good,” which as Lloyd points out, is the “life of moral and intellectual virtue that the citizens will lead” (263). Moral and intellectual virtues, like everything else in Aristotle, fit in his broader conceptualizations. As it was “reason” that justified the slavery of some people, here “virtue” is invoked as a justification for whose sake large segments of city-states are to be excluded from citizenship. To understand reason, it was necessary to excavate it from within layers of Aristotle’s philosophy. And reason, as Aristotle defines it, plays the central part in the definition of virtue, for what is good for man is what makes him happy. But what makes him happy corresponds to what he was made to do (for its final cause). And what was man made to do?
To answer this question, Aristotle has to discuss the parts of man: the body, the soul, and the mind. The good for the body is health, for the two parts of the soul, activity according to moral and intellectual virtues, respectively. The body serves the soul, and the soul serves the mind (213-245 Lloyd's *Aristotle*). Thus the ultimate end and good of man is activity according to intellectual virtues, which Aristotle defines as the life of contemplation or the pursuit of wisdom, which combines scientific knowledge with intellectual intuition (225 and 240-241).

*Authoritarianism and Democracy in Athens*

In the following section, I do not intend to explain the philosophy of Aristotle in terms of the historical context in which he lived, for there were other philosophers of his background who had diametrically opposed positions to many of his. I do not claim that Aristotle’s class, or Macedonian background, or his presence during times of upheaval determined his philosophy. But given the urgent purpose of thinking (see last chapter), I believe philosophers often engage in philosophical investigations with an eye on solving the most urgent problems facing their societies. Athens of Plato’s and Aristotle’s time faced staggering problems, and the overall philosophical project of Aristotle can be viewed as a set of related responses to those problems. Thus, in this section, I do wish to point out that Aristotle’s political and ethical positions matched his broader epistemological and metaphysical views, that the epistemological and metaphysical views justified his political and ethical positions, and that Aristotle’s political and ethical positions have a strong bearing on his treatment of rhetorical discourse. Thus, this section is going to be part of my support when I discuss the effects of Aristotle’s political and ethical views on his characterization of the audience of the rhetorical discourse as Aristotle imagined that audience in *On Rhetoric*.

Authoritarian tendencies pervade Aristotle’s life and thought as well as his logic. Authoritarianism shows up most prominently in Aristotle’s thoughts on society. G. E. R. Lloyd in *Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of His Thought* writes that Aristotle believed, “the master/slave distinction is a natural and permanent feature of society” (305). In
Aristotle’s thought, “it is good not only for the rulers to rule, but also for the slaves to be ruled” (306).

The political landscape of Greece for the 100 years preceding Aristotle’s death is chilling. Persia (another name for Iran), a huge empire of the time, had dominance over hundreds of different ethnic groups from the Indus to the Nile. Greek city states had different governments (which Aristotle catalogs in Politics). There were democracies, aristocracies, monarchies, oligarchies, and tyrannies. The autocratic elements in all these city states were strong. Even in the most democratic of city states, women were not allowed to participate in civic life, and there were large numbers of slaves. Athens, despite its reputation for democratic institutions, was renowned as a sea power and an empire, and the most important periods of the history of Greece are usually told in terms of the First and the Second Athenian Empires. But despite these strong elements of authoritarianism in Greece, the accomplishment of Athenians and other democratic Greek city states is remarkable. Edith Hamilton in The Greek Way describes the achievement of Greece in terms of the lives of people compared with those of the peoples in some of the more ancient, established societies in the neighborhood of Greece. She writes that such societies were marked by “Abject submission to the power on the throne which had been the rule of life” (22). The ancient world, Hamilton writes, was “ruled by the irrational, by dreadful unknown powers,” and “The lives and fortunes of all were completely dependent upon the whims of a monarch whose only law was his own wish” (13). In such societies, people “fly from the terror without to the citadel within, which famine and pestilence and fire and sword cannot shake” (16). What is remarkable about Greece, Hamilton maintains, is that the idea of freedom was born there (22). And issues of rights and freedoms were raised in so far as a check, no matter how tenuous and inconsistent, was placed on tyranny. The citizens of Greece considered themselves free.

The ideas of Greek democracy, independence, and justice predate Plato and Aristotle by centuries and represent a political and philosophical tradition that Plato and Aristotle opposed. The ideas of consultation and de-centered power were parts of Greek societies from the earliest periods in Greek history. Richard A. Katula in A Synoptic History of Classical
Rhetoric writes that between 850 B.C.E. and 650 B.C.E., during the period known as the “Age of Homer,” councils emerged to administer the daily activities of the people, and the King often deferred to the council in civil matters” (4). These councils figure prominently in Homer's narratives. Katula writes that “Indeed, wise kings began to call council into session regularly to seek their advice.” As councils became “more important in civil affairs, . . . a transition began to aristocratic forms of government, oligarchies.” Katula goes on to describe the pattern of occasional transitions to unstable tyrannies, “where one powerful person ruled with the power of the military” (4-5), and then back to oligarchies. By the middle of the seventh century, there were

three branches of government [in Attica]: the Archon serving as the Executive primarily in charge of foreign affairs but also involved in some civil matters,; the Areopagus or Council of Magistrates serving as the Legislative branch; and the Thesmothetae serving as the Judicial branch of government. (5)

By 621 and 593 B.C.E. Draco and Solon, respectively, established the Athenian court system and legislature. Katula writes that “Draco began the tradition of law, where cases are decided on clearly enunciated crimes and penalties determined by statute rather than the caprice of the nobility” (6). Later on, Solon introduced popular juries to courts and set up an assembly consisting of the representative from the various tribes in Attica. Solon’s jury system and assembly eventually became the model for later (a) court systems including those in Rome, England, and the United States and (b) parliaments in Western democracies. According to Katula, Solon’s reforms marked “the unalterable impulse toward popular government in western civilization” (6).

Persia attacked Greece in 492 B.C.E. By 479, the united Greek city states had repelled the Persians. And after the war, the city states around the Aegian Sea formed an alliance to “repel further invasion by Persian forces” (10). According to Katula, Pericles, who came to power in 461 and who was one of the greatest of Athenian leaders, had a political project with “two complementary policies: imperialism and popular democracy.” Internally, Pericles liberalized the judicial system to include popular juries chosen by lot, a system he supported with grants to the poorer citizens so that
they could serve. Pericles ran for office each year, thus eliminating fears of a tyranny and subjecting himself to popular democratic procedures. He also established a popular legislative assembly, the Five Hundred, which reviewed on a yearly basis all laws established by the Thesmothees. In addition, any citizen could propose or oppose a law during the time of the assembly. Grants were provided to the Five Hundred so that they could serve in the assembly, thus completing Pericles’ reform of Athens into a pure democracy. (10)

These reforms led to the “Golden Age” of Athens, the greatest period of prosperity and of intellectual and artistic creativity that Athens had known. Externally, however, the projects of Pericles were far less democratic. He “seized the leadership of the league by superior military might and soon subjected the surrounding city-states to a tax to pay for protection from the Persian” (10).99 In the Life of Greece, Durant quotes Thucydides as saying that

the democratic leaders at Athens, while making liberty the idol of their policy among Athenians, frankly recognized that the Confederacy of free cities had become an empire of force. (439-440)

According to Durant, other states in Greece began resisting these Athenian policies. By 431 B.C.E., this resistance lead to a protracted war (the Peloponnesian War) between Athens and the other city states. Athens suffered several losses, and when in 429 Pericles died, matters worsened. In 414, Athenian forces were defeated by Spartan and Sicilian forces. With nearly half the citizenry of Athens dead or enslaved, the Peloponnesian War ended in 414 with the fall of the First Athenian Empire. But in 413, Sparta renewed the war. Athenians fought ten more years under extremely trying circumstances to keep Sparta at bay.

In the conflict between nascent freedoms of democratic Athens on the one hand and the imperialist tendencies of Athens on the other, all seemed about to be lost. The great challenge facing Greece had always revolved around its ability to form a sustainable unity out of the diversity of the many Greek city states. The imperialist path of Athens had been unsuccessful, and the good will of city states towards one another had eroded during the Peleponnesian Wars. The possibility of volunteer alliances seemed increasingly unlikely.
In this context, Plato and Aristotle were not disinterested parties. The picture of Plato and Aristotle as two disembodied meditative academics untouched by the tremendous upheavals around them is misleading. Their philosophical speculations were taking place during political upheavals.

I pointed out that Aristotle's sexism and other prejudices cannot be excused on historical grounds. Plato's *Republic*, at least on the surface, states the equality of men and women. And Socrates claims to have studied rhetoric with Aspasia. There are a great many other pieces of evidence in support of the claim that Aristotle's prejudices are responses to people's holding views opposed to his. For example, one school of philosophy contemporaneous with Plato's and Aristotle's is that of the cynics, whose founders were Diogenes and his teacher Antisthenes. Russell writes that Antisthenes was "a disciple of Socrates" (230), like Plato, and that "Until after the death of Socrates, he lived in the aristocratic circle of his fellow disciples." But then a change took place in him. He began associating "with working men, and dressed as one of them." He would also talk "in a style that the uneducated could understand" and believed that "what could be known, could be known by the plain man" (231). The cynics are famous for their preference for "simple goodness" and "return to nature." Russell writes that "there was to be no government, no private property, no marriage, no established religion." And cynics "condemned slavery." Plato and Aristotle were no cynics. In the following two subchapters, I will try to draw as clear a picture as I can of their political alignments.

*Authoritarianism of Plato and Aristotle*

In the context of the history of Greece in terms of the growth and decline of Greek democracy and independence, Plato and Aristotle presided over—and assisted in—the political defeat of the democratic forces. Plato and Aristotle were from philosophical traditions diametrically opposed to those of the democrats. Politically, too, both philosophers were aligned against the democratic forces. During the brief, partial, and fitful break from complete despotism that Greece represented, Plato and Aristotle were—politically and intellectually—aligned with the reactionary forces, arguing for outright totalitarian or
benevolently monarchical states, respectively. The involvement of Plato and Aristotle (and perhaps even Socrates) in the reactionary politics against the democratic forces of the time can be seen in accounts of the company they kept and of their actions in times of political upheaval.

Plato was born to an ancient aristocratic family about 428 B.C.E.—a year or two after the death of Pericles, half a century after the end of the Persian Wars, and three years after the beginning of the Peloponnesian Wars. With the final defeat of Athens at the end of the generation-long Peloponnesian Wars with Sparta, Plato’s close relatives led “the tory revolution of 404” (Story 510) and helped set up the famous Tyranny of the Thirty, the period that Durant writes was marked by “oligarchic terror.” With the restoration of democracy soon afterward, however, Plato’s relatives were killed. Socrates was also killed for suspicion of collaboration with the oligarchs; Plato fled Athens. Durant writes that the death of Socrates filled Plato with such a scorn of democracy, such a hatred of the mob, as even his aristocratic lineage and breeding had hardly engendered in him; it led him to a Catonic resolve that democracy must be destroyed, to be replaced by the rule of the wisest and the best. (Story 12)

Plato wrote the Republic, which Russell in 1945 said described an idealized Spartan state, the Spartan state being “a model, in miniature of the state that the Nazis would establish if victorious” (98), and which Durant describes as “the brilliant endeavor of a rich conservative to reconcile his scorn of democracy with the radical idealism of his time” (Life 510).

During his travels, Plato accepted the invitation of the tyrant of Syracuse (Dionysius I), who was intrigued by Plato’s totalitarian model of the city state. By all accounts, the results were inconclusive for Syracuse’s tyrant and disastrous for Plato. Plato managed to return to Athens in 387 B.C.E. to found the Academy in 386. Before his death in 347, Plato succeeded in visiting the successor to Dionysius I two times (Dionysius II) in other attempts at helping those interested in actualizing his vision of the state. From the founding of the Academy in 387 till his death in 347, Plato lived during the Second Athenian Empire (378-
54), which grew and declined for reasons similar to the rise and fall of the First Empire (Social War with colonies 357-355). He also saw wars with Philip the monarch of Macedonia, whose forces wrested several colonies from Athens. And, finally, he witnessed most of the Sacred War (356-46), which Athens fought against several other city states and lost when Philip entered the war and defeated a key ally of Greece. During most of Plato's later life, the threat of Philip was looming over Athens. Many citizens of Athens knew that Philip's growing military and economic power would mean the end of Athenian independence and freedom. And Demosthenes, a democrat, made many of his famous speeches (studied by classical rhetoricians as models of good composition) urging Athenians to resist Philip during Plato's time. Plato died eleven years before the fall of Athens to Macedonia.

Aristotle, probably born in 384 B.C.E. (A History 160), was the son of a physician at the Macedonian court. At 18, (in 366), he went to Athens to study with Plato, and he studied there for 20 years (during which time Plato visited the tyrant of Syracuse twice). As mentioned, Athens went through extended wars with Macedonia (357-346); those wars eventually became part of the Sacred War with other city states between 356-346. Around the time of Plato's death, the Second Athenian Empire was defeated by Macedonia. But although the Second Athenian Empire ended, Athens remained unoccupied. After Plato's death in 347, Durant writes that "Aristotle went to the court of Hermeias... the dictator of Atarneus and Assus in upper Asia Minor" (Life 524) and married Hermeias' daughter. Hermeias had been a slave and had "raised himself from slavery" to be a dictator. Hermeias was an ally of Philip and, during Aristotle's visit, "was assassinated by the Persians" (525) on suspicion of his plan to help Philip invade Asia. In 343, Philip, now the absolute ruler of most of Greece, but not as yet of Athens, invited Aristotle "to undertake the education of Alexander, then a wild lad of thirteen" (525). While Aristotle was tutoring Alexander, Athens was fighting to preserve its independence and freedom from Macedonia, and Demosthenes was continuing to entreat with Athenians to recognize the danger Philip represented and to resist Philip's forces more resolutely. In 338, Philip's military defeated Athenian forces, and Athens surrendered. In this war against Athens and its allies,
Alexander, Aristotle’s pupil, distinguished himself for bravery. Philip was assassinated in 336, however, and Athens revolted for freedom. Alexander rushed to crush the revolt in 336, and Athenians hastened to send “him a profuse apology” (542). But shortly thereafter, while Alexander was suppressing “the rebellion of the barbarian tribes in 335, a rumor reached Athens that Alexander had died in battle. Athens revolted again. Alexander marched to meet Athens and its allies and defeated them. His troops burned the ally of Athens, Thebes, to the ground and sold its “inhabitants as slaves” (543). Although, Alexander regretted his genocide of Thebes and treated Athens leniently, Durant writes that with this event, Athenian independence, in government and in thought, was irrevocably destroyed” (Story 96). Two years after this latest defeat of the Athenians, Aristotle returned to Athens (in 334), now reduced from an independent, free city state to a Macedonian protectorate and opened his school, as Durant says, “probably aided by funds from Alexander” (525). During Aristotle’s stay in Athens and while Alexander was occupied with conquering the known world, Aristotle was in constant, cordial communication with Antipater, the regent Alexander had left back home in charge of Macedonian territories, including Greece. Durant writes that when the news of Alexander’s death in 323 reached Athens, “many . . . crowned themselves with garlands and feasted . . . “ (553). Athenians sent Demosthenes “to the Peloponnesus to raise allies for Athens in a war of liberation.” Durant writes that because “As a leader of the pro-Macedonian party,” Aristotle “had long been unpopular in Athens” (553), the city brought charges of impiety against him. Among other things he “was charged with having offered divine honors to the dictator Hermeias [Aristotle’s father-in-law and a pro-Macedonian tyrant while alive], who, being a slave, could not have been god.” Not surprisingly, Aristotle vacated Athens. Shortly afterwards, however, Athens was defeated decisively by Antipater’s forces, and Antipater laid the most arduous terms upon the city, requiring it to pay the cost of the war, to receive a Macedonian garrison, to abandon its democratic constitution and courts, to disfranchise and deport to colonial settlements all citizens (12,000 out of 21,000) possessing less than two thousand drachma’s worth of property, and to surrender Demosthenes, Hypereides, and two other anti-Macedonian orators. (553)
Aristotle died a year after he left Athens.

In summary, most notable events in Aristotle’s life point to strong authoritarian tendencies in him: He was born into a courtier family, studied with Plato, became a courtier, taught a future tyrant, married into the family of a dictator, returned to Athens because of his alliance with a tyrannical occupying power, and was one of the leaders of the antidemocratic party in subjugated Athens. Aristotle’s approval of slavery seems very much like an extension of his overall way of life. In politics, he rationalizes the subjection of slaves, women, children, and barbarians, and his biography betrays strong alignment with autocracies of all forms.

**Aristotle’s and Fromm’s Authoritarian Character**

Although Aristotle’s times did not shape his thinking—for there were other philosophers living around the same time who thought very differently from Aristotle—his entire philosophical project is geared towards solving a set of problems that point to what he at a deep human level felt were the most urgent issues facing him and those he considered to be in his community. I would like to look at Aristotle’s philosophy in terms of its psychological value to him, for similar tendencies are widespread in my time and to a great extent in myself. By presenting this psychological profile, I would like to point out the fact that Aristotle’s solution leads to a dead end.

Aristotle is doing nothing short of committing violence against the subject of his studies. Everyday dogma—“it is so because I say so”—is a very transparent strategy for persuading other people, who realize that the countervailing evidence against the dogmatic view is being dismissed because the dogmatic person merely has the power to do so. A much more effective strategy for persuading people of dogma—even when backed by great force—is to argue that the dogmatic belief benefits from superior evidence that the people aware of the countervailing evidence cannot see because of their limited intelligence, lack of piety, inadequate education, etc. And in fact, history shows that many kings and emperors have gone out of their way to establish their divinity as a way of brushing aside challenges to their decisions (their rule). Plato, for example, resorts to this strategy in *Republic* to persuade “if
possible the rulers themselves, but failing that the rest of the city” (658) with “one noble lie” to the effect that his rigid authoritarian state has in fact been ordained by God. In effect, Plato is saying that he knows what is best for people. Of course, this all sounds abstract and interesting, but despotism (dogma backed by superior force) has very real consequences. People at the receiving end of despotism suffer greatly. They are prevented from acting to diminish their suffering or the suffering of their loved ones. Their persons and properties are at the disposal of the despot. They can be arrested, tortured, and executed on a whim.

Aristotle, like Plato, is after a strategy that will give him credibility with his opponents (vaguely the democrats, slaves, women, children, barbarians, etc). To that aim, he has recruited Reason itself to the defense of his position. That is to say, he has redefined reasoning such that it seems like it is Reason itself that tells him what the nature of the world is; the rational world itself is hierarchical and ruler/ruled. His elaborate system is designed to obfuscate dogma. As mentioned, Greek democracy and rule of law are not attributable to Aristotle, Plato, or Socrates. The franchised, but extremely small, group of free Athenian citizens were using reasoning more or less effectively for the purposes of ruling themselves and removing problems for centuries before Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle represents at best a product of Athenian democracy and freedom of thought, not one of the creative minds behind that democracy and freedom. In fact, if anything, he was one of the creative minds that argued for the decline and fall of the Greek experiment in democracy. What Aristotle did do was to identify reasoning with dogma (opinion unsupported by evidence but supported by superior power). Regular, run-of-the-mill dogma is like run-of-the-mill disease. Some diseases are more deadly than others, but the immune system fights most of them effectively. Aristotle’s philosophic project, however, represented a kind of disease that damages the immune system itself and then uses it to spread itself. We have inherited Aristotle’s formulation of reasoning along with the terminology and the framework, and we have difficulty ridding ourselves of it.

Aristotle’s reasoning is at the service of superior power. It considers hierarchy not merely normal, but rational. Almost every aspect of Aristotle’s philosophy is geared towards achieving complete certainty, from the position of God in his system to his ideas that only the
fixed, whole, and permanent parts of nature can be subjects of knowledge, to his claim that such knowledge can be intuited directly, to the implied and the not so implicit conqueror/conquered nature of the relationship between form and matter. Given the horribly unstable social, economic, and political climate of Athens about Aristotle’s time, all of this point to someone bent on clinging to any power whatever that can put an end to uncertainty and insecurity. Aristotle in Politics explains why the rule of master over slave, husband over wife, father over son, and in general ruler over ruled is good for the latter by explaining the condition of tame animals: “Tame Animals are by nature better than wild, and it is better for them all to be ruled by men, because it secures their safety” (68). In Escape from Freedom, Fromm writes that the authoritarian striving in the individual is aimed at escaping the “unbearable feeling of aloneness and powerlessness” (150). The goal is to feel secure (151) in the face of an unbearable situation (153). As I have shown, Plato and Aristotle lived in extremely unstable times or periodic revolutions, coups, and wars fought with great brutality. For the authoritarian character, the goal or the tendency is “to give up the independence of one’s own individual self and to fuse one’s self with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual is lacking” (140).

Fromm sees the authoritarian tendency to be in fundamental opposition to genuine love and caring for another person because love is a union with another “person on the basis of the independence and integrity of the two persons” (159) and is based on the assumption of equality and freedom. The authoritarian tendency, on the other hand, is based on power over people when power “to do something, to be able, to be potent” is unavailable (160).

Fromm writes,

The feature common to all authoritarian thinking is the conviction that life is determined by forces outside of man’s own self, his interest, his wishes. The only possible happiness lies in the submission to these forces. The powerlessness of man is the leitmotif of masochistic philosophy. (169-170)
As I have shown, Aristotle’s philosophy is a systematic elaboration of the implications of that conviction. Fromm writes further that the authoritarian character feels that

Not only the forces that determine one’s own life directly but also those that seem to determine life in general are felt as unchangeable fate. It is fate that there are wars and that one part of mankind has to be ruled by another. It is fate that the amount of suffering can never be less than it always has been. Fate may be rationalized philosophically as “natural law” or as “destiny of man,” religiously as the “will of the Lord,” ethically as “duty”—for the authoritarian character it is always a higher power outside of the individual, toward which the individual can do nothing but submit. (168-169)

As in his philosophy so also in his personal life, Aristotle attached himself to forces much greater than himself: to the authoritarian rulers who fought against the democratic and independent strivings of Athenians. Aristotle’s world must have been unbearable to him given the political circumstances in which he had grown. In The Sane Society, Fromm asks, “How can a sensitive and alive person ever feel secure?” And his response is that “because of the very conditions of our existence, we cannot feel secure about anything” (174). Thus, in a fundamentally insecure world, the only way we can imagine ourselves to enjoy “complete security” is by submitting ourselves completely to supposedly strong and lasting powers. With Aristotle, these powers are his rational, divine monarch of the universe and numerous lesser worldly rulers. Submission to such powers, according to Fromm, relieves people from making decisions and assuming responsibilities (174). Since freedom is insecure and knowledge uncertain, Fromm writes, “The psychic task which a person can and must set for himself, is not to feel secure, but to be able to tolerate insecurity, without panic and undue fear” (174, his emphases).

**Critique of On Rhetoric, a Propaganda Manual**

In this subsection, I am going to explore the connection between Aristotle’s On Rhetoric and IDCT. First, I will argue that Aristotle’s On Rhetoric is a manual (perhaps the first extant manual) on propaganda, that is, on how to sway an audience considered
uneducated, base, and incapable of understanding to believe in what (a) the well-meaning powerful *know* to be (b) true and (c) in the interest of the audience. Second, I will argue that the key division of appeals to logos versus pathos is a direct consequence of Aristotle’s philosophy, all the way from his metaphysics to his rhetoric, and that it confounds the connection between reasoning and emotions so thoroughly that nothing short of jettisoning his distinction can restore a semblance of sense in a discussion of critical thinking. Third, pointing out that the entire philosophical project of Aristotle has been refuted and superseded, I will offer a set of hypothetical examples, showing (a) the irrelevance of Aristotle’s theoretical distinctions in *On Rhetoric* to what humans actually do in their lives and (b) the confusion that those distinctions create in any discussion of critical thinking. Finally, I will end the chapter and my thesis by pointing out that Aristotle’s theoretical distinctions should be rejected in teaching critical thinking and rhetoric. Teaching Aristotle’s distinctions, even without explicitly teaching his theoretical underpinnings for those distinctions, assume those underlying theories along with the accompanying oppressive and anti-intellectual values of his overall worldview.

**Background of *On Rhetoric***

Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* must be viewed in the context of not only his broader philosophical and political projects but also his biography. What we know about Aristotle’s biography points to his alignment with the oligarchic and oppressive forces of his day. He was a student of Plato, a theorist and staunch proponent of totalitarianism, whose own political alignments can be traced to the most reactionary political forces of his day in Athens. Aristotle was married to the daughter of a tyrant; he is universally acknowledged as a leader of the pro-Macedonian party in subjugated Athens, and he was forced to flee Athens during the final revolt of Athens for freedom.

I have outlined the philosophical projects of Aristotle in some detail. I think it is fair to say that the author of *On Rhetoric* is strongly committed to various forms of oligarchy in politics. He believes that women, slaves, farmers, artisans, traders, in short, all except the powerful and wealthy should be removed from participation in their own government. His
reasons for this position are several and lengthy but find their roots in his metaphysics and epistemology. Briefly, he believes that the world is ruled by form. He extends this belief to humans and maintains that some humans are by nature slaves and subjects. He comes to this view by identifying causality and rationality in the final causes and by conflating the meaning of the end for which change in nature occurs to the good towards which living beings and humans act. Thus, he finds the justification for the oppression of various people in the very rational order of the universe. In terms of practical politics, this position translates into a commitment to a proportional equality theory of justice according to which people are equal in proportion to their worth. That Aristotle believes in the proportional equality theory of justice is a roundabout way of saying that Aristotle believes in inequality (as equality is understood in our time, as equality before the law).

Finally, we know that Aristotle does not present his views as one tentative, or contingent, theory among others. He claims to have access to true knowledge, which is necessarily, that is, demonstrably and absolutely true. He claims divine sanction for his intuitive grasp of truth. The truths he grasps intuitively or through his demonstrative science are not from a human perspective and thus limited and incomplete. Although he may claim inexactness in his treatment of topics such as ethics, politics, and rhetoric, those topics are consistent with the starting points of his knowledge: the self-evidence of intuitive knowledge and the absolute truth of his demonstrative knowledge, which covers his claims about causality, final causes, rationality, and the ruler/ruled nature of substance (form/matter), life (animate/inanimate, animals/plants, humans/animals), humans (soul/body), the soul (mind/soul), and society (freeman/slave and ruler/ruled), all of which have epistemic statuses.

Given this background, and given his characterization of the audience of rhetorical discourse and the place and position of rhetoric within his hierarchy of various forms of knowledge, I will argue that On Rhetoric should properly be understood as a propaganda manual.
Aristotle's Characterization of the Audience for *On Rhetoric*

First, I will look at the audience. From the beginning of *On Rhetoric*, the audience of rhetorical discourse is clearly identified not merely as intellectual opponents but as enemy. To his students, the children of wealthy and well-educated Athenians, Aristotle offers four reasons for the usefulness of studying rhetoric: (1) truth by nature is superior to falsehood and if it fails to win a case in court, the fault is with the speaker, (2) some audiences cannot be instructed and must be swayed, (3) rhetoric helps us see the two sides of an issue so that we can counter unfair opponents, and finally (4) it is absurd to say one should defend oneself physically but not mentally since "rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs" (594 in W. Rhys Roberts’s translation). 110

By not-so-subtle implication, the opponents have the following characteristics: they are holders of falsehoods; or they cannot be instructed; they are unfair; and they are aggressors (attacking). The opponents are not people with whom the rhetorician is having respectful differences and with whose help some sort of understanding may be reached. A decision regarding not only the opponent's position but the opponent has already been reached. As fencing would be a useful skill to have when defending against a physical attacker, rhetoric is useful when under verbal assault.

But Aristotle doesn't see the opponents only as enemies. He is irrepressibly contemptuous towards them. In support of this claim, I will only quote some of the passages from *On Rhetoric* in which he explicitly characterizes the audience. "The duty of rhetoric," Aristotle writes,

is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning . . . . [for such reasonings] will necessarily be hard to follow owing to their length, for we assume an audience of untrained thinkers; those of the latter kind will fail to win assent, because they are based on premises that are not generally admitted or believed. (155)111

In Lawson-Tancred's translation, "untrained thinkers" is translated as "audiences of limited intellectual scope and limited capacity" (76). In George A. Kennedy's translation, the
word used to refer to the audience is “simple” (42), and it is explained that the audience referred to is the democratic “juries of the Athenian courts... drawn by lot.” Aristotle repeats the same set of claims when explaining the similarities and differences between syllogisms in dialectic and enthymemes in rhetoric. He writes that unlike the syllogism in dialectic, the rhetorician should not carry the “reasoning too far back” to avoid causing “obscurity” and should not “put in all the steps” leading to the conclusion to avoid stating the obvious. It is, Aristotle claims, the simplicity of enthymemes in rhetoric that “makes the uneducated more effective than the educated when addressing popular audiences—makes them, as the poets tell us, ‘charm the crowd’s ears more finely’” (184).\(^{112}\) The word Lawson-Tancred uses for “popular audiences” is “mobs” (195). And Kennedy refers to the audience as “crowds” (187). One of Aristotle’s clearest statements about his feelings towards the audience of rhetorical discourse is made in his discussion of style, a discussion which he says is almost below his dignity. He points out, however, that he has no choice but to treat the subject because actors in drama as in politics win prizes when they do pay attention to the elements of delivery and style “owing to the defects of our political institutions” (653) even though nothing really should interfere with the case except “the proof of those facts” (654). It is nothing short of scandalous, Aristotle implies, but style does affect the results “owing to the defects of our hearers” (654).\(^{113}\) Lawson-Tancred’s uses the phrase “the baseness of the citizenry” (217) for “owing to the defects of our political institutions” and the phrase “the baseness of the audience” for “owing to the defects of our hearers.” Kennedy uses the following two phrases, respectively, “the sad state of governments” and “the corruption of the audience” (218-219).

Finally, in discussing the organization of the rhetorical composition, Aristotle argues for the importance of what goes into the introduction. If, for example, the introduction is for defense, the false claims by the opponent must be refuted preliminarily. If, on the other hand, the introduction is for the accuser, the accusatory claims must come at the end of the composition, not in the introduction, so that the audience can remember the accusations better. In this discussion, he mentions in passing that
Observe, all this has nothing to do with the speech itself. It merely has to do with the weak-minded tendency of the hearer to listen to what is beside the point. Where this tendency is absent, no introduction is wanted beyond a summary statement of your subject, to put a sort of head on the main body of your speech. (669)\textsuperscript{114} In Lawson-Tancred’s translation, the modifier for the hearer is translated “low-grade” (248) and in George A. Kennedy’s translation it is “morally weak” (263).

In short, for Aristotle, the audience of rhetoric—that is, the public sitting in courts, assemblies, and public events of Athens—is characterized by words that can be translated as weak-minded, of limited intellectual scope, mob-like, base, low-grade, morally weak, defective, or corrupted.

Rhetoric Not in the Business of Understanding

Aristotle’s characterization of audience points to what Aristotle thought of rhetoric. For one thing, Aristotle states quite clearly that rhetoric is not in the business of understanding or knowledge, but of opinion. In his epistemological hierarchy, rhetoric is either at the bottom or about there.

For Aristotle, rhetoric and dialectic deal with belief and opinion as opposed to knowledge, which can be gained through his science and intuition. Unlike Plato’s dialectic, Aristotle’s does not aspire to discovering truth.\textsuperscript{115} Unlike rhetoric, however, dialectic is important in Aristotle’s epistemology because it is through dialectic that scientists can show the falsehood of first principles that are contrary to intuition. So although dialectic has no place in demonstration, it still plays a useful role in helping the scientist arrive at the definitions (61, Bodeus). In Aristotle’s epistemology, scientific demonstration is inferior to intuitive grasp, and dialectic is inferior to scientific demonstration. But rhetoric is inferior to dialectic because it plays no part in the discovery of truth. So although, like dialectic, rhetoric is concerned with appearances, deals with ethical and political issues, and provides forms of argument (example and enthymeme for induction and syllogism), unlike dialectic, it is used strictly for practical reasons.
Ultimately, the difference between the two ends up being about purposes and audiences. For example, one of the differences Aristotle mentions revolves around the issue of complexity. In describing demonstrative science and dialectic, respectively, Aristotle writes that long syllogisms are “hard to follow” (596) in rhetoric. I have already illustrated how he views the audience for rhetoric; in contrast he views the audience of dialectic as educated. Jacques Brunschwig, in “Rhetoric as a ‘Counterpart’ to Dialectic” describes the difference in this way:

In spite of its possible uses in “encounters” with “ordinary people,” dialectic is basically a greenhouse flower that grows and flourishes in the protected atmosphere of the school. The philosopher is able to keep it under intellectual control; and when he is Aristotle, he can even try to reinforce its intellectual purity and to clear it as far as possible from the influence of passions. But rhetoric is a plant growing in the open air of the city and the public places. This is why it smashes abstract schemas into fragments; it offhandedly makes fun of the most respectable theoretical distinctions. With it, contingency invades history, politics seize logic, passions rush into discourse. (51)

Dialectic is for Aristotle’s students, that is, for men who are being prepared for the task of understanding. In Aristotle’s hierarchical scheme of epistemological value, dialectic is below demonstrative science, and rhetoric, below dialectic, for rhetoric is for “ordinary people” in public places of Athens, who cannot understand. This may seem like a harsh judgment of Aristotle’s position towards the demos of his time. But this characterization of the audience of rhetorical discourse as incapable of understanding is at root of Aristotle’s contemptuous attitude towards the audience. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle’s complains that this incapacity of the demos, which is due to the fact that they “live by their feelings,” renders them impervious to argument (1179b 9-18, Terence Irwin’s translation). But even without such direct statements, Aristotle’s view that the public cannot be instructed is inescapable, especially in the broader context of his epistemology.

At the beginning of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle claims that past treatises on rhetoric have neglected enthymemes, which “are the substance of rhetorical persuasion” (2152, Roberts).
Instead, those treatises deal with “non-essentials,” such as “arousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions.” In contradiction to such authors, Aristotle states emphatically that a litigant has clearly nothing to do but to show that the alleged fact is so or is not so, that it has or has not happened. As to whether a thing is important or unimportant, just or unjust, the judge must surely refuse to take his instructions from the litigants: he must decide for himself all such points as the law-giver has not already defined for him.

In fact, Aristotle, goes so far as to claim that moving the judge emotionally to anger, or envy, or pity is like “warp[ing] a carpenter’s rule before using it.” Yet, despite emphatic statements such as “things that are true and things that are just have a natural tendency to prevail over their opposites” (152) and despite his firm rejection of the use of emotions in persuading others of the truth and of a discussion of justice in rhetoric, as George A. Kennedy points out, Aristotle gives “the justice of a speaker’s case, its importance, and its amplification “extended treatment” (27). When Aristotle gets into the details of rhetoric he seems to reverse his strong commitment to mere fact and make diametrically opposed claims while discussing the genres of rhetoric:

Further, all men, in giving praise or blame, in urging us to accept or reject proposals for action, in accusing others or defending themselves, attempt not only to prove the points mentioned but also to show that the good or the bad, the honour or disgrace, the justice or injustice, is great or small, either absolutely or relatively; and therefore it is plain that we must also have at our command propositions about greatness or smallness and the greater or the lesser—propositions both universal and particular. Thus, we must be able to say which is the greater or lesser good, the greater or lesser act of justice or injustice; and so on. (2160-2161 in Roberts Translation)

After this “dexterous feat of legerdemain” (139, Lawson-Tancred), Aristotle then proceeds to examine two sets of issues: the arousal of the emotions and the use of the ethical values of the audience. The means by which emotions can be aroused is explained with “Macchiavellian cynicism” (140, Lawson-Tancred) “with no direct connection to the specific substance of the plea.” In a similar vein, Martha Craven Nussbaum in “Aristotle on Emotions and Rational Persuasion” explains that much of the ethical views expressed in On Rhetoric
cannot be used to reconstruct Aristotle's own views because he is concerned with providing “the young orator not with his own considered view but with popular views of ethical matters that would be likely to prevail in his audience.” For example, Aristotle advises his students that “If the audience esteems a given quality, we must say that our hero has that quality” (610). In fact, he writes, “Everything... that is esteemed we are to represent as noble.” In other wise, although Aristotle believes emotions should not be used, he teaches his students to use the emotions of his audience and although he has very clearly enunciated authoritarian and elitist views on ethics and politics, he teaches his students to use for their compositions the unconsidered, but prevailing views of the populace.

Is this seeming about-face really “a dexterous feat of legerdemain”? I think this question should be considered from two perspectives. From the perspective of Aristotle’s overall philosophy, the answer has to be no. Outside that context, the answer is as unambiguously yes.

*On Rhetoric* From within Aristotle’s Philosophy

From within Aristotle’s philosophy, *On Rhetoric* is addressed to the students of Aristotle. His students enter the topic of rhetoric, being already well versed in his teachings on ethics, politics, and knowledge explained elsewhere. What he thinks about justice, reasoning, women, slavery, the demos, democracies, etc., are all in the background. Several of his foundational works are actually named in the text, there are frequent references to concepts, definitions, and discussions elaborated in other works, and—even without such references—those foundational concepts are embedded in theoretical definitions and divisions of rhetoric.

For example, the tremendously important division of appeals to logos versus pathos embeds basic theories that are the sine qua non of Aristotle’s philosophy. In *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle says repeatedly that appeals to emotions would be unnecessary if the audience were not base or defective. According to Aristotle’s epistemology and metaphysics, emotions occupy a lower part of the soul. The faculty or ability to feel and desire is shared by humans and animals. The faculty of reasoning (mind), however, is uniquely human. Although
emotions are experienced by the two lower faculties of sensation and desire (188, Lloyd’s Aristotle) and thus connected to the body, the reasoning faculty, though a part of the soul, conducts its activities “independently of the body” (196). In other words, Aristotle believed that “the body is in no way involved in reasoning.” In this characterization of the soul, emotions are perceived and expressed by their respective faculties, and reasoning is perceived by the reasoning faculty. Thus, appeals to emotions are fundamentally different from appeals to reason.

As pointed out, rationality is a characteristic of the world that the human mind can grasp or with which the human mind can come into contact. Given this view, the greatest good or value for Aristotle, true happiness, is tied to the activities of the mind (contemplation and reasoning). Contemplation, Aristotle writes in Nicomachean Ethics, “is the best [activity] (since not only is intellect [mind] the best thing in us, but the objects of intellect are the best of knowable objects)” (1860, 1177a10, in W. D. Ross’s translation). In fact, contemplation being the activity of God, Aristotle considers reasoning divine. It is a consequence of his worldview when he writes, “we . . . must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal; and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us” (1861, 1177b31-32). The problem for Aristotle is that although he believes that the mind is divine and not part of the body, it is still somehow part of the soul, and the soul is part of the body. So he argues that since a human being is a composite of mortality and divinity and cannot be otherwise, the needs of all parts must be met. The needs of the body must be met, for instance, and so seeking health is a good. Likewise, humans are social beings, and their social needs must be met; thus seeking happiness in ethics and politics is also good. But clearly in his scale of values, the good for the body and the good for the parts of the soul below the mind are important only in a “secondary degree” (1862, 1177b9), that is, only in so far as they contribute to the fulfillment of the good of the mind.

This hierarchical worldview leads to an extreme form of elitism, which presents difficulties for Aristotle’s ethical and political theories. Towards the end of Nicomachean Ethics, he wonders how one may “remould” the “many” (i.e., the demos) who live by passion and “have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never
tasted it” (1864, 179b14-16). At least in *Nicomachean Ethics*, his resigned observation is that “in general passion seems to yield not to argument but to force” (179b28-29).

Aristotle’s position in *On Rhetoric* is a direct extension of his overall view, for if force cannot be used (because of the power that the demos already possess) and if what motivates the demos is passion, then the most promising alternative would be appealing to what the demos responds to: emotionality. Thus, Aristotle’s treatment of emotions in *On Rhetoric* is clearly a tentative solution to the problem of changing people who live by passion and are seemingly affected only by force. *On Rhetoric* attempts to provide a model for remolding and persuading such people by appealing to faculties to which they respond.120

*On Rhetoric* has to be considered an extension of Aristotle’s basic writings. His presentation of “popular views of ethical matters” (305, Craven Nussbaum) cannot be considered Macchiavellian because he has explained his views in other works. He has already grounded his students in the “correct” way of viewing political and ethical issues. The sections in *On Rhetoric* dealing with ethical and political issues are meant to offer rhetors already in possession of knowledge a brief survey of the disheveled landscape of the confused ideas and views held by the “many” who are ruled by their emotions. Practitioners of Aristotle’s rhetoric do not see themselves preparing to manipulate an unwary audience. They are preparing themselves to help a confused and weak-minded audience see something of the truth.

Likewise, in the context of his oeuvre, Aristotle really does mean what he says about appeals to emotions: such appeals “warp a carpenter’s ruler,” and this he considers wrong. In *On Rhetoric*, he says that although students of rhetoric must reason on “opposite sides of a question,” this practice is followed only for the sake of refuting people who are arguing unfairly. He then explicitly states that “we must not make people believe what is wrong” (152, translated by W. Rhys Roberts in *The Rhetorical Tradition*). And, although he is trying hard to teach his students how to manipulate the ruler the audience is using, he does not consider that activity as warping or bending. Rather, having access to truth and being in the right and his opponents being in the wrong, he claims to have the straight ruler. His students must learn to straighten the warped ruler of their audiences, as he does. The audience is
confused; it has not examined the world as he has; it has not seen the truth of his views on the rationality of the universe; and it has not contemplated the implications of his metaphysics and epistemology for ethics and politics. In fact, it seems incapable of such knowledge because of its nature and upbringing. Children or patients may not know what is good for them; they may have inklings of the true and the good, but they do not have the intellectual education and tools to determine for themselves. The arousal of emotions in the audience is justified because the audience is being aroused for its own good, as a physician has the goal of inducing health in the patient and as a father has the happiness of his child in mind, Aristotle is interested in inducing the right way of thinking, the right view in the audience.

On Rhetoric From Outside Aristotle’s Philosophy

Before considering Aristotle’s On Rhetoric from outside the framework of his philosophy, I should first point out that for contemporary students of philosophy and rhetoric there is no longer any plausible reason for believing in the foundational claims of Aristotle’s philosophy. In other words, Aristotle’s philosophy is a historical curiosity. I offer this subsection to convey a sense of the tidal change that has taken place in philosophy since Aristotle.

The idea of self-evident first principles is now universally rejected, even by formal mathematicians. In reference to our intuitive grasp (our sense of the self-evidence) of these basic premises in science, Popper writes that Aristotle simply “postulates” that we have a faculty of intuition that can “unerringly... grasp the essence of things” (Book 2, 11). Aristotle, in other words, simply assumes that the axioms are self-evident.  

Aristotle’s identification of form and the end of change as a kind of causality is discredited by science. Although in our commonsense view of the world, we see living beings and their organs growing and changing according to seemingly predetermined goals (their functions), since Darwin’s Original Species (1859), most biologists have resisted explaining biological phenomena teleologically. But as Dewey points out, long before Darwin (around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, final causes were expelled from “astronomy, physics, and chemistry” (308-309, “Influence of Darwin”). Instead, science has
come to recognize and work with a concept of causality close to Aristotle’s conceptualization of the efficient cause—which played only a marginal role in his system. Since change in nature can no longer be explained teleologically, Aristotle’s entire metaphysical hierarchy of form and matter falls apart.

This collapse necessitates a completely different way of looking at definitions, which in science are no longer expected to capture the essence of objects. According to O’Connor, definitions in science are no longer descriptive but prescriptive. A scientific definition “is usually a statement of qualifications to be read as saying: If anything has qualities p, q, r . . . it shall rank as a specimen of type A.” (50, O’Connor). Definitions are acknowledged to identify characteristics that are determined “not by nature, but by human knowledge, needs, and interests.” As a consequence, a characteristic of modern definitions is that they change.

The collapse of Aristotle’s ontological edifice also means the collapse of his concept of knowledge as mirroring or capturing all that can be known of reality (and thus of knowledge being absolute). Indeed, scientists do not claim that cause and reason can coincide completely. Other aspects of Aristotle’s edifice that, as a consequence of this collapse, lose their justifications are the divisions of the soul (including the rational and emotional faculties of the soul), the conceptualization of the mind and its connection to reasoning, the ruler/ruled nature of the universe (including his justifications for slavery), and his justifications for proportional “equality.” Moreover, no plausible reason whatever remains for believing that the end (or purpose) of change should coincide or converge with the good, let alone extending such an idea of the good to human affairs.

In short, practically, nothing of the edifice of Aristotle’s philosophy stands, except scattered keen observations, occasional astute but fragmented arguments, and astonishingly elaborate rationalizations for deep-seated gender, class, and ethnic prejudices.


From outside Aristotle’s philosophy, two rather strong statements can be made about *On Rhetoric*. First, no justification remains for Aristotle’s characterization of rhetoric’s function, audience, and practitioners. Second, his characterization of rhetoric’s function,
audience, and practitioners can only be considered a theory of manipulation and propaganda and not what, for example, George Kennedy has called a Theory of Civic Discourse in a subtitle to his translation of *On Rhetoric*. The positions that Aristotle takes in *On Rhetoric* for which he has no justification are numerous. Without those justifications, however, his conclusions fail, and what remains merely reflects a frame of reference or worldview. I will point out the implications of some of the justificatory failures.

If Aristotle has no access to absolute, impersonal truth, the ultimate goal of the universe and by extension of life including humans and society, then his ideas can only be considered ideas among others. He cannot invoke epistemic privilege for anything he says. In other words, he can not lodge one of end of his arguments inside his enormous philosophical edifice. Without such epistemic privilege, his reasons for his positions need to be gathered from what he actually says in *On Rhetoric*. This attempt at gathering Aristotle’s arguments in *On Rhetoric* from only within that work is exactly what most contemporary readers of that work do. But many of the most critical of Aristotle’s reasons for his positions in *On Rhetoric* are nowhere to be found in the book because they are presented in his other works. In the absence of those reasons for the contemporary reader of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle simply decrees and often merely assumes extremely questionable positions, about knowledge, reason, persuasion, justice, emotions, civic discourse, etc.

If he doesn’t have privileged access to god-like knowledge and all the attached ideas on hierarchies and the ruler/ruled nature of the universe, then he also has no justification for considering the demos of his time inferior. Without such justification, his dislike of the demos seems motivated by his serious political differences with them. To prove the rightness of his position, however, he offers no reason other than to accuse them of living by passion, that is, by labeling them “poor thinkers.” But at the very least, this position—even at the level of labeling—clashes with basic assumptions of contemporary liberal democracies, which are founded on assumptions contrary to that of the intellectual inferiority of the voting public.

If knowledge is aspectual (situated) and uncertain (hypothetical) and if thus the best type of knowledge can only benefit from collaboration of people bringing different
perspectives to issues under investigation, if in other words, rationality is not an extrahuman feature of the world but something that humans (emotion-infused and always situated) do, and finally if other people cannot be considered by default inferior, then he has no justification for excluding certain people from public discourse. More specifically, if the universe is not hierarchic and ruler/ruled and if the purported rationality of the universe does not justify the oppression of various classes, Aristotle’s assumed (but not explicitly mentioned) justification in *On Rhetoric* for excluding women and slaves and other oppressed groups from civic discourse should not only be rejected, but he should be concerned with exploring and understanding what should be considered *important* perspectives. The issue of perspectives would have to be considered an explicit problem of knowledge.

If knowledge is aspectual, uncertain, and incomplete, then Aristotle has miscast and misformulated the entire discipline of rhetoric because the main thrust of the work is on persuading others of positions that are considered true beyond question. In *On Rhetoric* the focus is not on understanding but overcoming the resistance of the audience to one’s views. The audience of rhetoric is not considered potential critics (potential partners in knowledge making) who can help rhetors improve upon their positions. Rather the audience is viewed as a group of children who should be brought to their senses, if necessary, despite themselves.

If knowledge is aspectual, and no aspect can claim privileged status, then comparison, contrast, analysis, and synthesis of various *perspectives* becomes central to knowledge claims. Collaboration becomes a tool for broadening and deepening understanding. More specifically, it becomes a tool for making sure that what we take to be knowledge is not biased because of our uncritical situatedness. As both Harding and Popper point out, the reliability or objectivity of the contemporary model of the best type of knowledge—scientific knowledge—is, as Popper puts it, “bound up with the *social aspect of scientific method*” (217, Book 2, 217). In other words, it is through the “friendly-hostile co-operation of many scientists” (217) and the encouragement of “free criticism” (218) that some of the prejudices of scientists and of their claims can be removed. But *On Rhetoric* is not a tool for collaborating with others. It does not seek perspectives because it assumes that the practitioner of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, that is, the student of his philosophy, is already in
possession of unbiased, true knowledge. When, for example, Aristotle advises his students to
learn the skill of looking at the opposite sides of an issue, he explains that the aim of such a
skill is merely to refute people who argue unfairly. The explanation already passes a value
judgment on the opponents and the kinds of positions they hold. The aim of the skill is not to
help us understand our position better; rather it is to strengthen our already good position.
But since, as I have shown, Aristotle’s philosophy is by no means a guard against error,
Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* is completely vulnerable to this most egregious of the sources of bias
in the support for knowledge claims.

Because the divisions of mind, soul, and body as well as of form and matter and of
the rational and irrational parts of substance have no justification, Aristotle’s discussion of
the pathetic and logical appeals in *On Rhetoric* confounds several issues. If he is not
indubitably right, if his treatments of ethics and politics based on his metaphysics cannot
have the status of being absolutely right, if in other words it is possible that his “carpenter’s
ruler” is not as straight as he thinks it is, there is no justification for making the study of
emotional manipulation and of using the audience’s prejudices a cornerstone of his study of
rhetoric, especially, if, as Aristotle seems to believe, he has the best interest of the audience at
heart.122

If students of Aristotle are not in possession of absolute truth—as I have shown that
they are not—then *On Rhetoric*’s teachings regarding how to use the prejudices and
emotional weaknesses of the audience to make it believe in dubious claims is in fact a form
of manipulation. Aristotle writes,

> rhetoric is an offshoot of dialect and also of ethical studies. Ethical
> studies may fairly be called political; and for this reason rhetoric
> masquerades as political science, and the professors of it as political
> experts—sometimes from want of education, sometimes from
> ostentation, sometimes owing to other human failings. (154,
> translated by W. Rhys Roberts in *The Rhetorical Tradition*)

When Aristotle says that “rhetoric is an offshoot” of ethical and political studies, he
has something very specific in mind. He does not mean that rhetoric is a tool for
understanding ethical and political subjects. The principles and generalizations of those
fields have already been made in other works of Aristotle. What he means is that the
practitioner of rhetoric should already be in possession of that knowledge. That knowledge, however, is knowledge of right and wrong, of good and bad, in other words, of value. But questions of value, of course, have an emotional component. How can individual or social values be examined or even understood without reference to emotions? Aristotle’s answer is that he is uninterested in what people merely think they value (because they don’t know any better). Aristotle knows about the absolute, certain, extrahuman, divine, rational values (the end, which he equates with the good) of the universe, and he pegs his ethics and politics on the values that the cosmos holds. Having access to the kind of knowledge that Aristotle claims he has, he can dismiss the emotions of fellow humans as fickle and shallow, and he can speak of relying on reason (again as he understands reason) rather than emotions when examining ethical and political matters.

The confounding influence of Aristotle’s position on values in On Rhetoric can hardly be overstated. In his formulation of rhetoric, he takes for granted that (a) the question of values has been already to a great part decided elsewhere and (b) in that elsewhere, he has proved a source of value that is undefiled by human emotions. If (a) and (b) were acceptable, Aristotle’s lack of concern with examining values in rhetoric and his concern with persuading others of his values could perhaps be understood. But once (a) and (b) are rejected, Aristotle’s rhetoric not only fails to provide the rudimentary tools needed for examining questions of value but also confounds the relationships among emotions, thinking, justice, and values.

Rejecting IDCT and Reconceptualizing Critical Thinking

The institutional definition of critical thinking, the idea of objectivity in journalism (as discussed in Chapter 2), and the objectivism standard of objectivity in philosophy (as discussed in Chapter 3) are all descendents of Aristotelian philosophy, whose time has long passed. Not only does IDCT fail to emphasize the effects of thoughts on the emotion-infused experiences of individuals, but it also fails to take into account fundamental problems surrounding perspectives and situatedness. Moreover, IDCT as taught in rhetoric textbooks cannot locate the proper place of emotions and relegates and limits their analysis to how the
background of the audience should be taken into account in order to prepare the audience (aroused). Characterization of the distinction between emotional and logical appeals contains a tilt and a distant reference to Aristotle’s metaphysics and epistemology. Because of this tilt, IDCT has no provisions designed to help us notice, challenge, and examine our group and culturewide values and prejudices, all of which allow us to compartmentalize our emotions towards certain groups by default, thus blocking certain criticisms and viewpoints from our deliberations.

I will close with an anecdote narrated by Simon Wiesenthal and recounted by Nel Noddings in *Women and Evil*. Noddings writes that directly after VE Day, Wiesenthal was taken from the Nazi death camp in which he had been imprisoned to an army hospital. There, a heavily bandaged, dying Nazi “blindly extends his hand toward” Wiesenthal and confesses “to have participated in the burning alive of an entire village of Jews” and begs for “absolution” (211). “Torn between horror and compassion for the dying man” (210), Wiesenthal listens to the Nazi’s “story for several hours,” but eventually leaves the room without saying a word, telling himself, “He sought my pity, but had he any right to pity?”

Noddings comments,

> Herein lie the roots of our ratification of evil. Wiesenthal felt pain, rage, and despair. Suffering from monstrous evil, he did not expect to live much longer. We could excuse him for almost any reaction. But his reaction is not one of blind feeling. He *thinks*, and his thoughts reflect the long tradition that has subjected us to so much pain. He asks whether the young man has any *right* to pity, and he asks whether he himself has the right or authority to forgive. What can he mean by a “right to pity”? This question, prompted by Aristotle, is still with us. A better approach is to note that one *feels* pity in such a situation, and the appropriate response is one of compassion. (211)

Aristotle claims to have found a source or standard of value in the very order of the world that in effect trumps the emotions as the source of our values. But if the good of individuals and groups in society and the good of society as a whole have not been determined by the very rational order of the universe as perceived and understood by Aristotle, then a discussion of what is good or bad and right or wrong will fall under a
discipline designed for civic discourse among fallible and emotion-infused humans. When *On Rhetoric* is studied without knowledge of Aristotle’s context and philosophy, the strong statements about the division between pathos and logos and the superiority of logos to pathos in persuasive communication will only confuse students and distract them from clearly recognizing that rhetoric as a field of study cannot but deal with how to address collaboratively problems arising from emotion-infused humans who have divergent interests, outlooks, and positions (in short, values) and who happen to be living with other humans.

In summary, *On Rhetoric* fails to recognize that values are the primary subjects of its study, that the role of emotions in forming values is crucial, as is the aspectual character of knowledge, and, finally, that constructive/critical collaboration in knowledge production is indispensable. Thus, *On Rhetoric ties the hands of the practitioner whose goal is not to missionize to an audience but to understand issues, people, and positions.*

**Conclusion**

In this thesis, I have argued that IDCT skills neglects the emotion-infused experiences of people affected by and involved in issues that critical thinkers are considering. I maintained that this neglect has two grave consequences: (1) it does nothing to prevent, and it often contributes to, systematic injustice and (2) it leads to a failure in meeting the stated goals of IDCT, skills at evaluating claims and their support.

In Chapter 1, I pointed out that IDCT is commonly used in FYC rhetoric and argumentation textbooks. I noted that IDCT is still rooted in Aristotle’s conceptualization of the art of rhetoric. I traced several key terms that have Aristotelian roots. For example, I showed that most textbooks teach the Aristotelian distinctions between emotional and logical appeals. In a brief detour, I noted that Toulmin’s model of argumentation is a moving away from Aristotle’s attempts to model practical (day-to-day or informal) reasoning on a mathematical model. Instead, Toulmin uses a jurisprudential model. But I argued that although Toulmin’s model opens the door for emotional experiences of people to be admitted to argumentation as part of the common ground or warrant in reasoning, his model does not emphasize or appreciate the centrality of emotions to reasoning. Consequently, it remains
vulnerable to being absorbed in modified Aristotelian models. And I showed that in fact most textbooks do not use this model to replace the Aristotelian model. Rather they use it either as a form of the Aristotelian model or as an alternative to it. At any rate, even those textbooks using it extensively do not acknowledge the centrality of emotions to argumentation.

In Chapter 2, I analyzed two documents that exemplify the problems I attribute to IDCT. The first document, a history of the American- and British-sponsored coup of 1953 in Iran that overthrew the democratically elected prime minister of Iran, was written by an academic scholar who worked for CIA. The other document, a report of the contents of the internal history for publication in the United States, was by a journalist working for the NYT, the standard-bearer of American journalism. I first supported the claim that journalistic standards of objectivity correspond to IDCT. In other words, journalists believe that their job is to offer the kind of information that the audience can use to evaluate various claims and their support. Noting that at least according to Charter of the United Nation, the coup was illegal, I showed that although both documents made passing references to the views of Iranians who suffered the horrendous consequences of the coup, neither document was able to appreciate the weight of the views of the Iranians. In other words, neither author was able to understand the emotion-infused experiences of Iranians underpinning their views. Without that understanding, obvious objections against the views held by the two authors were neglected or dismissed and atrocities against Iranians were rationalized. I showed that neither author cared about Iranians and that the emotional center of gravity of both documents was with CIA agents. To illustrate what I mean by weight underpinning viewpoints, I then offered an alternative center of gravity, the emotion-infused experiences of my family as we lived through the consequences of the coup. Finally, I admitted that IDCT skills can be useful and that for example they were useful to me in discovering and highlighting the objections against the views held by the two documents. I noted that IDCT skills are useful when people at the receiving ends of injustice find their way to forums of discussion (where decisions about them are being made) and press their views forcefully. But when such people have not found their way to these forums (and on most issues, they are
absent), IDCT skills leave those already at the forums completely vulnerable to bias and prejudice.

In Chapter 3, I argued that epistemological justifications for IDCT, as well as for the standard of objectivity in journalism, constitute a version of objectivism, a discredited standard of scientific objectivity that among other things requires value-neutrality. Despite its being rejected by philosophers, objectivism has a pervasive and pernicious influence in all fields of knowledge because it remains the commonplace or default epistemological framework, the lens through which schools have taught us to view the world. I offered a set of assumptions about suffering that I bring to my argument in this document. To argue for the intimate epistemological connection between injustice and thinking, I examined several definitions and characteristics of oppression and described problems associated with attempting to solve the problem of oppression without taking into account the intimate epistemological issues involved. I concluded that oppression is accompanied by emotional compartmentalization. In other words, people who oppress either block or refuse to exercise their ability to empathize with (understand the emotion-infused experiences of) the oppressed. With that compartmentalization in place, the views of the oppressed no longer carry any weight or value. Finally, I presented one line of inquiry in the on-going feminist epistemological critique of objectivism in order to outline the theoretical reasons for rejecting objectivism as a legitimate standard of knowledge and to note the intriguing fact of its continued presence in science despite its philosophical rejection. The feminist critique I presented shows that values cannot be removed entirely from any line of inquiry including the research done in the natural sciences because knowledge is always tied to inquirers and therefore situated. Moreover, objectivism fails to acknowledge, let alone take steps to remedy, one source of bias in inquiry: *culturewide* beliefs, preconceptions, and predispositions. This critique of objectivism finds the reason for the longevity of objectivism in its suitability for serving the ruling classes in a hierarchical society with embedded age-old oppressive institutions, which objectivism allows to be left unexamined.

In Chapter 4, noting that objectivism is traceable to Aristotle’s philosophy, I argued that Aristotle’s beliefs in the inferiority of slaves, women, and barbarians were direct results
of his objectivist thinking. Aristotle claimed to have knowledge of the very order and organization of the universe. He used metaphysical conceptions of form, matter, potentiality, actuality, causality, body, and soul to find a source of value in the universe that is independent of humans. He identified more form with greater good, and discovered a hierarchy or evolutionary ladder of form, and he placed inanimate objects, plants, animals, and humans in that hierarchy. Having identified the good in the world, he concluded that all lower forms serve higher forms. He then used these conceptions to underpin a theory of knowledge that aims for aperspectival, absolute knowledge, a type of knowledge that is free of human values (what humans like or dislike, consider good or bad). Aristotle then extended his epistemological and metaphysical concepts to a great many lines of inquiry: physics, biology, politics, ethics, and rhetoric among others. In rhetoric, Aristotle intended to move human values from the center of civic discourse to the marginal role it plays in his discussion of appeals to the emotions of the audience. The unintended effect of adopting Aristotle’s objectivist formulations of rhetoric is IDCT, which fails to acknowledge the centrality of human values and emotions and the perspectival characteristic of knowledge in civic discourse and thus removes perhaps the only effective barrier against rationalizing injustice and dogma.
1 The relativist position of leaving the question of what constitutes a problem to who (what party) perceives the problem is really an acknowledgement of the impossibility of understanding. The position permits as acceptable that a phenomenon—say the depression of 1929 in America—perceived as a problem by a group of people may be legitimately perceived as an opportunity by another group. The relativist position accepts power by default as the final support (traditionally referred to as rationalization) for any opinion and leaves the door open for the commission of the worst kinds of atrocities, such as the Holocaust.

2 This applies in mathematical and natural sciences in which emotional disagreements are considered nonexistent or irrelevant. In *Open Society and Its Enemies*, Karl Popper writes, Everyone who has an inkling of the history of the natural sciences is aware of the passionate tenacity which characterizes many of its quarrels. No amount of political partiality can influence political theories more strongly than the partiality shown by some natural scientists in favour of their intellectual offspring" (Book 2, 217). In all fields whatever, people are conducting research or holding competing positions. And these people are located in institutions, which are ultimately tied to political interests of a society, and all political interests involve other people. Researchers have emotions (why have they conducted the research; why are they disagreeing or agreeing with others?) and different levels and layers of feelings.

3 The terms critical thinking, argumentation, and rhetoric are often used interchangeably.

4 Clark acknowledges Aristotle as the founder of the kind of knowledge being taught in the textbook (73).

5 Some of the words Durant mentions are “faculty, mean, maxim . . . , category, energy, actuality, motive . . . principle, form.”

6 Toulmin points out that many logicians had recognized the inability of their analytic guidelines for evaluating the soundness of arguments in fields other than pure logic and mathematics. Those logicians had tended to safeguard their logic and reject those fields as in effect irrational. As mentioned, Toulmin reverses this position. If the logicians cannot explain the reasoning professionals engage in, then the problem is with logic, and he identifies the problem in that the model logicians use is analytic and therefore inapplicable to the material world. But the problem he is tackling is larger than he thinks, for his argument is not merely with logicians; the logic of Aristotle is embedded in society; it is the theoretical framework out of which scientists, legal professionals, etc. look at the problems they try to solve. In fact, they perceive the problems in such terms that the framework allows. I accept Toulmin’s view that scientists in practice use types of reasoning that the reductive definitions of logicians cannot explain (that is, say, scientists are doing something right that the theory cannot explain), but I claim further that even for those scientists, Aristotle’s theoretical framework is still at work at even a more basic level—at the level of predispositions and outlook.

7 The epigram at the beginning of *Uses of Argument* is the first sentence of Aristotle’s *Prior Analytics*, which Toulmin later translates as: “logic . . . is concerned with apodeixis (i.e. with the way in which conclusions are to be established), and it is also the science (episteme) of their establishment” (177). Toulmin notes that the quoted passage “already takes for granted that one can set the subject out in the form of an episteme.” Aristotle’s definition of episteme will be explained in Chapter 4. Toulmin traces the mathematical formulation of logical theory to the Greeks’s dramatic success with geometry as an episteme. He identifies two strands among logicians that I think can be said correspond to the views of Aristotle and Plato. According to one group, “the mathematical relations discussed in the subject applied directly to the changeable objects of the material world, while others claimed that they referred rather to an independent class of change-free things” (178).

8 In Chapter 4, I will support my claim here that that separation can be justified only in terms of Aristotle’s broader metaphysical and epistemological project, a project that has been thoroughly discredited.

9 I have two partial copies of the history that I have downloaded from the Web and which together complete the document.

10 The publication of the entire history has a fascinating story. The NYT at first published the introduction, the summary, and three appendices of the history on the Internet. By popular demand, the NYT then published the complete history, though electronically redacted with the names of the Iranian agents to protect them from reprisals. A computer engineer working with an organization against government secrecy, however, un-redacted the history in segments and published the contents on Web page of the organization. While the un-redaction was proceeding, Risen wrote e-mails to the engineer warning that the latter would be wholly responsible for the lives of the Iranian agents.

11 The following preliminary summary, for example, is expanded in a good deal more detail in the article:

   The history says agency officers orchestrating the Iran coup worked directly with royalist Iranian military officers, handpicked the prime minister’s replacement, sent a stream of envoys to bolster the Shah’s courage, directed a campaign of bombings by Iranians.
posing as members of the communist party, and planted articles and editorial cartoons in newspapers.

12 Goodwin won the Kappa Tau Alpha-Frank Luther Mott award for the best researched book about journalism published in 1983.

13 The next sentence adds, “You also get advertising, for no newspaper would be complete without it. The pages of the *Times* offer a wide marketplace for the exchange or sale of goods, services and ideas.”

14 It was his hope that the NYT’s editorial pages may continue to reflect the best informed thought of the country, honest in every line, more than fair and courteous to those who may sincerely differ with its views,” that “its news columns may continue fairly to present, without recognizing friend or foe, the news of the day— All the News That’s Fit to Print!”—and to present it impartially, reflecting all the highest standards of business ethics and that all persons associated or connected with any of the departments of The *New York Times* organization may be treated justly and generously.

15 The Preamble to the “Statement” reads in part, “The First Amendment, protecting freedom of expression from abridgment by any law, guarantees to the people through their press a constitutional right, and thereby places on newspaper people a particular responsibility. Thus journalism demands of its practitioners not only industry and knowledge but also the pursuit of a standard of integrity proportionate to the journalist’s singular obligation. To this end the American Society of Newspaper Editors sets forth this Statement of Principles as a standard encouraging the highest ethical and professional performance” (http://www.asne.org/kiosk/archive/princip.htm).

16 Goodwin’s position is analogous to Toulmin’s. Toulmin notes that formal logicians seeing that the standards of assessment of formal logic cannot be applied to any other fields than pure logic and mathematics decided to label those other fields (dealing with unabstract, human-material world) *irrational*. Toulmin reverses this process and says that if there are standards of logic borrowed from formal logic that cannot explain how humans actually reason, then there is something wrong with those standards. Journalists also, seeing that their standards of intellectual integrity came into conflict with their humanity, originally argued that the humane side of this conflict must give way. Goodwin reverses this process and says that, if there is a conflict, the definition of critical thinking—here objectivity—must give way. Both Goodwin and Toulmin give more importance to understanding humans as they are than to how they should fit an abstract—and as I will show ancient модель of the world. Goodwin’s treatment of the issue of compassion has the virtue of pointing out the intellectual distortions that can ensue from sticking to the institutionally defined standards.

17 This article is a slightly abridged version of Curtis’s *The Ambiguities of Power: British Foreign Policy since 1945* published in Zed Press in 1995.

18 Curtis also quotes a Foreign Office memorandum, which outlines the positive characteristics of the candidate to be installed after the coup, given the noble goals the British government harbor for Iran after the coup:

But Zia had the quality of being ‘the one man who would be able, and anxious, to get a reasonable oil settlement with us’ and adopt a long-term policy of ‘development and reform which is essential for Persia’s future stability’, one Foreign Office memorandum noted.

19 I will pass over examples in which obvious surface contradictions that point to deep seated prejudices of the two authors. I am referring to examples such as Risen’s acceptance of Wilber’s claim that “the Shah had what the CIA termed a ‘pathological fear’ of British intrigues.” History of Iran happens to be replete with British intrigue. For example, the Shah’s father was brought to power by the British. The oil concessions granted Great Britain were also obtained by intrigue; so were the rights of the British to maintain their own police force and administration in the Southern one-third of Iran. But even without any knowledge of Iranian history, there seems to be no small irony—missed on Wilber and Risen—in describing the Shah’s fear of British intrigue as pathological while intriguing or reporting on an intrigue to overthrow the Shah’s popular and democratically elected prime minister. In both the CIA history and the NYT article the reader is told of the efforts the British and American agents made to soothe the Shah’s fears of the consequences of the coup plans and his role in the plans. The CIA history itself, which Risen claims to have read, reports that the Shah was threatened by the two foreign governments to cooperate. Under SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY PLAN PREPARED BY SIS AND CIA REPRESENTATIVES IN CYPRUS, Section I.B.2.b.(3), the Shah is to be told that if he does not cooperate with the plotters, “Shah’s dynasty will fall, and US-UK backing of you will cease.” The subheadings are as follows: 1. Preliminary Action, B. Acquisition Shah Cooperation, 2. Stage 2, b. Demands on the Shah. The expectation that the news of such intrigue should have alleviated the Shah’s fear of British intrigues seems markedly thoughtless.

In fact, all colonial powers had problems similar to those of the British. Hall and Albion offer two reasons for this disintegration. The Japanese during World War II, by their swift, spectacular conquest of Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands . . . showed to all the yellow, black, and brown peoples of the world not only that the white men were vulnerable to defeat in battle, but that they too could be forced to sweat away the years as
starving slave laborers. Before the powerful Allies could gather their resources to stop the onrushing tide of triumphal Japanese occupation of one colonial possession after another, white prestige had suffered an almost fatal blow" (1027). Another reasons was that "postwar Britain simply could not afford the sort of armed forces that would have been able to keep her overseas regions in hand against their will. (1027-1028)

So in 1947 India could no longer be kept in the Empire and was let go. And then problems re-cropped up in Ireland and Palestine. And then, from "'Cape to Cairo,' quite literally," Hall and Albion write, "bitter hatred of all that was British" (1034) spread through Africa. Thus, "along with the political disintegration of the empire and her economic ills, Britain was caught in the tangled and seething aftermath of the war in her foreign relations" (1037).

21 Hall and Albion observe that "A century earlier, faced with such situations, Britain did not hesitate, compromise, and cajole; instead the government got quick results by 'letting the British lion roar'" (1052). Labor's majority in the parliamentary elections of 1950 was narrow and could not have lasted troubled times. The Iranian oil nationalization and the troubles in Egypt over Suez Canal gave Winston Churchill a chance to bring "foreign policy into the campaign" to offer "a clear-cut issue" (1052). Thus "In the Conservative campaign Churchill blamed the Laborites for the difficulties in the Middle East. He referred to the Iranian oil seizures as laying Britain 'flat on the face as though she was a booby and a coward'" (1052). Churchill won the elections in 1951.

22 Read for example the patronizing article of January 7, 1952 naming Mossadegh Time Magazine's man of the year for 1951 (http://www.time.com/time/special/mom/151.html).


24 Sandra Mackey in The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation describes the National Front as "a large, variegated, and vociferous collection of political groups dating to the late 1940's" (196).

25 Sandra Mackey theorizes that Mossadegh's appeal to Iranians has roots in the culture and national and religious myths of Iran. She writes,

In a patriarchal and authoritarian society that puts great emphasis on family, education, and age, the aristocratic, highly educated, elderly Mossadegh fulfilled the requirements of the strong father figure. He was also the heroic leader defending the Iranian homeland against the hated foreigner. By accident or fate, elements of the ancient mythology concerning the founder of a new dynasty encircled the prime minister—his relationship to the preceding Qajar dynasty; persecution by Reza Shah, the reigning authority of the day; years of exile in his Ahmadabad estate; manifestations of greatness in time of national peril; and possession of the quixotic charisma that bestows the farr. Finally, Muhammad Mossadegh was an Ali figure, a man of integrity and commitment willing to take upon himself the sorrows and burdens of imperfect mankind. (199-200)

26 But to show that he was not the caricature that Wilber and his contemporaries drew of him, a picture that Risen faithfully replicates in his article, I will quote a few passages from Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran by Homa Katouzian. The quoted passages from Katouzian describe the political climate of Iran after Reza Khan was crowned king by the parliament. By the time the events described here took place, Mossadegh had served several posts as minister, two governorships, and a few terms as a representative to the parliament in dangerous and trying times. Katouzian's writes

But Mudarris would not give up the fight, and could not hold his tongue. He was arrested a year later in (in 1929), beaten up to the point of losing consciousness, bundled into a car, and sent to the medieval prison citadel in Birjand, at the far edge of the Khorasan desert. His jail was later changed to Khaf (or Khvaf) nearby; and in 1938 he was taken to a private house in Kashmar (also nearby) to be put to death on the Shah's orders.

However, the politicians, generals and intellectuals who had helped, supported, or acquiesced in , the rise of Reza Shah did not fare much better. Taimurtash was dismissed in disgrace, tried, imprisoned, and murdered in jail before he had served his full sentence. Nusrat al-Dawleh (Firuz), (Farmanfarma's powerful eldest son) was strangled in a police station many years after he had been taken straight from his ministerial seat to a court where he was tried and convicted for embezzling 3,000 tumans. Shaikh Khaz'al was strangled at his own dinner table; Davar was driven to suicide. General Amir Tahmasibi was assassinated in Kurdistan. Brigadier Dargahi was dismissed, beaten up by the Shah himself, and jailed with an unknown fate. Sardar As'ad (formerly Sardar Bahadur) Bakhtiyari (one-time commanding general of an army in which the Shah had served as a sergeant) and Sawlat al-Dawleh Qashqa'i were murdered in jail. Farrukhi-Yazdi, first a supporter, then an opponent, then a reluctant
fellow-traveller, was jailed, and eventually murdered in prison. Asadi was hanged in Mashad on the unproven charge of having instigated the revolt in that city against the compulsory order for men to wear—the European (instead of the 'Pahlavi') hat. . . . And this is just the list of the best known and most important official victims of the new order. Thus, the Shah became an absolute and arbitrary ruler . . . (31)

During most of the brutal dictatorship of Reza Shah, Mossadegh, as a prominent political figure, was under suspicious or house arrest or in self-exile or prison. Katouzian writes,

The same psychology lay behind his [Mossadegh's] conduct between 1928 and 1941. He completely withdrew from the social and political scene, but took no steps—not even when the Shah had become the absolute arbiter of all life and property in the land—even to pretend that he was anything other than an internal émigré (to use Isaac Deutscher's eloquent term), a rebel in silence. And that was the reason for his imprisonment and exile in 1940. . . .

It was not less than the loss of the only world in which he had lived since infancy, and in emotional terms it went far beyond mere loss of power, prestige and even social fulfillment. Almost all his friends, relatives, acquaintances—even enemies—had been destroyed, imprisoned, exiled, or turned into social unpersons. No more Mustawfi, Mushir, Mu‘tamin, or Mudarris; no more Samsam, Qavam, or Vusug either; nor Taqizadeh, Furughi, or Hedayaat; not even Davar, Nusrat, Taimurtash and Sulaiman Mirza. It all looked like a vanished civilization.

He began to bleed through his mouth again. It was treated in Tehran and stopped for a time, but it soon recurred with greater force, and he went to Germany in 1936 for treatment. He was seen by a throat specialist first, then a consultant physician. They both said it was nothing, and did not even issue any prescriptions or other instructions. Afterwards, the bleeding stopped occurring through the mouth, and changed its direction. 'In this very prison I have passed so much blood in my urine that I am alarmed by its threat to my life', he wrote in 1955 [in prison after the 1953 coup]. He was to die, in the end, of bleeding of the stomach, the physical 'nothing' which had important neurological origins.

Mussadiq was arrested in 1940. His home was ransacked in search of 'evidence' (any scrap of paper or old letter complaining about prices would have been sufficient) but without success. He told Sarpas Mukhtari, the police chief, that he could hold him without charge for twenty-four hours, as expounded in the law books. But when he learned that he was to be imprisoned in Birjand for an indefinite period and without any charges brought against him, he lost control, cursed the Shah while pointing at his huge picture on the wall, declared himself a rebel against a law less state, and had to be dragged into the car which was taking him to his new abode. He took an overdose of tranquilizers on the way, but could not hold them because of the roughness of the long unpaved road from Tehran to Mashad. He was still in a coma when they pulled up at a local clinic in Shahrud and saved his life.

Mackey points out that the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company made "Iran the first Third World country to defy the economic interests of a major power" after World War II (199). In the strong anti-colonialism movement after WWII, the American coup in Iran aligned the U.S. unmistakably in the imperialist camp, a position from which the United States has had, and will continue to have, great difficulty distancing itself.

For example, Newsweek reports of the time are replete with crass propaganda aimed at caricaturing Mossadeh.

Here is an incredible sampling of the reportage in Newsweek of the time before and after the coup:

July 27, 1953 (only weeks before the coup). The article "Powerful 'Imbecile'" reads:

As Usual, crisis prevailed in Iran last week. Thirty-five deputies resigned from the Majlis in 24 hours. And more continue to resign every day. This left the legislature totally impotent with a membership far short of a legal quorum. As usual, the crisis was created by Premier Mohammed Mossadegh's violent but calculated reaction to opposition . . . . (35)

The August 10, 1953 (only days before the coup). The article "Iran: Reds . . . .Taking Over" contends in a lead paragraph that Iran has "quietly been going Communist while the West has been preoccupied with larger affairs" (36). The article is in effect an "authoritative report now under study in Washington as Iran votes on a proposal to dissolve parliament." The gist of the report is that Mossadeh is motivated by his desire to stay in power at any price, even if he has
to collaborate with the Communist party—a formidable political and perhaps paramilitary force—especially since his unreasonable policies have destabilized Iran. This article is probably the one Risen reports was placed in Newsweek by the CIA through normal channels.

September 21, 1953 (a few weeks after the coup). The article “In the Red” reads:
Mohammed Mossadegh switched last week from his famous weeping and fainting fits to hunger strikes. The former Iranian Premier, now under arrest, staged two of them at the Sultanabad army barracks outside Tehran—one from breakfast to lunch; the other, overnight, won him the promise of a heartier diet. “I have only been able to preserve my physical powers with strong food,” he declared. “I must eat three roast chickens every day. I must eat a robust soup, a cutlet, and a good dessert. “Old Mossy” was undergoing questioning preparatory to a court-martial for rebellion. (49)

November 16, 1953. The article “Day in Court” reads:
On August 19, in his pajamas, Premier Mohammed Mossadegh of Iran fled under heavy gunfire from his fortified and beleagured home. This week, still in pajamas, the fallen Premier tottered into a military courtroom to stand trial. He stood accused, by the Zahedi regime . . . . Mossadegh complained of being cold (a kerosene heater was then supplied) and leaned on a desk as he spoke. Asked his name, he snapped: “The Legal Prime Minister’ . . . . The next day ‘old Mossy’ wept, fainted, threatened suicide, fired his lawyer, and said he would boycott further sessions ‘even if you cut off my head.’ (35?).

November 23, 1953. The article “Crackdown in the Middle East: Red-Inspired Iranians Retreat” reads in part:
Old Mossy’ was staging a one man uprising. As he was placed on trial for treason before a court martial, his antics were, in his prosecutor’s opinion, ‘funnier than Charlie Chaplin.’ He sobbed, groaned, and gasped for breath. He limped, stumbled, and tried to walk out. He clutched his heart and called for a stimulant; he shivered in gray wool pajamas and insisted on a heater. He flailed his arms, wagged his bony fingers, and punched his attorney. The ex-Premier toppled onto a bend, as if fainting—to catch a catnap. While weeping, he waivered: ‘I am not even free to cry.’ Repeatedly, Mossadegh vowed: ‘I will not speak again.’ He always did—for fourteen hours spread over four days. Supposedly he was arguing that it was illegal for a military court to try him... (40).

December 7, 1953. The article “Missing Magic” reads in part:
Iran was in the air without a magic carpet last week. The outcome of the trial of former Premier Mohammed Mossadegh was touch and go. So were chances of a solution of the oil dispute with Britain. The paradoxes:

Mossy: As the government closed its case against the wily old demagogue, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi personally instructed the chief prosecutor, Brig. Gen. Hossein Azmoudeh, not to attack Mossadegh as a “traitor” ... . The Shah’s caution and Azmoudeh’s rambling summation reflected the government’s fear of old Mossy’s restoration as a hero of the street mobs. (34)

29 As I will explain in the next section, much of the material in this section is lived history for me. But the historical claims made can be checked by looking at MacKey’s The Iranians and Sepehr Zabih’s The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution.


31 On the issue of genocide in Indonesia, see “The Case Against Henry Kissinger” by Christopher Hitchens in Harper’s (February and March 2001).

32 In my writings in English in the United States I had despaired of being able to convey the depths of despair that my grandmother’s threat implies. I feared that my American readers would find the threat amusingly folkloric till I came across Tonny Morrison’s Beloved, in which the hero kills her infant out of despair.

33 Unfortunately, the buildings strongly resembled Ross Hall, where the English department is located.

34 See Spider’s Web.

35 See Spider’s Web.
36 Wilber goes out of his way to point out the titles of the officials authorizing the coup operations and the dates of approval. Under the section IV. THE DECISIONS ARE MADE: ACTIVITY BEGINS, he writes, the following approvals of the operational plan were obtained on the dates indicated:

Director CIA - 11 July 1953
Director SIS - 1 July 1953
Foreign Secretary - 1 July 1953
Secretary of State - 11 July 1953
Prime Minister - 1 July 1953
President - 11 July 1953

37 Very much like scientists who work in corporate or university labs. The scientists are there to fix a pre-defined and -evaluated problem—that is, the problem is already framed—not to define and evaluate the problem.

38 An error that Bertrand Russell accuses Plato of introducing to philosophy.

39 See Durant's *Our Oriental Heritage*, or any standard textbook in history.

40 See Preface and back cover.

41 In this thesis, I have mainly given examples of political oppression as the word political is commonly used, but I use the terms political and oppression in the much wider sense adopted by feminists. In other words, I use oppression to refer to injustice that is not only chronic but institutionalized. Unfortunately, my use of the term in this way does dilute the meaning of the word, for oppression also implies drastic and outrageous forms of injustice, and there are a great many people in the world now who are suffering from forms of injustice that are not only chronic and institutionalized but also brutal (torture, state terror, assassination, extra-judicial imprisonment, etc.).

42 Consider, for example, this series of texts in chronological order:

To his Excellency Thomas Gage Esq Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over this Province. To the Honourable his Majesty’s Council and the Honourable House of Representatives in General Court assembled may 25 177-----, the Petition of a Grate Number of Blackes of this Province who by divine permission are held in a state of Slavery within the bowels of a free and christian Country Humbly Shewing That your Petitioners apprehend we have in common with all other men a natural right to our freedoms without Being depriv’d of them by our fellow men as we are a freeborn Pepel .

---Black Petition for Freedom in *The Harper American Literature 511*

The Declaration of Independence as Adopted by Congress, In Congress July 4, 1776, The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America . . . We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . .

---The American Declaration of Independence in *The Harper American Literature 545*

To the Honorable Counsel & House of [Representa]tives for the State of Massachusitte Bay in General Court assembled, Jan 13, 1777. The petition of A Great Number of Blackes detained in a State of slavery in the Bowels of a free & Christian Country Humbly shuwith that your Petitioners apprehend that they have in Common with all other men a Natural and Unaliable Right to that freedom which the Grat Parent of the Unavers hath Bestowed equally on all menkind .

---Black Petition for Freedom in *The Harper American Literature 513*

43 I won’t try to capture the rhyme only something of their frenzied flavor.

44 According to Fromm, the root causes of both the sadistic and masochistic drives are the same. Sadomasochism aims at “eliminating the conspicuous suffering” (152), but it cannot remove “the underlying conflict and the silent unhappiness.” In other words, even people who cause the suffering of other people and draw pleasure from witnessing such suffering at an immediate and personal level do so for reasons that bear investigating. Fromm writes that “Psychoanalytic and other empirical observations of masochistic persons give ample evidence . . . that they are filled with a terror of aloneness and insignificance” (150). In the masochistic striving, “the frightened individual seeks for somebody or something to tie his self to; he cannot bear to be his own individual self any longer; and he tries frantically to get rid of it and to feel security again by the elimination of this burden: the self” (150-151).

Considering masochistic and sadistic tendencies to be the two sides of the same phenomenon, Fromm writes, “The aim of both drives is the terrible anxiety of feeling insecure and powerless (157). Both drives are aimed at acquiring and expressing power but not the power to “do something, to be able, to be potent” (160) but a “secondary” or ersatz power, rooted in weakness “where genuine strength is lacking” aimed at “power over somebody.” Both the sadistic and
Fromm argues, appear when “a person . . . is not able to do what he wants,” and both aim to melt (or align) or be melted into the other person.

Fromm writes, “It is always the inability to stand the aloneness of one’s individual self that leads to the drive to enter into a symbiotic relationship with someone else” (157).

45 One of the examples Fromm gives is that of Nazi Germany. But later on he extends his analysis to cover the consumer culture in capitalist societies.

46 Here is the memorable passage in which he makes these claims:

And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If you read of one man robbed, one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one dog killed, or one lost grasshopper in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth or twelve years beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and the Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state of ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost The last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1849. (175)

Walden was written and revised between 1845, when Thoreau began living on Walden Pond, and 1854, when the book was published. Between 1830 and 1860, a great many events of tremendous importance happened, events that Walden makes light of through neglect. Europe and the United States were industrializing. European countries were busy colonizing the world. The 1832 Reform Act, which expanded the electorate in the United Kingdom, passed in parliament. The slaves were freed in the British colonies in 1833. In the 1830s and 1840s the Chartist movement, which according to Encyclopedia Britannica demanded “universal manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, vote by ballot, annually elected Parliaments, payment of members of Parliament, and abolition of the property qualifications for membership,” was at the height of its activities. And the potato crop in Ireland had failed between 1845 and 1846, resulting in the starvation and death of at least 500,000 Irish. In 1848, a revolution in France had made that country a republic. In 1852, a plebiscite had selected Napoleon III as emperor. In Walden, Thoreau quotes quaint pieces of wisdom from the “Bramins” of India and “sages” of China, but he seems unconcerned about the events of the time in those countries. For example, between the years 1848 and 1856, Lord Dalhousie’s “reigned” as an absolute monarch in India. In 1857, “The Great Revolt” against British rule occurred, a revolt ending in 1859 in British atrocities. And between 1839 and 1842, the British and the French were fighting the Chinese in the First Opium Wars to force China to import opium, which China considered, rightly, to be disruptive to its society and economy.

If Thoreau had taken a look at the newspapers of the time for national news, he might have noticed the Texas declaration of independence from Mexico in 1836, the imposition of the “gag rules” against discussing slavery in Congress in 1836 (which lasted till 1844), the bank panic of 1837 (which resulted in an economic downturn that hurt Thoreau’s chances of finding a job), Frederick Douglass’s lectures which began in 1841, the entry of Texas into the Union as a slave state in 1845 (the year Thoreau began writing Walden), the War with Mexico that began in 1846 and ended in 1848, the Compromise of 1850, the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, etc.

47 Meltzer in A Thoreau Profile quotes the following passage from Thoreau’s “The Last Days of John Brown”: “the one great rule of composition—and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this—is, to speak the truth. This first, this second, this third; pebbles in your mouth or not. This demands earnestness and manhood chiefly” (266).

48 Stoller writes, Thoreau “Learned that the laboring man, striving to maintain the market value of his hands and brain, had “no time to be anything but a machine” (II, 6). He found society devoted to ends which made it inevitable that some do “all the exchange work with the oxen, or, in other words, become the slaves of the strongest” (II, 63). After the smoke of the railroad is blown away, he declared, “it will be perceived that few are riding, but the rest are run over” (II, 59). For “we do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us,” and each of the sleepers that tie the tracks is a man. “The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them (II, 102 f.)” (8-9).

49 The material in the previous two paragraphs is taken from Milton Meltzer and Walter Harding’s A Thoreau Profile published by Thoreau Foundation, Inc., Thoreau Lyceum, 156 Belknap Street, Concord, Massachusetts 01742. Although “Slavery in Massachusetts” seems to be directed at the North or more specifically at the citizens of Massachusetts, it has a characteristic self-critical tone. He explains his revised position in a poignant passage:
The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable -- of a bad one, to make it less valuable. . . . I have lived for the last month -- and I think that every man in Massachusetts capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have had a similar experience -- with the sense of having suffered a vast and indefinite loss. I did not know at first what ailed me. At last it occurred to me that what I had lost was a country. I had never respected the government near to which I lived, but I had foolishly thought that I might manage to live here, minding my private affairs, and forget it. For my part, my old and worthiest pursuits have lost I cannot say how much of their attraction, and I feel that my investment in life here is worth many per cent less since Massachusetts last deliberately sent back an innocent man, Anthony Burns, to slavery. I dwelt before, perhaps, in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only between heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell wholly only within hell. The site of that political organization called Massachusetts is to me morally covered with volcanic scoriae and cinders, such as Milton describes in the infernal regions. If there is any hell more unprincipled than our rulers, and we, the ruled, I feel curious to see it. Life itself being worth less, all things with it, which minister to it, are worth less. Suppose you have a small library, with pictures to adorn the walls -- a garden laid out around -- and contemplate scientific and literary pursuits &c., and discover all at once that your villa, with all its contents is located in hell, and that the justice of the peace has a cloven foot and a forked tail -- do not these things suddenly lose their value in your eyes?

(https://www.eserver.org/thoreau/slavery.html)

51 In 1857 and 1859 Thoreau met John Brown, the man who "when he heard the news of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, organized a band of Gileadites among the fugitive slaves he knew and urged them to resist the law at all costs" (252). In 1859, John Brown attacked the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry because he believed that the federal government was complicit in the enslavement of blacks. His forces were defeated, and he was tried and hanged. Thoreau helped one of Brown's fugitive "men to escape to Canada" (259) the day after memorial services were held for Brown. In 1860, in one of his last public acts, Thoreau wrote "The Last Days of John Brown," in which he eulogized Brown, calling his action "noble" (264) and him a "hero" (262) and "the embodiment of principle" (262). Thoreau writes that during Brown's stay in prison before his hanging "Our thought could not revert to any greater or wiser or better man with whom to contrast him, for he, then and there, was above them all. The man this country was about to hang appeared the greatest and best in it" (262).

The Thoreau who celebrated the life of John Brown is not the Thoreau of Walden or even of "Civil Disobedience." In another essay before Brown's conviction, "A Plea for Captain John Brown," Thoreau writes that "It was his [Brown's] peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him."

Thoreau's "Plea" is an important document, among other reasons, because it contains his later views on what he values most in life and humans. In "Plea," he idealizes and eulogizes Brown, and the passages in which he does that are descriptions of his later views. Thoreau writes that Brown paid "no compliments to the oppressor. Truth is his inspirer, and earnestness the polisher of his sentences." Brown's detractors, Thoreau writes, "do not know the man . . . a man who did not wait till he was personally interfered with or thwarted in some harmless business before he gave his life to the cause of the oppressed." Thoreau compares Brown to Christ because, like Christ, Brown "did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them as he was bid. For once we are lifted out of the trivialness and dust of politics into the region of truth and manhood. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature."

Except for a brief concluding remark, Thoreau's "Plea" ends with several quotations from statements Brown had made during his trial. The key quotation from Brown is the following:

I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God.

The quotations in this and the next four paragraphs are from "A Plea for Captain John Brown" as the essay appears on the Web (http://www.toptags.com/aama/books/book2.htm).

52 I write as someone who has ties to Iran. As a human being who has ties to other humans, I find the chemical bombing of Kurdish civilians, including children, in Iraq—an activity also tacitly condoned by the government of the United States—morally even more despicable than the gassing of Iranian soldiers on battlefields.

53 See Freedman's Spider's Web.

54 Atlas of World History lists 14 U.S. economic/political interventions around the world since 1945 (including the 1953 coup in Iran). The Atlas also lists 16 instances of military interventions in countries as far away as Vietnam, Laos,
and Afghanistan (242). Also see Parts I and II of Christopher Hitchens’s “The Case Against Henry Kissinger” in Harper’s Magazine (February and March 2001).

55 For example, the human rights violations that country reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch find in the United States are not remotely as egregious as those found in, say, Iran or Saudi Arabia.

56 See Literature Cited for URLs.


58 These myths have direct political consequences. De Beauvoir writes, for example that since men “have always kept in their hands all concrete powers,” women have been “established as the Other” (139, emphasis mine). The pervasiveness of this myth is of particular importance to feminists, for according to de Beauvoir, “since the coming of the patriarchate, life has won in his [man’s] eyes a double aspect” (144). Men, having set themselves up “as the same” (69) (as the norm) while consigning women to the “category of the Other” (69), view “the world under the sign of duality” (69). She writes,

> Man seeks in woman the Other as Nature and as his fellow being. But we know what ambivalent feelings Nature inspires in man. He exploits her, but she crushes him, he is born of her and dies in her; she is the source of his being and the realm that he subjugates to his will; Nature is a vein of gross material in which the soul is imprisoned, and she is the supreme reality; she is contingency and Idea, the finite and the whole; she is what opposes the Spirit, and the Spirit itself. (144)

De Beauvoir writes even more clearly that

Few myths have been more advantageous to the ruling caste than the myth of women: it justifies all privileges and even authorizes their abuse. Men need not bother themselves with alleviating the pains and the burdens that physiologically are women’s lot, since these are ‘intended by nature’; men use them as a pretext for increasing the misery of the feminine lot still further, for instance by refusing to grant to woman any right to sexual pleasure, by making her work like a beast of burden. (255-256)

59 I will explore this issue in greater detail. But here is what Kathleen Lennon in “Natural Science” writes about in terms of the areas in natural sciences where feminist have noted gender to be an issue:

- “the science which is dignified as such and passed on in academic and industrial circles is primarily done and taught by men” (187) whose “interests and preoccupations serve to determine the direction of the research” (187),

- “the gendered life experiences and subjectivities of the men who practice science have conditioned not only the direction and objectives of the research but also the theoretical narratives which provide the explanations. Such a claim is particularly associated with an appeal to object-relations theory to provide an anatomy of male and female gender characteristics, generated by the position of women as primary carers” (187). Lennon writes that “the predominant motifs are of detached, unemotional, and individualistic men and relational and integrated women. These gender characteristics are then read into the character of the scientific theories which were produced” (187). And

- feminists researchers have identified in the writings of male scientific theorists and practitioners examples “in which the nature that scientists investigate is conceptualized both as female and object of invasion, domination, and control” (187).

60 A claim Lloyd supports by citing studies of mainstream sociologists.

61 The American Heritage Dictionary defines ontology as “The branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being.” And according to Encyclopedia Britannica, ontology is “the theory or study of being as such; i.e., of the basic characteristics of all reality.”

62 I will show in Chapter 4 that the Primary and Secondary qualities are variations on the Aristotelian concepts of form and matter, respectively, and thus predate the seventeenth century by about two millennia.

63 Lloyd writes that the

Primary Qualities are absolute, constant, and mathematical; they make up the true material objects—the Real—and the domain of knowledge, both human and Divine. The Primary Qualities—extension, number, figure, magnitude, position, and motion—have two crucial properties: they cannot be separated from bodies; and they can be represented wholly mathematically.
Secondary Qualities are in contrast, fluctuating, confused, relative, and untrustworthy; they arise from the senses. They are merely effects on our senses of the Primary Qualities, which are alone the qualities of real nature. (357-358).

Lloyd quotes a fascinating passage from Galileo in which he expounds on his theoretical framework by writing that the “book” of nature “is written in the mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of [nature]” (358).

Britannica points out that “Though the term was first coined in the 17th century, ontology is synonymous with metaphysics or “first philosophy” as defined by Aristotle in the 4th century BC. Because metaphysics came to include other studies (e.g., philosophical cosmology and psychology), ontology has become the preferred term for the study of being.” Thus, Lloyd here is referring to the old or Aristotelian definition of ontology or metaphysics. Of relevance to Lloyd’s argument—though she doesn’t mention it—is that the term Aristotle used for his Metaphysics was theology.

See discussion of Simone de Beauvoir’s Second Sex in the previous section.

Harding, for example, points out that even Karl Popper’s circumscribed version of the possibility of such a method, in which falsifiability of hypotheses provides support for scientific claims, runs into difficulties. Harding argues that Popper’s solution would work if “an unambiguous falsification procedure” (356) existed for “single hypotheses” (356). But since scientific predictions “are in fact based not on any single, falsifiable hypothesis, but instead on many assumptions and rules of inference, some of which are background or auxiliary beliefs often only tacitly held” (356), then no single hypothesis can be singled out and singly refuted and thus all scientific theories are “underdetermined by their evidence” (356). The point Harding is making (that scientists cannot but choose their theories “on some basis other than observed closeness of fit with nature” is, as Lloyd takes pain to highlight, granted by analytic philosophers. Consider for example, the following statements from John Searle in The Construction of Social Reality:

All true statements about the world can consistently be affirmed together. Indeed, if they could not consistently be affirmed together; they could not all be true. Of course, we are always confronted with the problems of vagueness, indeterminacy, family resemblance, open texture, contextual dependency, the incommensurability of theories, ambiguity, the idealization involved in theory construction, alternative interpretations, the underdetermination of theory by evidence, and all the rest of it. (167)

This claim is several leagues removed from the claim that there is no distinction between values and facts.

The areas she mentions are “the selection of problems, the formation of hypotheses, the design of research (including the organization of research communities), the collection of data, the interpretation and sorting of data, decisions about when to stop research, the way results of research are reported, and so on” (“Rethinking” 244).

As Harding writes, “All human thought necessarily can be only partial; it is always limited by the fact of having only a particular historical location—of not being able to be everywhere and see everything, and of being ‘contained’ by cultural assumptions that become visible only from outside that culture” (“Response” 341-342).

The full quotation is “conceptual frameworks of disciplines are shaped by administrative-managerial priorities, just as pre-scientific observations of nature are shaped by other cultural priorities. Such priorities do enable gaining the kinds of information administrators need to function effectively, but they also distort and limit our understanding of just what brings about daily social relations and interactions with nature, and they make it difficult to think possible any different kind of interactions” (“Response” 341-342).

Russell writes, “Change consists in giving form to matter, but, where sensible tings are concerned, a substratum of matter always remains. Only God consists of form without matter. The world is continually evolving towards a greater degree of form, and thus becoming progressively more like God. But the process cannot be completed, because matter cannot be wholly eliminated” (169).

Russell adds that “a similar doctrine” is offered in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethic: “There is in the soul one element that is rational, and one that is irrational. The irrational part is twofold: the vegetative, which is found in everything living, even in plants, and the appetitive, which exists in all animals. The life of the rational soul consists in contemplation, which is the complete happiness of man, though not fully attainable” (171). And Durant explains that for Aristotle, “The soul is the entire vital principle of any organism, the sum of its powers and processes. In plants the soul is merely a nutritive and reproductive power; in animals it is also a sensitive and locomotor power; in man it is as well the power of reason and thought” (Story, 73). Durant also mentions the role of the mind in Aristotle’s account of the make-up of the human being:

A personal and particular soul can exist only in its own body. Nevertheless the soul is not material, as Democritus would have it; nor does it all die. Part of the rational power of the human soul is passive: it is bound up with memory, and ides with the body that bore the memory; but the ‘active reason,’ the pure power of thought, is independent of memory and is untouched with decay. The active reason is the universal as distinguished from the individual element in man; what survives is not the personality, with its transitory affections and desires, but mind in its most abstract and impersonal form. (73)
74 The word existential in this document is used in the sense that Dewey uses the word, not in the sense used by existentialist philosophers like De Beauvoir. When Dewey says that to Greek philosophers knowledge was existential, he means that these philosophers did not believe that knowledge is something humans have learned or created through their interactions with the environment. Greeks believed that knowledge was something real that existed outside of humans and that sometimes people (more specifically, their rational faculties) were able to come into contact or merge with this knowledge.

75 See also Book 2, page 11, of Open Society and Its Enemies

76 According to O'Connor, a philosophical theory about knowing will depend on the extent of human knowledge at the time the theory is made. Every age has a standard of knowledge constructed on the basis of whatever is thought at the time to be reliable and authentic instances of knowing. Thus, natural science is the paradigm of knowledge for the present century. For medievals, the supposed revealed truths of theology provided the model. For the Greeks of Aristotle's day, the single example of certain and reliable knowledge was mathematics—geometry and arithmetic. And when Aristotle talks of scientific knowledge (episteme), he means knowledge that is certain and necessarily true. (47)

77 Bertrand Russell writes that for Plato, "there is nothing worthy to be called 'knowledge' to be derived from the senses, and that the only real knowledge has to do with concepts. In this view, '2 + 2 = 4' is genuine knowledge, but such a statement as 'snow is white' is so full of ambiguity and uncertainty that it cannot find a place in the philosopher's corpus of truths" (149).

78 For example, a part of a chunk of clay can potentially be turned into an urn. That part, as yet unformed and indefinite, is not a pot. It has not come into being.

79 Popper offers a succinct summary of the two ways by which Aristotelian knowledge can be gained. He writes, Knowledge, or science, according to Aristotle, may be of two kinds—either demonstrative or intuitive. Demonstrative knowledge is also a knowledge of 'cause'. It consists of statements that can be demonstrated—the conclusions—together with their syllogistic demonstrations (which exhibit the 'causes' in their 'middle terms') Intuitive knowledge consists in grasping the "indivisible form" or essence or essential nature of a thing (if it is 'immediate', i.e. if its 'cause' is identical with its essential nature); it is the originative source of all science since it grasps the original basic premises of all demonstrations. (Book 2, 9)

80 Popper writes that the "defining formula" must give an "exhaustive description of the essence of the essential properties of the thing in question" (Book 2, 10-11). O'Connor writes, Aristotle believed "to define X was merely to express in language the essence apprehended by nous [intellectual intuition or rational faculty or reason]; and that the essence of a thing was a fixed and definite group of properties" (49).

81 Dewey writes, "linguistic, psychological, or merely aids in reflection."

82 Woozley writes, certain, demonstrable knowledge is attained "within a science when the conclusions are deductively derived from the premises. So the ideal of knowledge is, as in Plato, that of strict demonstration, the establishment of necessary connection between premiss and conclusion" (452). O'Connor concurs with Woozley, writing that "A science, for Aristotle, is a body of true statements about a particular subject-matter—geometry, astronomy, or botany, for example. The statements must tell us that certain facts are so and also why they are so. But more is required than that the scientific statements should be true. They must be necessarily and demonstrably true" (48).

83 This demand for proof of every step soon leads to a chain of proofs that has to stop at some point to avoid an infinite regress. As we will see, the point at which the chain stops (axioms) also plays a key and problematic part in Aristotle's philosophy.

84 O'Connor gives this example of what can be considered a genuine Aristotelian syllogism: "If all theories based on empirical evidence deserve rational consideration, and if all psychological theories are based on empirical evidence, then all psychological theories deserve rational consideration" (40). Or to use the same pattern with symbols,

Major Premiss: If all M is P
Minor Premiss: And if all S is M
Conclusion: Then all S is P.

M, which is shared in the major and minor premisses and eliminated in the conclusion, is the middle term.

85 O'Connor's explanation of inference or argument is that in inference "we affirm certain premises as true and then draw certain conclusions from them" (40). For example, "All broad-leaved plants are deciduous. All vines are broad-leaved plants. Therefore: All vines are deciduous" (40).

86 As O'Connor writes,

If a statement S1 is both necessarily true and demonstrably so, we must be able to prove it from prior premisses, S2 and S3, say, which are themselves necessarily true. For no
statement can be necessarily true if it is proved from premises that are not themselves so. . . . It is clear, as Aristotle points out, that such a process of proof cannot go on ad infinitum. Sooner or later we must come to starting point . . . which, though true and necessarily so, are not themselves demonstrable and do not contain any of the statements $S_1 \ldots S_m$ which they are used to prove. (48)

87 For example Wootzley writes, that the intuition of axioms involves both perception (aisthesis) and intelligence (nous). We come to learn them by a kind of induction from our sense experience, and yet we know them by an intellectual intuition. . . . The function of perception is to provide us with particular examples or applications of the principles, the repetitions of such examples helping to fix our attention on the principles. But such empirical induction does nothing to prove or to establish the principles. At this point intelligence just sees or intuits the truth of the principles in question. (452)

88 Dewey in Logic writes,

In its final and complete sense all knowledge in the classic scheme is immediate rational apprehension, grasp or vision. Reflection and inquiry were of the nature of the maneuvering that an individual may be forced to engage in so as to get a better view of something already there, like making a journey to a museum to inspect the objects found in it. Form (eidos) and species are views of wholes. Because of the weakness of mortal flesh men have to engage in reflective inquiries, but the latter are of no inherent logical importance. Knowledge, when arrived at, is grasp and possession: of the nature of 'intuition' in modern theory, only having none of the vagueness of 'intuition' as that word is now used. (88)

89 Causality is thus a teleological concept and radically different from any of its contemporary formulations (which would be various forms of the insignificant efficient causality in the Aristotelian system).

90 G. E. R. Lloyd in Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of His Thought writes that Aristotle . . . denies that nature consciously deliberates, and he clearly recognises that his metaphors are metaphors. He repeatedly says that nature does not act without a goal, and even, on occasions, graphically compares nature with a painter, a modeller, or some other type of craftsman. But he makes it plain that he does not postulate a divine mind controlling natural changes from outside. On the contrary, natural objects have 'ends' within themselves. Earth naturally seeks its own place, and the young boy naturally grows into the mature man. (62)

Nevertheless, the idea of goal, purpose, the end in view, and function (i.e. the final cause or the teleological explanation) is so central to Aristotle's system of philosophy that O'Connor considers "Aristotle's liking for explanation in terms of final causes and his reading of purpose into nature as an unexorcized residue of the magical animistic thinking with which Greek philosophy was infected" (52). And then there are rather unambiguous passages in Aristotle's works. For example, Aristotle writes, "Now intelligent action is for the sake of an end; therefore the nature of things also is so. Thus if a house, e.g. had been a thing made by nature, it would have been made in the same way as it is now by art" (Ross'sMetaphysics 276).

91 According to Durant, "Matter obstructs, form constructs. Form is not merely the shape but the shaping force, an inner necessity and impulse which moulds mere material to a specific figure and purpose; it is the realization of a potential capacity of matter; it is the sum of the powers residing in anything to do, to be, or to become" (Story 69-70).

92 In the translation by W. D. Ross, the passage reads: "We must consider also in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the good and the highest good, whether as something separate and by itself, or as the order of the parts. Probably in both ways, as an army does; for its good is found both in its order and in [15] its leader, and more in the latter; for he does not depend on the order but it depends on him" (605).

93 I read the chapter synopses in the tables of contents of all of Aristotle's books in the Great Books collection., and I read all the chapters and sections in which Aristotle develops his concepts of matter and form and final cause. The views of Aristotle that Durant describes are presented and developed systematically in Physics, Metaphysics, On the Generation of Animals, History of Animals, On Generation and Corruption, and On the Soul.

94 Compare with Ernest Barker's translation: "A man is thus by nature a slave if he is capable of becoming (and this is the reason why he also actually becomes) the property of another, and if he participates in reason to the extent of apprehending it in another, though destitute of it himself" (13).

95 Russell has an interesting preliminary comment about Aristotle's justifications for war—and by extension of the people involved in war who are potential masters and slaves:

[according to Aristotle,] War, however, is just when waged against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit (1256b); and in this case, it is
implied, it would be right to make slaves of the conquered. This would seem enough to justify any conqueror who ever lived; for no nation will admit that it is intended by nature to be governed, and the only evidence as to nature's intentions must be derived from the outcome of war. In every war, therefore, the victors are in the right and the vanquished in the wrong. Very satisfactory! (186).

In another formulation, Plato writes, "the having and doing of one's own and what belongs to oneself would admittedly be justice" (675, 434a, Republic).

Aristotle's preoccupation with (as opposed to Plato's lack of interest in) making sure that his ideas had some sort of connection to detailed goings-on in the world of the senses creates many complications that he attempts to overcome in Politics. For example, Saunders points out that Aristotle cannot equate the good citizen with the good person because being a good person means that he (and Aristotle does mean he) can rule based on the commands of reason, whereas the good citizen has to obey and compromise with the rulers (178). Thus, for the definition of the good man and the good citizen to converge, the good citizen must be ruling others, i.e. must be a king.

Similar to the state of affairs in America around the time of the War of Independence.

Popper in Open Society disputes the claims about the imperialistic policies of Athens (Book 1, 178).

Both tyrannies.

Durant reports historical accounts of Socrates's having resisted a criminal order of the Thirty Tyrants, who among other things had "confiscated the property . . . ; plundered the temples, sold for three talents the wharves of the Piraeus which had cost a thousand, exiled five thousand democrats, and put fifteen hundred others to death . . . assassinated all Athenians who were distasteful to the politically or personally; . . . put an end to freedom of teaching, assemblage, and speech . . . . " (Life 451). We are talking about extreme reactionaries. The evidence against Socrates's being the disinterested by-stander to Athenian politics is overwhelming. After the restoration of democracy, the democrat Anytus who was one of the people charging Socrates of impiety towards the gods, was, according to Durant, against Socrates because Socrates's "persistent criticism was 'weakening the belief of educated Athenians in the institutions of democracy'. " Durant writes further that "The murderous tyrant Critias had been one of Socrates' pupils; the immoral and treasonable Alcibiades had been his lover; Charmides, his early favorite, had been a general under Critias, and had just died in battle against the democracy" (Life 452). Against, these considerations, Popper in Open Society and Its Enemies makes a sharp distinction between historical and Platonic Socrates and claims that the historical Socrates was a true believer in democratic institutions and that his refusal to avoid execution indicated the full extent of his commitment to democracy (Book 1, 128-134).

The distinction between monarch and tyrant is based on the relative power of the ruler to the ruled. Monarchs usually relied on an alliance of faithful aristocracy for their power. The monarchs were the most powerful of the powerful in the state. Tyrants, on the other hand, ruled by military might and would not tolerate any competing centers of power (such as other aristocrats).

I mention the enslavement of Hermeias because Aristotle dedicates some space in Politics for explaining the difference between natural and conventional slaves. Durant writes that Hermeias' daughter died a few years after marrying Aristotle and that although Aristotle remarried, he had always remained mindful of the memory of his first wife.

The theorist of future empires and monarchies (Roman, Holy Roman, Byzantine, Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian, etc.).

Aristotle is known for the great humanity he displayed in his will. He had been generous to his wife and freed some slaves. What Aristotle cannot be accused of is crass hypocrisy. I am in particular thinking about Thomas Jefferson, who declared the equality of all humans but kept slaves, had sex with one of them, had his own children born into slavery and did not free his lover and many other slaves when he died.

In references to the political instability of Plato's time, Karl Popper writes that Plato "suffered desperately" (19, Open Society). Popper quotes Plato's Seventh Letter (there are questions as to the authenticity of the letter), "Seeing that everything swayed and shifted aimlessly, I felt giddy and desperate" (Book 1, 19).

Fromm writes,

Our life and health are subject to accidents beyond our control. If we make a decision, we can never be certain of the outcome; any decision implies a risk of failure, and if it does not imply it, it has not been a decision in the true sense of the word. We can never be certain of the outcome of our best efforts. The result always depends on many factors which transcend our capacity of control. Just as a sensitive and alive person cannot avoid being sad, he cannot avoid feeling insecure. Life, in its mental and spiritual aspects, is by necessity insecure and uncertain. There is certainty only about the fact that we are born and that we shall die. (174)

In a fundamentally insecure world, Fromm writes, "Our thoughts and insights are at best partial truth, mixed with a great deal of error, not to speak of the unnecessary misinformation about life and society to which we are exposed almost from the day of birth."
108 In his will, Aristotle names Antipater, the regent of Macedonia during the absence of Alexander, as his executor (2464 in The Complete Works of Aristotle).

109 In examining Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Russell writes that although he finds much of the sentiment in that work "repugnant," he nevertheless considers "Aristotle's ethics . . . at all points, consistent with his metaphysics" (182).

110 Unless otherwise stated, all translations from On Rhetoric are from W. Rhys Roberts.

111 In Lawson-Tancred's translation, the passage reads, rhetoric's "function is in fact concerned with just those things about which we deliberate but of which we have no arts, and with audiences of limited intellectual scope and limited capacity to follow an extended chain of reasoning" (76). In Kennedy's translation, the passage reads, "Its function [ergon] is concerned with the sort of things we debate and for which we do not have [other] arts and among such listeners as are not able to see many things all together or to reason from a distant starting point . . . [i.e., a chain of syllogism] is necessarily not easy to follow because of the length [of the argument] (the judge is assumed to be a simple person)" (41-42, the bracketed statements are in Kennedy's text).

112 In Lawson-Tancred's translation, the passage reads, "This is also the reason for the uneducated person's being more persuasive than the educated one before mobs, just as the poets say that the uneducated 'speak more musically before the people'" (195). In Kennedy's translation, the passage reads, "This is the reason why the uneducated are more persuasive than the educated before a crowd, just as the poets say the uneducated are 'inspired by the Muses' in a crowd; for [the educated] reason with axioms [koina] and universals, the uneducated on the basis of what [particulars] they know and instances near their experiences" (187).

113 In Lawson-Tancred's translation, the passage reads, "Experts in these more or less carry off the prizes at the contests, and just as in the case of tragedy actors now nave more effect than the poets, so is it also in political contests, through the baseness of the citizenry. . . . Nevertheless, these [stylistic issues] have great effect, as has been said, because of the baseness of the audience" (217). In George A. Kennedy's translation, first reference to audience is absent. His translation reads: "Those [performers who give careful attention to these] are generally the ones who win poetic contests; and just as actors are more important than poets now in the poetic contests, so it is in political contests because of the sad state of governments. . . . nevertheless, [delivery] has great power, as has been said, because of the corruption of the audience" (218-219).

114 In Lawson-Tancred's translation, the passage reads, "One should not forget that all such things are external to the speech; for they are directed to a low-grade listener, who listens to things outside the matter; if he be not of this kind, there would be no need for an introduction, but only of so much as to summarize the matter, so that it has, as it were, a head to its body" (248-249). In George A. Kennedy's translation, the passage reads, "But one should not forget that all such things are outside the real argument: they are addressed to a hearer who is morally weak and giving ear to what is extrinsic to the subject, since if he were not such a person, there would be not need of a prooemion except for setting out the 'headings' of the argument in order that the 'body' [of the speech] may have a 'head'" (263).

115 As Bodeus writes, [for Aristotle] dialectic is the art of defending or refuting any commonly accepted opinion held by an interlocutor. Just like rhetoric, which is the art of persuading an audience to believe in either of two opposing thesis (and which Aristotle calls the counterpart of dialectic), dialectic is a discipline that is, as such, unconcerned with truth. For this reason, Aristotle, puts Plato and the sophists on an equal footing: while the sophists relinquished the pursuit of eternal scientific truth in favor of the relativism of the orators, for whom the degree of persuasion determines the correctness of opinion, Plato claimed to overcome the uncertainty of opinion by resorting to universal pseudoscience confined to the sphere of probable opinion. (60)

116 Towards the end of Nicomachean Ethics, reflecting on the effects of the kind of argument he has finished presenting, Aristotle briefly considers the possibilities of argument. He writes, although arguments seem to be able to influence and encourage the civilized ones among the young people, and perhaps to make virtue take possession of a well-born character that truly loves what is fine; but they seem unable to stimulate the many towards being fine and good. For the many naturally obey fear, not shame; they avoid what is base because of the penalties, not because it is disgraceful. For since they live by their feelings, they pursue their proper pleasures and the sources of them, and avoid the opposed pains. (1179b 9-18 in Terence Irwin's translation of Nicomachean Ethics, emphases mine).

The passage quoted in Lloyd's Aristotle reads as follows:

But as things are, while they seem to have power to encourage and spur on liberal-minded young men . . . , they are powerless to encourage the mass to noble behaviour. For they [the many] do not naturally obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and they refrain from evil deeds, not because the deeds are shameful, but because of the penalties
involved. They live by emotion and pursue their own pleasures and the means to them and avoid the opposite pains. (242)

117 Gisela Striker, too, in “Emotions in Context: Aristotle’s Treatment of the Passions in the On Rhetoric and His Moral Psychology” notes that the material Aristotle discusses in Rhetoric are on “topics of general relevance” (286) and should be considered “a collection of commonly acceptable theses that are likely to convince a not very educated audience, rather than as Aristotle’s own considered views about the subject.”

118 In On Rhetoric, Aristotle refers to several other works of his including Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, Topics, Ethics, Politics, and Methodics, Poetics, and Theodectea.

119 See, for example, the index to Kennedy’s translation of Rhetoric.

120 Aristotle’s views about the greatest good and reasoning explains the general absence of feeling that Russell observes in Aristotle’s writing. Russell makes two particularly incisive statements about Aristotle. The first is about Aristotle’s smugness in Nicomachean Ethics. Russell writes,

There is an emotional poverty in the Ethics, which is not found in the earlier philosophers. There is something unduly smug and comfortable about Aristotle’s speculations on human affairs; everything that makes men feel a passionate interest in each other seems to be forgotten. Even his account of friendship is tepid. He shows no sign of having had any of those experiences which make it difficult to preserve sanity; all the more profound aspects of the moral life are apparently unknown to him. He leaves out, one may say, the whole sphere of human experience with which religion is concerned. What he has to say is what will be useful to comfortable men of weak passions; but he has nothing to say to those who are possessed by a god or a devil, or whom outward misfortune drives to despair. For these reasons, in my judgement, his Ethics, in spite of its fame, is lacking in intrinsic importance. (184)

The second quotation is on what Russell perceives as Aristotle’s unemotional response to the “suffering of mankind”: “There is in Aristotle an almost complete absence of what may be called benevolence or philanthropy. The sufferings of mankind, in so far as he is aware of them, do not move him emotionally; he holds them, intellectually, to be an evil, but there is no evidence that they cause him unhappiness except when the sufferers happen to be his friends (183-184).”

121 As O’Connor points out, however,

Intuition of supposedly self-evident propositions cannot guarantee their truth. What appears self-evident to us will depend upon our intelligence, our interests, and our training. Thus A may accept as self-evidently true what B will reject as false or doubtful. The history of mathematics has in fact shown that the axioms at the basis of a mathematical system do not have to be ‘true’, still less, ‘self-evident.’ They have merely to be consistent. ‘True’ is not an appropriate predicate for such propositions. (48-49)

Aristotle’s idea of demonstrative science is superceded and is no longer valid. Scientific knowledge remains for ever in the form of hypotheses. “In science,” Popper writes, “there is no ‘knowledge’, in the sense in which Plato and Aristotle understood the word, in the sense which implies finality; . . . [i.e.,] truth . . . ‘scientific knowledge’ is . . . , using the language of Plato and Aristotle, information concerning the latest, and the best tested, scientific ‘opinion’” (Book 2, 13).

122 He says that it is better for slaves to be slaves for the same reason that domestic animals have it better than wild animals. Slaves and domestic animals are protected. In these passages, Aristotle shows that he is, like Wilber and Risen, seemingly motivated by benevolence towards inferiors.

123 But as John Dewey writes, “Old ideas give way slowly; for they are more than abstract logical forms and categories. They are habits, predispositions, deeply ingrained attitudes of aversion and preference” (313, Darwin).
WORKS CITED


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